



RUN Howard County - 2025

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Overview

- What's a County?
- State v. County Government
- What's a MACo?



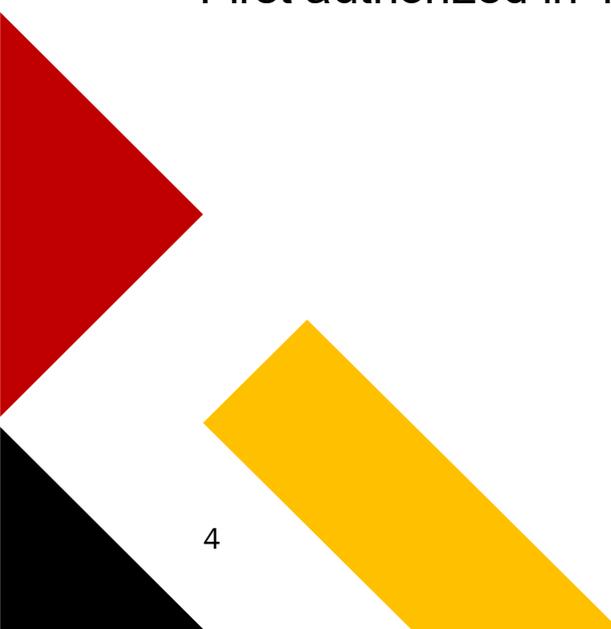
What's a County

A county is a level of local government, created by the state to administer state and local laws, and provide basic services such as public safety, infrastructure management, land use, and health services.

Counties are granted different levels of authority based on class (type).



Types of County



Commissioner

Specified in State law.
General Assembly may determine through legislation.
First authorized in 1827.

Code

Commissioners determine structure through local enactments. County Commissioner title retained.
First authorized in 1966 – Article XI-F of the Maryland Constitution.

Charter

Determined by the charter. Nine of the eleven charter counties have an elected executive and elected county council. Baltimore City, considered a county for most purposes under state laws, has a mayor and council. The remaining two counties have an elected council that retains both executive and legislative power. First authorized in 1915 by Article XI-A of the Maryland Constitution.

What do Counties do?

- **Corrections**
- **Elections**
- **Emergency Management**
- **Infrastructure & Public Works**
- **Land Use & Zoning**
- **Parks & Recreation**
- **Public Health**
- **Public Safety (Police, Fire, EMS)**

- **Fund Community Colleges**
- **Fund Libraries**
- **Fund School Systems**

Counties fund or operate most public services that you interact with every day!

Howard County

County Executive (Executive Branch)

- 1 Executive
- Term Length – 4 years
- Term Limits – 2 terms, consecutive
- The County Executive is the Chief Executive Officer of the County and the head of County Government and is responsible for:
 - The proper and efficient administration of the County's affairs; and
 - Other duties and powers as set forth in the Charter, required by law, or necessarily implied.

County Council (Legislative Branch)

- 5 Members
- Term Length – 4 years
- Term Limits – 3 terms, consecutive
- The County Council acts as the County's legislative branch of government. It is responsible for making the laws that govern the County. The Council members also are the zoning authority and the licensing and enforcement authority for alcoholic beverages in the County.

State vs. County

Partners in Government

- General Assembly
 - Competing Priorities
 - 90 Day Legislative Session
 - Ultimate Decider
- Governor
 - Influential in Statewide Conversation
 - Regulatory Authority
 - Power in Implementation of State Laws



What's a MACo?

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) is the non-profit, non-partisan voice of all 24 Maryland counties promoting effective, efficient government through advocacy, education, and collaboration. The Association's membership consists of county elected officials and representatives from Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City.



What MACo Does Do?

Advocacy

- Testimony (approx. 2/3 bills we interact with in some way)
- Legislative Priorities
- Legislator Education

Conferences & Events

- Annual Summer & Winter Conference
- Fall Symposium
- Affiliate Events

Communications

- Conduit Street Blog
- Conduit Street Podcast
- Weekly Policy Deep Dive

Connection

- Affiliate Network
- Connections between state & local governments
- Networking Opportunities

Member Education

- Educational Sessions
- Webinars
- Partnerships



MACo 2025 Legislative Session Snapshot



24 Counties, 1 Voice

County jurisdictions direct ALL MACo positions through weekly meetings www.mdcountries.org

METHODS



81%

Of Bills Reached MACo's Desired Outcome

RESULTS



Resisted Deepest Cuts/Shifts to County Services and Budgets



Eased Delay Implementing Family Leave, Smoothed County Roll-out



Advanced Career Counseling Support for Public School Students



Defended and Expanded Local Role in Energy Siting



Maintained Local Role Guiding Accessory Dwelling Unit Permitting

Candid Thoughts From Dom

- ***Value a Majority*** - You'll be working with these people.
- ***Never be Afraid to Ask if You Don't Know*** - You're going to be facing a lot of complex and unfamiliar issues. It's okay to ask people to stop and explain.
- ***Elections are Hard*** - Running for office can be intense and draining. Give yourself grace.
- ***Behind Every Politician is a Someone, Don't Forget that Someone*** - Elections & elected office aren't just hard on the individual. Remember the important people in your life.





THANK YOU HoCo!

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Helpful Links

- County Government Structure - <https://mdcounties.org/DocumentCenter/View/5449/2023-NEOO---Co-Government-Structure?bidId=>
- Code Home Rule vs. Commissioner vs. Charter - <https://mdcounties.org/DocumentCenter/View/5448/2023-NEOO---Code-Home-Rule-vs-Commissioner-vs-Charter-Comparison?bidId=>
- MACo County Government Structure - <https://mdcounties.org/152/County-Government-Structure#:~:text=General%20Government%20%2D%20This%20grouping%20includes,the%20Washington%20Suburban%20Sanitary%20Commission.>
- Conduit Street Blog - <https://conduitstreet.mdcounties.org/>
- Conduit Street Podcast - <https://mdcounties.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=53>
- MACo - <https://mdcounties.org/>