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2019 Survey of New York’s Local Chief Elected Officials: The Details

By Michael Hattery and Celia Watt*

In the summer of 2019, the Public Management Program at the College at Brockport conducted a survey of New York chief elected officials (CEOs). The survey was sent to town supervisors, village and city mayors, and the chairs of county governing boards. Participant local officials were emailed a link to an online survey and two follow-up emails were sent over a four week response period. All 1,593 of New York State’s local government chief elected officials were included in the survey and 493 (31%) completed surveys were received.¹ The survey was designed to collect information in four areas: (1) the experience of local officials, (2) public policy issues of importance to local officials, (3) the training needs and preferences of local government governing board members, and (4) local government risk management and capital planning practices in New York State. The survey results in each of these four areas are discussed in separate policy briefs.

CEOs that responded to the survey represent the mix of types of local governments in the state. Table 1 shows the number and percent responding by type of local government. The percentage responding by type varies from 26 to 33.

Municipal Type	Total Statewide	Number Responding	Percentage of Total
Town	932	310	33%
City	61	24	39%
Village	543	142	26%
County	57	17	30%
Total	1593	493	31%

Respondents also represent the various regions of the state and the size distribution of local governments. Table 2 provides a comparison of represented governments in the sample by population size with the statewide size distributions. Following, Table 3 provides a similar view of the representativeness of respondents by population size for each municipal type (county, city, town and village).

Population Categories	All New York Municipalities	Survey Respondents
0-2,499	47%	42%
2,500-4,999	20%	22%
5,000-9,999	15%	17%
10,000-19,999	8%	9%
20,000-49,999	6%	5%
50,000+	5%	5%

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 493, the total percentage estimates reported for survey items in this study have a maximum margin of error of plus or minus 3.7% (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 sample subgroup and the size of the subgroup total population. (See Survey Details at: https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/public_management.)

Figure 1, below, provides a view of the geographic distribution of responding officials across the state.

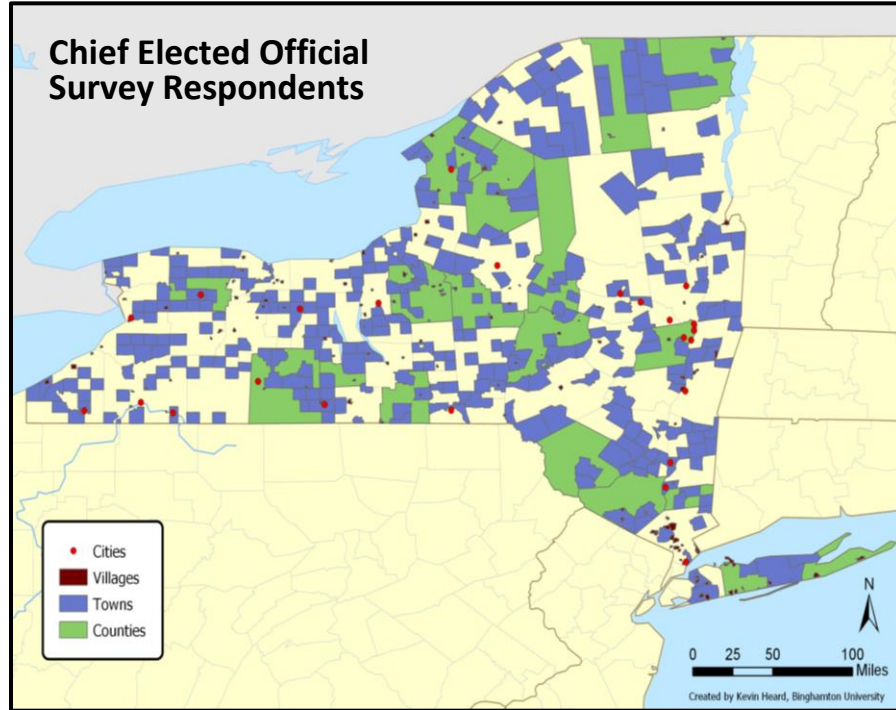


Table 3: Population Size and Municipal Class: Percentage Respondents vs. Total Municipalities Statewide (in Bold) by Population Size Grouping

Population Size	Municipal Type				Total
	City	County	Town	Village	
Count by Population (%) Size Group					
0-2,499	0% 0%	0% 0%	41% 44%	57% 61%	42% 47%
2,500-4,999	0% 3%	0% 2%	24% 23%	23% 19%	22% 20%
5,000-9,999	21% 13%	0% 0%	19% 16%	13% 13%	17% 15%
10,000-19,999	38% 36%	6% 2%	9% 8%	4% 5%	9% 8%
20,000-49,000	29% 28%	6% 19%	4% 6%	3% 2%	5% 6%
50,000+	13% 20%	88% 77%	3% 2%	0% 0%	5% 5%

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