

Maryland

Maryland ranks 46th among the states in number of local governments, with 265 as of June 2002.

COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (23)

The entire state is encompassed by county government with the exception of the area of the city of Baltimore. Baltimore is an independent city outside the area of any county and is counted as a municipal rather than a county government. Baltimore County is a county government but excludes the area of Baltimore City. Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Talbot, and Wicomico counties operate under home-rule charters. These counties are governed by county councils.

In counties without home-rule charters, the county governing body is known as the board of county commissioners. In addition, Allegany, Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Worcester counties operate under a special code option, but their governing bodies are still designated as boards of county commissioners.

SUBCOUNTY GENERAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS (157)

Municipal Governments (157)

The municipal governments in Maryland are the cities, towns, and villages. There are no significant differences between city and town governments that would affect their classification for census statistics. All municipal governments in Maryland except the city of Baltimore are treated as a single class in state legislation. Incorporation as a municipality requires a minimum population of 300. Municipalities may operate under home-rule.

Some "villages" in Montgomery County have been formed as special taxing units rather than incorporated as municipal governments. These are counted as special district governments rather than as municipal governments for census purposes. See "Special District Governments," below.

Township Governments (0)

Maryland has no township governments.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS (39)

School District Governments (0)

Maryland has no independent school district governments.

Dependent Public School Systems (39)

In Maryland, the local public school systems are not counted as separate governments. Maryland statutes provide for the following types of dependent public school systems:

Systems dependent on county governments: County boards of education
County and regional community colleges

System dependent on municipal governments: Baltimore City schools

County schools are administered by a county board of education, which is either appointed by the Governor or elected except in Prince George's County where the board is jointly appointed by the Governor and the county executive from a list submitted by the state board of education. County school fiscal requirements are determined and provided for by the county governing body. The county school systems are classified for census purposes as dependent agencies of the county government.

The Baltimore City schools are governed by a board of commissioners jointly appointed by the Governor and the mayor. Fiscal requirements are subject to review and are provided for by the city of Baltimore. The Baltimore City School System is not counted as a separate government but is classified as a dependent agency of the city of Baltimore.

Most community colleges in Maryland are classified for census reporting as dependent on the county governments they serve. Community colleges are governed by a board of trustees appointed, in most cases, by the Governor with the consent of the senate. Fiscal requirements of the colleges are determined and provided for by the sponsoring county governments. In the case of regional community colleges, which serve two or more counties, each participating county provides its share of the fiscal requirements of the college in proportion to enrollment and county population. The Baltimore City Community College is classified as a state dependent agency.

Other Educational Activities

County boards of education may enter into agreements with other county boards of education, other educational institutions or agencies, or the county boards of commissioners or county councils to provide joint services. If a separate administrative entity is created, the agreement

specifies the nature of the board and the funding arrangements. The Regional Education Service Agency of Appalachian Maryland was created as a joint agreement.

SPECIAL DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS (85)

Maryland statutes authorize the creation of a variety of special districts or authorities that are counted as governments. These are discussed in detail below.

Cooperative Library Corporations

These entities may be formed as nonstock corporations by two or more boards of library trustees. They are governed as specified in their articles of incorporation. They may collect user fees and receive state and local funding. The Eastern Shore Regional Library was formed under this law.¹

Maryland statutes authorize the following types of independent districts to provide for drainage of agricultural lands:

Drainage or levee districts. Drainage or levee districts may be established by the board of county commissioners on petition of landowners. A board of drainage commissioners is appointed by the county commissioners. The board may issue bonds and levy special benefit assessments. As of June xxxx, no drainage districts appear to have been established under this law.

Storm drainage districts. These districts may be established by local law in charter and code home-rule counties. Financial provisions governing storm drainage districts vary according to terms of the local legislation.

Tax ditches (drainage). Legislation authorizing these districts was repealed in 1941, but tax ditches then in operation are permitted to continue. Drainage ditches were established by the boards of county commissioners on petition of landowners and after a public hearing. Elected boards of managers govern the ditches. Tax ditches may levy special benefit taxes.

Housing Authorities

Housing authorities may be established in counties or in cities upon resolution of the governing body. They are governed by boards of commissioners appointed by the county governing body or the mayor. The authorities may issue bonds and fix and collect rentals.

Housing authorities governed by the county governing body or subject to county fiscal controls are not counted as separate governments. See “Subordinate Agencies and Areas,” below.

¹Public drainage associations, previously classified as special districts, were reclassified as county dependents for the 2002 Census of Governments.

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority

This authority is counted under “Virginia—Special District Governments.”

Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority

This authority was created by special act to provide resource recovery facilities. The authority board consists of one member representing each member county and Baltimore City appointed by the Governor from lists approved by the chief executive officers. The director of the Maryland Environmental Service also serves on the board. The authority may fix and collect fees and rentals and issue revenue bonds.

Potomac Highlands Airport Authority

This authority is counted under “West Virginia—Special District Governments.”

Public Watershed Associations

These associations provide water conservation, drainage, flood control, and soil conservation. The county governing body or the mayor and city council of Baltimore City may establish these associations upon petition of landowners and after public hearing. An elected board of directors governs each association. The board may issue bonds and may levy assessments on benefited land.

Sanitary (or “Metropolitan”) Commissions

Sanitary districts provide water supply, sewerage, and solid waste disposal facilities. These districts are established by ordinance or resolution of the county governing body of each county served. A commission, appointed by the county governing body, governs the districts in that county. The commissions may issue bonds, levy taxes, and impose charges for services.

LaVale Sanitary Commission, created by special act, also is counted as an independent government. The board is appointed by the county commissioners. The board may fix and collect fees, issue bonds, and set property taxes.

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, created by special act, is subject to budget oversight by Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. The St. Mary’s County Metropolitan Commission, also created by special act, is subject to bond approval by the county. These commissions are classified as subordinate agencies. Commissions of this type that are governed by the county governing body are not counted as separate governments. See “Subordinate Agencies and Areas,” below.

Soil Conservation Districts

These districts are created by the state soil conservation committee on petition of the land occupiers after a public hearing and local referendum. A board of supervisors,

with four members appointed by the state soil conservation committee and one by the county governing body, governs each district. The districts may require contributions from landowners for services performed and establish and implement a fee system.

Special Tax Districts²

The following special tax districts are counted as special districts. The services they provide are specified in the creating legislation and may include services such as streets, lighting, parking, water supply, sanitation, drainage, recreational facilities, police, or fire.

In Allegany County:

The Bel Air Special Taxing Area, Bowling Green and Robert's Place Special Taxing Area, Crespatown Special Taxing District, Eilerslie Special Taxing Area, McCoolle Special Taxing District, Mount Savage Special Tax Area, and Potomac Park Addition Taxing District are counted as special districts. These districts were created by state law and local referendum prior to the passage of home-rule in Allegany County. The county does not have the power to modify or abolish these districts. The governing bodies are elected. The county levies a property tax on behalf of the districts. The Crespatown Special Taxing District may issue bonds.

The Corriganville Special Taxing District also is counted as an independent government. The Corriganville Light and Improvement Association, popularly elected, governs the district. The association may fix and collect fees and sets the tax rate to be levied by the county.

In Montgomery County:

The Friendship Heights and "The Hills" Special Tax District, Oakmont Special Tax District, and Village of Drummond Special Taxing Area are counted as special districts. These districts were created by state law prior to the passage of home-rule in Montgomery County. The county does not have the power to modify or abolish these districts. The governing boards are elected. The statutes set a minimum tax for the county to levy on behalf of each district. The governing boards may levy special assessments with the approval of the county. The latter two may issue bonds.

Five former special taxing districts of this nature that were created by the general assembly have become municipal corporations.

For special tax districts in these counties and other counties that are not counted as governments, see "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

²The special community benefit districts in Anne Arundel County, previously classified as special districts, were reclassified as county dependent taxing areas for the 2002 Census of Governments.

Upper Potomac River Commission

This commission was established by special act to reduce pollution in the Potomac River by providing facilities for treatment and disposal of sewage and industrial wastes. The commission consists of three members: a chair appointed by the Governor and one member appointed by each of the commissioners of Allegany and Garrett counties. The commission may issue revenue bonds and fix and collect fees.

Washington County Free Library

This library was formed under a special act to provide library services to the residents of Washington County. It is governed by a board of nine trustees. The library may obtain revenue through donations, sales, investments, and state and local appropriations.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

This authority is counted under "District of Columbia—Special District Governments."

Water and Sewer Authorities

These authorities may be created by one or more political subdivisions (county, municipality, sanitary district, or other political subdivision) except in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. These authorities are governed by boards appointed by the creating governments. The authorities may fix and collect fees and issue bonds.

Water and sewer authorities with ex officio boards are not counted as independent governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

SUBORDINATE AGENCIES AND AREAS

Shown below are various governmental designations in Maryland that have certain characteristics of governmental units but that are classified in census statistics as subordinate agencies of the state or local governments and are not counted as separate governments. Legal provisions for some of the larger of these are discussed below (see "Public School Systems," above, regarding educational agencies of this nature).

Some subordinate agencies and areas represent "special taxing areas" within the territory of an established government other than those listed under "Special Tax Districts," above. This method of financing additional services in limited areas by property taxation, while also used by some municipal and township governments in a few states, is more widely utilized by county governments. In the listing below of authorized county-related agencies, a bullet (*) appears for each entity of this kind—i.e., any that may individually serve a portion rather than all of a county and for which a tax may be levied against the assessed value of property in the area served.

Maryland Health and Higher Educational Facilities Authority (state). An act of the state legislature created this authority to finance the construction of buildings for hospitals and institutions of higher education. The authority is governed by a board of nine members including eight members appointed by the Governor, plus the state treasurer ex officio. The authority may fix and collect fees and rents; make loans to participating hospitals or institutions of higher education; and issue revenue bonds.

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (joint county). This commission provides park and recreational facilities plus planning services in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. It was created by special act. The governing body consists of ten members, five appointed by the Montgomery County council with the consent of the county executive and five appointed by the Prince George's County executive with the consent of the county council. Revenue needs are met by county tax levies. In addition, the commission may issue bonds, which may be guaranteed by the county in which the facilities to be financed are located. Since 1972, Montgomery and Prince George's counties have had the power to modify the commission budget. The commission also acts as governing body for the Maryland-Washington Metropolitan District and the Maryland Washington Regional District. These two districts are not counted as separate governments.

Maryland Transportation Authority (state). This authority was created by 1970 legislation to finance, operate, and maintain all state toll highways, bridges, and tunnels and finance other transportation-related facilities by revenue bonds. Authority members are the secretary of the department of transportation plus six members appointed by the Governor with the consent of the senate. The authority may impose rates and charges for its facilities and issue revenue bonds.

Other examples include:

State

Auxiliary and Academic Facilities Bond Authority
Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority
Chesapeake Bay Trust
Forest conservancy districts
Historic St. Mary's City Commission
Maryland Affordable Housing Trust
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation
Maryland Deposit Insurance Fund Corporation
Maryland Economic Development Corporation
Maryland Environmental Service
Maryland Food Center Authority
Maryland Health Care Foundation
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority
Maryland Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority
Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Industrial Development Financing Authority
Maryland Port Commission (including Maryland Port Administration)
Maryland-Potomac Water Authority (joint state-county)
Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority
Maryland Stadium Authority
Maryland Venture Capital Trust
Seafood Marketing Authority
Southern Maryland Higher Education Center
State Tobacco Authority

County

Allegany County Transit Authority
Anne Arundel County Recreational Facilities Revenue Authority
Baltimore County Metropolitan District
Baltimore County Revenue Authority
Baltimore County revitalization districts
Battery Park tax area (Montgomery County)
Bedford Road Fire Taxing Area (Allegany County)
Bowling Green Fire Taxing Area (Allegany County)
Calvert County Economic Development Authority
Commercial district management authorities
County library boards
Crofton Special Community Benefit District (Anne Arundel County)
Crystal Beach Manor Special Taxing District (Cecil County)
Electric lighting districts
▪Erosion districts
Garrett County Memorial Hospital
Historic districts
Housing authorities governed by county governing body or under county fiscal control
Howard County Economic Development Authority
▪Howard County fire districts
Howard County Mental Health Authority
Industrial development authorities (county)
▪LaVale Fire Taxing Area (Allegany County)
▪LaVale Rescue Taxing Area (Allegany County)
Local economic development agencies
Maryland-Potomac Water Authority (joint state-county)
Montgomery County Fire Tax District
Montgomery County Recreation District
Montgomery County Revenue Authority
Montgomery County Suburban District
Noise abatement districts in Montgomery County
Octoraro Lakes Special Taxing District (Cecil County)
Parking authorities (Montgomery and Prince George's counties)
▪Parking lot districts in Montgomery County
Prince George's County Redevelopment Authority
Prince George's County Revenue Authority
Prince George's County special improvement districts
Public drainage associations
St. Mary's County Building Authority Commission
St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission

- St. Mary's County Special Tax District (fire)
- Sanitary (or "metropolitan") districts governed by county governing body
- Shore erosion control districts
- Special community benefit districts in Anne Arundel County
- Special taxing areas for public transportation in Anne Arundel, Carroll, Calvert Frederick, Garrett, Howard, and Montgomery counties
- Special taxing districts in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Garrett, Howard, Prince George's, Washington, and Wicomico counties
- Special taxing districts in home-rule counties
- Tax increment financing districts
- Urban district corporations (Montgomery County)
- Urban districts (Montgomery County)
- Washington County Museum of Fine Arts
- Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
- Washington Suburban Transit District
- Water and/or sewer authorities with ex officio boards
- Waterways improvement districts
- Wicomico Urban Services Commission
- Worcester County Citizens Nursing Home Board

Municipal

- Baltimore City Downtown Commercial District Management Authority
 - Baltimore City Child First Special Authority
 - Baltimore City community benefits districts
 - Baltimore Civic Center Authority
 - Baltimore Community Development Finance Corporation
 - Drainage districts in Takoma Park
 - Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore)
 - Historic districts
 - Industrial development authorities (municipal)
 - Lexington Market Authority (Baltimore)
 - Parking authorities (Baltimore City)
 - Special taxing districts created by municipalities in home-rule counties
 - Tax increment financing districts (except Baltimore City)
 - Urban renewal agencies (special acts)
 - Urban renewal authorities for slum clearance
 - Water and/or sewer authorities with ex officio boards
 - Waterways improvement districts
- Maryland laws also provide for various types of local areas for election purposes and administration of justice.