

NEWS RELEASE

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County administrators play major role in serving residents, NACo report shows

WASHINGTON, D.C. – New research shows that many county governments turn to county administrators to help deliver core services like health care, criminal justice, public infrastructure and economic development. More than four out of 10 county governments appoint county administrators to implement board policies, prepare annual budgets and run daily operations that serve millions of residents, according to research released today by the National Association of Counties (NACo).

An Overview of County Administration: Appointed County Administrators is a comprehensive analysis of county administrators across the country and by region. Key findings include:

- **County administrators play a major role in overseeing county operations.** Forty-four percent of county administrators have a high level of authority, appointing and removing department heads, supervising departments, preparing budgets and managing day-to-day operations. Another group of county administrators, about a third of them, are mainly in charge of the daily operations of the county and the preparation of the annual budget. The remaining administrators have lower levels of authority, coordinating between departments, ensuring administrative action on board policies and preparing draft ordinances and reports.
- **Almost half of counties — 43 percent or 1,322 counties — have administrators.** Counties of varying sizes, from Petroleum County, Mont. (485 residents) to Los Angeles County, Calif. (more than 10 million residents) appoint county administrators.
- **Individuals who perform county administrator functions hold 115 different titles.** These employees hold the position of county administrator or have other positions like a county clerk with additional county administrator duties, depending on the governance structure and state statutes. Those primarily dedicated to performing county administrator duties have one of more than 100 other titles like “chief administrative officer” or “county director.”

“Professional county administrators can be instrumental in fulfilling the vast responsibilities of county governments,” said McHenry County, Ill. Administrator Peter Austin, the incoming president of the National Association of County Administrators. “County managers or administrators are uniquely positioned to understand all the services counties provide and make level-headed recommendations to the elected officials.”

The report provides regional snapshots of the data, an analysis of state and county legislation on county administrators and a historical perspective on the trend towards formalizing the county administrator role.

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To read the complete analysis, visit www.naco.org/countyadministrators.

To access the companion interactive maps and individualized state-level profiles, go to NACo's County Explorer interactive map at www.naco.org/countyexplorer and select the "County Structure" indicator, then select "County Administrators."

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The [National Association of Counties](http://www.naco.org) (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 county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service.

