



CENTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2009 Survey of New York’s Local Chief Elected Officials: The Details

By Michael Hattery*

In the summer of 2009 the Center for Local Government at Binghamton University conducted a survey of New York chief elected officials. The survey was sent to town supervisors, village and city mayors and the chairs of county governing boards. The survey was distributed in June of 2009 and local officials were given the option of responding via an initial mail questionnaire or web based online response, subsequent follow-ups offered a telephone response option as well. The survey was administered by the Siena Survey Research Institute. All 1,604 chief elected officials on New York State were included in the survey and 566 (35%) officials responded.¹ The survey was designed to garner information in four key areas: (1) understanding about local officials’ experience and their communities, (2) local policy issues of importance to local elected leaders, (3) the training needs and preferences of these leaders, and (4) local government capital planning practices.

Municipal Type	Total Statewide	Number Responding	Percent of Total
Town	932	347	37%
City	61	15	25%
Village	554	128	23%
County	57	12	21%
Total	1,604	566	35%

Local governments that responded to the survey fairly represent the mix of communities in New York when compared by population size or by region of the state. Table 2 provides a comparison of the breakdown of local governments in New York State and survey respondents. The distribution is very close in each major population category.

Population Categories	All New York Municipalities	Survey Respondents
0-2,499	47%	44%
2,500-4,999	20%	21%
5,000-9,999	15%	17%
10,000-19,999	8%	8%
20,000-49,999	6%	5%
50,000-+	5%	4%

*Data analysis and mapping provided by Chelsea Robertson.

^[1] Polling results are often reported with a qualification noting the degree of accuracy or margin of error. Based on the respondent sample size of 566, the total percentage estimates reported in this policy brief have a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5% (at a 95% level of confidence) around the reported percent figure. The margin of error for reported subgroups (e.g. village mayors) are generally larger and depend on several factors including the size of the subgroup and the size of the subgroup total population.

Responding local governments show a fair geographic distribution as well. Figure 1 portrays the local governments represented in the respondent sample.

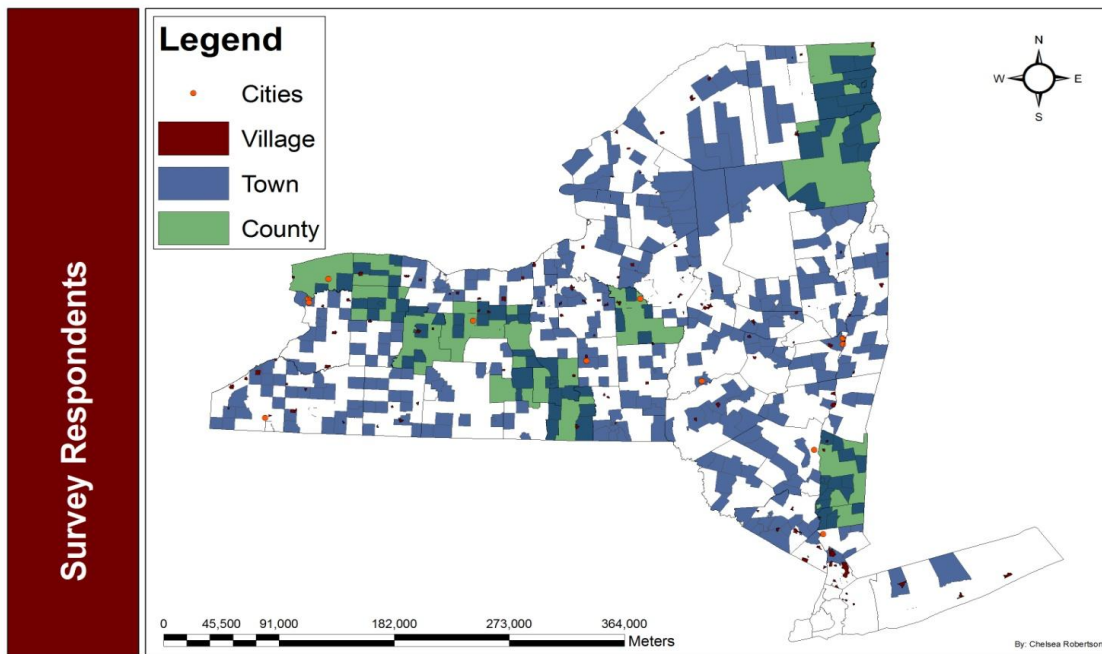


Table 3: Population Size and Municipal Class: Count and Percent of Municipalities by Population Size Grouping

Population Size		Municipal Type				Total
		City	County	Town	Village	
Count by Population (%) Size Group						
	0-2,500	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	415 (45%)	344 (62%)	759 (47%)
	2,500-4,999	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	210 (23%)	106 (19%)	317 (20%)
	5,000-9,999	9 (15%)	1 (2%)	160 (17%)	69 (12%)	239 (15%)
	10,000-19,999	22 (36%)	1 (2%)	74 (8%)	25 (5%)	122 (8%)
	20,000-49,999	18 (30%)	12 (21%)	52 (6%)	9 (2%)	91 (6%)
	50,000+	11 (18%)	43 (75%)	21 (2%)	1 (0%)	76 (5%)
Total		61	57	932	554	1,604

*The Center for Local Government
 Research, Training, and Problem Solving Approaches for Local Governments in New York State
 P.O. Box 6000
 Binghamton, NY 13902
www.binghamton.edu/clg
 (607) 777-9185
mhattery@binghamton.edu*