COUNTY SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION

STATE - COUNTY PARTNERSHIP

ARIZONA LEGISLATIVE ACADEMY

01·23·19
Five Forces Impacting County Operations

- U.S. Executive, Congressional & Federal Agencies
- State Legislature
- Ballot & Voter Initiatives
- The Courts
- The Executive & State Agencies

15 Counties
Arizona’s Territorial Days

• Originally there were just 4 counties in Arizona
• The 4 counties Mohave, Pima, Yavapai and Yuma, were created in 1864 following the organization of the Arizona Territory in 1862.
• The now defunct Pah-Ute County split from Mohave County in 1865, but merged back in 1871.
• All but La Paz County were created by the time Arizona was granted statehood in 1912.
• La Paz County was established in 1983
Arizona Counties

- 15 counties in Arizona
- All counties have a 3 or 5 member board
- There are a total of 321 County Elected Officials in Arizona, including 61 County Supervisors
What is the role of counties?

- Counties, cities and towns are *political subdivisions* of the state, charged with implementing state law and policy on a *regional level*.

- Unlike cities, counties do not have “home rule” (authority to act independently of the state), therefore, **counties only have powers and authorities delegated to them by the Arizona Legislature and State Constitution**.
How are counties governed?

- Power is divided between elected governing body (board of supervisors) and separately elected officials
  - Constitutional Offices
  - Statutory Duties
- State law endows county supervisors with budgetary authority over the county
- The structure of county government requires close collaboration among the elected officials to promote an efficient, responsive organization.
How is a county organized?

VOTERS ELECT
(State Law Mandates Activities of Elected Officials)

Board of Supervisors (BOS)

County Administrator
Clerk of the BOS
County Engineer
Medical Examiner
Public Defender
Public Fiduciary

Other departments, boards, and commissions

Sheriff
Recorder
Clerk of Superior Court
Assessor
County Attorney
School Superintendent
Treasurer
Superior Court Judge
Justice of the Peace
Constable
What services do counties provide?

- Operation of Superior Courts and Justice of the Peace courts
- Probation operations (in conjunction with the state)
- Build and maintain roadways and bridges
- Assess and collect property taxes on behalf of schools and other districts
- Set and implement zoning, subdivision, and other land-use regulations
- Administer environmental and public health programs and inspections
- Provide medical examiner and indigent burial services
- Provide public safety and jail operations through the Sheriff’s Office
- Prosecute state crimes through the County Attorney
- Provide for indigent defense through the Public Defender
- Coordinate emergency management and response
- Conduct elections and maintain voter records
- Record and store legal documents, including deeds, mortgages, etc.
- Operate and maintain county fair and parks
What else do counties do?

Perform city-type functions in unincorporated areas

- Law enforcement (sheriff) and community patrols
- Build and maintain roads, manage transportation system, enforce building safety codes
- Set and implement zoning, subdivision and other land use regulations
How are counties funded?

Counties are funded through a combination of local and state-shared revenues

*LOCAL TAX REVENUE*
- Half-cent sales tax
- Primary property tax
- Secondary property taxes (for dedicated purposes)

*STATE-SHARED REVENUE*
- Sales tax
- Vehicle license tax
- Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF)

(sources in red are statutorily capped)
Do counties have financial flexibility?

EXPENDITURE LIMITATION

COUNTY COSTS

State policies influence county costs
Pension and healthcare costs are increasing
Population growth increases demand for more services

LEVY LIMIT

SALES TAX CAPPED
Do counties have financial flexibility?

- CORP, 221%
- PSPRS, 212%
- EORP, 204%
- ASRS, 35%
- County GF Rev, 21%
- ALTCS, 11%
County General Fund Expenditures
Since counties provide essential state services (public safety, transportation and criminal justice), your policy choices affect local costs and county responsiveness to constituents.

- Federal, state and judicial action drive costs in county operations.

Unlike cities, counties have limited financial flexibility and fixed, limited revenue streams.

Recession-era policies have significantly impacted counties. Ongoing efforts to provide relief are critical.

- County impacts since 2009: **$546 million**
- County transportation impacts since 2009: **$111 million**
- Eliminate the ADJC fee ($11.3 million) and provide permanent EORP relief ($3.0 million)

County officials are your partners in serving your constituents.
Issues relating to:

- Budget authority
  - Taxation; revenue distributions
- Transportation
- Public/environmental health
  - Air quality
- Land use/planning & zoning
- Animal control
- Special districts
- Indigent services (public defender, fiduciary, burial)
- County funding of:
  - AHCCCS/ALTCS
  - Courts

Issues relating to the following functions:

- Constable
- Recorder
  - Elections
- Assessor
- Treasurer
- County Attorney
- School Superintendent
- Clerk of the Court
- Sheriff
- Justice of the Peace

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