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Urban Collective Governance Organizations: The Effect of Institutional Arrangements on Organizational Behavior

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The authors analyze how the institutional arrangements, considered rules and forms of public policy in this context, of four community benefits districts (CBDs) impact organizational behavior in these organizations. A community benefits district is a quasigovernmental city subdistrict organization that assesses an additional property tax to both residential and commercial property owners within its boundaries. In exchange for paying this additional tax, subdistrict property owners receive supplemental services such as safety, sanitation (garbage collection), and economic development. The authors examine these institutional arrangements in four subdistrict organizations in Baltimore, Maryland; New York, New York; Louisville, Kentucky; and Cincinnati, Ohio. Specifically, the authors find the following broad similarities in the organizations' institutional arrangements: legislation at the state and local level is required before the organizations can form; a necessary amount of favorable political will at the grassroots level is required before the organizations can form; organizational governance by an elected or appointed board is required; and a professional and non-professional staff that manages the organizations' daily operation is required. In addition, the authors find and discuss the importance of more nuanced differences in these institutional arrangements on organizational behavior. In the article, the authors show that how the organizations are institutionally structured affects the way in which they behave.

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