

Local Government 101: Counties

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California State Association of Counties

Counties Do It All

- Police Protection
- Adult Protective Services
- Economic Development
- Voter Registration and Elections
- Roads, Bike & Pedestrian Paths
- Homeless Services
- Health Care
- Probation
- Flood Control
- Public Defenders
- Planning Services
- Transit
- Parks and Recreation
- Behavioral Health
- Foster Care
- Vaccines
- Water
- Medi-Cal
- Code Enforcement
- Tax Collection (for all agencies)
- Weights and Measures
- Airports
- In-Home Supportive Services
- Child Support
- Marijuana Permitting
- You Get the Idea

At Every
Stage of Life:

Infancy

Birth certificates

First 5

Child Care Funding

WIC

Literally delivering babies



At Every
Stage of Life:

Childhood

Parks

Libraries

Child Protective Services

Medi-Cal

Vaccinations

Child Support



At Every
Stage of Life:

Teen

Beaches

Public pools

Elections

Marijuana regulations

Tattoo parlor regulations



At Every
Stage of Life:

Adult (Good Choices)

Property taxes / Assessor

Code Enforcement

Animal Shelter

Marriage License

Flood Control

Arts Commissions



At Every
Stage of Life:

Adult (Good Choices)

Planning and zoning

Health inspections

Community development

Economic development

Airports



At Every
Stage of Life:

Adult
(Poor Choices)

Sheriff

District Attorney

Jail

Probation



At Every Stage of Life

Adult (Bad Luck)

Child support

Welfare

Public guardian

Homelessness



At Every
Stage of Life:

Oldster

Human Rights and Fair Housing

In-Home Support Services

Adult Protective Services

Medicaid



County Organization and Structure

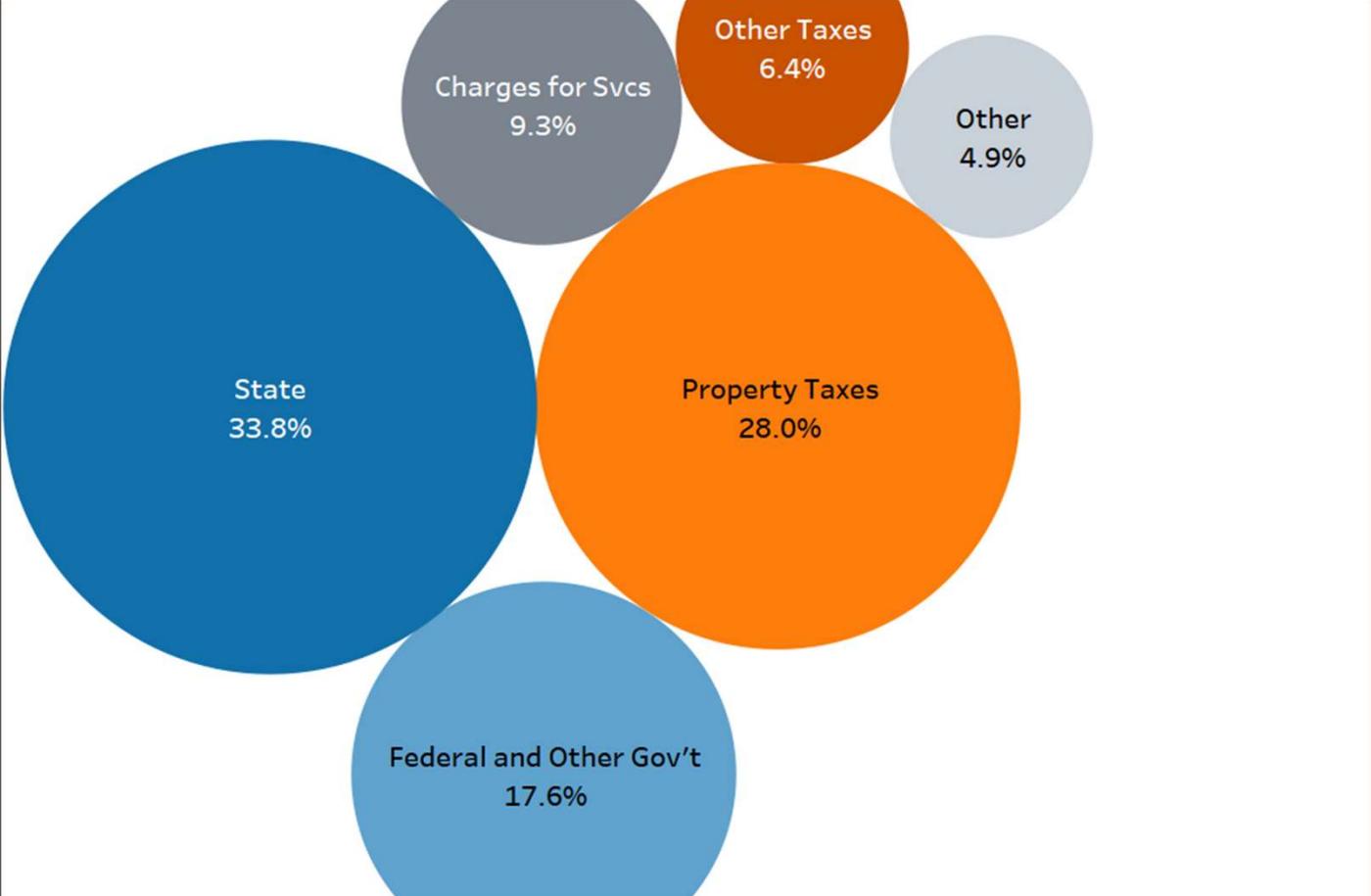
- Counties don't have "home rule" authority, but can have charters.
- All counties have certain elected officials:
 - Board of Supervisors
 - Sheriff
 - District Attorney
 - Assessor
- Some counties also elect other officials:
 - Registrar of Voters
 - Clerk
 - Auditor-Controller
 - Treasurer-Tax Collector

County Non-Enterprise Revenues

The state and federal governments provide just over half of county revenues.

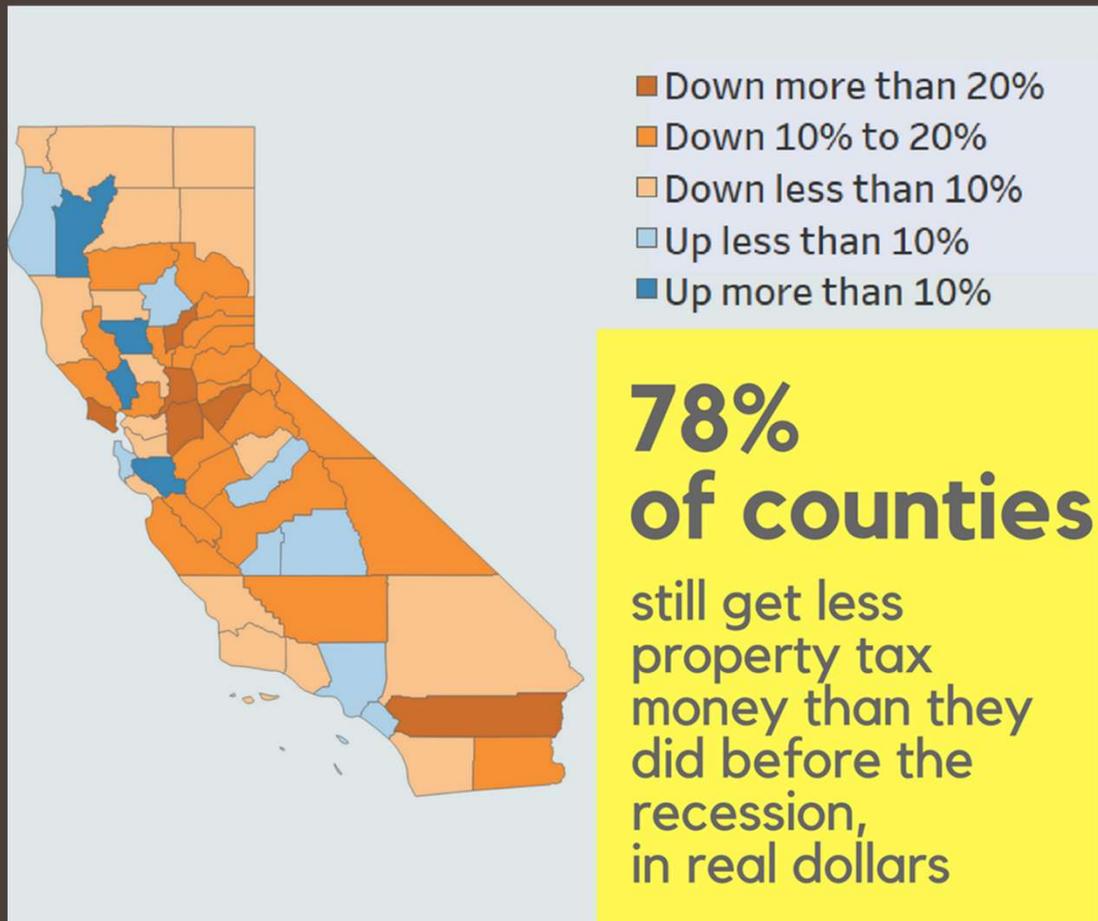
Property tax provides just over half of the rest.

Sales tax, both locally and the state's share, is increasingly important to counties.



County Revenues Haven't Recovered

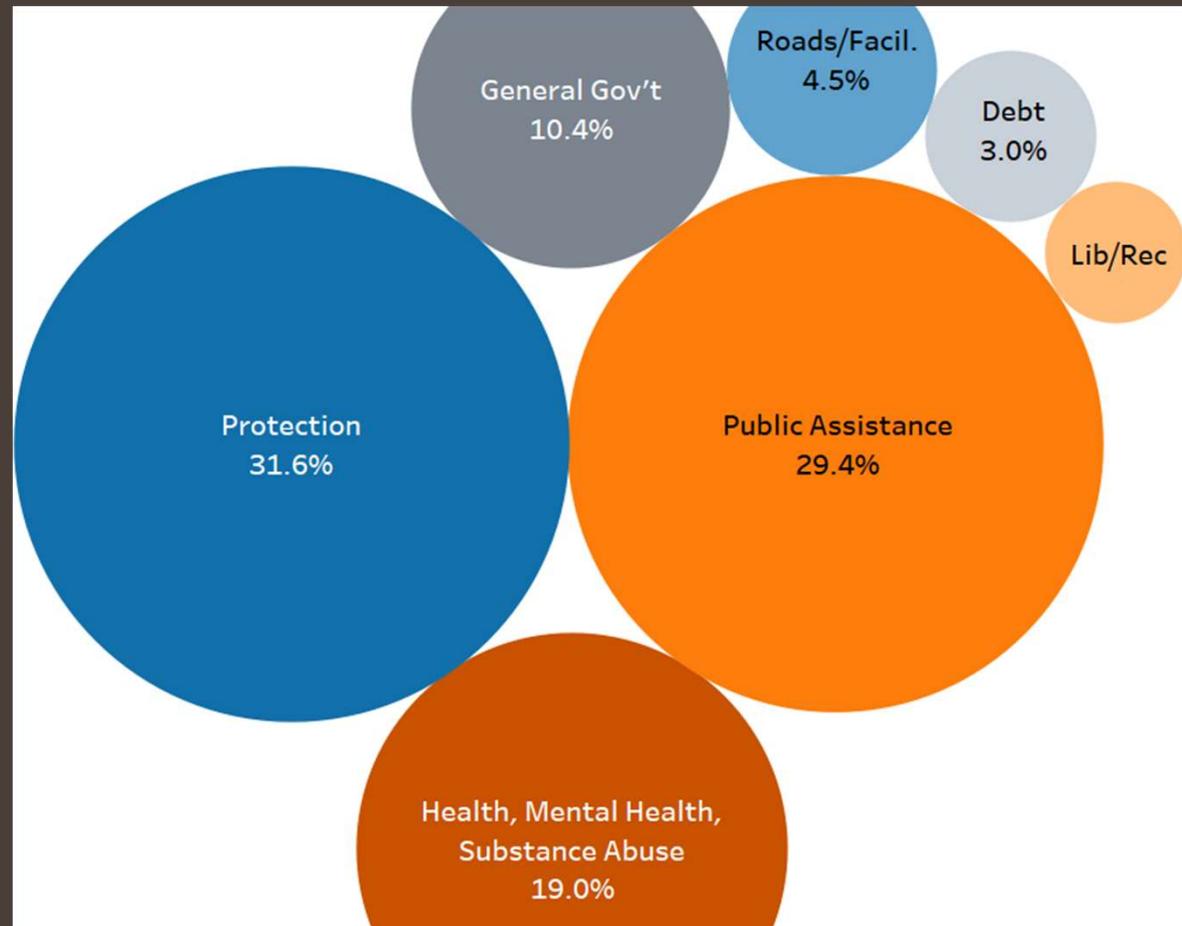
A combination of factors, including the way property taxes work and the localized nature of the recovery, mean that, while state finances recovered from the recession years ago, few counties have.



County Non-Enterprise Spending

Protection is mostly sheriffs, jails, and courts, but also includes things like code inspection, weights and measures, and LAFCOs.

Public assistance includes human services and other programs that support the general welfare.



Realignment

- State fiscal crises have led to realignments.
- 1991:
 - Changed funding shares for 19 state/county health, behavioral health, and social service programs and gave counties a little more flexibility within these programs.
 - Paid for with a ½ sales tax increase and 74.9 percent of the VLF, allocated based on decades-old caseload and revenue data through complicated formulas.
- 2011:
 - Transferred \$6 billion of program responsibilities to counties, about \$5 billion for HHS programs and \$1 billion for public safety.
 - The significance of realigning low-level felons to county jails cannot be overstated (along with funding changes to court security, juvenile justice, and other public safety programs).
 - Paid for with 1.0625 cents of the state sales tax and 25.1 percent of the VLF, allocated based on complicated formulas.

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