

# The Executive Council in New Hampshire

In 1679 when King Charles II of England separated New Hampshire from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, a President and a Council were appointed by the King. The Council's chief responsibility at that time was to report on the activities of the Governor to the King.

When the New Hampshire Constitution was written, the Council remained as a check and balance on the role of the state's chief executive officer.

The Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire has the authority and responsibility, together with the Governor, over the administration of the affairs of the state. Their role is defined in the New Hampshire Constitution, New Hampshire statutes and in advisory opinions of the New Hampshire Supreme Court and the Attorney General.

The Governor and Executive Council form of government is unique to New Hampshire. No other state has selected this colonial vestige of a two-part executive branch of government.

## **The duties and responsibilities of the Executive Council include:**

Approving nominations from the Governor of judges, commissioners, notaries public, justices of the peace and commissioners of deeds;

Approving nominations from the Governor for Commissioners, Deputy and Assistant Commissioners;

Approving nominations from the Governor for representatives serving on various state agencies, boards and commissions;

Hearing requests for pardons;

Approving the receipt and expenditures of State and federal funds, as well as budgetary transfers within the departments;

Approving all contracts with a value of \$10,000 or more;

Ensuring that all major executive branch business is conducted in public;

Playing a vital role in improving the State's infrastructure, especially roads and bridges, via management and oversight of the State's 10 year highway plan;

Approving the spending of a major portion of the budget that is appropriated annually by the legislature.

The Executive Council is not a legislative body. It is not mandated to set policy but to implement policies established by the legislature. However, by vetoing an item that comes before them, policy issues can be directly affected.

The Governor has the right to veto legislation without any involvement of the Executive Council.

The State of New Hampshire is divided into five districts, each having one Executive Councilor. Each district represents approximately one-fifth of the population or 263,000 citizens. Councilors are elected every two years, concurrently with the Governor.

For more information about the councilors, minutes of their meetings and their meeting schedules, check the following website:

[www.council.nh.gov](http://www.council.nh.gov)

All meetings of the Executive Council are open to the public.



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