

# 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

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- **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

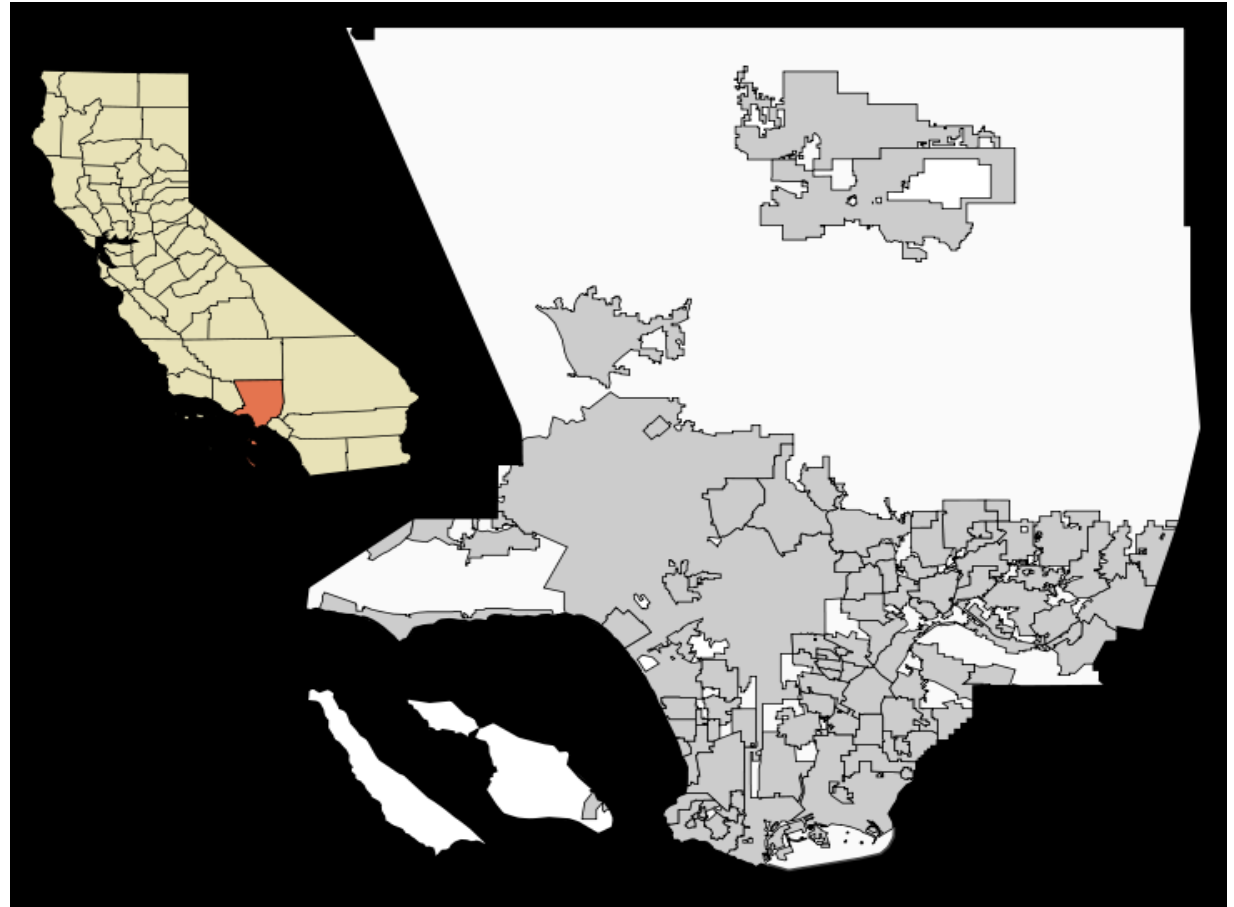
# Counties, *continued*

- **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?

Type of Agency	The Governing Body is Called	Presiding Officials Are Called	Other Individual Elected Officials are Called
County	Board of Supervisors	Chair, Vice Chair (Some counties may use the term "President")	Supervisors
Special District	Board of Directors or Board of Trustees	Chair or President, Vice Chair or Vice President	Directors or Trustees
City (also sometimes called a "town")	City Council/Town Council	Mayor (elected or appointed) Vice Chair or Mayor Pro Tem	City or Town Council Members
School District	School Board	Chair or President, Vice Chair or Vice President	Board Members

# Common Staff Positions

Counties	Cities	Special Districts
<b>General Management and Administration</b>		
County Administrator <a href="http://www.caoac.org">www.caoac.org</a>	City Manager or Administrator <a href="http://www.cacitymanagers.org">www.cacitymanagers.org</a>	District or General Manager
County Clerk and Elections Official** (Some are called "Registrar of Voters") <a href="http://www.caceo58.org">www.caceo58.org</a>	City Clerk** <a href="http://www.californiacityclerks.org">www.californiacityclerks.org</a>	
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors <a href="http://www.ccbsa.net">www.ccbsa.net</a>		

# 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?

