Local Government Basics

Understanding California’s System of Local Government
Who We Are:
Institute for Local Government

- 501(c)(3) affiliate of two major associations of local government agencies
- Promote good government at the local level
- Government that enjoys the public’s trust and confidence
Types of Local Governments
Types of Local Governments

- Counties
- Cities
- Special Districts
Counties

• 58 counties
  – Boundaries determined by state law

• Two Roles:
  – Agent of state/administer countywide programs
  – General purpose government for unincorporated areas
Counties, continued

- **County-wide services:**
  - Health, welfare and social services
  - District attorney

- **General purpose government:**
  - Services: Sheriff, parks and recreation, fire protection, solid waste collection to unincorporated areas only
  - Regulations: Land use and other regulations in unincorporated areas
Unincorporated versus Incorporated Areas

White = unincorporated

Gray = incorporated
Cities

• 482 cities in California
  – Created when residents in county areas choose to incorporate

• Role
  – Provide services and regulate conduct
Cities, continued

• Services:
  – Police and fire, animal control, parks and recreation, water, solid waste, library

• Regulation:
  – Adopt land use and building regulations
  – Other local legislation/regulations
Types of Local Regulation

• **Public Safety:** Curfews, anti-gang measures

• **Land Use:** Planning and zoning laws, historic preservation, sign regulations

• **Business Regulations:** Adult entertainment, rent control, parking requirements
Special Districts

• 5,000 special districts

• Organized for specific purposes: water, sewer, fire protection

• Provide these services within a city or within a county

• School districts are special districts
Schools

- Hybrid
  - Funded and part of state system
  - Locally elected boards exercise some control
People Who Serve in Local Governments
# What’s in a Name?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Agency</th>
<th>The Governing Body is Called</th>
<th>Presiding Officials Are Called</th>
<th>Other Individual Elected Officials are Called</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>Chair, Vice Chair (Some counties may use the term “President”)</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special District</td>
<td>Board of Directors or Board of Trustees</td>
<td>Chair or President, Vice Chair or Vice President</td>
<td>Directors or Trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City (also sometimes called a “town”)</td>
<td>City Council/Town Council</td>
<td>Mayor (elected or appointed) Vice Chair or Mayor Pro Tem</td>
<td>City or Town Council Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District</td>
<td>School Board</td>
<td>Chair or President, Vice Chair or Vice President</td>
<td>Board Members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Common Staff Positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>Cities</th>
<th>Special Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Management and Administration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Administrator</td>
<td>City Manager or Administrator</td>
<td>District or General Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.caoac.org">www.caoac.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.cacitymanagers.org">www.cacitymanagers.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Clerk and Elections Official** (Some are called “Registrar of Voters”)</td>
<td>City Clerk**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.caceo58.org">www.caceo58.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.californiacityclerks.org">www.californiacityclerks.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk of the Board of Supervisors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.ccbsa.net">www.ccbsa.net</a></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Division of Labor

• Role of Elected Officials
  – Policy Direction
  – Budget Decisions

• Role of Staff:
  – Recommendations on policies
  – Implementation of policies adopted
The Public’s Role in Decision-making

- **Initiative**—When the public proposes and adopts laws

- **Referendum**—When the public rejects laws adopted by elected officials

- **Recall**—When the public votes elected officials out of office (not as part of the election cycle)
Funding and Revenues
Types of Revenues

• Taxes
• Service charges, assessments and fees
• Revenues from other government agencies
• Rents from use of public property
• Fines, forfeitures and penalties
Taxes

• Property tax
• Sales tax
• Business license
• Hotel tax
• Utility user taxes
• Transfer tax
• Parcel tax
Service Charges, Assessments and Fees

- Utility rates
- Benefit assessments
- User fees
- Regulatory Fees
- Development Impact Fees
Revenues from Other Government Agencies

- Gas tax
- Motor vehicle license fee
- Health and welfare realignment
- State and federal grants
Rents for Use of Public Property, Including Streets

• Earnings on investments

• Rents, royalties and concessions

• Franchise fees
Fines, Forfeitures and Penalties

- Amounts paid when someone violates the law
- Violations of state laws
- Parking fines
- Violations of local ordinances
Questions?