

MICHIGAN

Michigan ranks 12th among the states in number of local governments, with 2,893 as of October 2007.

COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (83)

There are no areas in Michigan lacking county government. The county governing body is called the board of county commissioners. Most counties operate in accordance with general statutes, although they may also organize under a locally approved charter.

SUBCOUNTY GENERAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS (1,775)

The subcounty general purpose governments in Michigan consist of municipal (city and village) governments and township governments.

Municipal Governments (533)

The term "municipality," as defined for census statistics on governments, applies only to the cities and villages in Michigan. Townships, to which the term "municipality" is applied by some Michigan statutes, are classified for census purposes as township rather than municipal governments (see below).

Cities are organized as home rule, special charter, or fourth class. Those fourth-class cities that do not adopt a home-rule charter are under the Fourth Class City Act. Villages are either home-rule or general law villages. Unlike cities, which exist outside the area of any township, villages are included within township areas.¹

Township Governments (1,242)

Township governments encompass the entire state except for areas within the boundaries of cities. Townships of 2,000 or more inhabitants may organize as "charter" townships and exercise considerably broader taxing powers and more administrative flexibility than other township governments.

Townships are governed by a township board consisting of the township supervisor, the township clerk, the township treasurer, and two or four elected trustees.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS (730)

School District Governments (579)

The following types of school districts in Michigan are counted as separate governments for census purposes:

First class school districts

General powers school districts

Local act school districts

Community college districts

General powers school districts include all of the former types of school districts except the first class school districts. The governing body of a first class school district or general powers school district is an elected board of education. Revenue is derived from a state wide sales tax. The school districts may issue bonds, some of which require voter approval. Local act school districts operate under similar provisions granted by special acts of the state legislature.

Community college districts, each administered by an elected board of trustees, are also counted as governments. Community college district boards are authorized to levy taxes up to limits approved by the voters and, with voter approval, issue bonds.

Dependent Public School Systems (151)

Public academy schools in Michigan created by a state agency or a school district are considered dependent agencies of the creating government in census statistics.

Other Educational Activities

The intermediate school districts (areas within which intermediate school boards provide services for underlying school districts) are classified for census purposes as joint

educational service agencies of the constituent school districts and are not counted as separate governments. The intermediate school district board is appointed by a board composed of one representative of each constituent school district. Although intermediate school districts may levy ad valorem taxes, their budgets must be approved by the underlying school districts. In addition, the levy of ad valorem taxes for vocational-technical school and special education purposes by intermediate school districts requires voter approval.

The board of education of a first class school district or other school district having 10,000 population or more may operate community (junior) colleges as an extension of the school services provided by the district. However, nearly all community colleges in Michigan are now operated by independent community college districts.

SPECIAL DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS (456) ²

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

Agencies Formed Under Intergovernmental Agreements — 1968 Law

Public Act 7 of 1967, effective 1968, permits two or more governments (county, city, village, township, school district, or special district) may exercise jointly any power common to them. Whenever such an agreement establishes an agency that is separate from the creating governments, the agreement specifies the functions to be performed, the method of selecting members of the agency governing body, and the method of allocating the share of the agency budget to each participating government. Agencies formed under this law may fix charges and borrow money. This act is known as the Urban Cooperation Act of 1967.

Agencies Formed Under Intergovernmental Contracts – 1951 Law

Two or more municipal corporations, including

school districts, special districts, and the like, may exercise jointly any power common to them except the provision of public utilities. Such an intergovernmental contract may create a separate legal entity that may or may not be counted as a government. The board of such a legal entity consists of ex officio representatives of the participating governments. The authorized functions and powers are set by the intergovernmental agreement. Authorities established under this law may be known by a variety of names.

In addition, two or more municipal corporations, other than counties, in counties with a population of 1 million or more (Wayne and Oakland counties) may jointly establish authorities to select single cable television franchises. The creating agreement establishes the nature of the board and delegates the powers. These authorities are counted as governments for census purposes.

Airport Authorities

A 1970 general law, with special application to Ingham County, provides for the formation of an airport authority by any county having a portion of its boundaries within 10 miles of any state-owned airport and any city exceeding 100,000 population (Lansing) within its boundaries by resolution of each governing body. Contiguous counties may participate. The airport authority board consists of three members appointed by the mayor with the advice and consent of the city council; three members appointed by the Ingham County board of commissioners; and two members from each other county comprising the authority, appointed by their respective legislative bodies. The authority board determines its fiscal requirements, which are provided by the participating governments. The participating governments may set and levy ad valorem taxes, with voter approval, on behalf of the airport authority. The authority may also impose ad valorem taxes and may issue revenue bonds. The Capital Region Airport Authority was created under this law.

Joint airport authorities may be created by resolution of the legislative bodies of two or

more cities, counties, townships, or incorporated villages or any combination thereof. The composition and manner of appointment of the authority's governing body are set forth in the creating resolution. An authority may issue bonds, upon voter approval if so petitioned; levy ad valorem taxes after voter approval; and determine its financial requirements, which are provided by the participating governments. The participating governments may set and levy ad valorem taxes, with voter approval, on behalf of the airport authorities.

Community Swimming Pool Authorities

These authorities may be created by resolution of two or more cities or townships. Each authority is governed by a board consisting of four members appointed by the governing body of the local government with the largest population and one member appointed by each of the other participating governments plus the superintendent of the board of education. The authorities may set taxes and collect fees. The authorities may issue general obligation limited tax bonds, with voter approval, and revenue bonds.

Cooperative Library Boards

These boards are created by agreement between participating public libraries with the approval of the state legislative council. Each board is governed by representatives appointed by the member libraries. The boards receive state appropriations on a per capita basis and may fix and collect nonresident borrowing fees. The member libraries are required to fund deficits as specified in the agreement.

County Water, Sewer, and Sewer and Garbage Disposal Systems

Any two or more adjoining counties may, by action of their county boards of commissioners, establish a joint entity. The board of such an entity is composed of members of each counties' boards of county road commissioners, drain commissioners, and/or boards of public works. The amounts to be

contributed by each city, township, or village are determined by contract. The counties may jointly issue revenue bonds to finance these systems. The systems may determine rates, charges, and assessments.

Systems created by a single county are not counted as governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

District Library Boards

Two or more county, municipal, township, or school district governments may establish a district library upon approval of each of the participating governments subject to a backdoor referendum. The composition of the library board is specified in the agreement creating the district library. Each participating government supports the district library through appropriations or tax levies. Tax levies and general obligation bond issues for library purposes require voter approval.

Emergency Service Authorities

Any two or more counties, cities, villages, or townships may incorporate an authority to provide emergency services, including fire protection, ambulance, and police protection, upon approval of the articles of incorporation by the governing body of each participating government and, upon petition, voter referendum. The method of selecting the authority governing body is specified in the articles of incorporation. The authorities may set and levy ad valorem taxes upon voter approval. Participating governments may set and levy additional ad valorem taxes to support the authorities.

Grand Rapids Kent County Convention Arena Authority

This authority was created by a special act of the legislature and a joint resolution of the city and county to acquire, construct, and operate convention centers and related facilities. The authority is governed by a board consisting of two members appointed by the city, two appointed by the county, one appointed by the Governor, and two appointed by the

aforementioned five. The authority may fix fees and charges and may issue bonds.

Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority

A special act of the Michigan Legislature created this authority for acquiring and developing parks in southeastern Michigan. The authority is governed by a board of commissioners, consisting of one member appointed by each of the participating county boards of commissioners and two appointed by the Governor. The authority may set ad valorem taxes, issue revenue bonds, and collect fees, tolls, and charges.

Joint Agencies for Electric Power

These agencies may be created to generate and distribute electric power by resolution of the legislative bodies of two or more counties, cities, villages, townships, or metropolitan districts. The governing body is a board of commissioners composed of representatives of the participating governments. An agency may set rents, rates, and fees and may issue revenue bonds.

Joint Hospital Authorities

Joint hospital authorities are created to provide, operate, and maintain hospitals by resolution of the legislative bodies of two or more cities, villages, or townships with the approval of the voters. The authorities are governed by hospital boards with one member appointed for the first 20,000 inhabitants, one for each additional 40,000 or fraction thereof by the creating legislative bodies, and seven members selected by these appointees. The authorities determine their fiscal needs, which are provided by the participating cities, villages, and townships. In addition, joint hospital authorities may issue bonds. The participating governments may set and levy ad valorem taxes on behalf of the authorities.

Land Reclamation and Improvement Authorities

These authorities are created following a

petition to the department of the treasury and after a public hearing for the purpose of promoting economic growth. An authority is governed by a board of five to seven members elected by property owners. The authorities may collect fees and charges, determine special assessments, and issue bonds. As of October 2007, no authorities of this type were reported in operation.

Mass Transportation Authorities—1963 law

Any city with a population not exceeding 300,000 may, by action of its governing body, incorporate a mass transportation authority to provide transit service. The method of selecting the authority governing body members is specified in the articles of incorporation. Mass transportation authorities may fix fares and other charges and may issue revenue bonds. The authorities may set and levy a property tax with voter approval.

Authorities governed by the city governing body ex officio are not counted as separate governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

Metropolitan Councils

Metropolitan councils to provide public improvements and services, including water supply, sewerage, solid waste collection and disposal, parks and recreation, transportation facilities, higher education facilities, and economic development and planning are established by an agreement between two or more local governments subject to a backdoor referendum. The composition of the metropolitan council governing body is specified in the agreement creating the council. Metropolitan councils may fix charges for their facilities and services, levy ad valorem taxes with voter approval, and require the participating governments to contribute to the council in proportion to their assessed valuation. If their articles of incorporation so permit, they may also issue bonds.

Metropolitan Transportation Authorities—1967 law

Under general law, metropolitan transportation authorities may be established to provide transit service in major metropolitan areas by resolution of the board of commissioners of one or more contiguous counties. A board of directors, consisting of nine members, is appointed by the Governor with the consent of the senate; six of the appointments are made from lists submitted by the boards of commissioners of the member counties and the mayor of any city within the authority with a population exceeding 500,000. The board of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority consists of county officials ex officio and representatives selected by the governing bodies of the participating counties.

Metropolitan transportation authorities may fix and collect rates, fares, tolls, and other charges and issue revenue bonds. In addition to operating transit service itself, a metropolitan transportation authority may make contracts with other public or private transit systems for construction or operation of any portion of the transit facilities within the area served by the authority.

Port Authorities—1978 law

Any city and county, combination of counties, or a combination consisting of at least one city and one county may request the Governor to authorize the incorporation of an authority to provide, operate, and maintain port facilities. The governing body of an authority has one member appointed by the Governor and at least one representative appointed by each of the participating governments. In a county with more than 1,500,000 population, one member is appointed by the Governor, two by the county board of commissioners, and two by the mayor of a city having a population of at least 750,000. Authorities may set and collect rates, fees, and charges and may issue revenue bonds. Fifty percent of the authority operating budget is funded by the department of transportation. These provisions replace former provisions that authorized port districts.

Public Transportation Authorities—1986 Law

Authorities to provide transit service may be created under this law by one or more counties, cities, townships, or villages, or combination thereof. The composition of the authority governing body is specified in the agreement creating the authority. The authorities may fix fares, fees, rents, and charges. With voter approval, they may also levy ad valorem taxes and issue general obligation bonds.

In addition, mass transportation authorities, authorities created under the urban cooperation act of 1967 for the purpose of providing public transportation, and some metropolitan transportation authorities may create a public transportation authority under this law.

Recreation Authorities

Two or more counties, cities, villages, townships, or voting districts within a county or municipality may establish a recreation authority. After voter approval of an ad valorem tax, the articles of incorporation are filed with the secretary of state. Each recreation authority is governed by a board of directors; the size of the board and the method of selection are named in the articles of incorporation. The authorities may set ad valorem taxes with voter approval and may issue bonds.

Regional Libraries

The state board for libraries shall develop a plan for the establishment and location of regional libraries throughout the state based on a detailed survey of the needs of the various localities of the state. A region shall include two or more counties. The county boards of supervisors must approve the plan for their counties by resolution. The participating counties appoint the governing board, which may include one supervisor ex officio from each county board. The libraries are funded by local appropriations and may, with voter approval, be funded by tax levies.

Soil Conservation Districts

The state creates these districts on petition and after hearing and referendum. The governing board consists of five directors popularly elected. The districts may require contributions from benefitted landholders. Counties may levy an ad valorem tax, with voter approval, and remit the proceeds of the tax to the conservation district.

Water and Sanitation Districts and Authorities

Michigan general laws authorize the following types of districts or authorities to provide for water supply and sanitation:

Charter water authorities—1957 law

Metropolitan districts—1929 law

Garbage or rubbish collection or disposal authorities—1947 law (act 179 of 1947)

Sewage disposal, water supply, and solid waste management system authorities—1955 law (aka 1955 public act 233)

Water authorities—1952 law

Water and/or sewage disposal districts—1994 law

Charter water authorities under the 1957 law are created by agreement between any two or more cities, villages, or townships having a combined equalized valuation of \$200 million or more, with voter approval, to acquire and operate a water supply system. A board of commissioners, appointed by the legislative bodies of the member governments, governs each authority. The authority may collect rates and charges, set ad valorem taxes, and issue general obligation bonds.

Metropolitan districts under the 1929 law are created by agreement between two or more cities, villages, or townships, or combinations thereof, to acquire and maintain water and

sewage disposal systems, as well as parks and transportation facilities. The district charters provide for election or appointment of governing bodies. Each district may levy ad valorem taxes, issue revenue and mortgage bonds, and collect rates, tolls, and excises. In lieu of levying taxes, the district may prorate expenses to be provided by participating governments.

Garbage or rubbish collection or disposal authorities under the 1947 law are formed by agreement between any two or more cities, villages, or townships to provide for collection of rubbish and garbage. The method of choosing the governing body is determined in the articles of incorporation. Any such authority determines its fiscal requirements, which are provided by the participating governments. In addition, these authorities may also issue revenue bonds. Landfill authorities, sanitation authorities, incinerator authorities, resource recovery authorities, and sanitary districts operate under the same provisions as rubbish and garbage disposal authorities.

Sewage disposal, water supply, and solid waste management system authorities under the 1955 law are formed by agreement between any two or more counties, cities, villages, or townships, to acquire and operate sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, and water supply systems. The method of choosing the authority governing body is determined by the articles of incorporation. The authority determines its fiscal needs, which are provided by the participating governments. In addition, an authority may issue revenue bonds. Cooperative authorities, solid waste management authorities, utilities authorities, and waste water authorities operate under the same provisions as sewage disposal and water supply system authorities.

Water authorities under the 1952 law are formed by agreement between any two or more cities, villages, or townships, or combinations thereof, to provide a supply system. The articles of incorporation provide for the method of selecting the governing body as well as the method of determining the

amount to be paid by each participating municipality to the authority for services. A water authority may issue revenue bonds.

Water and/or sewage disposal districts under the 1994 law are created to provide a water supply and sewage disposal system by the state department of natural resources on petition of two or more metropolitan districts, water or sewer authorities, cities, villages, or townships after local referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may collect rates and charges, levy special benefit assessments, and issue revenue bonds.

SUBORDINATE AGENCIES AND AREAS

Shown below are various governmental designations in Michigan 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).

Drainage districts (county). Michigan law authorizes four types of drainage districts to provide drainage for agricultural and health purposes:

Chapter 3 and Chapter 20 drainage districts (each covering portions of a single county)

Chapter 5 and Chapter 21 drainage districts (each covering portions of two or more counties)

Each type is established by petition of landowners or local governments to the county drain commissioner or the state director of agriculture followed by a public hearing. Chapter 3 districts are governed by the county drain commissioner. Chapter 5 districts are governed by a board consisting of the county drain commissioners of each county served plus the state director of agriculture. Chapter 20 district boards include,

in addition to the above officials, the chair of the county board of supervisors and the chair of the board of county auditors of each county served. Chapter 21 district boards consist of the director of the state department of agriculture and the drain commissioner of each participating county except in certain counties where the board also includes local appointees. Each district certifies, to the governing body of each county, city, village, or township served, the amount of property taxes and special assessments to be levied for district purposes. All types of drainage districts may issue bonds.

Housing commissions (county, municipal, or township). A housing commission is established by county, city, village, or township ordinance; local referendum is required if voters petition therefor. A commission consists of five members appointed by the chief administrative officer of the county, city, village, or township. In Detroit, the commission includes, in addition to the five members appointed by the mayor, representatives of the board of tenant affairs and the coordinating council on community redevelopment. A housing commission may fix and collect rentals and, in the name of the parent government, issue revenue bonds. Housing commissions may also perform redevelopment functions.

Joint water, sewage, and garbage disposal systems--1939 law (county). Under this 1939 law, any two adjoining counties may create a system by resolution to serve within or between cities, townships, or villages. The counties create a joint administrative agency composed of representatives of the county governing bodies. The service charges to be imposed, as well as the contributions to be made by each participating government, are specified by contract. The participating governments may set and levy property taxes to fulfill contract obligations. The counties may issue bonds on behalf of the system.

Joint water and sewage disposal systems--1947 law (county, municipal, or township). The question of joint acquisition of a water

supply or sewage disposal system serving two or more county, city, village, township, or metropolitan district governments may be submitted to the voters. Each system is governed by a joint board or commission consisting of one representative appointed by each participating government plus one member selected by the board itself. By contract, however, the participating governments may agree to have one government administer the system ex officio or each party may operate its own portion of the system. The financing is specified by contract. Participating governments may issue bonds.

Michigan Municipal Bond Bank Authority (state). This authority was established by an act of the legislature to enable local governments to borrow money for public purposes at favorable interest rates. A board of trustees, consisting of the state treasurer serving ex officio, plus two state officials serving at the pleasure of the Governor, and five other trustees appointed by the Governor, governs the authority. The authority may impose fees and charges and may issue revenue bonds.

Michigan State Building Authority (state). This authority was established by special act to finance the construction of state buildings. It is governed by a board of trustees appointed by the Governor. The authority may impose rentals for use of facilities and may issue revenue bonds.

Michigan State Hospital Finance Authority (state). This authority was established to finance construction of hospital facilities. The authority is governed by a board of seven members, five of whom are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the senate, plus the director of the department of public health and the state treasurer. The authority may fix charges and fees, make mortgage loans, and issue revenue bonds.

Michigan State Housing Development Authority (state). This authority was established to provide mortgage credit for low- and moderate-income housing. The authority is governed by a board of seven members, four

of whom are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the senate, plus three heads of principal departments of the executive branch of the state government. The authority may fix fees and charges, make mortgage loans, and issue revenue bonds. In addition, the authority may, upon approval of the legislature and the voters, receive proceeds of state general obligation bonds.

Other examples include:

State

Automobile Theft Prevention Authority
Base conversion authorities
Forest improvement districts
Low-Level Radioactive Waste Authority
Mackinac Island State Park Commission
Medical control authorities
Michigan Broadband Development Authority
Michigan Economic Growth Authority
Michigan Education Trust
Michigan Enterprise Zone Authority
Michigan Export Development Authority
Michigan Family Farm Development Authority
Michigan Forest Finance Authority
Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority
Michigan Higher Education Facilities Authority
Michigan Higher Education Student Loan Authority
Michigan Next Energy Authority
State Strategic Fund

County³

Building and parking authorities
Cemetery associations (county)
Community mental health service boards
County health districts
County library boards
County park and recreation commissions
County water, sewer, and sewer and garbage disposal systems (created by a single local government)
Economic development commissions
Economic development corporations
Emergency telephone districts
Empowerment zone development corporations
Health facilities corporations (county)
Historic district

Joint boards or commissions for intergovernmental transfers (county)
Joint building and parking authorities (county)
Joint county medical care facilities
Lake improvement (“inland lake”) districts
Local hospital finance authorities (county)
Regional park and recreation commissions
River management districts (county)

Municipal ⁴

Birmingham Area Cablecasting Board
Brownfield redevelopment authorities
Building and parking authorities
Cemetery associations (municipal)
Commercial redevelopment districts (municipal)
Corridor improvement authorities (single municipality)
Downtown development authorities (municipal)
Economic development corporations
Empowerment zone development corporations
Health facilities corporations (municipal)
Historic districts
Joint boards or commissions for intergovernmental transfers (municipal)
Joint building and parking authorities (municipal)
Joint environmental management authorities
Joint fire protection districts
Joint water supply systems—1945 law
Library boards (municipalities)
Local development finance authorities (municipal)
Local hospital finance authorities (municipal)
Market authorities
Mass transportation authorities with ex officio boards—1963 law
Plant rehabilitation and industrial development districts (municipal)
River management districts (municipal)
Rural fire protection districts (municipality)
Tax increment financing authorities
Technology park districts (municipal)
Twin City Public Safety Authority

Township

Brownfield redevelopment authorities
Building and parking authorities
Cemetery associations (township)
Commercial redevelopment districts (township)

Corridor improvement authorities (single township)
Downtown development authorities (township)
Economic development corporations
Empowerment zone development corporations
Fire assessment districts
Historic districts
Joint boards or commissions for intergovernmental transfers (township)
Joint building and parking authorities (township)
Joint fire protection districts
Library boards (townships)
Local development finance authorities (township)
Local hospital finance authorities (township)
Plant rehabilitation and industrial development districts (township)
Resort district authorities
Rural fire protection districts (township)
River management districts (township)
Technology park districts (township)
Township water supply districts—1941 law

Joint County-Municipal

Cemetery associations (joint)
Joint boards or commissions for intergovernmental transfers (joint)
Joint building and parking authorities (joint)
River management districts (joint)

Other

Industrial districts within port authorities are classified as subordinate activities of a port authority and are not counted as separate governments.

School districts also may participate in the creation of joint building and parking authorities.

Michigan laws also provide for various types of local areas for election purposes and administration of justice.

1. One village, Grosse Pointe Shores, is coterminous with two townships (Lake Township in Macomb County and Grosse Pointe Township in Wayne County). However, the village and the townships each perform

distinct functions and are each counted as separate governments for census purposes.

2. The community swimming pool authorities, previously classified as municipal dependent agencies, have been reclassified as special districts for the 2007 Census of Governments. The regional libraries, previously classified as county dependent agencies, have been reclassified as special districts for the 2007 Census of Governments.

3. The community mental health service boards, classified as special districts for the

2002 Census of Governments, have been reclassified as county dependent agencies for the 2007 Census of Governments. The law authorizing emergency telephone districts stands repealed effective December 31, 2007.

4. Corridor improvement authorities may be created under the Urban Cooperation Act of 1967 in addition to formation by single municipalities or townships.