WHAT ARE COUNTIES?
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- A local unit of government
- Administrative arm of the state
- Service providers
History of Wisconsin’s Counties

- Counties predated statehood
  - Performed administrative services for the territorial government
  - First three counties were Brown, Crawford, and Michilimackinac (1818)
- By 1901, Wisconsin had 71 counties
- Menominee County became the 72nd county in 1961
Type of County Government

✓ New York Constitution (supervisor) v. Pennsylvania Constitution (commissioner)

✓ Supervisory form of government prevailed in Wisconsin
  - County boards of supervisors
Governance

✓ County board of supervisors
  □ Serve two-year terms
  □ Elected in even-numbered years

✓ County board chair

✓ Oversight committees
  ○ e.g., county highway committee, emergency management, local board of health, land conservation committee, social/human services board

✓ Board and committee meetings are open to the public
Governance

✓ Each county must have a county executive (11), administrator (23), or administrative coordinator

- County executives are elected
- Administrators and administrative coordinators are appointed by the county board
- Each has different powers and authorities
A Note About Home Rule

✓ Administrative Home Rule
✓ Constitutional Home Rule

- Counties can only undertake a function that is expressly allowed for or mandated by state statute or the constitution.
Services

- Snow Plowing and Road Maintenance
- Jail and Law Enforcement
- Court Administration
- Public Health
- Human Services
- Libraries
- Vital Records
- Land Conservation
- Property Tax Collection
- Elections
County Expenditures (2012)

- Health and Human Services: 36%
- Public Safety: 19%
- General Government: 12%
- Public Works: 9%
- Debt Service: 7%
- Culture, Recreation & Education: 8%
- Other: 9%
County Revenues (2012)

- Property Taxes: 35%
- State Aids: 24%
- Public Fees: 15%
- Federal Aid: 3%
- Other Taxes: 7%
- Other: 17%
Statewide Percentage of Property Tax Bill - 2013(14)

- School: 45%
- Municipal: 24%
- County: 19%
- Tech Colleges: 8%
- Special Districts: 4%
WANT TO LEARN MORE?

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

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