

OREGON

Oregon ranks 22nd among the states in number of local governments, with 1,439 as of June 2002.

COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (36)

There are no areas in Oregon lacking county government. The county governing body is called the board of county commissioners or the county court. Home rule is an option.

SUBCOUNTY GENERAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS (240)

Municipal Governments (240)

Municipal governments in Oregon are the cities and towns. There are no differences in their legal powers or status. The minimum population requirement for incorporation is 150.

Township Governments (0)

Oregon has no township governments.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS (236)

School District Governments (236) 1

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

Common school districts
Joint school districts
Union high school districts
Community college districts
Community college service districts

Each school district of these types has an elected board. All of the school districts may levy local school taxes. All except education service districts and community college service districts may issue general obligation bonds with voter approval

Dependent Public School Systems (0)

Oregon has no dependent public school systems.

Other Educational Activities

Education service districts are established by general law to serve specified regions. An elected board governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and, with voter approval, issue bonds.

County education bond districts are created by education service districts. The board of the education service districts serves as the board of the county education bond district. These districts are not counted as separate governments.

Any school district or community college district may establish and maintain a public library. A library board, appointed by the governing body of the sponsoring government, administers the library. The sponsoring government may levy ad valorem taxes and issue general obligation bonds. These libraries are not counted as separate governments.

Other Oregon agencies concerned with local school administration are not counted as governments

SPECIAL DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS (927)

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

Airport Districts

Airport districts are created by resolution of the governing body of the most populous county in the proposed district or by resolution of the governing body of any city owning an airport in the proposed district. A referendum is required. An elected board governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and issue revenue bonds and, upon voter approval, may issue general obligation bonds.

Cemetery Maintenance Districts

A cemetery maintenance district may be established in any area of at least 4,000 acres or having an assessed valuation of at least \$200,000. The districts are created by a county governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the

county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board of directors governs each district. The district may levy ad valorem taxes.

Domestic Water Supply Districts

Districts to provide water supply, street lighting, and fire protection may be established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board of commissioners governs each district. The districts may fix rates, levy ad valorem taxes and special benefit assessments and, upon voter approval, issue general obligation and revenue bonds. Districts organized under this law are often called "water districts."

Drainage Districts

These districts are created by the county governing body on petition of landowners and after a public hearing. An elected board of supervisors governs each district. The districts may levy an acre age tax and special benefit assessments and, with voter approval, issue revenue bonds. Drainage districts organized prior to the February 14, 1921, passage of this law are subject to the same powers and provisions.

Emergency Communications Districts

These districts to provide "911" emergency telephone service are established by the county governing body upon petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. Establishment requires the approval of two-thirds of the public or private safety agencies representing two-thirds of the population in the area to be served. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and, with voter approval, issue general obligation bonds.

Fair Districts

Fair districts may be established by the county

governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing, or the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board governs each district. The districts may set taxes.

Geothermal Heating Districts

The districts are established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. These districts supply geothermal heat to the inhabitants of the district. An elected board of commissioners governs each district. The districts may set rates, levy ad valorem taxes and special assessments, and, upon voter approval, issue revenue and general obligation bonds.

Health Districts

Health districts are established by the county governing body on petition of the voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if requested by petition. Health districts may provide hospitals, nursing homes, and ambulance service. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may fix rates and charges, levy ad valorem taxes, and, upon voter approval, issue general obligation bonds. Some districts organized under this law are named "hospital districts" or "ambulance districts."

Highway Lighting Districts

These districts may be established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. A board of commissioners appointed by the county governing body governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and special assessments.

Petitioners may request that the county governing body administer a district. In such a case, the district would not be counted as a separate government. See "Subordinate

Agencies and Areas," below.

Housing Authorities

Housing authorities are created when the governing body of a city or county passes a resolution, either after petition of the voters and election or on the initiative of the city or county. A board appointed by the governing body of the establishing city or county governs each authority. The board may appoint additional members. Housing authorities may establish rents and charges and may issue revenue bonds.

Oregon laws also provide that two or more housing authorities may establish a regional housing authority with the same legal powers as above. The governing body of a regional housing authority consists of members appointed by the participating cities and counties plus members appointed by the board of the housing authority itself.

Oregon statutes also provide that the governing body of a city or county establishing a housing authority may constitute the authority board. In such a case, a housing authority would not be counted as a separate government. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

Irrigation Districts

Under general law, the county governing body may establish irrigation districts after petition of landowners, hearing, and referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and benefit assessments and fix tolls, rates, and charges. Levies of benefit assessments may require voter approval. With voter approval, districts may issue revenue bonds. Subdistricts created by irrigation districts are governed by the irrigation district and are not counted as separate governments.

Joint Water and Sanitary Authorities

These districts may be created by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. As an

alternative method, a water authority and a sanitary authority or a water authority, sanitary authority, and any combination of cities or sanitary districts may initiate a consolidation by resolution; voter approval is required. An elected board of directors governs each authority. The authorities may fix charges and rentals, levy ad valorem taxes and special assessments, and, upon voter approval, issue revenue and general obligation bonds.

Library Districts

The districts are established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. Two or more counties may initiate the formation of a multicounty library district. An elected board governs each district. Library districts may levy ad valorem taxes and, upon voter approval, issue general obligation bonds.

Mass Transit Districts

Mass transit districts may be established by resolution of the governing body of the most populous city in a standard metropolitan statistical area if such a city has a public transit system. The resolution is filed with the governing body of the principal county in the area, after a public hearing. As an alternative, mass transit districts may be established by the county governing board on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. A referendum is required for all methods of formation. The Salem Area Mass Transit District has an elected board of directors. For the other mass transit districts, a board of directors appointed by the Governor governs each district. These districts may impose ad valorem taxes, income taxes, payroll taxes, motor vehicle registration fees, business license fees, fares, and service charges. With voter approval, a district may issue revenue bonds and general obligation bonds.

Medford Water Commission

This commission was created by city ordinance and referendum in 1922. The commission is appointed by the mayor of Medford with the approval of the city council.

The commission may set rates and ad valorem taxes. The city may issue general obligation bonds on behalf of the commission.

Metropolitan Area Communications Commission

This commission was created by an intergovernmental agreement of Washington County and numerous cities. The commission administers franchises for cable television. Each participating government appoints one representative to the commission. The commission sets and collects a percentage of franchise fees from member governments.

Metropolitan Service District

This district is authorized to provide sewerage or solid waste disposal services ; public transportation and transit facilities; cultural, convention, and sports facilities; parks and recreation facilities; metropolitan zoo facilities; regional planning; and other public services. It was formed under a general law with special application to the Portland metropolitan area (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties) by petition or resolution of the largest city in the district to the county governing body of the largest county in the district, after local referendum. An elected council governs the district. The district may set vehicle registration fees; levy excise taxes; fix and collect service or user charges; levy special assessments; and issue revenue bonds. With voter approval, the district may levy ad valorem taxes and income taxes and issue general obligation bonds.

Park and Recreation Districts

These districts are established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners , after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and, upon voter approval, issue revenue and general obligation bonds.

Park Commissions in Cities of 3,000 or More

Oregon law authorizes park commissions in

cities with a population of 3,000 or more. The city governing body submits the question of formation for referendum . The board of park commissioners consists of the mayor, the city engineer or city auditor, and five citizens appointed by the circuit court. The commissions may set ad valorem taxes. They also may set special taxes with voter approval.

Peoples' Utility Districts

Districts to provide water, water power, and electric energy are established after petition by the voters to the county governing body, after public hearing and referendum. As an alternative, the governing body of a county or city may initiate formation by a resolution. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem bonds; fix rates, fees, and charges; and upon voter approval, issue revenue bonds and general obligation bonds.

Joint operating agencies for electric power are classified for census purposes as dependent activities of the participating peoples' utility districts and cities, and are not counted as separate governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

Pesticide Control Districts

Agricultural chemical protection areas for the application of herbicides are established by the state department of agriculture upon petition of land owners, after a hearing. A committee of five members governs each district; three members are elected and two appointed by the state department of agriculture with the approval of the elected members. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes.

Ports

Municipal corporations designated as ports are counted as special district governments for census purposes. They may be incorporated in certain counties upon petition of the voters or landowners to the county governing body, after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation . A referendum is required only if petitioned. These corporations may provide hospitals, industrial parks, and airport facilities as well as seaports. A port may also acquire,

construct, maintain, or operate sports, convention, and trade show facilities. With the exceptions listed below, a board of port commissioners is initially appointed by the Governor but thereafter elected. Ports may levy ad valorem taxes and special assessments and fix rates for facilities and services. The port commissioners may issue general obligation bonds, but bonds over specified amounts require voter approval. Ports created prior to April 17, 1920, by special law have the same powers except the power to issue bonds.

The Port of Portland and the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay were established by special acts. Each is governed by a board of commissioners appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the senate. The financial powers of these ports are similar to those provided for ports under general law described above.

Export trading corporations formed by ports are governed by members selected by the port commissioners. They are classified for census purposes as dependent activities of the port and are not counted as separate governments.

Road Assessment Districts

These districts, which must have an area of more than 20,000 acres or an assessed valuation of \$1,000,000 or more, may be established in counties of at least 19,000 and not more than 25,000 in population. These districts are established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board of directors administers each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes.

Rural Fire Protection Districts

These districts are established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem

taxes, issue revenue bonds for fire safety systems, and, with voter approval, issue general obligation bonds. Districts within a 10-mile radius of a city of more than 100,000 in population may also provide street lighting. Special taxes, in addition to baseline taxes, for street lighting require voter approval.

Sanitary Authorities and Districts

Oregon statutes authorize the following types of sanitary authorities and districts:

Sanitary authorities. These districts may be established in any portion of one or more counties. The districts are established by the governing body of a county on petition of voters or landowners after a public hearing. If an authority is located in a single county, the county board may initiate formation by its own motion, or, if located in two or more counties, these county boards may initiate formation. Also, the governing bodies of two or more cities, two or more sanitary or drainage districts, or one or more cities with one or more districts may initiate the formation of a sanitary authority by resolution. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board governs each authority. The authorities may fix charges and rentals, levy ad valorem taxes and special assessments, and, upon voter approval, issue revenue and general obligation bonds.

Sanitary districts. These districts are established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners, after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board of directors governs each district. Financing powers are similar to those for sanitary authorities above.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

These districts are formed by petition of landowners to the state department of agriculture, after a hearing and referendum. The initial board for each district is appointed by the state department of agriculture but is thereafter elected. The districts may levy special assessments and issue special assessment improvement bonds.

Special Road Districts

These districts are established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners , after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. A board of three commissioners, either elected or appointed by the county governing body, governs each district. The district may levy ad valorem taxes.

Translator Districts

These districts provide educational television, radio, and distance learning to public schools. These districts may be created by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners , after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board governs each district. The districts may impose service charges and issue revenue bonds.

Transportation Districts

These districts may be created by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners , after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. As an alternative, a district may be formed by resolution of the most populous city in the proposed district, after referendum. An elected board governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem, income, and payroll taxes; impose motor vehicle registration fees and business license fees; and set service charges. In addition, transportation districts may issue revenue and general obligation bonds upon voter approval.

Water Control Districts

These districts provide for drainage, irrigation, and flood and surface water control. The districts are established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners , after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy either special

benefit assessments or property taxes. The districts may set water charges and rates, and, upon voter approval, issue revenue and general obligation bonds.

The county governing body may serve as the governing body. Districts governed by the county governing body are not counted as separate governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

Subdistricts may be created within water control districts on petition of landowners for the purpose of providing water control improvements to the lands within the subdistricts. The subdistricts are administered by the water control district board and are not counted as separate governments.

Water Improvement Districts

Water improvement districts may be created in areas of 1,000 acres or more to provide drainage, irrigation, flood and surface water control, domestic water supply, and water-related recreation. These districts are established by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners , after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may fix and collect charges, levy ad valorem taxes and special assessments, issue improvement bonds, and, upon voter approval, issue general obligation bonds.

Subdistricts for watershed improvement may be organized within water improvement districts on petition of landowners. The subdistricts are administered by the water improvement district board and are not counted as separate governments.

Water Authorities

Any portion of one or more counties may be formed into a water authority. These districts may be created by the county governing body on petition of voters or landowners , after a public hearing. If a district is located in a single county, the county board may initiate the formation. Also, the governing bodies of two or more cities, two or more water districts, or one

or more cities with one or more water districts may initiate the formation of a water authority by resolution. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board of directors governs each authority. The authorities may fix charges and rentals, levy ad valorem taxes and special assessments, and, upon voter approval, issue revenue and general obligation bonds.

Weather Modification Districts

These districts to provide cloud-seeding services may be established within one or more counties bordering on the Columbia River and having fewer than 21,000 inhabitants, on the petition of voters or landowners to the county governing body and after a public hearing. The county board may initiate the formation if the district is located in a single county. A referendum is required only if petitioned. An elected board of commissioners governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes.

SUBORDINATE AGENCIES AND AREAS

Shown below are various governmental designations in Oregon 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).

Among the subordinate agencies and areas listed below, some represent "special taxing areas" within the territory of an established government. This method of financing additional services in limited areas by property taxation, while also used by some municipal and township governments in a few states, is more widely utilized by county governments. In the listing below of authorized county-related agencies, a bullet (*) appears for each entity of this kind--i.e., any that may individually serve a portion rather than all of a county and for which a tax may be levied against the assessed value of property in the area served.

Joint operating agencies for electric power

(municipal and special district). These agencies are established by order of the state department of energy upon adoption of an ordinance and filing of an application by the legislative bodies of three or more peoples' utilities districts or cities (or a combination thereof), after referendum. A board of directors appointed by the legislative bodies of the member cities and districts governs each joint operating agency. The agency may set and collect rates and charges and issue revenue bonds. These agencies are classified as dependent activities of the participating peoples' utility districts and cities.

Other examples include:

State 2

Fire patrol districts, Zone 1
Forest protection districts
Oregon Facilities Authority
Oregon Economic and Community Development Commission
Oregon Mass Transportation Financing Authority
Oregon Youth Authority
State Accident Insurance Fund Corporation (previously listed as State Industrial Accident Fund Corporation) Tax supervising and conservation commissions

County

County fair boards
County livestock districts
*County road districts
*County service districts (law enforcement, sewerage, drainage, street lighting, parks and recreation, diking, flood control, water supply, solid waste disposal, transportation, agricultural education extension services, emergency medical services, libraries, roads, emergency communications, cemetery maintenance, and, in some counties, fire protection, hospital and ambulance services, vector control and weather modification)
*Diking districts
Dog control districts
*Fire patrol districts, Zone 2
Highway lighting districts administered by county governing body
Hospital facility authorities
Housing authorities administered by county governing body

Local commissions on children and families
Public libraries (county and regional) Regional
air quality control authorities Road
improvement areas
Sports and convention facilities commissions
Unified Sewerage Agency of Washington
County (organized under county service special
law)
*Vector control districts (mosquito control)
Water control districts governed by the county
governing body
Weed control districts
Wind erosion districts
Municipal Economic improvement districts
Hospital facility authorities
Housing authorities administered by city
governing body
Public libraries
Regional air quality control authorities
Urban renewal and redevelopment agencies
Utility boards
Joint City-County
Metropolitan Wastewater Management
Commission

Private associations

Corporations for irrigation, drainage, water supply, or flood control, known as district improvement corporations or improvement districts, are not counted as governments. Drainage districts and diking districts may dissolve and reorganize as district improvement corporations until December 31, 2004. Drainage districts and irrigation districts may assume the obligations of existing district improvement corporations.

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

1. 1. Legislation authorizing county unit districts was repealed in 2003.
2. 2. Legislation authorizing the Oregon Resource and Technology Development Corporation was repealed in 1999.