

# WHAT IS COUNTY GOVERNMENT?

New York State, like other states around the nation, established its county system of government as a way to deliver services more efficiently on a grassroots basis. There are 3,142 counties/county equivalents in the United States. Only Connecticut and Rhode Island have no functioning county governments. All county governments are led by an elected body. Westchester, one of New York State's original ten counties, was first led by the Board of Justices which convened for the first time on November 1, 1683. The legislature then became the Board of Supervisors and is now called the Westchester County Board of Legislators.

The 17-member County Board is the lawmaking branch of county government. It sets policies that protect and serve Westchester's residents, and allocates the money needed to operate county programs and services. It has oversight responsibility of the executive branch, which was created in 1939 to carry out its policies. Each County Legislator, elected to a two-year term, represents a district of about 59,000 residents.

## Westchester County's Budget

Two-thirds of Westchester County's operating budget involves services and programs mandated by the federal government and the state of New York. Some of these services are funded entirely by federal and state aid; however, the State shifts a significant portion of the cost of other programs (in particular Medicaid) to the County to be funded through tax revenue. The remaining one-third of the budget is considered discretionary or non-mandated, and the County Board has greater control over how this portion of the budget is spent. (See the back page for a breakdown of mandated and discretionary spending for services and programs.)

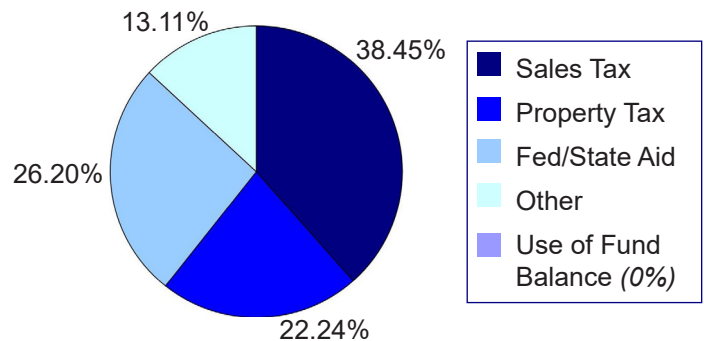
## WHERE DO YOUR PROPERTY TAXES GO?

**Contrary to popular perception, county services are the smallest piece of the property tax dollar.**

15.0¢ County  
22.5¢ City/Town/Village/Special Districts  
62.5¢ Schools



## SOURCES OF COUNTY REVENUE



### County/Town Revenue Sharing

Counties, unlike the State and some cities around NY, collect no income taxes. Westchester shares over \$222 million of its sales tax revenues with towns and school districts.

## Citizen involvement is critical to the success of county government.

County government belongs to the people of Westchester. The legislative process is open, transparent and accessible to all Westchester residents. County Board and Committee meeting calendars and agendas are posted on the Board's Web site at [www.westchesterlegislators.com](http://www.westchesterlegislators.com). Your County Legislators have been the voice of the people of Westchester for over 340 years. To best represent your interests and ensure your voice is heard, the legislators need to hear from you.

# WHAT DOES THE COUNTY DO?

About two-thirds of the County's operating budget goes toward paying for services mandated by the State. County government provides a regional, cost-effective solution for delivering services that local municipalities would have to otherwise provide and fund through property taxes.

**THE BOTTOM-LINE: COUNTY GOVERNMENT OFFERS EFFICIENCIES THAT SAVE TAXPAYER DOLLARS.**

## Social Services (\$705.1 M)

- Medicaid
- Child Protective Services
- Child Support Enforcement
- Family Emergency Assistance
- Housing Placement
- Homeless Services

## Public Health (\$224.8 M)

- Communicable Disease Control
- Environmental & Community Health
- Early Intervention
- Inspections: restaurants, hotels, day camps, water, solid waste systems
- Public Health Laboratories

## Correction (\$159.4 M)

- County Jail and Penitentiary

## County Sales Tax Distribution (\$222.2 M)

- Municipalities (\$159.2 M)
- School Districts (\$63.0 M)

## Environmental Facilities Department *A Consolidated Services Model*

- 7 wastewater treatment plants
- 194 miles of sewers
- 4,000 manholes
- 42 pump stations
- Water Filtration Systems
- 4 water districts
- Kensico Dam
- Charles Point Trash Disposal
- Materials Recycling Facility

Please note: Sewer and refuse services are not included in the County's operating budget.

## Capital Projects Budget\* (\$510,720,000)

Airport	12,125,000
Board of Elections	2,500,000
Correction	21,795,000
District Attorney	586,000
Emergency Services	8,900,000
Information Technology	17,375,000
Labs & Research	1,692,000
Parkways	18,820,000
Planning	137,450,000
Property Acquisition	4,927,000
Public Safety	4,504,000
Public Works-Buildings	21,825,000
Public Works-Parking Facilities	25,000,000
Recreational Facilities	43,055,000
Refuse Disposal	22,500,000
Roads & Bridges	20,211,000
Sewer and Water Districts	133,495,000
Social Services	1,950,000
Transportation	12,010,000

\* Funded primarily through the issuance of bonds.

## Probation (\$49.7 M)

- Family and Criminal Court

## District Attorney (\$34.8 M)

- Prosecutions
- Special Bureaus: Narcotics; Gang & Gun; Stop DWI
- High Tech Crime
- Environmental Crimes
- Domestic Violence Bias Crimes
- Child Abuse
- Economic Crimes

## Office of Assigned Counsel (\$27.4 M)

- Felony
- Misdemeanor

## Indigent Defense (\$17.2 M)

- Legal Aid Society of Westchester County

## MTA Surcharge (\$32.5 M)

## MTA Mobility Tax (\$1.8 M)

## County Clerk (\$6.9 M)

- Land Records
- Legal Documents
- Passports
- UCC filings

## NYS Court Facilities (\$9.5 M)

## Board of Elections (\$28.2 M)

- Voter Registration
- ALL county, village, water, fire, library & school district elections

## Westchester Community College (\$25.4 M)

## Employee Pension (\$77.5 M)

**FED/STATE MANDATED**  
**\$1.622 BILLION**

**NON-MANDATED**  
**\$816 MILLION**

About one-third of the County's operating budget goes toward funding non-mandated or discretionary services.

## Public Works / Transportation (\$201.0 M)

- Bee Line Bus System
- Infrastructure

## Parks, Recreation & Conservation (\$68.6 M)

- 17 parks; 6 golf courses; 5 conservation areas
- 18,000 acres of open space
- Rye Playland
- Westchester County Center
- Ballfields
- Historic Sites
- Bronx River Conservancy

## Public Safety (\$63.1 M)

- Highway patrols
- DWI program
- Units: Environmental Security; Bomb Squad; Special Ops.; Canine; Aviation; Narcotics; Parkway Patrols
- Training facilities for local depts.

## Labs & Research (\$9.4 M)

- Forensics
- Crime Labs

## Enrichment (\$11.1 M)

- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Westchester Library
- Arts
- Hudson River Museum
- Tourism
- Westchester Historical Society

## Youth Programs (\$4.1 M)

## Home & Community Services (\$8.1 M)

- Senior Programs
- Consumer Protection

## Mental Health (\$13.2 M)

- Case Management
- Depression Help Line
- Substance Abuse; Mental Health Court; Alternatives to Incarceration

## Emergency Services (\$14.7 M)

- Special Operations
- HAZMAT Team
- Fire Training Facility
- Bomb Squad
- Arson Unit
- WMD Response
- Emergency Evacuation
- 24/7 County-Wide Fire & EMS

## Planning (\$9.9 M)

- Open Space
- Water Quality
- Land Use-Westchester 2025
- Affordable Housing
- Farm Protection
- Community / Economic Development
- Transportation Planning

## Employee Fringe Benefits (\$192.3 M)

## Administrative, Supportive & Miscellaneous (\$110.9 M)

## Debt Service (\$109.5 M)

*NOTE: These numbers are reflective of the 2024 County Budget adopted on Dec. 11, 2023.*