

RetroIndy: Uni-Gov

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On Jan. 1, 1970, the city of Indianapolis expanded its boundaries to include all of Marion County. This consolidation was called unified government or Uni-Gov.

Many units of city and county government were consolidated into one civil government, including the City Council and the County Council which joined to become the City-County Council. The structure of Uni-Gov was divided into three branches similar to the federal government: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch.

The executive branch includes the mayor, deputy mayors, which the mayor appoints, and six departments: Administration, Metropolitan Development, Public Works, Transportation, Public Safety and Parks and Recreation . The executive branch carries out the day-to-day operations of the city. Each of its six departments has a director appointed by the mayor and approved by the City-County Council. Each department has an appointed board of directors which approves all contracts and department budgets before they are submitted to the City-County Council. The appointed board members are not paid, and the board meetings are open to the public.

The legislative branch of Uni-Gov is the City-County Council. It has exclusive power to adopt budgets, levy taxes and make appropriations. The council can enact, repeal, or amend local laws (ordinances). Its 29 members have appointive powers and they confirm the mayor's appointments.

The judicial branch consists of a Circuit Court, a Superior Court, a Municipal Court and a Small Claims Court.

Not all functions of local government were absorbed by Uni-Gov:

Excluded cities and towns.

The cities of Beech Grove, Lawrence and Southport and the town of Speedway were not annexed into the Consolidated City of Indianapolis. These municipalities are called excluded cities and towns. In addition to voting for the mayors and councils of their respective cities and towns, residents can also vote for the mayor of Indianapolis plus a City-County Council member and four at-large council members. This arrangement was passed because residents are obligated to pay many countywide taxes and the mayor's powers extend to the entire county.

Included towns.

There were 16 towns in Marion County with fewer than 5,000 people that elected to retain town status as defined by the state constitution. They are, however, included for governmental purposes in the Consolidated City of Indianapolis.

Townships.

In each of the nine townships in Marion County there is an elected township assessor, township trustee and a three-member advisory board. The nine townships are:

CENTER

DECATUR FRANKLIN LAWRENCE PERRY

PIKE WARREN WASHINGTON

WAYNE

School districts.

There are 11 school districts Marion County. Each determines its own budget and policy within state law.

Independent municipal corporations

. There are six independent municipal corporations largely unaffected by Uni-Gov: the Capital Improvement Board, Health and Hospital Corp., Indianapolis Airport Authority, Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library, Indianapolis Public Transportation Corp. and the Indianapolis-Marion County Building Authority.

County offices of assessor, auditor, coroner, prosecutor, sheriff, surveyor, recorder, treasurer and clerk of the circuit court (county clerk).

All of these offices, except the assessor, were written into the state constitution and cannot be eliminated unless the constitution is amended. When Uni-Gov was formed, Marion County government did not fade away, and the county still exists as a separate entity.

Marion County Department of Public Welfare.

The Department of Public Welfare administers welfare services under the supervision of the Indiana Department of Public Welfare.

Police and fire special service districts.

The jurisdiction of the Indianapolis police and fire departments were changed very little by the Uni-Gov act, although the law did allow for subsequent expansion of the special service districts .