

California Counties 101

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California State Association of Counties
(CSAC)

58
Counties

296
Supervisors

All
Californians



California counties are...

- Political subdivisions of the state (California Constitution, Article XI, Section 1)
- General purpose government
- Different from other local governments
- Not schools
- Complicated

California counties are...

Providers of state services at the local level,
including:

- Adult Protective Services
- Child Protective Services
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Services
- Food Stamps
- Foster Care
- In-Home Supportive Services
- Medical Care Services
- Mental Health Services
- Public Health/Laboratory
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

California counties are...

Providers of municipal services in the **unincorporated** area (about 16% of Californians live in unincorporated areas), including:

- Building inspection/code enforcement
- Building permits/plan checking
- Economic development
- Emergency Services
- Fire Protection
- Housing
- Library Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Pest Control
- Planning and zoning
- Police protection (county sheriff)
- Sewers
- Street Lighting/road maintenance
- Streets/roads/highways/storm drains
- Water delivery
- Weed abatement

California counties are...

Providers of countywide services as prescribed by law, including:

- Adult Detention (jails)
- Indigent Burials
- Ag Commissioner
- Juvenile Detention
- Assessor
- Juvenile Justice Programs
- Auditor-Controller
- Landfill
- Communicable Disease Control
- Law Library
- Cooperative Extension
- Probation (Juvenile and Adult)
- Coroner/Medical Examiner
- Public Administrator
- District Attorney (Prosecutions)
- Public Guardian-Conservator
- Elections
- Recorder/Vital Statistics
- Environmental Health
- Regional Parks
- Forensic Labs
- Treasurer/Tax Collector
- Homeless Shelters
- Weights and Measures
- Immunizations
- Veterans' Services

County Organization and Structure

- Governed by elected body, the Board of Supervisors (5)
 - Serves as executive and legislative authority, also quasi-judicial
 - Adopts Budget for county departments
 - Sets compensation levels
- Managed through chief administrative officer/chief executive officer
- Other elected* county positions include treasurer-tax collectors, assessors, auditor-controllers, sheriffs, district attorneys, recorders, election registrars
- Counties do not have “home rule” authority. They may adopt charters, which mainly provide for the internal workings of county government.

Counties with Charters

Alameda

Sacramento

Butte

San Bernardino

El Dorado

San Diego

Fresno

San Francisco City and County

Los Angeles

San Mateo

Orange

Santa Clara

Placer

Tehama

Where do Counties Intersect with Other Local Agencies?

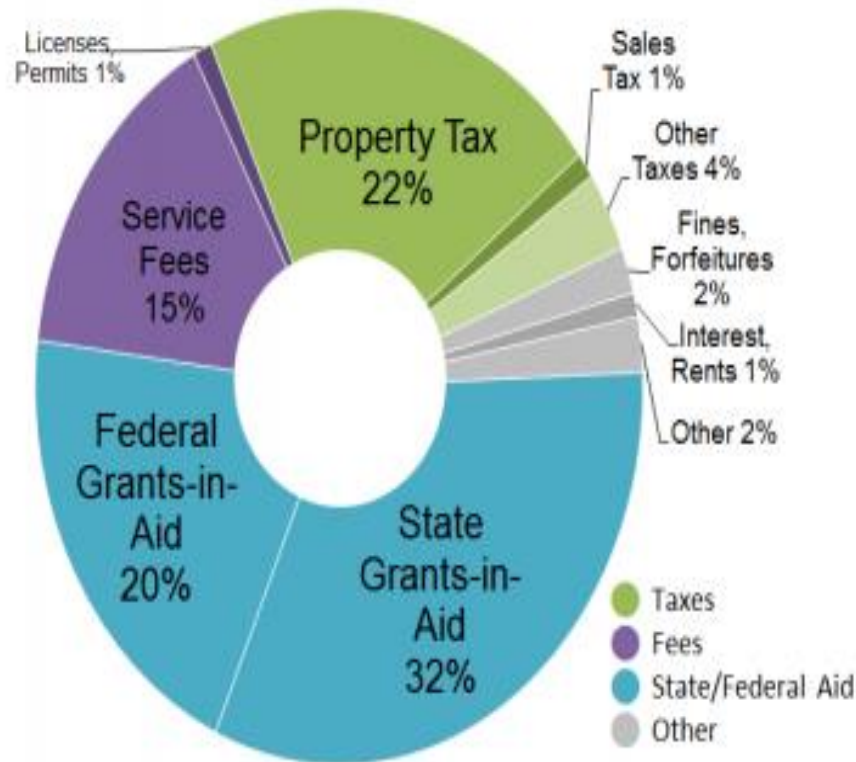
- Conduct elections on behalf of all local agencies (and the state)
- Make appointments to some special district boards
- Serve on LAFCOs (Local area formation commissions) for formation/annexation/dissolution and service delivery decisions
- Serve on redevelopment dissolution oversight boards, transportation authorities, community corrections boards
- May form JPAs, EIFDs, CRIAs with cities and special districts
- Provide services or receive services from cities and special districts (police, fire, animal control)
- Conduit for property tax allocation to cities, special districts and schools

County Finances

- The bulk of county revenues comes from the state and federal governments to operate federal and state-mandated services.
- Property taxes and sales taxes account for the bulk of county discretionary revenues.
- Other types of tax authority includes transient occupancy tax, utility user tax, and parcel taxes.

County Finances

California County Revenues



Realignment – 1991 and 2011

'91 Realignment

Shift of 19 state/county health, mental health, and social services programs, essentially shifting a greater share of costs to counties with funding generated by new revenue sources

2011 Realignment

Fundamental policy shift for incarceration and post-release public safety services, as well as some health and human services

1991 Realigned Programs

- Health Services
 - County Health Services
 - Medically Indigent Services Program
 - County Medical Services Program
 - Local Health Services
- Mental Health Services
 - Community-based Mental Health
 - Institutes for Mental Disease
 - State Hospitals
- Social Services
 - CalWORKS Aid Payments
 - Welfare Administration
 - Foster Care
 - Child Welfare Services
 - Adoptions Assistance
 - GAIN
 - In-Home Supportive Services
 - County Services Block Grant
 - County Juvenile Justice Subventions
 - County Stabilization Subventions
 - California Children's Services

2011 Realigned Programs

- Public Safety
 - Trial Court Security
 - Local Law Enforcement Subventions
 - District Attorney and Public Defender (AB 109)
 - Local Community Corrections (AB 109)
 - Juvenile Justice
- Health and Human Services
 - Community Mental Health
 - EPSDT
 - Mental Health Managed Care
 - Substance Abuse Services
 - Adult Protective Services
 - Foster Care and Child Welfare Services

CA State Association of Counties

- Your resource for counties
- Member-based advocacy and professional development association founded in 1895
- Partners in the Institute for Local Government and CSAC Institute for Excellence

www.counties.org

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