

County Departments

PRESENTED BY THE ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS AND COMMISSIONERS

County Administrator

The county administrator is appointed and serves as the chief administrative officer of the county. The administrator under the supervision of the county board chairman directs the day-to-day operation of the county and provides staff support to the county board in policy-making. The administrator assists in the preparation and monitoring of the annual county budget and serves as the liaison between the county board and the elected officers and employees. Not every county has a county administrator.

Public Defender

The office of the Public Defender was created by the General Assembly to provide constitutionally mandated representation to indigent persons accused of crimes. The responsibility of the public defender is to represent every person arrested or charged with a crime who cannot afford an attorney. Qualified persons are appointed to this position by a majority vote of the Circuit Judges. In counties over 1 million in population, the appointment is made by the county board chairman. The office of public defender is mandatory in counties over 35,000 in population. In counties of less than 35,000, the county board may create the office by resolution.

Zoning Department

The zoning department administers and enforces all zoning and land use ordinances of the county. A major portion of the work of this department is directed towards enhancing the livability and economy of the county. Responsibilities of the zoning department include the issuance of sanitary permits, review of subdivision plats, preservation of wetland areas and floodplain management. The zoning department also works with landowners to achieve compliance with zoning ordinances and regulates the location and use of buildings and structures. Only counties that have adopted county-wide zoning maintain a zoning department.

Emergency Services Disaster Agency

The Emergency Services Disaster Agency (ESDA) exists to coordinate responses to disasters in the county. The ESDA provides citizens with the necessary information they may use to prepare for and respond to disasters that may threaten the county such as floods, tornadoes, and hostile enemy action. The ESDA has a broad range of responsibilities beyond disaster response which include maintaining the county's hazardous materials plan, coordinating rescue teams, vehicle and equipment maintenance, volunteer training and homeland security.

Regional Planning Commission

Regional planning commissions or regional councils are formed by counties, cities and towns to assist with planning activities. The primary function of a planning commission is to study the needs and conditions of a region and to develop strategies which enhance the region's communities. The commission provides planning services related to land use, housing, transportation, solid waste, community development, recreation and natural resources. The agency also serves as the census coordinator and maintains existing base maps and zoning maps for the county.

Department of Public Health

The county health department provides services designed to protect, promote and maintain the health of all county residents. Programs required by the Illinois Department of Public Health include communicable disease control, food sanitation, private sewage and potable water. Other health services provided by the county health department include childhood and adult immunizations, Tuberculosis testing, health education, water well sampling, recycling programs, and enforcement of the Illinois Animals Control Act, just to name a few. The county health department is governed by a board of health appointed by the county board.

Veterans Assistance Commission

The Veterans Assistance Commission is a separate county government agency operated by and for veterans. The Commission provides emergency aid and services to military veterans and their families. Commission personnel assist veterans in filing claims for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation, pension and death benefits, insurance, home loans, and hospitalization care, as well as numerous other benefits.