



The Role of County Government

County Government is Maine’s oldest form of government, pre-dating statehood and even the Declaration of Independence. Maine has sixteen counties. The County is the only form of regional government whose officials are directly elected by the voters. There has always been a role for county government, providing democratic institutions that operate at the regional level between the state and municipalities.

The **MCCA** is a nonprofit organization run by a Board of Directors comprised of elected county commissioners who serve to represent Maine counties and county government. The monthly meetings of the association include discussions on timely topics with helpful insights provided by representatives from the following associations:

- Maine Association of County Clerks, Administrators and Managers
- Maine Register of Deeds Association
- Maine Association of Registers of Probate
- Maine Sheriffs Association
- Maine Association of County Treasurers
- Emergency Management Agency
- Maine Emergency County Communications Association

MCCA currently has a staff of three:

Executive Director, Charles Pray
 Office Manager, Lauren Haven
 Risk Pool Manager, Malcolm Ulmer



Maine County Commissioners Association
 4 Gabriel Drive, Suite 2
 Augusta, Maine 04330
 Phone: 207-623-4697
www.mainecontinies.org



Supporting the Role of County Government in Maine Since 1980



There are many crucial services provided by county government.

County Commissioners

The voters in each county elect three, five or seven commissioners to four-year terms to oversee the operation of county government. Each commissioner serves a separate district within the county. Commissioners, as the counties' chief elected officials, are ultimately responsible for the fiscal operations and policy decisions affecting county government.

Law Enforcement, Sheriff's and Corrections

Maine's 16 county sheriff's offices are responsible for the majority of criminal investigations in rural Maine, and handle a large share of rural highway patrol. County sheriff's offices are also responsible for serving all civil lawsuit complaints and related documents throughout the state.

The office of sheriff has a long history in our country, dating back more than four hundred years. The sheriffs in the State of Maine serve as the chief law enforcement officer in each county committed to providing professional, progressive and highly trained employees. It is the only elected law enforcement officer in the state of Maine, allowing citizens to elect their sheriff every four years. Maine's sheriffs are committed to protecting the citizens providing a robust law enforcement resource with 352 sworn deputy sheriffs and 740 corrections' officers. They are committed to the principles of compassion, integrity and fairness to all they serve.

Registry of Deeds

The registry of deeds provides two main services to the people of the county. The Registry records all documents and survey plans that effect property lying anywhere within the boundaries of the county.

County Treasurers

Each county has an elected or an appointed Treasurer who maintains the county's financial records. The Treasurer is also responsible for the investment of all tax revenues.



Registry of Probate; Probate Court

The Probate Court system is under the jurisdiction of the Maine Supreme Court and funded by Maine's counties. The Probate Court handles all estates, as well as guardianship, conservatorship, changes of name, adoptions and other legal matters.

Emergency Management Agency

Each county operates an Emergency Management Agency which is responsible for the coordination of municipal and county wide efforts in times of natural and man-made disasters and public health emergencies.

Public Health

Counties, in conjunction with municipal governments and various private sector entities including hospitals, are playing an increasing role in organizing, overseeing and delivering public health services in the state.

Safety Answering and Dispatch Services

Counties continue to provide valuable public safety answering and dispatching services to fire, police and rescue departments in the surrounding municipalities.

District Attorney

County government provides extensive support for each of Maine's elected District Attorneys. This support includes office facilities, staff, equipment, and witness fees.

District and Superior Courtrooms

County government provides much of the state's District and Superior courtroom space. Superior Court space is provided at no charge to the state. This space has a rental value of in excess of one million dollars.

Unorganized Territories

Much of Maine's land area is located outside of any organized municipality. The residents of these unorganized territories require the same services as residents of incorporated municipalities. County government provides these residents with services, including road and bridge maintenance, solid waste disposal and public safety.

Solid Waste Management

Maine's counties are taking the lead in solid waste management. Lincoln County is now in its 22nd year of operating a recycling program. Franklin, Oxford, Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties have formed regional solid waste planning commissions consisting of both public and private entities.

Economic Development

Several county governments assist regional economic development efforts through funding of programs.

Airports

Hancock, Knox and Oxford Counties own and maintain county airports. Aroostook, Somerset and Washington Counties provide financial assistance to airports in their areas.

Human Services and Other Program Funding

Some counties provide grants to vital human service organizations, including daycare, elderly, mental health and youth services. Other programs supported by county government include the Cooperative Extension Service and Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Risk Management Pool

In 1989, seven counties formed a self-funded risk management pool to provide property and liability coverage at reduced cost and guaranteed availability. The fund contracts with a risk pool manager to provide professional management of its program. In its first year of operation, the Pool saved taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars in insurance premiums. Currently, all 16 counties, and Two Bridges Jail, an independent Jail Authority, are participating members of the Risk Pool.

