

Connecticut

Connecticut ranks 41st among the states in number of local governments, with 580 active as of June 2002.

COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (0)

Effective October 1, 1960, Connecticut county government was abolished and county functions were transferred to the state government. However, the former county boundaries were retained for election of county sheriffs and for judicial purposes. Thus, Connecticut counties are not counted as governments for census purposes.

SUBCOUNTY GENERAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS (179)

The 179 subcounty general purpose governments in Connecticut comprise 30 municipal (city and borough) governments and 149 town governments. These two types of governments are distinguished primarily by the historical circumstances surrounding their incorporation. In Connecticut, city, borough, and town governments have similar powers and perform similar functions.

Municipal Governments (30)

The term "municipality," as defined for census statistics, applies only to the cities and boroughs in Connecticut. Towns, which are treated as municipalities in Connecticut statutes, are counted as a separate type of local government in census statistics. Nine boroughs (all except Naugatuck) and one city (Groton) are located within town areas with active town governments. One borough—Woodmont—is part of the town of Milford. Woodmont is counted as a separate municipal government, but governmental functions performed in other parts of the state by town governments are performed in Woodmont by an overlying city, Milford.

The other 19 cities (including Milford) and the borough of Naugatuck are also located within town areas, but in each of these instances, the town government and the city or borough government have been consolidated. Each of these 20 consolidated governments has responsibility both for services handled in other parts of the state by town governments and for the usual city or borough functions. Each is counted only once in census statistics on Governments—as a municipal government, and not as a town government.

The two towns of Putnam and Windham are also consolidated with an underlying city or borough for governmental purposes, but are designated as towns. They are therefore counted as town (or "township") governments, and not as municipal governments, in census statistics on governments.

Town or Township Governments (149)

Towns, although not differing in legally authorized powers generally from cities and boroughs, are classified for census purposes as a separate type of local government.

The entire area of the state is encompassed by town governments, except for areas in which a town is consolidated with a city or borough government. As explained under "Municipal Governments," above, Connecticut governments that perform both municipal and town functions are counted only once in census statistics on governments. In two of these cases—the towns of Putnam and Windham (which are larger than the former cities of Putnam and Willimantic)—the consolidated government is designated as a town. Accordingly, Putnam and Windham are counted as town (or "township") governments, and not as municipal governments, in census statistics on governments.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS (166)

School District Governments (17)

Only the regional school districts in Connecticut are counted as separate governments in census statistics on governments. A regional school district is organized by joint action of two or more towns, after referendum. It is administered by a board comprised of members appointed by the governing body of each participating town. Fiscal needs are determined by the regional school district board and apportioned to the participating towns after a public hearing has been held.

Dependent Public School Systems (149)

Connecticut statutes provide for the following types of dependent public school systems:

Systems dependent on municipal governments (20):
City school systems

Systems dependent on town governments (129):
Town school systems

The 20 city and 129 town school systems in Connecticut have elected governing bodies that administer the schools, but their budgets are subject to review and change by the city or town budget-making authority and governing body. City and town school systems in Connecticut are not counted as separate governments.

Other Educational Activities

Regional educational service centers may be established in any regional state planning area by four or more boards of education to provide special services to the participating school systems. These centers are classified as joint educational service agencies of the participating public school systems and are not counted as separate governments.

Cooperative educational service centers are established by two or more boards of education to provide special services and programs to member school systems. These centers are classified as joint educational service agencies of the participating public school systems and are not counted as governments.

Supervisory districts in Connecticut are entities for the employment of a superintendent to serve two or more towns or regional school districts. These districts are joint activities of participating public school systems and are not counted as separate governments.

Regional vocational agriculture centers may be established by agreement between town or regional boards of education. These centers are joint activities of participating public school systems and are not counted as governments.

SPECIAL DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS (387)

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

Fire, Sewer, and Similar Special-Purpose Districts

A general law in Connecticut provides for the establishment of districts for any or all of the following purposes: fire and police protection; street lighting and sprinkling; establishing building lines; planting and care of trees; constructing and maintaining streets, crosswalks, drains, flood or erosion control systems, sewers, and recreational facilities; establishing a zoning commission or a planning commission and a zoning board of appeals (if the town government does not have a zoning or planning commission); and collection and disposal of garbage, etc. Such a district may be established by vote at a town meeting called by the board of selectmen on the petition of 20 voters in the proposed area. Officers for the district are elected. Each district may levy taxes, as well as special benefit assessments.

Fire and sewer districts are also created by special acts of the general assembly. These districts are similar in organization to the districts established under general law and are also counted as governments.

Housing Authorities

Three types of housing authorities are authorized under Connecticut law—municipal housing authorities (serving a single borough, city, or town), regional housing authorities (serving two or more boroughs, cities, or towns), and Indian housing authorities. Municipal and regional housing authorities are established by resolution of the borough, city, or town governing body. The chief executive officer of the borough or city or the town board of selectmen appoints five or seven city or town residents to be housing authority commissioners or the respective representatives of the city, borough, or town on the board of a regional housing authority.

The authorities may borrow money and issue bonds, accept grants from the federal government, and fix and collect rentals. A city, borough, or town governing body may designate a housing authority as a redevelopment agency. Redevelopment agencies established as separate city, borough, or town agencies are not counted as separate governments for census purposes. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

Under a 1976 general law, housing authorities may also be established for each designated Indian tribe. The chief or other governing head of a tribe appoints five members of the tribe to be commissioners. These authorities have the same revenue powers as municipal housing authorities. In 1997, Indian housing authorities were classified as special districts. However, in 1999, they were determined to be out of scope for census purposes.

The Connecticut Housing Authority is classified as a dependent agency of the state government. It is not counted as a separate government.

Improvement Associations

These associations were formerly established by special acts of the general assembly but are under substantially uniform provisions as to organization and operation. Under present law, such authorities may be established by a petition to the town selectmen and after a meeting of the voters. An elected board governs each association. Each association may levy ad valorem taxes, assessments, or charges for services. These associations may perform one or more of a variety of functions similar to those of fire and sewer districts. Some associations of this type are known locally as "beach associations."

Metropolitan Districts—1955 General Law

A 1955 general law authorizes the establishment of metropolitan districts in any metropolitan area containing a central city of 25,000 or more population and any town, city, or borough, any part of which is not more than 15 miles from the nearest boundary of such a central city.

Such districts must be approved by referendum and preparation of a district charter by a metropolitan district charter commission that is itself created in response to either petition of the voters or resolution of local governments. Each district is governed by a board whose members are selected in accordance with the district charter. The charter of each district provides for its organizational structure, powers, means of financing, and other provisions.

Metropolitan District (Hartford Area)

This district was established by a 1929 special act primarily to provide a water supply and sewerage system for the Hartford metropolitan area. Legislation also authorizes the district to sell, distribute, and transmit electric power, dispose of solid waste, and operate river front park facilities on the Connecticut River in the Hartford area. A board of 25 commissioners governs the district; 17 are appointed by the governing bodies of cities and towns within the district as specified by statute. In addition, eight commissioners are appointed by the Governor. The district may levy ad valorem taxes, collect charges for water, levy fees on member and customer municipalities, and issue bonds.

Municipal Electric Energy Cooperatives

These cooperatives are established to provide electric power by concurrent resolution of two or more municipalities. Each cooperative is governed by a cooperative utility board appointed by the governing body of each municipal electric utility represented; the number of representatives per member utility is specified in the agreement establishing the cooperative. These cooperatives may fix rates, fees, rentals, or charges, and may issue revenue bonds. The Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative was formed under this law.

Putnam Special Service District

This district was established to finance fire protection, police protection, and street lighting under provisions of the town charter of Putnam. An elected board of five directors governs the district. The district may levy ad valorem taxes.

By contrast, special service districts established under a 1973 general law are not counted as separate governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

Regional Refuse Disposal District One

This district was established by the towns of New Hartford, Barkhamsted, Colebrook, and Winchester to provide solid waste management. A board of directors appointed by the governing authority of each city and town governs the district. The district may levy assessments and issue revenue and refunding bonds.

Regional Resource Recovery Authorities

These authorities are established by concurrent ordinances of participating boroughs, cities, or towns. The number of board members and their method of selection are determined by agreement between the participating governments. The authority may fix fees or charges and may issue revenue bonds.

Authorities of this type that serve a single borough, city, or town are not counted as separate governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority

This authority was established by special act to provide water supply for the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District. The authority governing board consists of five residents of the district appointed by the representative policy board which, in turn, consists of a member of the governing body of each city or town in the district. The authority may acquire property, fix rates and fees, and issue revenue bonds.

Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority

This authority was established by a special act to provide water supply in the southeastern part of the state. The governing body of each participating city and town appoints two members to an advisory board that, in turn, appoints a seven-member board to administer the authority. The board may collect rates and charges, levy special benefit assessments, accept grants, and issue revenue bonds.

Taxing Districts

Both state and local government may create taxing districts. Function of these districts vary, and are outlined in the legislation that created them. Taxing districts established by the state are created by special act. Districts created by local government are established by municipal/town charter. Not all districts established by municipal/town charter are classified as independent special districts for census purposes—a pattern that can be seen when comparing the taxing districts of the city of Norwalk.

First, Second, Third, and Sixth Taxing Districts, located within the area of the city of Norwalk, were established by the Norwalk city charter and may perform the following functions within their defined areas: First Taxing District—water supply; Second Taxing District—electric light and power and water supply; Third Taxing District—electric light and power; Sixth Taxing District—public library, street lighting, and sewers. Each of the above districts has a separately elected governing body. Fiscal requirements for each district are determined by the district officials or voters without review by the

city. Each district may levy ad valorem taxes, which the city collects, and may collect rates and charges for services, as well as issue bonds. These four districts are counted as governments.

The Fourth, Fifth, and Seventh Taxing Districts of Norwalk, which constitute the city of Norwalk proper, and taxing districts in other Connecticut towns and cities, may not be counted as separate governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

Transit Districts

Any town, city, or borough, by itself or in cooperation with one or more other municipalities, may establish a transit district after voter approval. A board of directors governs each district; it consists of members appointed by the participating governments as follows: Each municipality has at least one member, municipalities with a population from 25,000 to 100,000 have two, and those of 100,000 or more have four. The board may fix rates, determine the proportionate share of the total appropriation to be paid by each municipality, and issue either revenue or general obligation bonds after hearing. Transit districts with similar provisions have been authorized by special acts. Transit districts may provide transit service directly, or contract with a public or private transit system for provision of transit service.

Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority

This regional airport serves the south central Connecticut region (to include the towns and cities of Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, and Woodbridge). The authority is governed by a board of 14 directors. Nine directors are appointed by the mayor of New Haven, two are appointed by the mayor of East Haven, and three are appointed by the South Central Regional Council of Governments. The authority is responsible for maintaining and operating the airport, may charge fees for services, can accept grants, and may enter into contracts.

SUBORDINATE AGENCIES AND AREAS

Shown below are various governmental designations in Connecticut 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 governments. Legal provisions for some of the larger of these are discussed below (see "Public School Systems," above, regarding educational agencies of this nature).

Connecticut Development Authority (state). This authority was created by act of the general assembly to provide mortgage credit for industrial, health care, pollution control, or recreational facilities. It is governed by a

board of seven members, four of whom are appointed by the Governor, and the commissioner of economic and community development, the state treasurer, and the secretary of the office of policy and management, who serve in an ex officio capacity. The authority may make mortgage loans; receive gifts, grants, fees, and rentals in connection with its projects and loans; and issue revenue bonds.

Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities

Authority (state). This authority was created by act of the general assembly to finance the construction of buildings for nonprofit hospitals and institutions of higher education. It is governed by a board of nine members, eight of whom are appointed by the Governor, and the secretary of the office of policy and management ex officio. The authority may fix rates, rents, fees, and charges; make mortgage loans to qualifying hospitals and institutions; and issue revenue bonds.

Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (state). This agency provides financial assistance for housing for low and moderate income families and persons through the purchase of government-insured mortgages. The authority consists of the state treasurer, the commissioner of economic and community development, the secretary of the office of policy and management, the bank commissioner, and six members appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate. The authority may issue revenue bonds secured by income from mortgage payments.

Connecticut Marketing Authority (state). This authority was established by a special act to develop and operate marketing facilities and to enable more economical distribution of Connecticut agricultural products. The authority's board consists of one member from each congressional district, an at large public member and, serving ex officio, the commissioner of economic and community development and the commissioner of agriculture. The authority may collect rentals, accept federal grants, issue bonds, and borrow funds from the state. Bond issues must be approved by the state bond commission.

Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (state).

This authority was created by act of the general assembly to finance facilities for recovery of resources from solid waste. A board of 13 directors governs the authority; four are appointed by the Governor, two each by the president pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the house, one each by the minority leaders in the Senate and the House, and the following officials ex officio: the secretary of the office of policy and management, the commissioner of transportation, and the commissioner of economic and community development. The authority may fix fees, make loans, and issue revenue bonds.

Redevelopment agencies (municipal and town). General law permits cities, boroughs, or towns to establish these agencies or to designate housing authorities as

redevelopment agencies. Redevelopment agency boards are appointed by the chief executive officer of the sponsoring borough, city, or town with the approval of its governing body. The agencies may receive appropriations from the sponsoring government and may accept state and federal grants. Bonds for redevelopment purposes are issued by the borough, city, or town governments. Two or more boroughs, cities, or towns jointly may establish regional or metropolitan redevelopment agencies.

Soil and water conservation districts (state). These districts are established by the state commissioner of environmental protection. A district board, selected by local residents in accordance with regulations of the state commissioner, governs each district. The districts are financed by state appropriations.

Other examples include:

State¹

Connecticut Emergency Response Commission
Connecticut Equestrian Center Corporation
Connecticut Hazardous Waste Management Service
Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority
Connecticut Housing Authority
Connecticut Innovations Incorporated
Connecticut Lottery Corporation
Connecticut Port Authority (formerly the Connecticut Coastline Port Authority)
Connecticut Public Transportation Commission (advisory body to state Department of Transportation)
Connecticut River Gateway Commission
Connecticut Student Loan Foundation
Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
Lower Fairfield County Convention Center Authority
University of Connecticut Health Center Finance Corporation (formerly John Dempsey Hospital Finance Corporation)

Municipal

District health departments
First Fire Taxation District of West Haven
Fourth, Fifth, and Seventh Taxing Districts, and fire districts, of Norwalk
Historic district commissions
Lake authorities
Middletown Fire District
Middletown Sanitary District

¹State law authorizing the creation of Connecticut Convention Center Authority was repealed 5 June 1998.

Municipal districts
Municipal flood and erosion control boards
Municipal harbor commissions
Municipal resource recovery authorities serving a single borough or city
Municipal wetlands and watercourses commissions
New Haven Coliseum Authority
Parking authorities and commissions
Port authorities or districts
Public recreational facilities authorities
Sewer authorities
Special service districts—1973 general law
Taxing districts
Water pollution control authorities

Town

District health departments
Historic district commissions
Lake authorities
Municipal districts
Municipal flood and erosion control boards
Municipal harbor commissions
Municipal resource recovery authorities serving a single town
Municipal wetlands and watercourses commissions
Parking authorities and commissions
Port authorities or districts
Public recreational facilities authorities
Sewer authorities
Special service districts—1973 general law
Taxing districts
Water pollution control authorities

Joint Municipal

Connecticut River Assembly
District departments of health
Municipal districts
Naugatuck Valley Industrial Development District
Niantic River Gateway Commission
Regional emergency medical services councils
Regional solid waste operating committees
River protection commissions

Private Associations

In Connecticut, cemetery facilities are often provided by and maintained by nonprofit cemetery associations. These associations are classified as private entities for census purposes and are not counted as governments. The same is true for manufacturing and agricultural societies. Connecticut laws also provide for various types of local areas for election purposes and administration of justice.