Preliminary Report
The Los Angeles County Legislative Analyst

Designing the CLA to Enhance the Policymaking Capacity of the Board of Supervisors

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Abstract

- Measure G created the position of an independent County Legislative Analyst (CLA), who shall provide nonpartisan legislative support and analysis to the Board of Supervisors on County policy issues. The duties of the CLA staff will be defined by the Board of Supervisors, which will also oversee the CLA. The purpose of this report is to provide information on CLA-type offices in other local jurisdictions, as well as in the state of California, and to explore issues regarding cost and the implications of a CLA for executive-legislative policy interactions.

Structure of U.S. County Government

In general …

County Commission: voters elect the commission, which has both legislative and executive responsibilities. This form is typically found in smaller, rural counties.

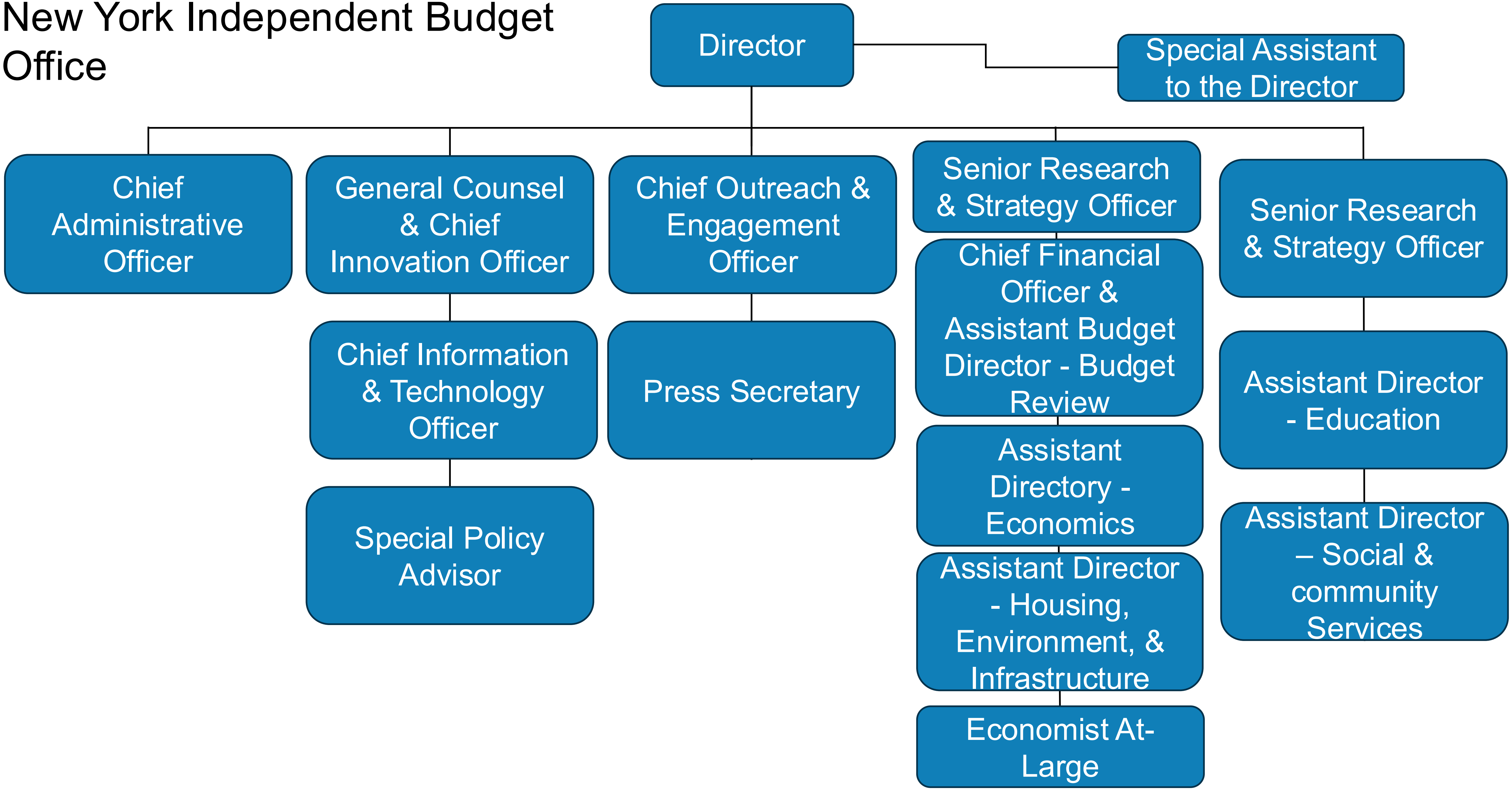
Commission-administrator: Voters elect a commission, which is responsible for lawmaking and oversight, which then appoints an administrator who functions as the chief executive.

Commission-elected executive The third form is what Measure G creates.

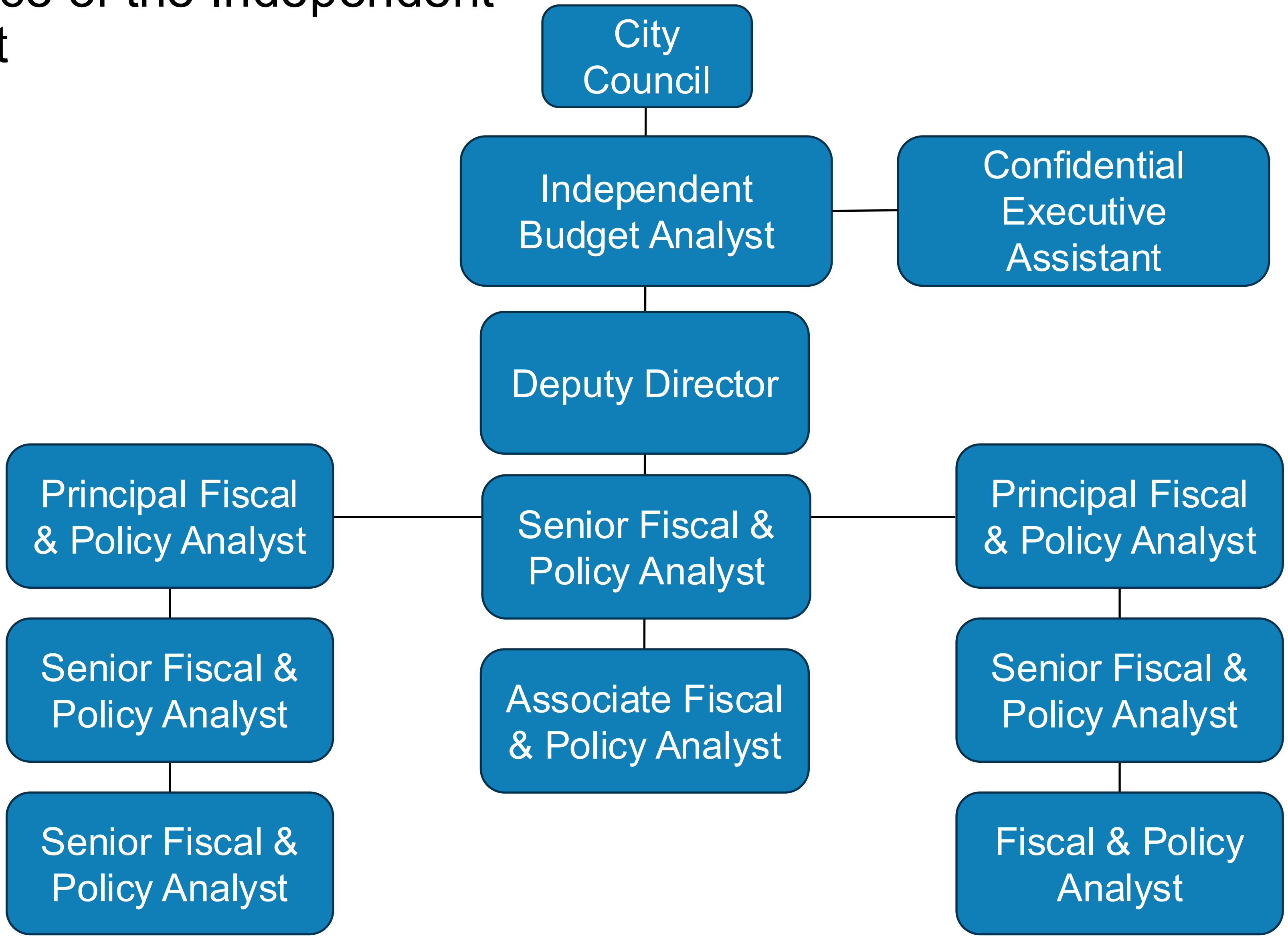
Measure G

- Until the passage of Measure G, Los Angeles County operated according to a hybrid model, a Board of Supervisors with both lawmaking and executive powers, *along with* an appointed administrator/executive.
- A foreseeable risk in having a strong and separate elected executive is the potential for executive dominance because of its information/resource advantages.
- This institutional challenge is common at the subnational level in the U.S., but it varies greatly, so it is critical that a strong CLA be established from the start.

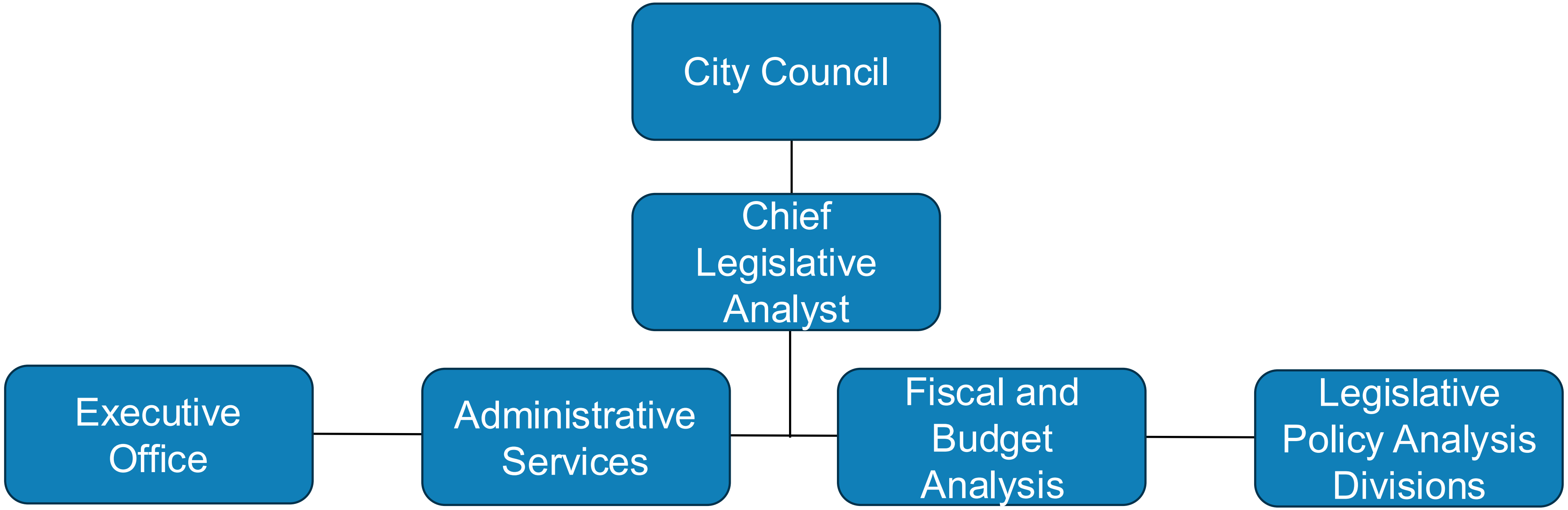
New York Independent Budget Office



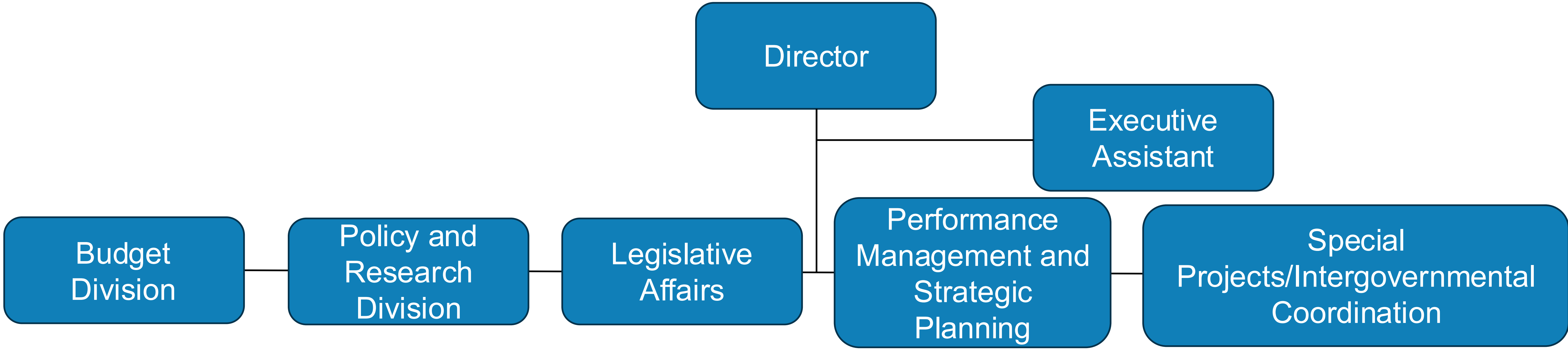
San Diego Office of the Independent Budget Analyst



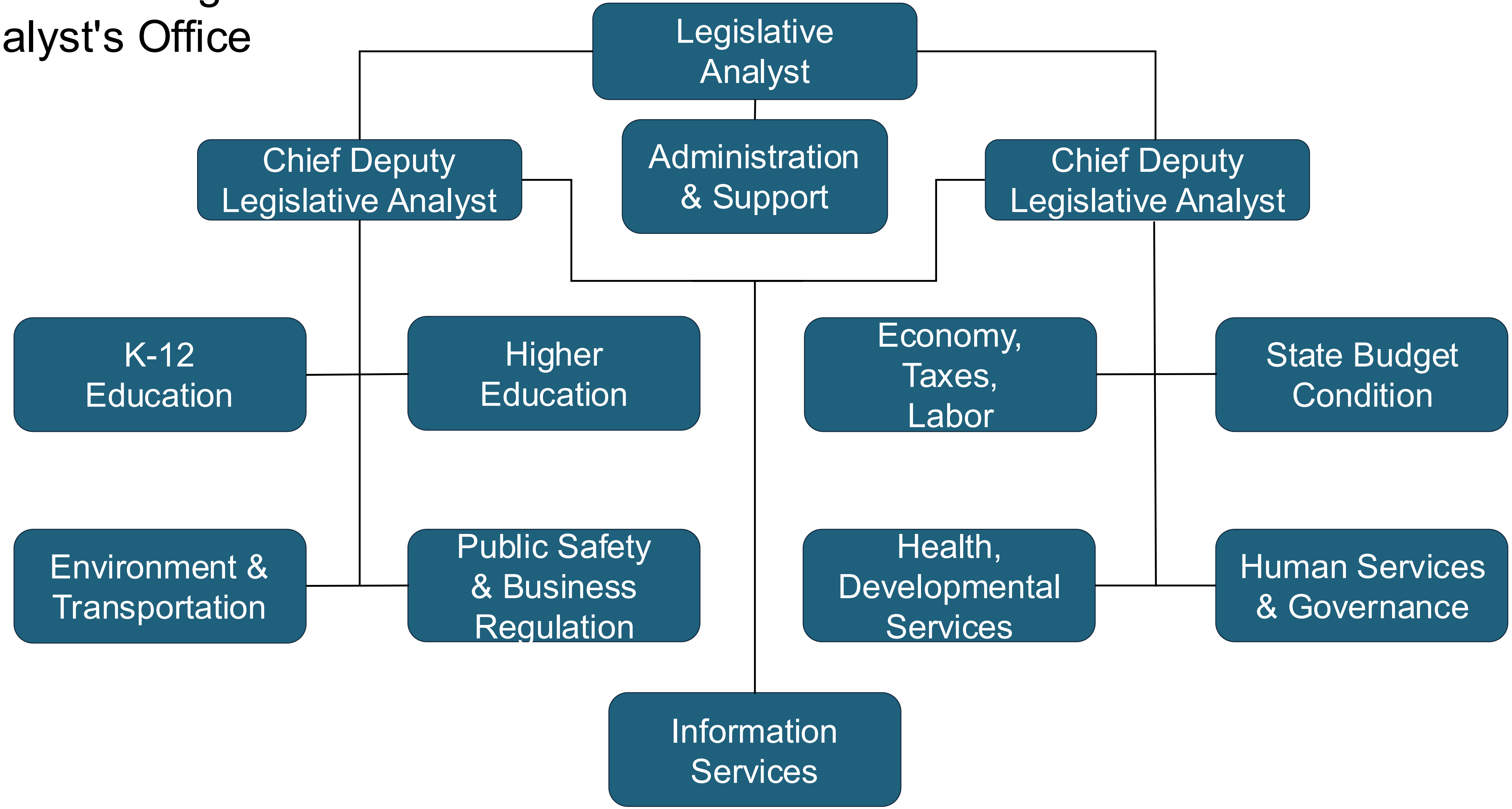
City of Los Angeles Chief Legislative Analyst Office (Template)



Miami Dade Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs (Template)



California Legislative Analyst's Office



Number of Units Under the Analyst, Staffing, and Reporting for Comparison Analyst Offices, Large Jurisdictions with Separation of Powers Systems

Jurisdiction	Name	Unit/Individuals	Staff	Reports to:
New York City	Independent Budget Office	15	~= 50	Independent
City San Diego	Independent Budget Analyst	10	17	City Council
City Los Angeles	Chief Legislative Analyst	4	~= 49	City Council
Miami_Dade County	Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs	6	6	Board of County Commisioners via the Chair
California	Legislative Analyst Office	11	56	State Legislature

Budget and Source of Funds, Comparison Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Name	Budget	Source
New York City	Independent Budget Office	$6.4 million	General Fund, 12.5 % of Mayor's OMB
City San Diego	Independent Budget Analyst	$4.7 million	General Fund
City Los Angeles	Chief Legislative Analyst	~= $7.6 million	General Fund
Miami-Dade County	Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs	$1.7 million	General Fund
California	Legislative Analyst Office	$13 million	General Fund

Cost per FTE, Comparison Jurisdictions—Range is $128,000 per FTE to $288,333 / FTE

Jurisdiction	Name	Cost per FTE
New York City	Independent Budget Office	$128,000
City San Diego	Independent Budget Analyst	$276,470
City Los Angeles	Chief Legislative Analyst	$155,033
Miami-Dade County	Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs	$288,333
California	Legislative Analyst Office	$232,142

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Legislative-Executive Interactions

- In jurisdictions with a council manager or commission administrator forms the imbalance regarding information is deliberate.
- Legislators and appointed executives generally complement one another in the governing process, which consists of mission, policy, administration, and management.
- Elected officials often get too involved in administration and manager/administrators often play too strong a role in policy.
- In larger, more complex jurisdictions strong elected executive and legislatures experience more friction, which might produce less cooperation.

Legislative-Executive Interactions

- There are two key issues in legislative–executive interactions in local government.
- The first has to do with information advantages.
- The second is how do analysts in the executive and legislative branches interact with each other in the policy process.

Legislative-Executive Interactions

- A second issue is information sharing among analysts in both the executive and legislature.
- Conflict between/among analysts is over politically contentious issues.
- In general, however …
  - Professional staff on both sides adhere to professional norms and seek to avoid overt political conflict
  - They are collegial
  - Each side needs the other to function effectively, so incentives promote cooperation and information sharing
  - Strong legislative analyst offices significantly reduce executive resource advantages and allow legislatures to make better policy and bargain more effectively

Conclusion

- The County Legislative Analyst will not eliminate the information asymmetries that will exist between the branches, but it will reduce significantly the executive's ability to interfere in the legislature's core functions of policymaking and oversight.
- The need to create a strong and independent CLA office is crucial to ensuring the Board is co-equal, and to preserve its legislative and oversight functions.

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