



# 100 Ways

Counties Serve New Yorkers  
and Strengthen the Quality  
of Our Communities



New York State Association of Counties

Albany, NY 12207

[www.nysac.org](http://www.nysac.org)

518-465-1473



## General Government

1. County governments provide vital services tailored to the unique needs of their communities, ensuring that decisions are made by leaders who live, work, and engage directly with the people they serve.
2. Were first established in 1683 as regional colonial governments designed to uphold public safety, maintain infrastructure, and keep vital records, more than 100 years before New York became a state.
3. Protect the health, safety, and welfare of New Yorkers through the passage of local laws, resolutions, and ordinances.



## Public Health

4. Manage mass testing, tracing, and quarantine operations for infectious diseases.
5. Provide programs to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and other communicable diseases.
6. Run programs to help prevent or reduce major causes of death and chronic disease such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and cancer.
7. Monitor and control insect-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus and Lyme Disease.
8. Conduct health and safety inspections of swimming pools, summer camps, beaches, and other recreational venues.
9. Test for lead in homes of children identified as having lead poisoning.
10. Provide maternal and infant community health services designed to improve the health and well-being of high need women through their reproductive life years.
11. Provide tobacco prevention and control programs.
12. Monitor and test the safety of community water supply in New York State through county public health departments.
13. Issue permits for food service restaurants ensuring the protection of public health.
14. Conduct restaurant health and food safety inspections.



# Health and Human Services

15. Contribute \$7.6 Billion annually to the State's Medicaid Program; more than the total Medicaid spending in 35 other states.
16. Fund and/or administer nearly all federal health and human service mandates.
17. Coordinate all foster care services in New York and encourage the adoption of children in need of families.
18. Investigate all domestic violence allegations and ensure the safe placement of at-risk children.
19. Provide child support, visitation, custody, and paternity petitions.
20. Provide childcare subsidies to low-income families.
21. Help families in need access emergency services, including housing, food stamps, day care, and heating and cooling assistance.
22. Administer all Title Three federal programs ensuring seniors have access to medical information; opportunities to socialize with one another through social activities and congregate meals.
23. Provide care for vulnerable and older Americans through the support of several countywide nursing homes.
24. Operate Meals-on-Wheels and other special services for the aged and homebound.
25. Provide older New Yorkers and their caregivers with assistance and support to age in place.
26. Coordinate programs and services for veterans, helping ensure they get the benefits they deserve.
27. Operate long-term health care facilities.
28. Promote an atmosphere of trust for consumers in the marketplace by protecting consumers against illegal or deceptive trade practices.
29. Provide indigent burial assistance for individuals with families that are unable to provide for a decent interment.







## Mental Health

- 30. Oversee, manage, and plan for services for adults and children with mental illness, substance use disorders and/or developmental disabilities in their communities.
- 31. Operate mental health and substance abuse clinics.
- 32. Sponsor education and training that advances the use of evidence-based treatment practices and promotes public understanding and awareness of behavioral health disabilities to reduce stigma and promote meaningful and productive community relationships and involvement.
- 33. Coordinate the opioid epidemic response—including funding, selecting and administering opioid use prevention programs and services.



## Environment/Economic Development

- 34. Maintain hundreds of parks, beaches, forest preserves, museums, and related cultural and recreational facilities.
- 35. Maintain, monitor, and operate waste management and landfill facilities.
- 36. Provide recycling and alternative waste management systems for communities.
- 37. Reduce waste by harvesting methane from landfills and turning it into clean energy for municipal buildings.
- 38. Develop, maintain, and distribute geographic digital data for the public's use.
- 39. Promote historical and tourism destinations in NYS, including the I LOVE NY campaign.
- 40. Facilitate economic development through IDA's and the creation of agricultural districts.
- 41. Provide training and support for local planning units, including grant writing, land use and environmental permitting services assistance.
- 42. Assist towns in zoning permit approvals and processing.
- 43. Provide invasive species management and coordination between local government units.
- 44. Provide management and training expertise to farmers and landowners through cooperative extension.

- 45. Provide incentives for residents and businesses to pursue energy efficiency projects.
- 46. Revolutionize lighting, heating, and electrical systems, making conversions to more energy efficient technologies in government buildings.

## Judiciary

- 47. Construct and pay for state and county courthouses across New York.
- 48. Provide lawyers for the poor accused of crimes by coordinating and funding indigent defense and public defense services in the state.
- 49. Serve as the official clerk of the court for the State Supreme Court.



## Public Safety/Emergency Management

- 50. Prosecute all felony crimes in county courts.
- 51. Prosecute criminal cases in local criminal courts, including DWI and misdemeanor drug offenses.
- 52. Combat the opioid epidemic that intersects our sheriff, probation, district attorney, mental health, and public health departments.
- 53. Monitor the use of ignition interlock devices required of those convicted under the state's DWI laws through probation, sheriffs, and district attorneys.
- 54. Provide supervision for adult and juvenile offenders.
- 55. Provide crime victim assistance, advocate for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and provide rape crisis services.
- 56. Run STOP DWI programs.
- 57. Prepare communities to address the consequences of terrorism.
- 58. Facilitate communication through emergency management software amongst state and local governments during disasters.
- 59. Deliver maximum communication support to all residents, businesses and public agencies requiring immediate fire, police, or ambulance responses.

60. Coordinate disaster preparedness, as well as the response, recovery, and rebuilding efforts from health pandemics, weather-related or hazardous material spills and other states of emergencies.
61. Responsible for the efficient deployment of firefighting resources and overall coordination of fire departments through the administration of NYS Fire Training Program.
62. Provide training and education programs for fire departments and administer the county fire mutual aid plan.
63. Provide fire investigation, response for hazardous materials, and technical rescue response.
64. Provide county law enforcement road patrol.
65. Provide correction officers to staff the county jail ensuring the public's safety.
66. Provide coroner and medical examiner services investigating cases of suspicious deaths.
67. Provide k-9 assistance for bomb detection and narcotic enforcement.
68. Patrol waterways and shorelines.
69. Train municipal police on firearms handling, and other essential job skill training responsibilities.
70. Provide criminal and arson background checks.
71. Process pistol permits on behalf of the state.
72. Are responsible for the safety and protection of abused and neglected animals.



## Infrastructure

73. Own and maintain (with local governments) 85 percent of the roads and 50 percent of the bridges in New York State, 33 percent of all local bridges are structurally deficient and in need of costly repair.
74. Own and operate both commercial service and general aviation airports.
75. Create and manage green infrastructure projects that reduce rainwater and storm water runoff on roads, parking garages and other municipal structures.
76. Own and manage all bridges over 25' in length.
77. Own and operate mass transit systems.



## Special Education

- 78. Finance summer school programs for special needs children in Kindergarten through Grade 12, at a cost of nearly \$50 million a year.
- 79. Fund the largest local share of a preschool special education program out of any state in the nation, now approaching \$1 billion a year.
- 80. Provide services for developmentally delayed and physically handicapped children from birth through age five. Services include speech, occupational, physical therapy, nutrition, social work.

## Higher Education

- 81. Create, sponsor and fund community college costs, and pay a share of their residents' community college tuition.
- 82. Provide citizens certificates of residency for community college students.
- 83. Train and develop skills for individuals seeking employment.



## Youth Programs

- 84. Coordinate persons in need of supervision (PINS), runaway and homeless youth.
- 85. Promote positive youth development through integrated community-based planning for ages 0-21, and work with after school programs to reduce truancy and encourage graduation.
- 86. Provide independent living services to youth and young adults to help prepare them for life on their own as adults.
- 87. Provide intensive direct services in secure settings for youth in pending juvenile delinquency cases in family court.

## Weights and Measures

- 88. Ensure that a gallon of gas equals actually equals one gallon, and a pound of deli meat equals exactly one pound.

## Elections

- 89. Process voter enrollment applications, early voting, absentee and overseas ballots.
- 90. Operate and fund all federal, state, and local primary and general elections, including early voting.
- 91. Hire and train election inspectors to ensure a safe and secure election process.



## Tax and Finance

- 92. Make school districts and most local governments whole when a homeowner or business does not pay their property taxes.
- 93. Auction foreclosed homes and other surplus properties.
- 94. Receive and distribute sales tax revenues to municipalities.

## Maintain Vital Records

- 95. Record and file property deeds and all mortgages.
- 96. Operate community DMV offices, collecting nearly \$400 million in revenue for the state.
- 97. Maintain vital personal records, such as birth and death certificates.
- 98. Assist county residents seeking genealogy information.
- 99. Maintain detailed property tax records to help homeowners understand their rights and how the property assessment process works.



## Recreation

- 100. Own, operate and maintain convention centers and sports venues, which help foster tourism, economic development, and community pride.



# NYSAC

## The United Voice of New York's Counties



New York's counties are at the heart of New York State. From Niagara Falls to the Finger Lakes, from the Adirondacks to Long Island Sound, New York's counties represent diverse landscapes, cities, towns, farms, mountains, and everything in between.

New York county government provides vital programs and services that keep our communities humming and support residents and businesses. We've led the nation in agriculture and manufacturing. We've been pioneers of industry, conservation, and technology. Counties remain home to vibrant communities, cutting-edge businesses, world-class colleges and universities, and natural beauty.

Though varied, New York's counties have often come together to assist one another, to call for state action on common needs, to share services, and to improve upon an always-evolving local government structure.



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