

How Do COUNTIES PAY FOR THEIR SERVICES?

Counties receive federal and state money to provide mandated services. However, these revenues only account for about 40% of the county budget, so counties must raise additional revenue through other taxes.

Counties get most of their local revenue from the property tax. County taxes account for about 20% of the average homeowner's property tax bill in Wisconsin. More than 60 counties also levy a 0.5% sales tax.



How CAN I LEARN MORE?

To find out more about Wisconsin's counties, visit the Wisconsin Counties Association's website www.wicounties.org, which includes links to your county's website.

County board meetings are usually held monthly at your local courthouse or county offices. Meetings are open to the public.

Wisconsin's Counties.
Helping to make Wisconsin great!



www.wicounties.org
HELPING TO MAKE WISCONSIN GREAT!

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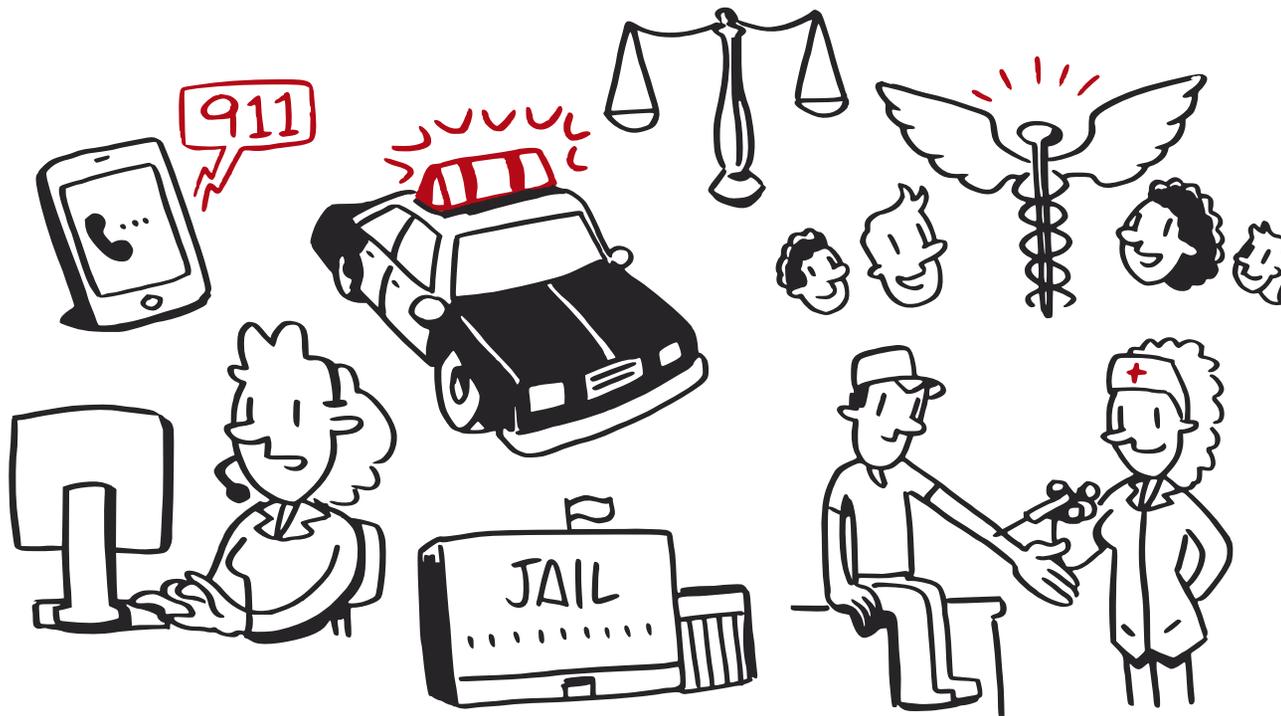
WHAT ARE COUNTIES?



Counties are units of local government that also serve as administrative units for the state. Every state has counties, but they may also be called parishes or boroughs. Wisconsin has 72 counties.

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Your county contact:



WHAT DO COUNTIES DO?

Counties provide the following services:

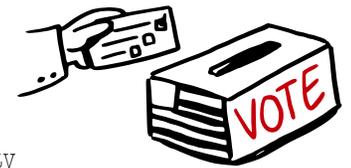
- Plow snow and maintain state highways and county roads.
 - Operate the jail and provide law enforcement services through the sheriff's office.
 - Protect vulnerable adults and children and administer state and federal assistance programs through the human services department.
 - Issue birth and death certificates and record property transfers through the register of deeds office.
 - Issue marriage licenses and domestic partnerships and oversee elections through the county clerk's office.
 - Operate and support the circuit courts through the clerk of circuit court's office.
 - Monitor sanitary conditions and protect public health through the county health department.
 - Collect property taxes and other fees through the county treasurer's office.
 - Maintain and operate county parks.
 - Operate 911 emergency dispatch centers.
 - Help farmers with conservation efforts and help to keep lakes and rivers clean.
- Some counties also operate airports, ports, museums, and zoos, as well as provide other optional services.

HOW ARE COUNTIES IN WISCONSIN GOVERNED?

Every county is governed by a county board of supervisors. At the time Wisconsin became a state, counties could follow two models for organization. The Pennsylvania model called for a small board of commissioners elected from precincts to represent the interests of the county at large. The New York model, which Wisconsin adopted, called for a larger board of supervisors elected by district.

Wisconsin's county boards have reduced their size over time. In the past, some boards had more than 90 members; now, the sizes range from seven to the upper 30s.

Supervisors are elected to two-year terms during the spring non-partisan elections. The county board sets general policy for the county by passing resolutions or ordinances, which are the laws of the county.



Every county also has an executive, administrator, or administrative coordinator who is responsible for day-to-day operations. Some counties have elected executives, who have the power to veto county board actions. Other counties have full-time administrators, while the remaining counties have administrative coordinators. Administrators and administrative coordinators are professionals who are appointed by the county board. An administrator's duties are set by state law, while an administrative coordinator's responsibilities are generally determined by the county board.