

Local Government Works



COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The citizens of each county elect their own board of county commissioners, sheriff, clerk of court, and register of deeds. All of these officials share authority for setting county policy.

Elected Board of County Commissioners

This group of individuals acts on behalf of the county by setting the county budget, which includes establishing tax rates.

County Manager

The county manager is hired by the board of commissioners to carry out the board's policies and to direct the general operations of the county.

Elected Sheriff

The county sheriff has authority over the county jail and provides law enforcement for unincorporated areas of the county.

Elected Clerk of Court

The clerk of court manages the county court system and those who come through the courts on a daily basis. The clerk is elected by the residents of the county but is a state employee.

Elected Register of Deeds

The register of deeds maintains all legal records of property transactions, marriages, births, and deaths in the county.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

The citizens of each municipality elect a city or town council; many cities and towns also elect a mayor.

Elected Town/City Council and Elected Mayor

This group of individuals works together to establish local tax rates, to provide local services, and to act on behalf of the municipality. The mayor presides over the council and usually is its spokesperson.

Town/City Manager

In many municipalities, a town or city manager is hired by the council to carry out the council's policies and to direct the general operations of the town or city, which include hiring the chief of police and directors of public works and transportation.

INDEPENDENT STATE BOARDS

County governments also operate six state-mandated boards at the county level; all six local boards report to their respective state boards.

Elected School Board

The school board manages a budget for operating schools, sets school calendars, and makes decisions about textbooks and other school-related issues. School board members are elected at the school-district level.

Public Health

The board of public health regulates restaurant cleanliness, educates people about health issues, provides shots to prevent illness, and cares for the ill who cannot afford to care for themselves.

Mental Health

Working together or alone, counties provide psychiatric services, treatment for substance abusers, and schools for the emotionally challenged.

Social Services

Through social services, counties assist individuals with low incomes; help children through foster care, adoption, and counseling programs; and administer the federal food stamp program.

ABC Board

The ABC board controls the manufacturing, transportation, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Board of Elections

The board of elections registers voters, conducts elections, and reports election results to the state board of elections.

