

# County Commissioners

The three commissioners are the custodians of the home rule powers of the county. Counties have 3 commissioners, one from each district in the county. Within the scope of home rule, commissioners may adopt and vest themselves with additional regulatory powers. They have authority to pass ordinances in the following broad areas:

- Controlling, maintaining, and supervising county property including courthouses, jails, and public offices.
- Supervising construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and to provide for traffic control.
- Developing Economic Development programs to attract and retain jobs in the county.
- To grant vacation pay, sick leave, paid holidays and other similar benefits to county employees.
- To administer elections in conjunction with the county election board.
- To establish minimum housing standards
- Auditing and authorizing payments on behalf of the county.
- To incorporate new towns and alter township boundary lines, on petition.
- Receiving bids and authorizing contracts.
  - Exercising appointive powers including both the selection of members to fill positions on boards, commissions, and committees, and appointments of certain department heads.
  - Planning and implementing strategies for solid waste handling as members of solid waste district boards.

In Lake, Marion, and St. Joseph counties, the county councils are the home rule custodians and have authority to bestow specific, additional powers on the commissioners.

***We have provided some basic information that will be useful in understanding the office of County Commissioner.***

*Not paid for with tax dollars*

*As proposed in  
Indiana's Constitution,  
County Government  
in Indiana  
still operates  
under a system  
of checks and balances  
that provides voters  
with the power  
to directly choose  
their local  
elected officials.*



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# WHAT IS A COUNTY COMMISSIONER?



**INDIANA**  
ASSOCIATION OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



# INDIANA

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**...your three County Commissioners are an important part of your local government.**

The structure of county government in Indiana diversifies power among officeholders to create a system of checks and balances. Power is diversified to prevent corruption and make county decision making inclusive. This diversification of power places the ultimate authority in the hands of voters as important positions are elected rather than appointed by other elected officeholders.

State statute governs the duties of the Constitutional offices, thereby maintaining county government as an arm of the state. County government structure requires cooperative attitudes and a spirit of genuine teamwork among all elected officials.

Most county officials are elected for a four-year term of office. County commissioners and county council have unlimited terms of office.

Today, county government impacts economic development, public safety, health, planning and zoning, the transportation system, judicial system, administration of the property tax system and much more.

Throughout the Indiana Code, the board of county commissioners is variously referred to as the executive body or the legislative body. In all but three of the counties: Lake, Marion, and St. Joseph, the legislative power of the county is divided between the board of county commissioners and the county council. In these three counties full legislative power is vested in the council by the statute.

As a rule, the council has jurisdiction over fiscal matters and the commissioners have jurisdiction over matters concerning either the exercise of regulatory or administrative powers.

### Representative County Government Organization Chart

