

**The Mayor of Buffalo
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Mayor Makowski



Mayor Griffin



Mayor Masiello



Mayor Brown

What is the Mayor's website and contact information?

The Mayor's website is

<http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/home/leadership/mayor>.¹ His address is 201 City Hall, Buffalo, New York 14202.¹ Mayor Byron Brown may also be contacted via email at MayorBrownWebMail@ch.ci.buffalo.ny.us.¹

How is the Mayor elected and how long is the term?

The Buffalo Mayor is elected by city voters for four-year terms.² To be eligible as Mayor, a person must be a resident of the City of Buffalo for at least one year before the date of election or appointment as successor.²

What is the Mayor's salary?

The City Charter limits the Mayor's annual salary to \$105,000.³

What are the Mayor's key powers?

- The Mayor appoints the heads of city departments, as well as the members of boards and commissions.⁴
- The Mayor is responsible for formulating the City's annual budget.⁴
- The Mayor has the power to veto the Common Council's actions.⁴

- The Mayor oversees all offices, boards, departments, commissions and agencies to ensure they are appropriately carrying out their duties.⁵
- The Mayor has authority to examine the City's books and accounts and also has powers of investigation like those of the Council. He may exercise any additional powers granted by ordinance, local or general law.⁵
- The Mayor acts as department head for all divisions of the Executive Department.⁵



What are the key limits to the Mayor's power?

- The Mayor may not approve any local law without first holding a public hearing.⁶ Notice of the time and place of the hearing must be published at least five days before the hearing in at least one daily newspaper.⁶ The publication shall also include a copy of the proposed local law.⁶
- Once the Mayor's term ends, "all mayoral appointments of department heads and members of boards, agencies and commissions" which are subject to confirmation by the common council also terminate.⁷ The Common Council has the opportunity to reconfirm the appointments by majority or two-thirds vote of the council, depending on the number of votes necessary for the original confirmation.⁷

Who takes over if something happens to the Mayor?

If the Mayor is temporarily unable to perform the duties of his office, the mayor's designated officer whose appointment has been confirmed by the Common Council shall act as Mayor until the Mayor is able to.⁸ The designation must be in writing and filed with the city clerk.⁸

If the Mayor has not made such a designation, the president of the Common Council shall perform the Mayor's duties until the Mayor is able to.⁸ If the office of Mayor is vacant (as a result of resignation, removal, death or permanent inability to perform duties of the office of mayor) the president of the Common Council shall serve the balance of the term.⁸

How is a City Manager different than a Mayor?

North District Councilmember Joe Golombek has proposed that Buffalo consider reforming city government by having a city manager rather than a mayor.⁹

- City managers and mayors have the same basic responsibilities and decision-making power.¹⁰
- Unlike mayors, who are elected by the city electors, city managers are professionals appointed by city councils.¹⁰
- Although the city manager model is less democratic, it is also “impartial, professional, and nonpolitical.”¹⁰
- City managers are educated, trained, professionally certified and have experience running cities whereas mayors are not required to meet any of these qualifications.¹⁰
- Rather than eliminating mayors, some cities utilize a full-time, professional city manager to manage the city’s daily operations, and the mayor fills an ambassador-type role for the city.⁹

Who makes up the Current Mayor’s Administration Cabinet and Senior Staff?

Mayor Brown’s Administration Cabinet and Senior Staff include:

- First Deputy Mayor (Steven M. Casey)
- Deputy Mayor (Donna Brown)
- Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development, Permit and Inspection Services (Brian Reilly)
- Commissioner of Administration, Finance, Policy and Urban Affairs (Janet Penksa)
- Commissioner of Assessment and Taxation (Martin Kennedy)
- Commissioner of Human Resources (Karla Thomas)
- Commissioner of the Buffalo Fire Department (Michael L. Lombardo)
- Corporation Counsel (Alisa A. Lukasiewicz)
- Commissioner of the Buffalo Police Department (H. McCarthy Gipson)
- Director of Communications (Peter K. Cutler)
- Public Works Commissioner (Steven Stepniak)
- Commissioner of Community Services (Tanya Perrin-Johnson)
- Director of the Division of Citizen Services (Oswaldo Mestre, Jr.)
- Director of the Division for Youth (Otis T. Barker, Sr.)¹¹



Can I attend the Mayor's CitiStat Buffalo meetings and how often are they held?

Yes, members of the general public may attend CitiStat Buffalo meetings.¹² However, they must contact the Office of Strategic Planning at 851-5035 to sign up for specific meetings due to room size constraints.¹² Attendance availability is on a first-come, first-served basis.¹² Meetings are held weekly.¹²

What is the Mayor's Call and Resolution Center?

The Mayor's Call and Resolution Center, created in July 2000, allows citizens to access information regarding City of Buffalo services, programs and events, report service needs, check the status of service requests and access non-emergency police services. The phone number is (716) 851-4890.¹³



What have recent Buffalo Mayors been known for?

- **Mayor Makowski** served from 1974-1977.¹⁴
 - He was a Democrat.¹⁵
 - He helped prepare the 1973-1974 budget which gave residents their first tax cut in eight years.¹⁵
 - He won the general election by the largest victory margin in Buffalo history.¹⁵
 - He served as Mayor during the blizzard of '77.¹⁵
 - His major accomplishments included building the Convention Center, downtown redevelopment and building an industrial park at William and Lewis streets.¹⁵
 - He was criticized for placing an occupancy tax on occupants of commercial and residential buildings to help fund the Municipal Housing Authority deficit.¹⁵

- **Mayor Griffin** served from 1978-1993.¹⁴
 - Although Mayor Griffin was a Democrat, he was endorsed by: Conservatives in the 1977 election; Democrats, Republicans, Conservatives and Right to Life in the 1981 election; Republicans, Conservatives and Right to Life in the 1985 election; all four in 1989; and Right to Life in 1997.¹⁶
 - He is the only Mayor to have served four terms.¹⁷
 - He was known for being earnest, feisty, outspoken¹⁸ and a scrapper.¹⁶
 - His accomplishments included building condominiums, hotels,¹⁸ town houses and office buildings on the waterfront and in other areas downtown, the Rotary Ice Rink, three bank office buildings at Fountain Plaza, parking ramps, walkways, the HSBC Bank Atrium, City Center, and a new City Mission and Cornerstone Manor.¹⁶ He also restored Shea's Buffalo and cleaned up Hoyt Lake.¹⁶
 - Some feel that his greatest accomplishment was construction of downtown's Pilot Field (now Dunn Tire Park).¹⁶
 - He was criticized for increased crime, decreased population, the closing of several downtown department stores, under-funded public schools, neglecting the East Side, employing few minorities in high positions and cutting more than 1,000 city employees.¹⁶ His parks commissioner was put in jail, and \$746,000 in public funds went missing.¹⁶

- **Mayor Masiello** served from 1994-2005.¹⁴
 - He was a registered Democrat but was more conservative than the mainstream Democrats.¹⁹
 - In his third term, he was endorsed by both Democratic and Republican parties.²⁰
 - His main area of attention was the city's \$25 million deficit.¹⁹
 - He got state approval for a joint construction fund to renovate and build schools in the city.²¹
 - The state imposed a Fiscal Control Board on the City in 2003.²⁰

- **Mayor Brown** began his term in 2006.¹⁴
 - He is a Democrat.²²
 - His accomplishments include initiating a Zero Tolerance Law Enforcement program, creating the Buffalo Police Department's Mobile Response Unit, starting the management accountability CitiStat Buffalo program,²³ and

expanding the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program.²⁴

- His tenure has seen the beginning of construction of a new federal courthouse and the Inner Harbor waterfront mixed use development project.²³



- Criticisms of the Brown Administration include the Mayor's installation of 100 surveillance cameras in various parts of the City,²⁵ plans to build three new hotels downtown, including one at Erie Basin Marina,²⁶ the failure to deal with "green issues" including low recycling rates, the lack of staff to develop plans to address environmental issues,²⁷ and the demolition of abandoned buildings rather than trying to preserve or rehabilitate them.²⁸
- A survey of almost 150 government officials, business leaders and civil leaders by The Buffalo News revealed very split opinions regarding the Brown Administration.²⁹ Overall, Mayor Brown's "score" would have been about a C+, with most complaints focused on his inaccessibility, lack of decision-making, and giving Deputy Mayor Steve Casey too much power.²⁹
- The survey also suggested Mayor Brown's administration was more professional and accountable than the past administration.²⁹



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- ¹ City of Buffalo, *Mayor's Office*, 2001-2008, <http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/home/leadership/mayor>.
- ² The Charter of the City of Buffalo, New York, *Section 4-6, Election; Term; Residence Requirement*, December 2007, http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/codes/1237_A/1237-Cha.pdf#xml=http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/searchresults.asp?cmd=pdfhits&index=1237_A&filename=1237-Cha.pdf&fn=D:\siteinfo\ecodes\codebooks\1237_A\1237-Cha.pdf.
- ³ The Charter of the City of Buffalo, New York, *Section 24-12, Salaries of Elective Officers*, December 2007, http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/codes/1237_A/1237-Cha.pdf#xml=http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/searchresults.asp?cmd=pdfhits&index=1237_A&filename=1237-Cha.pdf&fn=D:\siteinfo\ecodes\codebooks\1237_A\1237-Cha.pdf.
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- ⁵ The Charter of the City of Buffalo, New York, *Section 4-1, Duties and Powers*, December 2007, http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/codes/1237_A/1237-Cha.pdf#xml=http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/searchresults.asp?cmd=pdfhits&index=1237_A&filename=1237-Cha.pdf&fn=D:\siteinfo\ecodes\codebooks\1237_A\1237-Cha.pdf.
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- ⁸ The Charter of the City of Buffalo, New York, *Section 4-4, Designation in the Event of Temporary Disability or Absence from the State*, December 2007, http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/codes/1237_A/1237-Cha.pdf#xml=http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/searchresults.asp?cmd=pdfhits&index=1237_A&filename=1237-Cha.pdf&fn=D:\siteinfo\ecodes\codebooks\1237_A\1237-Cha.pdf.
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