

THE LIFE OF A COUNTY COMMISSIONER

What do county boards do?

Each Michigan county has a county board of commissioners that serves as the legislative and fiduciary (financial decision-making) body. The board is responsible for setting policy (passing resolutions, its main device for stating its policies), as well as providing legislative oversight and constituent services.

AMONG ITS POWERS, A COUNTY BOARD MAY:

- ✓ Purchase or lease real estate necessary for the site of a courthouse, jail, clerk's office or other county building in that county.
- ✓ Determine the site of, remove or designate a new site for a county building.
- ✓ Authorize the sale or lease of real estate belonging to the county and prescribe the manner in which a conveyance of the real estate is to be executed.
- ✓ Erect the necessary buildings for jails, clerks' offices and other county buildings and prescribe the time and manner of erecting them.
- ✓ Borrow money or raise funds through taxes as authorized by law.
- ✓ Provide for the repayment of a loan made by the board, by tax upon the county.
- ✓ Prescribe and fix the salaries and compensation of employees of the county if not fixed by law.
- ✓ Direct and provide for the raising of money necessary to defray the current expenses and charges of the county and the necessary charges incident to or arising from the execution of the board's lawful authority.
- ✓ Pass ordinances that relate to county affairs and do not contravene the general laws of this state or interfere with the local affairs of a township, city, or village within the limits of the county.
- ✓ Require a county officer whose salary or compensation is paid by the county to make a report under oath to the county board.
- ✓ Establish rules and regulations in reference to the management of the interest and business concerns of the county as the board considers necessary and proper.
- ✓ Enter an employment contract with an appointed county manager or other appointed chief administrative officer or a county controller.
- ✓ Remove an officer or agent appointed by the board.
- ✓ Decide appeals under the Freedom of Information Act.
- ✓ Appoint members of the County Board of Road Commissioners (in counties in which the Road Commissioners are not elected).
- ✓ Appoint members of the Board of County Canvassers, which canvasses election results and conducts recounts.

By the numbers

- ▶ **83** counties (modern configuration established in 1897)
- ▶ **5 to 21** number of seats allowed on a county board of commissioners
- ▶ **\$12.9 billion** total revenue under county oversight (2021 figures)
- ▶ **2,100** approximate number of regular public meetings held by county boards each year

Who serves on a county board?

Each county may have no fewer than five and no more than 21 commissioners. Following each decennial census, the county's Apportionment Commission, using limits determined by the population of a county (or a County Charter), decides how many commissioners a county will have for the next 10-year period.

TERMS OF OFFICE

County commissioners in Michigan serve four-year terms, as of the elections to be held in November 2024.

A commissioner is elected from a geographic district that is set every 10 years by a County Apportionment Board.

Commissioner elections are on the partisan ballot, with party primaries held in August of the election year.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COUNTY COMMISSIONER?

Attend meetings of the full county board and board committees to which a member is assigned, plus meetings of boards of other civic entities to which the commissioner is appointed by the county board.

Prepare for all meetings by diligently reviewing board packets and affiliated reports provided by county staff and countywide elected officials.

Stay informed on national, state and local issues and policies in which the county government has a role.

HOW DOES A CITIZEN RUN FOR A COMMISSIONER SEAT?

To be placed on a ballot, a prospective candidate must:

- (a) File an affidavit of identity and filing form with the county clerk;
- (b) Pay a \$100 filing fee or submit petition signatures in an amount determined by a county's population; and
- (c) File campaign finance reports as required by state law.

Source: Public Act 156 of 1851 (<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-Act-156-of-1851>)

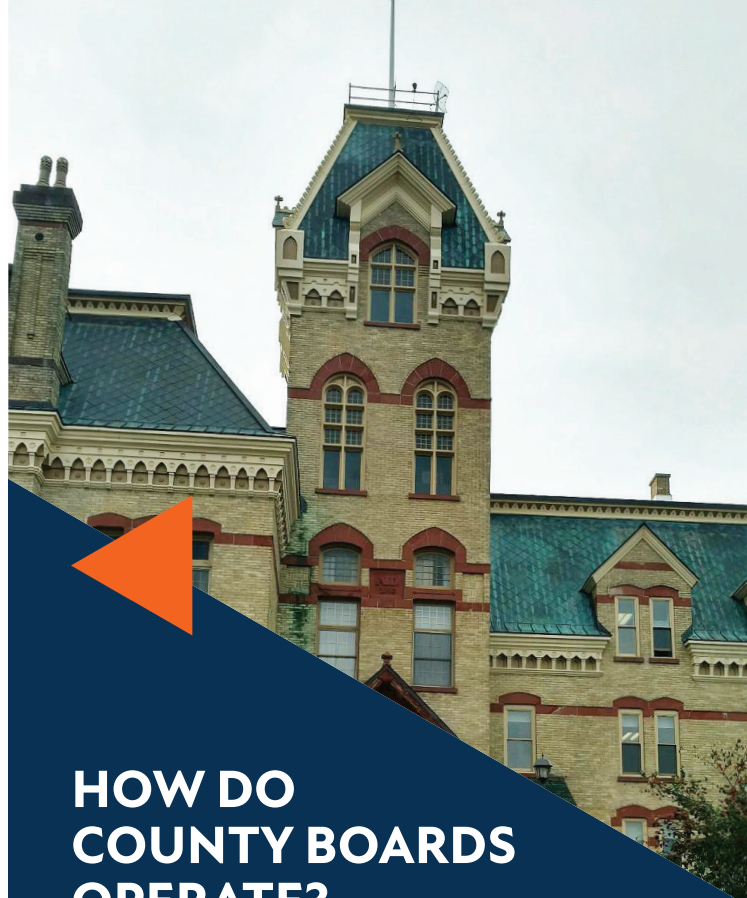


110 W. Michigan Ave., Suite 200
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Contact Us

📞 517.372.5374

@ www.micounties.org



HOW DO COUNTY BOARDS OPERATE?

The business which a county board may perform must be conducted at a public meeting of the board held in compliance with the open meetings act, Act No. 267 of the Public Acts of 1976, as amended, being sections 15.261 to 15.275 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

The county board of commissioners of a county shall elect one member as chairperson and one member as vice chairperson. The chairperson shall be elected each odd numbered year for a two-year term, unless the county board of commissioners provides by resolution that the chairperson shall be elected annually for a one-year term.

The county board shall act by the votes of a majority of the members present. However, the final passage or adoption of a measure or resolution or the allowance of a claim against the county shall be determined by a majority of the members elected and serving.



For county map of Michigan,
use the QR code above.

