

March 9, 2023



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

City Government Basics and Cal Cities Overview

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City Basics

- **There are 482 cities in California.**
 - Approximately 83% of the state population (32.7 million people).
- Formed by people to provide more self-government.
- Level of government closest to the people.
- Cities provide municipal services: police, fire, water, sewer, parks, library, etc.
- **Common ground between all cities:** Passionate support for fundamental principle of local democracy and local decision making.

City Basics

Important issues for city residents:

- Community traditions and sense of place.
- Local history.
- Retaining “local quality of life.”
- Ensuring new growth and development are compatible with community plans.

City Basics

Two Types of Cities

Charter Cities (121 cities)

- Authorized in the Constitution. Special powers to govern “municipal affairs.”

General Law Cities (361 cities)

- Formed under the general laws of the state with local voter approval.

What is Cal Cites?

- Established in 1898 (operating for 123 years).
- Organization largely governed by local *elected* officials.
- Mission:

Restore and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy in order to enhance the quality of life for all Californians.

Cal Cities Key Functions: Advocacy

Policy and Legislative

- 7 full-time lobbyists.
- 16 Regional Public Affairs Managers mobilize city officials and coalition partners to augment and support these efforts.

Legal

- Represents city interests in both federal and state court. File approximately 50 friend of the court briefs per year.

Ballot Issues

- Proposition 1A, Proposition 98/99, and Proposition 22.

Cal Cities Key Functions: Education

Cities are constantly innovating and learning from each other.

- Cal Cities hosts many conferences, webinars, and roundtables, to address the educational needs of local elected officials, city department heads, their staff at all phases of their professional careers.

Other sources of municipal information:

- Western City Magazine.
- CA Cities Advocate (weekly newsletter).
- Institute for Local Government.
- Californiacityfinance.com.

Key Fiscal Challenges

- **Over time, ballot measures have restricted local government's financing authority.**
 - Prop. 13, Prop. 218, and Prop. 26.
 - Most financing options involve local voter approval by either 2/3rds or majority vote.
- **The state is constantly tinkering with or siphoning local revenue streams.**
 - Attempts to take local sales taxes and elimination of redevelopment agencies.

Local Protection Measures

Proposition 1A (2004)

- The state cannot take local sales taxes.
- Caps on unfunded mandates, and had to repay \$1 billion in unpaid mandate claims (now pay or suspend).
- Capped state's ability to “borrow” property taxes at \$2 billion, had to be repaid in three years.
- Locked in VLF-Property Tax Swap.

Local Protection Measures

Proposition 22 (2010)

- Protected local transportation funds.
- Removed the ability of the state to “borrow” property taxes.
- Protected all other locally approved revenue from state raids.
- Tried to protect redevelopment agencies.

2023 Cal Cities Advocacy Priorities



1. Protect and expand investments to prevent and reduce homelessness.
2. Increase the supply and affordability of housing while retaining local decision-making.
3. Improve public safety in California communities.
4. Safeguard essential local revenues and support fiscal sustainability.

2023 Key Issues

1. Addressing Homelessness and Housing Production
2. Improve Public Safety
3. Protecting Local Revenues
4. Brown Act Reforms
5. Protect Local Decision Making
6. Advancing Equity

QUESTIONS?

For more information on Cal Cities' positions on pending legislation, please visit www.calcities.org/billsearch and type the bill number into the search function.



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THANK YOU

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