

# California Counties 101

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California State Association of Counties

# CSAC

- A nonprofit membership association
- All counties are members
- One elected county supervisor from each county on our Board of Directors
- Acts as a liaison between counties and state and federal policymakers
- CSAC Institute for Excellence – continuing education for county officials
- CSAC Challenge Awards – recognizing innovative programs

# California counties are...

- Political subdivisions of the state (California Constitution, Article XI, Section 1)
- General purpose government
- Different from other local governments
- Complicated

# California's 27 Counties



# California's ~~27 Counties~~ 58 Counties





# California counties...

- Provide state services throughout the county, including:
  - CalWORKS
  - Adult Protective Services
  - Child Protective Services
  - Drug and Alcohol Abuse Services
  - Food Stamps
  - Foster Care
  - In-Home Supportive Services
  - Medical Care Services
  - Behavioral Health Services
  - Public Health

# California counties...

- Provide municipal services in the unincorporated area (about 17% of Californians live in unincorporated areas), such as:
  - 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 (sheriff)
  - Sewers
  - Street Lighting/road maintenance
  - Streets/roads/ highways/storm drains
  - Water delivery
  - Weed abatement



# California counties...

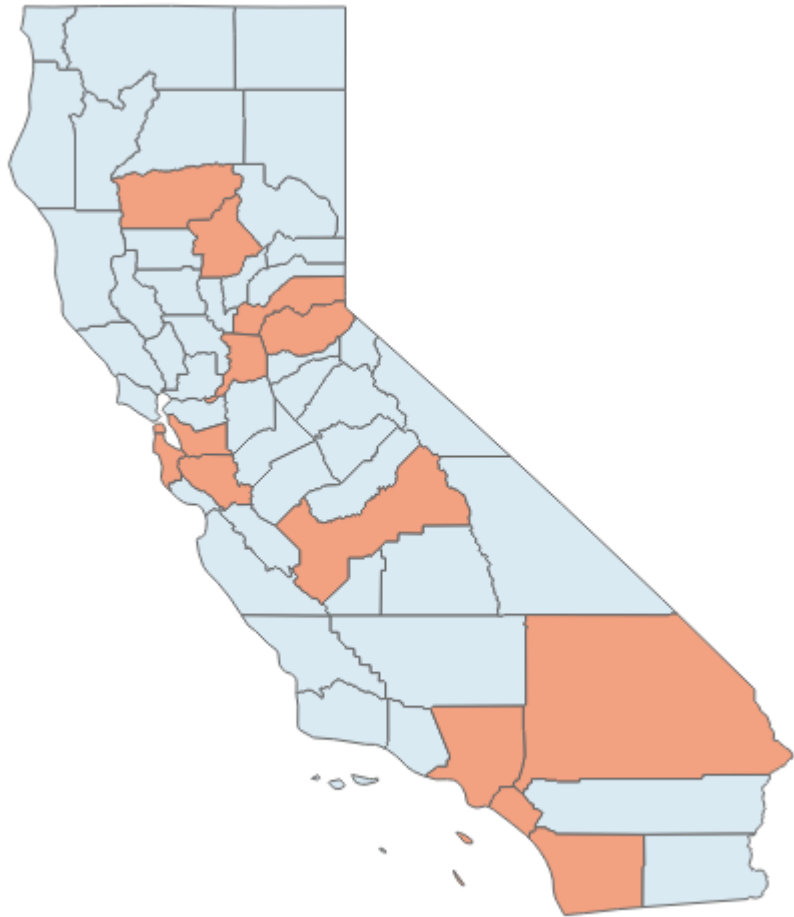
- Provide countywide services as prescribed by law, like:

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

# County Organization and Structure

- Counties do not have “home rule” authority. They may adopt charters, which mainly provide for the internal workings of county government, to address issues such as:
  - Number of members of boards of supervisors (5 or more).
  - Compensation and terms of office of supervisors.
  - An elected sheriff, district attorney, and assessor and any other official, including compensation and terms of office.
  - The performance of functions required by statute, including the power of the county executive and the relationship between the county executive and the board of supervisors.
  - The powers, duties, and the organization of governing bodies and other county offices.
  - Personnel system, labor relations, and contracting for services.

# Counties with Charters



Alameda

Butte

El Dorado

Fresno

Los Angeles

Orange

Placer

Sacramento

San Bernardino

San Diego

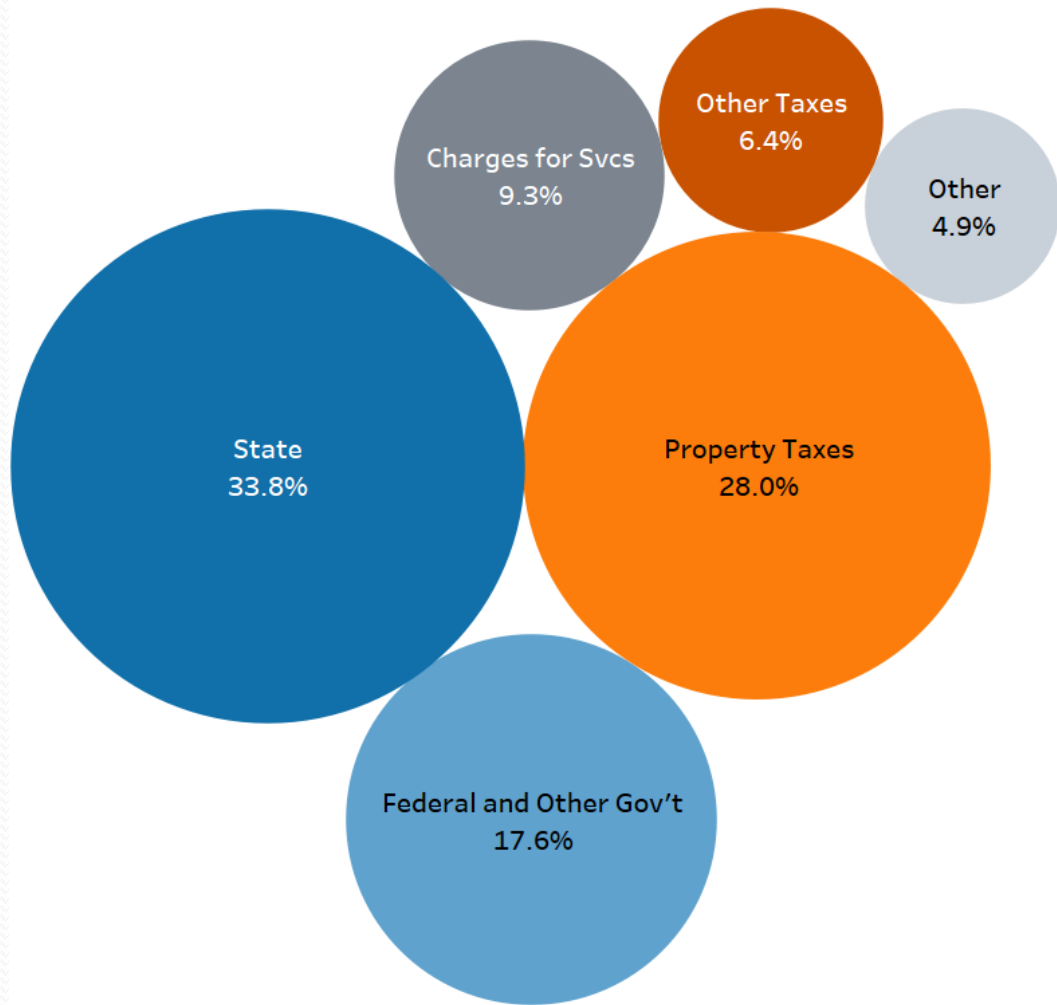
San Francisco

San Mateo

Santa Clara

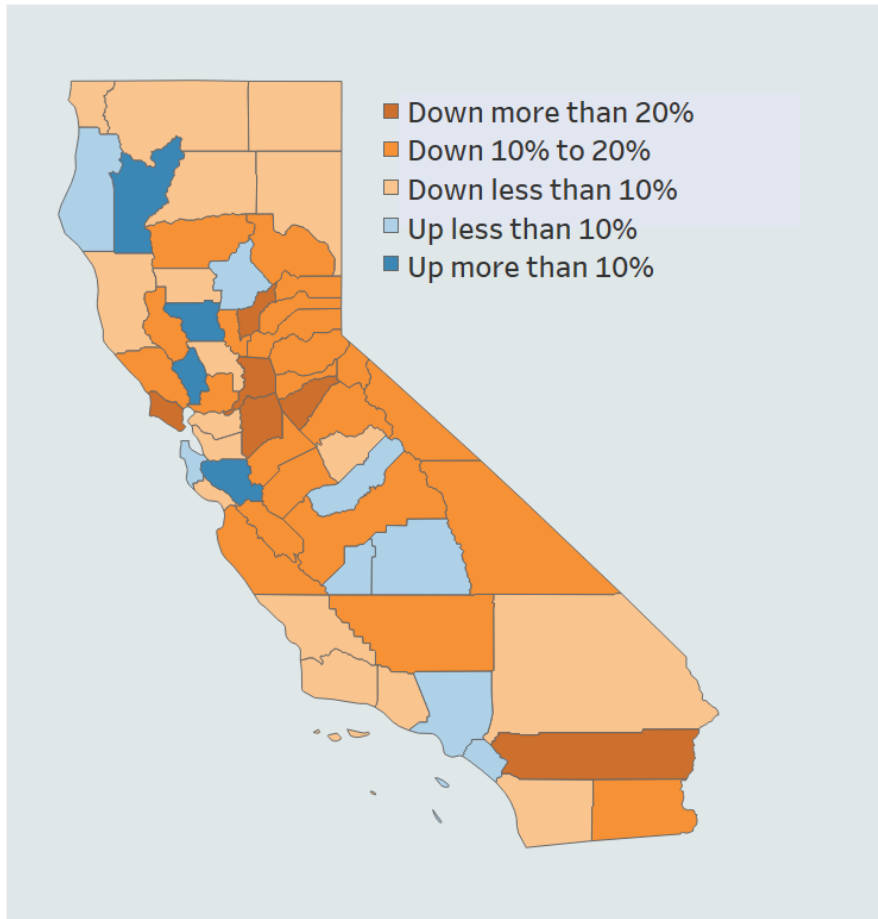
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# County Finances - Revenue



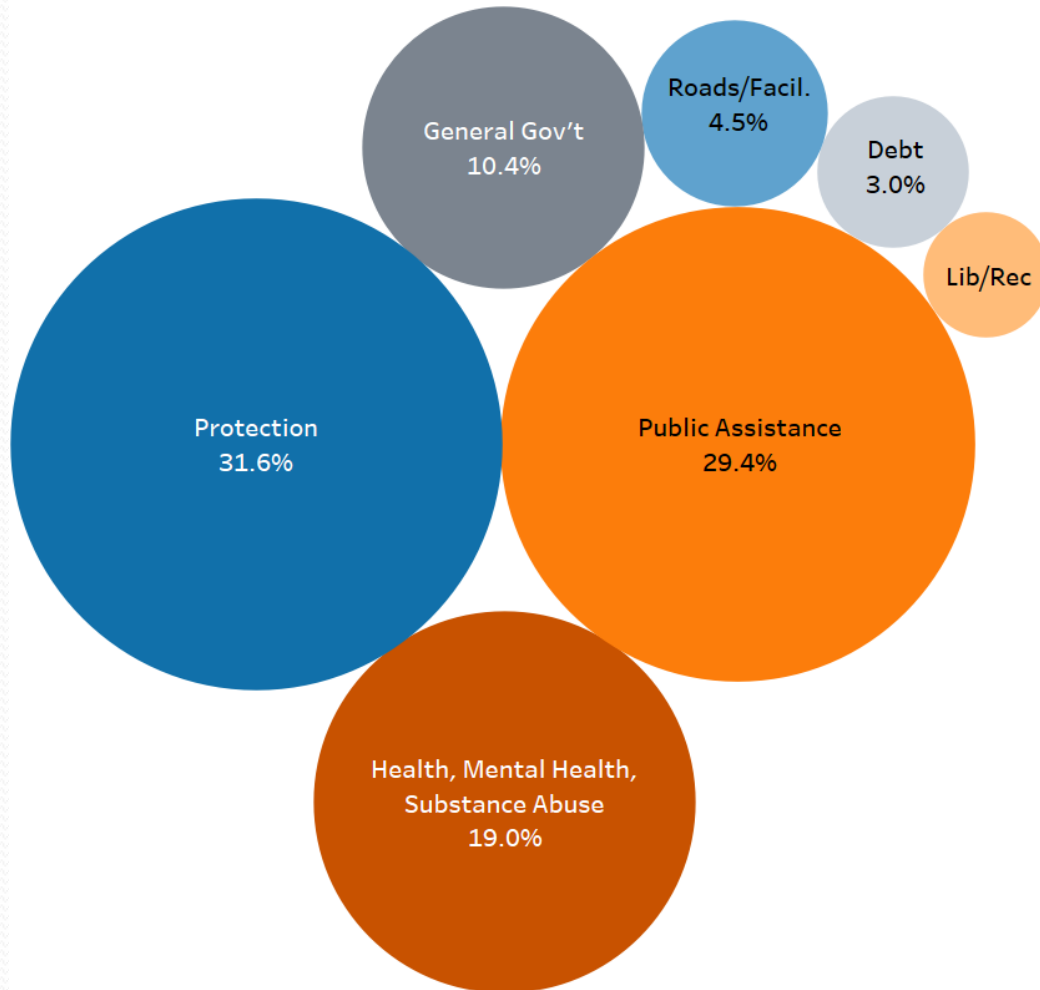
- The bulk of county revenues comes from the state and federal governments to operate federal and state-mandated services.
- Property taxes and sales taxes account for the bulk of county discretionary revenues.

# County Finances – A Slow Decade



- Nearly a decade after the Great Recession, per capita tax revenues in most counties had still not recovered, in real dollars.
- Property taxes and sales taxes both grow significantly more slowly than GDP.

# County Finances - Spending



- The spending on public assistance, health and behavioral health reflects counties' responsibility for state and federal entitlement programs.

# Realignment (1991)

- In 1991, the Legislature and Governor approved a “realignment” 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.
- Counties also were granted flexibility in managing some of the realigned programs, particularly in the mental health area.

# 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



# 1991 Realignment Funding

- ½ cent state sales tax increase
- A “slowing down” of the Vehicle License Fee (VLF) depreciation schedule; currently, 74.9% of the 0.65 VLF rate.
- Revenues are continuously appropriated and allocated to counties on a monthly basis.
- County-by-county formulas are very complicated and, in many instances, based on decades-old caseload and spending data for each jurisdiction.

# 2011 Realignment

- The 2011-12 state budget transferred about \$6 billion in new program responsibilities to counties.
- 2011 realignment reflects perhaps the most significant policy changes in the public safety area in our lifetimes.
- Counties are now responsible for a new offender population and for post-release community supervision (PRCS) for certain offenders.
- Counties now are responsible for 100% share of cost for a variety of human services programs.

# 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

# 2011 Realignment Funding

- 1.0625% of existing state sales tax rate
- 25.1% of existing Vehicle License Fees (VLF), essentially remainder after 1991 realignment
- Funds are deposited into a state special fund and continuously appropriated to counties on a monthly basis.
- County-by-county formulas vary depending on program.
- Permanent fiscal structure approved in 2012.

# Other Major Issues

- COVID-19
  - Public health departments
  - Direct medical care
  - Vaccinations and testing
  - Economic supports
  - Social services
  - Mental health and domestic violence crises
  - Emergency response
  - Employee safety
  - Increasing service loads, decreasing revenues

# Other Major Issues

- Homelessness and Affordable Housing
  - Which level of government does what?
  - Resources should match responsibilities
- Behavioral Health Services
  - Seeking additional funding for services, technology for remote services, and the expansion of Laura's Law.
  - Implementation of state's CalAIM Medi-Cal proposal
  - Cross-sector collaboration: schools, justice system, etc.
- Juvenile Justice Realignment
  - Like other realignments, adequate funding and flexibility are essential

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