COUNTIES MATTER

National Association of Counties

STRONGER COUNTRIES. STRONGER AMERICA.
Transportation and infrastructure are core public sector responsibilities that impact everything from our daily commutes to shipping goods around the globe. From building and maintaining roads and bridges to providing efficient transit options, counties are a driving force connecting communities and strengthening our economy. Counties play a major role in other essential community infrastructure like schools, hospitals, jails, courthouses, parks and water purification and sewage systems.

SERVICES INCLUDE
- Roads & bridges
- Airports
- Public transportation
- Construction of public facilities
- Utilities like gas & electricity
- Solid waste recycling & management
- Water & sewage
- Telecommunications

Counties invest
- 34% of public airports
- 27% of public transportation systems

COUNTIES INVEST
- ALMOST $60 BILLION IN CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES
- ALMOST $22 BILLION IN SEWAGE AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT
MORE THAN $122 BILLION TOTAL IN BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTAINING AND OPERATING PUBLIC WORKS

Counties own and maintain 45% of America’s roads

Counties own 40% of bridges

annually
Counties invest heavily in local residents’ health and well-being, often serving as a safety net for low-income and indigent residents. County health departments protect our residents and communities by offering a wide range of services like administering flu shots, providing health information and preventing and responding to public health emergencies.

From hospitals and emergency rooms to clinical care facilities, many counties operate the systems that keep us healthy from the time we are born to the time we grow old. Counties also often have significant responsibilities for behavioral and mental health services and care.

SERVICES INCLUDE:
- Hospitals & health clinics
- Public health
- Behavioral & mental health
- Substance abuse treatment
- Immunizations & prevention
- Indigent healthcare
- Health code inspections
- Nursing homes
Counties are involved in promoting public health through 1,592 local health departments.

1,000 Counties support nearly 1,000 hospitals.

...with more than 100,000 beds

100,000

More than $58 billion in human services annually.

In a majority of states (27), counties are required to provide healthcare for low-income, uninsured or underinsured residents.

27

Local governments, mostly counties, contribute $28 billion to the non-federal share of Medicaid.

$28 billion
JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY

Counties play a major role in two distinct areas of justice and public safety: emergency response and preparedness and the criminal justice system. Counties keep communities safe by providing law enforcement and preventing crime. From patrolling the streets, to operating and maintaining county detention facilities, to serving as the arm of the county courts, county sheriffs and other law enforcement departments are on the front lines of public safety and the criminal justice system. Other key county players are judges, district attorneys, public defenders, court clerks, jail directors, 911 operators and coroners.

Counties invest

ALMOST $11 BILLION IN FIRE PROTECTION ACTIVITIES
ALMOST $26 BILLION ON CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
ALMOST $19 BILLION ON COUNTY COURTS AND LEGAL SERVICES

SERVICES INCLUDE:
- Sheriffs departments
- County police departments
- County courts
- Jails & correctional facilities
- Juvenile detention & justice services
- Emergency management personnel
- Paid & volunteer firefighters
- District attorneys
- Public defenders
- Coroners
Counties operate 91% of all local jails

11.4 million people were admitted to county and other local jails in 2014

OVER $35 BILLION ON 3,041 POLICE AND SHERIFF DEPARTMENTS

ALMOST $93 BILLION TOTAL IN JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

annually
COUNTY MANAGEMENT

Counties provide vital services to all Americans, from issuing birth certificates and marriage licenses to operating 911 call centers. Counties often build and maintain parks, community centers, libraries and cultural centers. Counties are responsible for managing elections, from presidential to local. While balancing numerous administrative responsibilities, counties deliver essential services to ensure healthy, vibrant and safe communities across the United States.

SERVICES INCLUDE
- Record keeping
- Tax assessments & collection
- 911 call centers
- Elections and polling places
- Recreation and parks
- Arts programs
- Housing
- Community and economic development

counties invest \(\text{ALMOST $10 BILLION TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES}\)
There are 37,984 total county elected officials (including county board, executives and row officers).

...19,355 elected county board members and elected executives.

...18,629 are independently elected constitutional or row officers responsible for specific county functions.

Every two years counties fund and oversee more than 104,000 polling places.

...and coordinate more than 648,000 poll workers.

CLOSE TO $11 BILLION IN HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT annually.
Counties are one of America’s oldest forms of government, dating back to 1634 when the first county governments (shires) were established in Virginia. The organization and structure of today’s 3,069 county governments are chartered under state constitutions or laws and are tailored to fit the needs and characteristics of states and local areas.

No two counties are exactly the same. Counties are diverse in structure and how we deliver services to our communities. In general, states decide the roles and responsibilities of county governments. Counties are governed by locally elected officials and, in some instances, operate under home rule authority, which allows for more local flexibility and control with structural, functional and fiscal powers. Though organizational structures vary, all county governments are on the front lines of delivering vital services to residents.

$554.4 BILLION + 3.6 MILLION = 308 MILLION

$554.4 billion total expenditures annually
3.6 million county employees
Service to almost 308 million county residents
NACo’s Mission

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America’s 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to:

- Advocate with a collective voice on national policy
- Exchange ideas and build new leadership skills
- Pursue transformational, cost-effective solutions
- Enrich the public’s understanding of county government, and
- Exercise exemplary leadership in public service.

NACo’s Vision

Healthy, vibrant and safe counties across the United States.

Sources: