

GLOSSARY OF GOVERNMENT TERMS

A plain-language guide to city jargon and acronyms.

Government Roles

- **City Charter** – Local constitution defining powers and structure.
- **City Clerk** – Keeper of records, meeting notices, and agendas.
- **City Manager** – Chief administrator hired by council.
- **Councilmember / Commissioner** – Elected decision-makers.
- **Boards / Committees** – Advisory or decision-making groups.

Meetings & Procedures

- **Agenda** – List of items for discussion.
- **Workshop** – Informal, non-voting meeting.
- **Public Hearing** – Formal meeting for citizen input.
- **Readings** – Required public readings before a law is adopted.
- **Minutes** – Official meeting record.
- **Quorum** – Minimum number needed to conduct business.
- **Parliamentary Procedure** – Rules for fair, orderly meetings.

Documents & Legal Terms

- **City Ordinance** – Local law.
- **Budget Amendment** – Change to approved budget.
- **Legal Notices** – Required public announcements.
- **Comprehensive Plan** – Long-term development guide.
- **Strategic Plan** – Short-term priorities.
- **Audit** – Independent financial review.

Land Use & Zoning

- **Zoning** – Rules for land use and development.
- **Selective Enforcement** – Uneven or biased rule enforcement.

Public Participation

- **Public Comment** – Time for citizen input.
- **Sunshine Law** – Guarantees open meetings and records.
- **FOIA / Public Records Request** – Formal request for documents.
- **Municode** – Online library of local laws and ordinances.

**Common Government Acronyms

A quick-reference guide to help residents decode the alphabet soup of local government.

- **NIMBY** – *Not In My Backyard*
A term used when residents oppose development near their homes, even if they support it elsewhere.
- **RFP** – *Request for Proposals*
A formal invitation for vendors or contractors to bid on a government project or service.
- **MPO** – *Metropolitan Planning Organization*
A regional body that coordinates transportation planning across cities and counties.
- **CRA** – *Community Redevelopment Agency*
A local agency focused on revitalizing blighted or underdeveloped areas using tax incentives and public investment.

- **LDC** – *Land Development Code*
The set of rules that governs zoning, building standards, and land use in your community.
- **FOIA** – *Freedom of Information Act*
A federal law that guarantees public access to government records. States have their own versions (e.g., Florida's Chapter 119).
- **FLC** – *Florida League of Cities*
A statewide association that provides training, resources, and advocacy for municipal governments.
- **NLC** – *National League of Cities*
A national organization that supports city leaders and promotes local governance best practices.