

# Missouri Government and Constitution

State Motto: "Salus populi suprema lex esto."

"The welfare of the people shall be the supreme law."



## Missouri Facts

- Missouri's capital is Jefferson City
- Missouri became the 24th state in 1821
- Missouri's nickname is the "Show Me State"
- The state animal is the mule
- The state bird is the blue bird
- The state tree is the dogwood

## LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

### The Missouri legislature is known as the General Assembly

- General Assembly is divided into two houses:
  - Senate—upper house
  - House of Representatives—lower house
- Legislature is in session from January to May each year

### Senate

- has 34 members
- serve 4 year terms (1/2 elected every two years)—8 years max.
- presided over by Lt. Gov. (President pro Tempore takes over in his absence)
- approves gubernatorial appointments

### Qualifications:

- 30 years old
- A qualified Missouri voter for 3 years
- A resident of their district for 1 year

### House of Representatives

- has 163 members
- Representatives serve 2 year terms—8 years max.
- H.O.R. is presided over by the Speaker of the House

### Qualifications:

- 24 years old
- A qualified voter of Missouri for 2 years
- A resident of their district for 1 year

## EXECUTIVE BRANCH

### Missouri Governor

- Term: 4 years
- Term limit: 2 consecutive terms

### Qualifications

- at least 30 years old
- U.S. citizen for at least 15 years
- live in MO for at least 10 years

### Basic powers of Missouri's governor –

- administers state laws
- appoints and removes officials
- liaison with federal government

- recommends laws and budget
- signs or vetoes bills
- calls special sessions
- commands national guard
- grants pardons, reprieves, or commutations
- ceremonial head of state

### **Missouri's Lieutenant Governor**

- Term: 4 years

#### Qualifications

- at least 30 years old
- U.S. citizen for at least 15 years
- live in MO at least 10 years

#### Basic Powers of the Lieutenant Governor

- ceremonial head of state
- President of the Senate
- succeeds to governorship if necessary
- acting governor when needed
- volunteer coordinator
- ombudsman

### **Secretary of State**

- responsible for providing and preserving information for the public
- Oversees all elections

### **Attorney General**

- serves as the chief legal officer of the state
- represents the interests of government agencies and citizens

## **JUDICIAL BRANCH**

### **The Supreme Court**

- Chief Justice presides over court
- 7 justices
- 12-year terms
- highest court in Missouri
- hears cases on appeal from lower courts or transferred from appeals court

#### Requirements

- must be at least 30 years old
- must be citizen of U.S. at least 15 years
- must be qualified MO voter at least 9 years

### **The MO Court of Appeals**

- Eastern district: 14 judges
- Western district: 11 judges
- Southern district: 7 judges
- 12-year term of office
- hears cases on appeal from lower courts

#### Requirements

- must be at least 30 years old
- must be citizen of U.S. at least 15 years
- must be qualified MO voter at least 9 years

**The Missouri Circuit Courts (trial courts)**

- All cases under state law first come to trial in one of the state's Circuit Courts
- 4-year term of office
- 44 Circuit Court districts

**MISSOURI'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS****Municipalities**

A municipality is an incorporated local government, meaning it is organized under Missouri law with corporate and governmental characteristics. Cities, villages, and incorporated towns are considered municipalities.

**Townships**

A township is a sub-administrative unit of county government with very limited powers. Usually, the main function of a township is road maintenance. There are 23 counties in Missouri with township government, mostly located in the northwest of the state.

**Counties**

A county is a sub-administrative unit of state government. Counties carry out crucial state functions such as taxation and law enforcement. There are 114 counties in Missouri.

**Special Districts**

A special district is usually a one-service local government, but can overlay other local government entities. The most common special districts in Missouri provide fire protection, road maintenance, and water supply.

**School Districts**

School districts administer and provide for public education within recognized governmental systems. In Missouri, they function under dual control of local and state governmental influences or mandates.

