



# COUNTY FACT SHEET

Senate Governance and Finance Committee, April 2016



California has [58 counties](#), including San Francisco which is both a city and a county. California created 27 original counties in 1850 and last formed a new county in 1907, when Imperial County separated from San Diego County.

## Population ([U.S. Census Bureau, 2013](#))

*California population: 38.3 million*

Largest	(% of state population)	Smallest	Fastest Growing	(since 2010 census)
Los Angeles	10 million (26.1%)	Alpine	1,159	Placer +5.7%
San Diego	3.2 million (8.4%)	Sierra	3,047	Riverside +4.7%
Orange	3.1 million (8.1%)	Modoc	9,147	Santa Clara and Alameda +4.5%

## Area (in square miles)

*California area: 163,696*

Largest	Smallest
San Bernardino 20,062	San Francisco 47
Inyo 10,192	Santa Cruz 446
Kern 8,142	San Mateo 449

## Cities in Counties

*California cities: 482*

The most cities	The fewest cities	The highest % of county population in cities
Los Angeles 88	Alpine 0	San Francisco 100%
Orange 34	Mariposa 0	Orange & Solano 96%
Riverside 28	Trinity 0	Santa Clara 95%

There are about 2,000 unincorporated communities located throughout the state.

## Governance

The county is governed by a five-member board of supervisors, as required by State law, although charter counties can increase this number. The board of supervisors has the legislative power to enact ordinances for the county, executive power oversee the operations and budgets of county departments, and has quasi-judicial power to resolve claims against the county in certain circumstances. There are [44 general law counties](#) and [14 charter counties](#). In addition, the California Constitution requires all counties to elect a sheriff, district attorney, assessor, and board of supervisors. All counties elect or appoint additional county officials.

## Services

All counties provide three levels of service.

- As **agents of the State**: social services and health services.
- **Countywide services** such as: jails, probation, district attorney, assessor, elections, clerk, recorder, and animal control.
- **Municipal-type services** in their unincorporated areas such as: fire protection, sheriff patrol, libraries, parks and recreation, roads, and planning. In some counties, special districts provide these services.

# COUNTY FACT SHEET

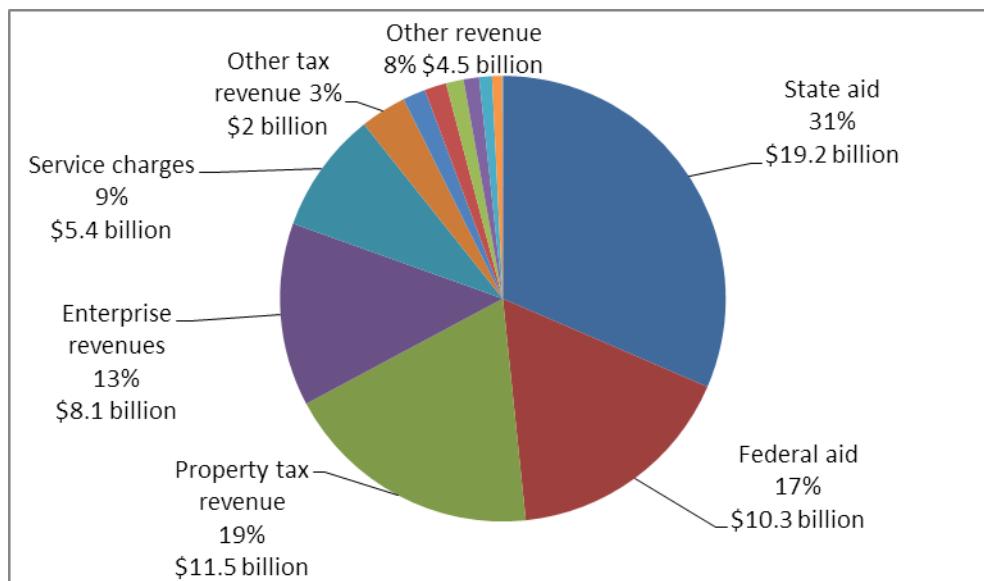
Senate Governance and Finance Committee, April 2016

## County and State Relationship

The county is a geographically defined area that lies within that state. The California State Legislature can remove or designate new responsibilities to the counties. The state maintains an oversight and compliance role. The county can administer certain services more efficiently and effectively than the state due to their close proximity to the residents. However, state financial allocations do not always keep up with changing county demographics.

## Total County Revenues 2013-14: \$61 billion

(excluding San Francisco; Source: State Controller)



## Total County Expenditures 2013-14: \$59 billion

(excluding San Francisco; Source: State Controller)

