

Here's Cuyahoga County



Cleveland, OH

League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland
5th Edition

Here's Cuyahoga County



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
OF GREATER CLEVELAND
EDUCATION FUND

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Made possible by a gift from the Joan Hirsh Memorial Fund

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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY KIM SLY, ALBIE DESIGNS

ISBN: 978-0-692-06054-4

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FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1968; 5TH EDITION, 2018

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES. PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.

PRINTED BY LEGAL NEWS PUBLISHING COMPANY, CLEVELAND, OHIO.

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PREFACE

This publication is offered as a resource for understanding how Cuyahoga County government and its many public agencies work to meet the needs of Cleveland’s wider metropolitan area. The strength and effectiveness of any democratic government depend upon the informed support and active participation of its citizenry.

Area Leagues of Women Voters collaborated in 1968 on the first *Here’s Cuyahoga County*, a guide to the county government’s system of administration and policy making. Subsequent editions incorporated gradual changes that had taken place in governance over a decade’s time. In 2009, however, the citizens of Cuyahoga County voted to adopt a new charter form of county government that almost completely changed its structure and operations. This fifth edition seeks to explain those changes and their effects on the function and services of county government, so that residents can better understand and navigate the system.

The guide begins with an overview of history, local governments, and the structure and powers of the new county government. It then turns to specific functions and services of county government, such as taxation, health services, infrastructure, and the justice system. Finally, it explores major areawide public services that are not directly a part of county government, such as courts, libraries, public education, and elections. Readers who seek specifics are invited either to use the index at the end or to follow the web citations in each section.

Now, with no further explanations – *Here’s Cuyahoga County*.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY

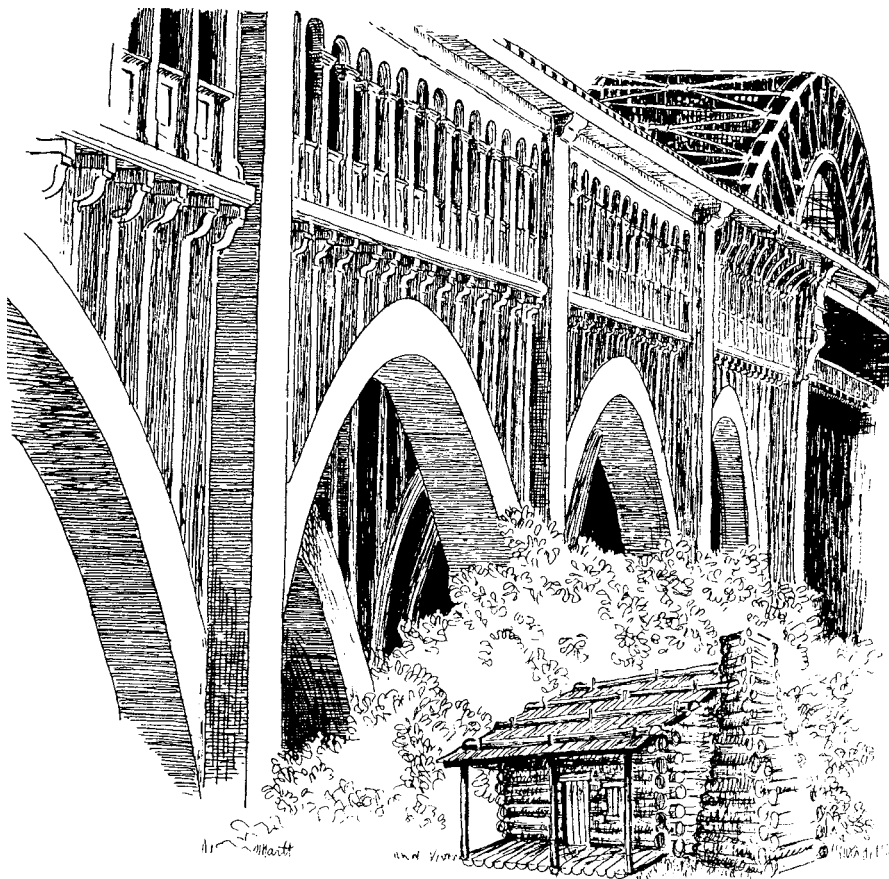
Before Statehood

The earliest documented evidence of habitation in the area that became Cuyahoga County lies in the Cuyahoga River Valley about 40 miles southeast of Cleveland and dates from 10,500 to 11,000 years ago. About 3,000 years ago, American Indians began to cultivate land to supplement hunting and gathering and to develop pottery to store produce. The last prehistoric group appeared around 1000 CE, migrating from the south. They disappeared from the area sometime before 1650 but returned in the 1730s after being displaced by Europeans from their lands farther east. After 1805, few American Indians were left in the region.

The area was claimed at various times by the French, Spanish, and English. Charles II of England granted land, including the Western Reserve, to Connecticut in its charter of 1662. He also granted the same land to Pennsylvania in its charter of 1681. After negotiations and a few armed skirmishes, Connecticut wound up with a 140-mile-wide band of land running along the southern shores of Lake Erie from the Pennsylvania border to the Pacific Ocean. In 1795, the state of Connecticut sold the land to the Connecticut Land Company, and the next year the company sent Moses Cleaveland to lead a surveying expedition to the area. Cleaveland carved out 12 townships and mapped out a New England-style village called Cleaveland around a village green, which is now Public Square. In 1803 Ohio became a state, and within a decade the spelling of Cleaveland changed to Cleveland.

From Farming to Manufacturing

Cleveland's early non-native settlers were farmers, most of them European Americans. The first African American settler, George Peake, arrived in 1809. The population of both city and county increased and changed dramatically with the 1832 opening of the Ohio and Erie Canal,



High Level Bridge and Heritage Cabin

connecting Lake Erie with the Ohio River. Cleveland’s canal merchants became wealthy, exchanging grain for eastern luxuries like china and cotton cloth. The discovery of iron ore in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and, somewhat later, the opening of the iron ranges of Minnesota made Cleveland the center of the iron trade and a major port on the Great Lakes. The population of Cleveland increased from about 6,000 in 1840 to more than 40,000 in 1860.

As Cleveland’s economy shifted from trade to manufacturing during the Civil War, demand for armaments, iron rails, nails, and other iron products skyrocketed. After the war, the city became a major center for oil refining, thanks to John D. Rockefeller’s consolidation of the industry and the founding of Standard Oil Co. in 1870. Steel, oil, and coal—the backbones of Cleveland’s economy—spawned other industries, such

as chemicals and paints (Glidden and Sherwin–Williams), parts for the automobile and aircraft industry (Eaton and TRW), machine tools (Warner & Swasey), and electrical products (Lincoln Electric and General Electric). These industries, many of which were located in the Flats along the Cuyahoga River or along Lake Erie, caused heavy pollution of the city’s air and water. A network of railroads connecting Cleveland with Chicago, Pittsburgh, and New York City also contributed to air and noise pollution at a time when most Cleveland residents lived downtown.

Immigration and Wartime

Cleveland’s industrial capacity depended on labor provided by thousands of European immigrants fleeing famine and war: first the Germans and the Irish, then eastern and southern Europeans. By 1900, one-third of Cleveland’s population of 381,768 was foreign-born, and almost the entire county population of 439,120 was concentrated within the city’s boundaries. To provide services for impoverished immigrants and to assist in their assimilation, the county created government institutions and agencies, including health and human services, welfare, transportation, and public safety. The county set up a juvenile court in 1902 and a park commission in 1913.

The story of African Americans in Cleveland had already begun by the turn of the century as well. Garrett Morgan, who arrived in 1895 from Cincinnati, had opened a sewing machine and shoe repair shop in 1907, and soon made a name for himself by inventing an industrial safety hood and the three-position traffic light still used today. During World War I, when new laws cut off European immigration, the resulting labor demand and shortage opened up industrial jobs to African Americans fleeing Jim Crow conditions in the deep South. Between 1910 and 1939, Cleveland’s black population increased from 10,000 to 72,000.

During the Great Depression, unemployment soared, causing increased demand for health, welfare, and human services, which led to a larger county government. Cleveland’s industries revived during World War II, and labor shortages fueled a second migration of African Americans from the South. The city’s black population increased from 85,000 in 1940 to 251,000 in 1960. Racial discrimination by the real estate and banking industries limited where African Americans could live to the Central, Hough, and Glenville areas of Cleveland. In addition, real estate companies engaged in block busting. Property values in the suburbs rose

as many white residents fled the city. With the loss of this demographic, Cleveland's population and tax revenues declined, making it more difficult to provide services to city residents, many of whom were poor and black.

Sprawl, Decline, and Renewal

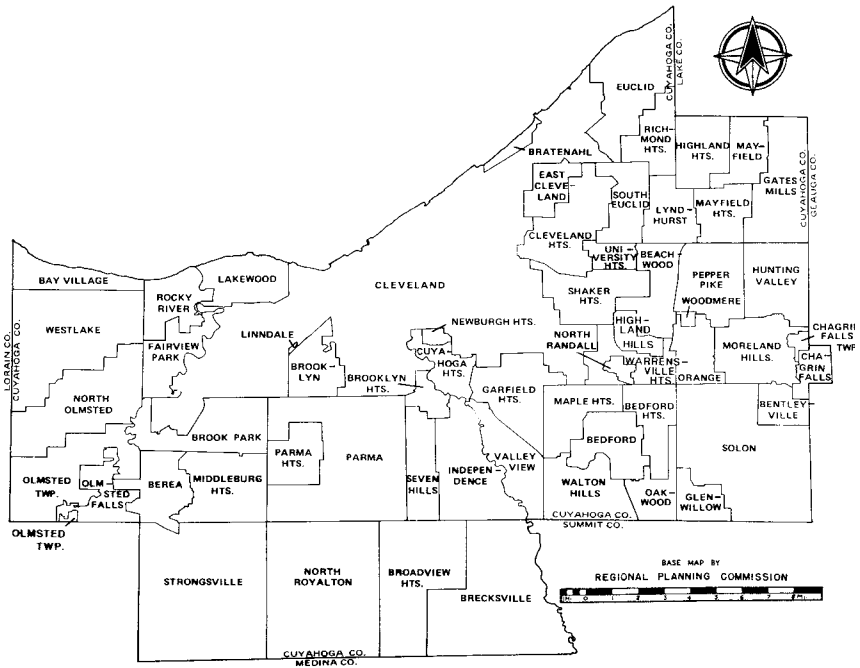
The imbalance between the city's dwindling resources and the suburbs' robust growth increased in the 1950s and '60s. The growth of the federal interstate highway system, supplemented by new state and county highways, increased the mobility of the county's residents and destroyed the vitality of neighborhoods the highways traversed. Suburbs beyond I-271 attracted real estate investment while those closer to Cleveland's borders, the so-called inner-ring or first-ring suburbs, began to suffer population decline and subsequent tax revenue loss. Ohio law allows incorporated municipalities to act independently of each other. Thus, there has been no obligation for the surrounding suburban areas to assist in renewing Cleveland's aging infrastructure and declining services.

Suburban expansion also occurred at the same time that Cleveland experienced deindustrialization. As industries shut down, relocated to adjacent counties, or moved to other states or countries, it became clear that without greater attention to economic development and job creation, the prospects for the future growth of Cuyahoga County were limited. Cuyahoga County government appeared to lack the organizational structure and will to correct this imbalance.

After a three-year federal investigation of the county's government revealed significant corruption, county residents voted in 2009 to adopt a county charter. The charter replaced the three county commissioners with one elected county executive and a county council made up of 11 part-time representatives. Although only one step toward change, reforms initiated by the charter enabled the county government to sharpen its focus on regionalization and to encourage greater sharing of services among the county's 59 communities.

CHAPTER 2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Fifty-nine local governments comprise Cuyahoga County: 38 cities, 19 villages, and two townships.

Municipalities

(Incorporated Cities and Villages)

Cuyahoga County’s municipalities range in size from the city of Cleveland with 77 square miles and 396,815 residents, to the .07-square-mile village of Linndale with 179 residents (2010 census). In general, a city is a municipality with at least 5,000 residents; a village is a

municipality with fewer than 5,000 residents. All derive their powers directly from the Ohio Constitution, which grants them home rule – broad authority to govern their own affairs. Municipalities are able to determine their own governing structure by adopting a charter through a vote of the electorate. A charter allows flexibility in the form of government (mayor–council or council–city manager), the number of elected legislators, and their method of election (partisan or nonpartisan, at-large or by ward).

All of Cuyahoga County’s cities and villages except Parma have exercised the option of adopting home rule charters. Most have chosen a mayor–council form of government with an elected mayor. In the two cities that have chosen a council–city manager form of government, Bedford and Cleveland Heights, the elected council determines policy and hires a city manager to implement and administer day-to-day operations. In a non-charter (statutory) city, such as Parma, the form of government is prescribed by state statute.

Townships

Although throughout the state of Ohio there are more townships than municipalities, Cuyahoga County has only two townships: Chagrin Falls Township and Olmsted Township. Unlike municipalities, which derive their powers from the Ohio Constitution, townships derive their powers and structure from Ohio statutes. Thus, their structures are more specified and their powers more limited than those of municipalities, and any township governmental change requires state legislation.

Townships provide a basic form of local government headed by three trustees and a clerk. Some township powers reflect their rural history: provision for an election site, a cemetery, a town hall, and maintenance of local roads. Newer powers and duties have been granted one at a time by the state legislature, and the county provides some basic services. Townships are limited in their ability to incur debt, and they may not impose income taxes. They can also be vulnerable to annexation by adjacent municipalities.

MUNICIPALITIES AND TOWNSHIPS

CITIES (over 5,000)	Square Miles	2016 Est. Population	Website
Bay Village	4.56	15,328	cityofbayvillage.com
Beachwood	4.49	11,707	beachwoodohio.com
Bedford	5.52	12,665	bedfordoh.gov
Bedford Heights	4.58	10,555	bedfordheights.gov
Berea	4.96	18,859	cityofberea.org
Brecksville	19.47	13,425	brecksville.oh.us
Broadview Heights	13.02	19,197	broadview-heights.org
Brooklyn	4.37	10,828	brooklynohio.gov
Brook Park	8.00	18,691	cityofbrookpark.com
Cleveland	77.33	385,809	city.cleveland.oh.us
Cleveland Heights	8.13	44,633	clevelandheights.com
East Cleveland	3.10	17,220	eastcleveland.org
Euclid	10.75	47,360	cityofeuclid.com
Fairview Park	4.67	16,332	fairviewpark.org
Garfield Heights	7.27	27,905	garfieldhts.org
Highland Heights	5.20	8,397	highlandhts.com
Independence	9.62	7,114	independenciohio.org
Lakewood	5.49	50,279	onelakewood.com
Lyndhurst	4.36	13,605	lyndhurst-oh.com
Maple Heights	5.05	22,478	citymapleheights.com
Mayfield Heights	4.21	18,731	mayfieldheights.org
Middleburg Heights	8.19	15,608	middleburgheights.com
North Olmsted	11.54	31,817	north-olmsted.com
North Royalton	21.40	30,247	northroyalton.org
Olmsted Falls	3.84	8,890	olmstedfalls.org
Parma	19.94	79,425	cityofparma-oh.gov
Parma Heights	4.19	20,123	parmaheights.gov
Pepper Pike	7.15	6,198	pepperpike.org
Richmond Heights	4.38	10,421	richmondheightsohio.org
Rocky River	4.71	20,264	rrcity.com
Seven Hills	4.96	11,655	sevenhillsohio.org
Shaker Heights	6.26	27,448	shakeronline.com
Solon	20.46	23,003	solonohio.org
South Euclid	4.67	21,658	cityofsoutheuclid.com
Strongsville	24.54	44,631	strongsville.org
University Heights	1.93	13,126	universityheights.com
Warrensville Heights	3.87	13,236	cityofwarrensville.com
Westlake	15.82	32,293	cityofwestlake.org

VILLAGES (under 5,000)	Square Miles	2016 Est. Population	Website
Bentleyville	2.67	858	villageofbentleyville.com
Bratenahl	0.99	1,164	bratenahl.org
Brooklyn Heights	1.78	1,521	brooklynhts.org
Chagrin Falls	1.70	3,995	chagrin-falls.org
Cuyahoga Heights	3.26	612	cuyahogaheights.com
Gates Mills	9.15	2,231	gatesmillsvillage.com
Glenwillow	2.85	920	glenwillow-oh.gov
Highland Hills	3.04	961	vhhohio.org
Hunting Valley (part)	7.01	715	huntingvalley.net
Linndale	0.07	176	linndalevillage-oh.gov
Mayfield	3.98	3,387	mayfieldvillage.com
Moreland Hills	7.25	3,306	morelandhills.com
Newburgh Heights	0.58	2,079	newburghhtsoh.gov
North Randall	0.75	1,002	northrandall.com
Oakwood	3.34	3,660	oakwoodvillageoh.com
Orange	3.59	3,271	orangevillage.com
Valley View	5.63	2,005	valleyview.net
Walton Hills	7.04	2,298	waltonhillsohio.gov

TOWNSHIPS (unincorporated)	Square Miles	2016 Est. Population	Website
Chagrin Falls Township	0.56	120	chagrinfallstowship.org
Olmsted Township	11.00	13,168	olmstedtownship.org

Special Districts

In addition to cities, villages, and townships, Ohio has another form of local authority, the special district, which can cross municipal and township boundaries. A special district is a unit of government independent from other governmental units. It is established to serve a specific purpose or to respond to a need for service not provided by an existing governmental entity. Special districts derive their authority from Ohio law, so their powers are specific and limited, and they require state legislation to change. They may be formed by a resolution of the governing bodies, a contract among local governments, or a petition to certain courts. The most common type of special district is a school district. For more information, see Chapter 3 “County Government” and Chapter 12 “Education.”

Special districts have independent means of financing their operations. Some special districts, like school districts, can levy taxes, but levies require a vote of the district's electorate. In most cases, a special district's governing body is appointed; however, most school district boards are elected by the people each serves. A special district can encompass all or parts of one or more communities, providing a service over a larger area. This can, however, result in differing services and tax rates within a single community. This is most common with school districts whose borders are not consistent with municipal boundaries. Learn more about special districts in Chapter 3 "County Government" on pp. 25-26.

CHAPTER 3

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Structure and Power

Background

In 1933, Ohio permitted home rule in counties by allowing them to adopt a charter. Cuyahoga County commissioners made their first unsuccessful attempt at charter adoption in 1934. Subsequent county charters were also proposed and rejected by voters in 1949 and 1958. The main reasons for rejection were the difficulty of achieving the four majorities* required by state law and voter wariness that a more powerful county government might usurp authority from local governments. The state legislature made adopting a county charter easier in the 1960s, but Cuyahoga County voters in 1969 and 1970 again defeated charter efforts. In 1979, when state legislators made the process even easier, Summit County became Ohio's first charter county, but a similar Cuyahoga County proposal the very next year failed once more.

Periodically during the following 25 years, studies were conducted and charter proposals were made in Cuyahoga County, but the issue never managed to generate public interest or establishment support. Yet many county officials and knowledgeable civic groups considered the three-commissioner system antiquated and unwieldy, especially in an urban county, given its many unaccountable, independent offices. In addition, it was too inflexible to meet the challenges of managing a large metropolitan area of 59 political subdivisions.

Still, the three-commissioner system might have continued well into the 21st century if it had not been for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

* At the time these early charter proposals were on the ballot, a majority vote was required in each of the following: (1) the county as a whole, (2) the largest municipality in the county, (3) the total county area outside the largest municipality, and (4) the total number of municipalities and townships in the county.

Aided by intensive investigative reporting by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the FBI uncovered a pervasive culture of corruption that had penetrated the highest offices of the county and the inner workings of several patronage-rich, independent, and unaccountable offices. The steady drumbeat of exposures, arrests, and media coverage finally caught the public’s attention, resulting in a 2009 citizen initiative and charter campaign that ultimately won broad voter approval for a new form of government.

The Charter

Cuyahoga County’s charter can be found on the county council’s website, council.cuyahogacounty.us. Its preamble states its goals: reformed government and improved economic competitiveness. It breaks these goals down into separation of powers, accountable leadership, better representation, economic growth, intergovernmental collaboration, equity for all citizens, and streamlined efficient operations. Its powers are both broad and limited: broad because the county may exercise “powers specifically conferred by this charter ... and all other powers that the constitution and laws of Ohio ... grant to counties or do not prohibit counties from exercising,” and limited because in case of conflict between powers granted to both county and local governments, “the exercise of powers by the municipality or township shall prevail.”

The charter establishes an elected executive–elected council structure of government, with an executive branch and a representative legislative branch, endowed with checks and balances to protect the system from potential abuses of power. It has several unique features:

- Executive appointment, with council consent, of all of the formerly elected and independent county officers except for the prosecuting attorney. Integrated into the unified executive branch are these offices and their departments: fiscal officer, medical examiner, clerk of courts, treasurer, sheriff, director of public works, and law director. These officers are held accountable to the public through the elected county executive.
- A personnel system that sets uniform hiring, qualifications, duties, and dismissal policies for all classified employees in the executive branch. The independent personnel review commission ensures qualifications of classified employees

through civil service testing, handles individual infractions of personnel rules, and assures that policies are uniformly and fairly enforced.

- Citizen recourse measures, such as initiative, referendum, and other procedures whereby voters can amend the charter, pass and repeal legislation, or recall an elected official. Commissions must also review the charter at regular intervals.
- An increased focus on countywide economic development, driven by the charter’s requirement that the county adopt and update five-year economic development plans.
- An expanded regional role for the county in initiating or facilitating intergovernmental collaboration with and among the county’s political subdivisions.
- A county audit committee that watches for incidents of waste, fraud, or abuse in the executive branch.
- A code of ethics, mandated by the charter and shaped by the county council, that exceeds the pertinent ethics statutes in the Ohio Revised Code. Companion legislation established the agency of inspector general, whose duty is to train, advise, investigate, and refer cases of ethics infractions to appropriate authorities for action.

County Council

An 11-member, part-time county council constitutes the legislative branch of county government and is co-equal with the executive branch. Members serve staggered four-year terms, elected in even-numbered years, and each must be a resident of the council district he or she represents. After each U.S. Census year, the charter requires a bipartisan council districting commission to redraw district lines to reflect equal population, compactness, contiguity, and respect for existing subdivision boundaries. At the same time, proposals must also consider “opportunities for historically under-represented and minority communities to elect representatives to the council.” The salary of council members may be changed in one biennial session, but the changes may not take effect until the following biennium begins. Council also hires and compensates its

own shared staff, separate from that of the executive branch. County council's powers and duties, fixed in the charter are to:

- Introduce and enact ordinances and resolutions. After the county executive signs those, he or she then follows through with the required actions.
- Propose, submit to the voters, and collect county taxes.
- Advise and consent to major appointments by the county executive.
- Establish county departments, boards, agencies, commissions, and authorities it deems necessary.
- Establish the processes for county contracts and purchasing and to approve contracts and purchases over a certain amount (currently \$500,000).
- Adopt and amend the county's annual tax budget, biennial operating budget, and biennial capital improvements program.
- Provide for buying, building, maintaining, and administering all county property and other county public facilities.
- Cooperate or contract with other governments for common facilities or services and to provide grants or loans to further intergovernmental programs or projects.
- Provide financial assistance to help county residents access higher education, vocational education, or job training programs.
- Enact a code of ethics that exceeds state requirements, represents high professional standards, and discourages conflicts of interest or other violations of the public trust.
- Investigate the financial transactions or conduct of any county official, including the ability to subpoena witnesses and evidence, if needed.

The list above illustrates the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of county government. In addition, council may not interfere in the day-to-day operations of any executive departments or give orders to any employees who work in those departments. No council

actions may take effect unless the executive approves them, but a supermajority of council members may override an executive's veto.

The county council may organize itself as it sees fit. Every two years its members elect officers, adopt operating rules, set meeting schedules, and decide who will serve on and chair council committees. Council currently holds its regular public meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month in council chambers on the fourth floor of the county administration building at East Ninth Street and Prospect Avenue. The public is encouraged to attend the meetings, and opportunities for public comment introduce each session. There may be earlier work sessions, open to the public, for council to consider major legislation, hear presentations, examine special issues, or conduct confirmation hearings. Public sessions are aired via live-stream video on the county council page of the Cuyahoga County website and are archived on the county's YouTube channel.

Committee meetings are scheduled throughout the period between council meetings. The current committee structure can be found on the county council website. All proposed ordinances and resolutions are referred to committees first, where they are debated and refined before they return to the council's agenda for public scrutiny and final action. In general, the real give and take of any legislative body takes place at committee meetings. Although Ohio sunshine laws permit several kinds of executive sessions (meetings covering personnel matters, the purchase of property, pending or imminent legal action, and collective bargaining), all other committee meetings are open to the public. Times, locations, and detailed agendas are available on the council's website, council.cuyahogacounty.us.

The County Executive

The county executive position is similar to that of a strong mayor of a major American city. He or she is responsible for all executive departments of county government. County voters elect the county executive to a four-year term, during which he or she is prohibited from holding or accepting other employment. The executive must have lived in the county at least two years before filing to run for the office. The salary is intentionally generous in order to attract and reward strong leadership, and it may be raised by council ordinance at any time before a primary election for that office. The most important powers and duties of the county executive are to:



County Administration Building

- Appoint, suspend, discipline, or remove all county personnel, except for those under the direct authority of county council, the county prosecutor, or the various boards and commissions
- Advocate for countywide interests and to promote collaboration with other levels of government or political subdivisions
- Sign or veto any ordinance and most resolutions of county council
- Execute all contracts and agreements on behalf of the county
- Attend all county council meetings and participate in its discussions
- Introduce ordinances and resolutions to council for consideration and passage
- Submit to council, every two years, a proposed biennial operating budget for all departments, boards, and commissions reporting to the executive
- Submit to council, every two years, a capital improvements program, along with estimated costs, methods of financing, and a five-year projection of future capital improvements

- Submit to council, along with the budget proposal, a written message explaining what upcoming work needs to be done and itemizing each proposed expenditure
- Conduct collective bargaining, administer uniform personnel procedures for all employees, and make regular reports to the personnel review commission
- Present to council each year a five-year financial forecast for the county’s general operating fund
- Examine, without notice, any official acts and conduct of any employee, department, or agency, as well as compel witnesses or the production of evidence and refer cases of noncompliance to the prosecuting attorney.

The wording of the charter limits the county executive’s authority only to those “over which the executive has authority.” Nevertheless, the county executive has significant leeway for framing the overall direction of Cuyahoga County’s public policy. For more information, see below for the organization of the executive branch, or consult the website at executive.cuyahogacounty.us.

The County Prosecutor

The office of county prosecutor is the only one of the eight formerly elected county offices that retains its elected status under the new charter. As such, it maintains some independence from county council and from some regulations that apply to the executive branch. The reason for this, according to charter framers, was partly political but also partly due to the widely held public perception of a prosecutor as a policy-maker with discretion as to that office’s role in county affairs. The public, charter framers thought, could be reluctant to approve a charter that deprived voters of the right to elect their prosecutor.

The office of county prosecutor has some overlap with the executive branch’s law director, who regularly sits at county council meetings and whose office routinely helps council with legislative advice. Administration of the prosecutor’s office is separate from that of the county executive, with its own fiscal, operational, informational, communication, and personnel management. See Chapter 9 “Justice and the Courts,” or consult the website at prosecutor.cuyahogacounty.us.

Organization and Administration of the Executive Branch

All county governments in Ohio must perform certain general functions: determine and collect taxes, augment the courts with necessary justice services, maintain infrastructure, and administer many health and human services. The county charter vests the elected county executive with much discretion as to how he or she organizes the executive branch in order to accomplish these responsibilities. Because of this discretion, departmental structure is likely to vary from administration to administration, or even over the term of a single administration. This chapter briefly lists the main functions of the county’s executive branch and how they are organized in 2018, and are outlined in the following organizational chart. Some major functions are briefly described here or more fully described in their own chapters.

Fiscal Management and Taxation

The county fiscal officer is an appointed cabinet-level position that combines the duties formerly performed by the independent auditor and recorder. Under the current administration, the treasurer reports to the fiscal officer. Future administrations may change that, since the office of treasurer is a charter office in its own right. See Chapter 5 “Taxation,” and read more at fiscalofficer.cuyahogacounty.us.

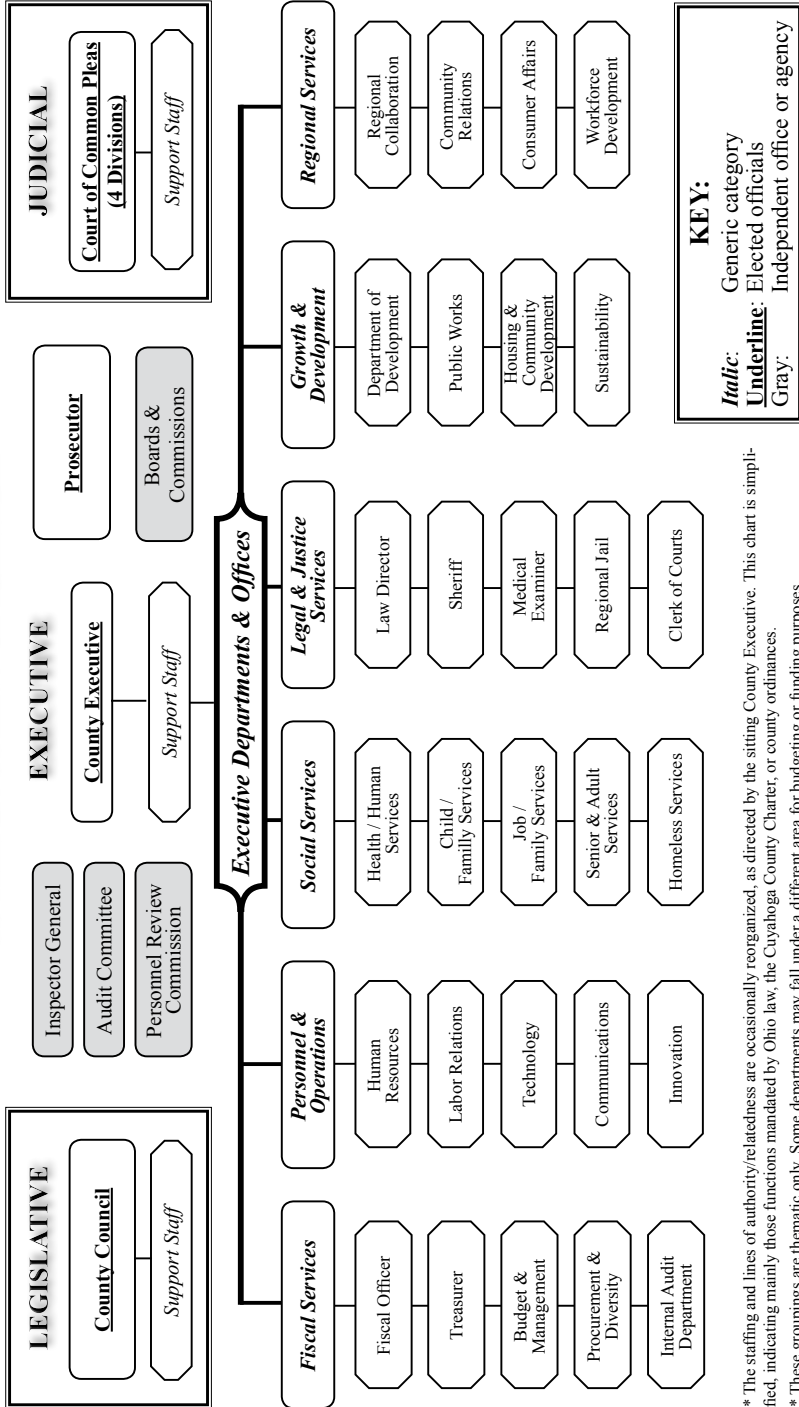
Health and Human Services

This large department contains several divisions and offices. In addition, there are a number of other boards and commissions in the county that provide essential health and social services. See Chapter 7 “Social and Health Services.”

Administration of Justice Services

The appointed sheriff, clerk of courts, and medical examiner provide important support services to the county’s justice system, which also includes the department of public safety and justice services and the regional jail. See Chapter 9 “Justice and Court Services,” and read more at ja.cuyahogacounty.us.

CUYAHOGA COUNTY GOVERNMENT*



KEY:
Italic: Generic category
Underline: Elected officials
 Gray: Independent office or agency

* The staffing and lines of authority/relatedness are occasionally reorganized, as directed by the sitting County Executive. This chart is simplified, indicating mainly those functions mandated by Ohio law, the Cuyahoga County Charter, or county ordinances.

* These groupings are thematic only. Some departments may fall under a different area for budgeting or funding purposes.

Public Works, Sanitation, and Transportation

These three functions chiefly involve the county’s infrastructure. Duties of the former county engineer are included in the large public works department. See Chapter 8 “Infrastructure and Facilities” and read more at publicworks.cuyahogacounty.us.

Economic Development

Economic development has traditionally been mainly a concern of local governments, but Cuyahoga County, reflecting its charter mandate, has elevated it to priority status. An economic development commission includes representatives from Cleveland, the city-county port authority, county mayors and managers, regional labor and business organizations, and nonprofit and educational organizations. This commission, together with the county executive and chief economic development officer, must present five-year economic development plans to the county council for its approval and adoption. The plan must be updated every year. The executive branch, currently structured to carry out the five-year plan’s primary objectives, is led by a director and department of development. The 2016-2020 plan states those goals:

- Reestablishing the greater Cleveland region as a national economic hub, recognized nationally and globally for the strength of its manufacturing sector, as a global center for healthcare innovation and research, and as home to both a well-funded start-up ecosystem and a modernized workforce
- Fostering positive employment and economic and population growth in the county
- Advancing balanced, diverse, and equitable economic and job growth through public policies and investments that also focus on the quality of jobs and neighborhoods.

To these ends, the department of development provides capital assistance in the form of loans and grants to business ventures, housing improvement programs, and municipal projects. The full text of the current five-year plan, data on northeast Ohio’s economic indicators, and more current information on the activities of the department of development can be accessed at development.cuyahogacounty.us.

Regionalism

Under the charter, Cuyahoga County is free to take a proactive role in regional problem-solving and intergovernmental sharing of services. The department of regional collaboration provides guidance to local efforts to combine services, explore mergers, and set up joint projects. For information on the most current regional initiatives and strategies, consult the website regionalcollaboration.cuyahogacounty.us, and see Chapter 4 “Regionalism.”

Consumer Affairs

A department of consumer affairs was formed to help protect consumers from unfair practices, to mediate complaints, and to perform what used to be the auditor’s task of verifying weights and measures on devices such as fuel pumps, scales, and cash registers. The department also provides public information about consumer protection laws. More can be found on the department’s website, consumeraffairs.cuyahogacounty.us.

Sustainability

A new priority set in 2014 was the formation of a department of sustainability. Its mission includes promoting environmentally sustainable energy practices in county operations, supporting similar efforts by local governments and businesses, and educating the public on sustainability issues. See Chapter 8 “Infrastructure and Facilities” or the county executive’s website, executive.cuyahogacounty.us.

Legal Services

The county law director is a new, appointed charter officer who represents and serves as legal advisor to the county executive and county council. The law director attends all council meetings and is instrumental in drafting county legislation and contracts. Initially, charter framers saw this position as assuming the role of the prosecutor’s civil division, particularly its functions as counsel for the county in all litigation and as solicitor for all county boards and commissions. However, in a binding 2011 advisory opinion, Ohio’s attorney general said that those two functions are still to be performed by the prosecutor’s office. A 2013 follow-up written agreement signed by the county executive, president of county council, prosecutor, and law director spells out the division of responsibilities and cannot be

changed except by a successor written agreement. The current agreement states that its purpose is to “achieve an agreement without having to go through a formal charter amendment process.” More detail on duties and staffing of the county’s legal department can be accessed on the law director’s website, legal.cuyahogacounty.us.

Personnel Management

An appointed human resources director oversees the county’s large employee pool under a uniform civil service system with a thick manual of job classifications and salary scales. The director also handles hiring and training, labor relations, benefits, policies and procedures, equal opportunity, workmen’s compensation, rule enforcement, and staff development. The only county employees technically not covered by this system are unclassified workers and those not part of the unified executive branch, although many in those categories voluntarily comply. The human resources department also plays a large role in the enforcement of the county’s code of ethics, in that it provides regular ethics training for all county employees. More detail on the duties and subdivisions of Cuyahoga County’s personnel management system can be reviewed on the human resources website, hr.cuyahogacounty.us.

Technology and Innovation

Cuyahoga County has a department of information technology—a single focal point for all technological services to all branches, departments, and agencies of county government. Its technicians create and maintain web design, voice and video communications, network engineering, server applications, database development, project management, countywide public safety systems, cyber security, equipment maintenance, purchasing, and more. More detail can be accessed on the department’s website, isc.cuyahogacounty.us.

Communications

A department of communication and media relations is responsible for all internal and external communications, media relations, social media, public records access, and public information about county programs and services. This department can be accessed from the county executive’s website, executive.cuyahogacounty.us.

Independent Safeguards

Framers of the county charter and members of county council have addressed the need for independent safeguards against possible waste, fraud, abuse, or corrupt practices in county government, especially since past ethical and financial irregularities resulted in broad public demand for reform. Foremost among these additional functions are internal auditing, standards of employee conduct, and ethics enforcement.

County Audit Committee

The county audit committee and its department of internal auditing are charged by the charter with assisting all arms of Cuyahoga County supported in whole or in part by county funds to provide efficient, effective services by means of regular financial and performance audits. Committee members include the council president plus four county residents with relevant professional qualifications appointed by the county executive and confirmed by council. The executive and the fiscal officer serve as nonvoting, ex-officio members. Because this committee directs audits of all executive branch operations, only committee members can remove one of their own number, an action that must be approved by council. The department of internal auditing is headed by a certified director of internal auditing recommended by and directed by the audit committee but appointed by council to a four-year term and dismissible only for cause and after a thorough hearing. The audit committee and its department of internal auditing are not part of the county's executive branch. For more information, see the county's boards and commissions website, bc.cuyahogacounty.us.

Personnel Review Commission

The personnel review commission, basically a county civil service commission, is likewise mandated by the charter and not part of the county's executive branch. It is responsible for administering an efficient and economical employment system based not on patronage but on merit, fitness, equity, consistency, high ethical standards, and nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or ancestry. As it primarily deals with classified employees of the executive branch, its three members may not be public officials, nor may more than two members be from

the same political party. Members are appointed to staggered six-year terms by county council and receive only per diem pay. Council enacts the commission's policies and procedures by ordinance, after receiving recommendations from commission members. Council also may remove members from their positions, but only for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office, and only after a public hearing and a two-thirds vote of council. The department of human resources shoulders the day-to-day workload of administering personnel policy.

Duties of the personnel review commission consist of civil service testing, hearing employee complaints and appeals, assuring compliance with federal and state personnel laws, and ensuring the following: pay equity, standardized benefits, qualifications, consistent discipline, and compliance with ethics ordinances passed by county council. Under the system, uniform civil service standards apply to all classified employees of the entire executive branch, and include those who work for the prosecutor, the county planning commission, and the county public defender. Technically not covered are many unclassified employees, members of bargaining units, and others not part of the executive branch. For more information on duties and policies, visit prc.cuyahogacounty.us.

Inspector General

County council created the office of inspector general (IG) to lead investigations and to enforce, to a prescribed extent, the county's code of ethics. As of 2018, the office is still not mandated in the charter and therefore can be subject at any time to amendment or repeal. The current IG ordinance can be found in the county code, code.cuyahogacounty.us. The ordinance confers semi-independent status on the IG by stipulating appointment by the county executive to a five-year term and council confirmation by a two-thirds majority vote. It also spells out strict professional standards any appointee must meet, and none of the agency's employees is to be considered a classified county employee answerable to the executive branch. However, the IG has neither subpoena powers to aid in investigations nor quasi-judicial powers to hear or adjudicate complaints. The agency's funding is subject to the normal budgetary process undergone by all other county government entities.

The duties of the inspector general are to “investigate fraud, corruption, waste, abuse, misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance ... without interference or pressure from any other public official or employee.” The

IG, in turn, must not interfere with or duplicate the work of the personnel review commission or the internal auditor. Complaints of violations of the code of ethics may be anonymous and may be submitted by any means or in any format, although a whistleblower hotline and a website are mandated by ordinance. An official, employee, or contractor may ask the inspector general for an opinion as to whether a certain action is a violation of the code of ethics. If, after investigation, the IG believes a violation has taken place, he or she must notify the appropriate civil, criminal, or administrative agency with the power to issue an appropriate response. If a classified employee is believed to have committed an ethics violation, the case is referred to the personnel review commission. Semi-annual reports and other activities and actions of the IG can be viewed on the agency's website, inspectorgeneral.cuyahogacounty.us.

County Code of Ethics

The county code of ethics is considerably stricter than the ethics provisions in the Ohio Revised Code or in any other local ethics policy in Ohio. It begins by stating that the county will comply with all ethics provisions of Ohio law, followed by additional provisions applicable to the several classes of covered persons: employees, contractors, and lobbyists. Enforcement of county ethics policy relies on the independent safeguards outlined above and the possibility of prosecution in the appropriate court. Of special interest are provisions that:

- Require conflict-of-interest disclosure and recusal from related decision making
- Extend financial disclosure requirements to director- and officer-level appointees, including top staff members of county council, the county executive, and the prosecutor
- Require disclosure of secondary employment, with termination required in case of incompatibility with county service
- Expand state nepotism rules to prohibit favoritism in personnel actions
- Expand nondiscrimination rules to include sexual orientation and gender identity
- Limit the size of gifts to officials and define the presumption that the gift was intended to influence the official

- Require registration conditions and ethics training for all contractors and lobbyists
- Provide the penalty of debarment—prohibiting noncompliant contractors or lobbyists from doing business with the county for a specific time
- Require inspector general or law department opinions to avoid conflicts of interest
- Expand whistleblower rights, duties, and protections against retaliation, and add a system-wide requirement that employees understand their rights and duty to report what they know
- Delineate roles for the inspector general, the personnel review commission, and the human resources department.

The code of ethics can be accessed in its entirety at code.cuyahogacounty.us.

Authorities, Boards, Commissions, and Special Districts

Cuyahoga County has many authorities, boards, commissions, and special districts to provide or oversee services that cannot be easily incorporated into the regular structure of county government. These take many shapes, functions, and powers, from the smallest advisory board to a large policy-making entity spanning several counties, to an authority capable of charging high user fees, or even of asking voters to pass tax levies. School districts fall under this broad classification as well. See Chapter 2 “Local Government” and Chapter 12 “Education.”

Autonomous governing boards (other than those of school districts) are appointed by various officials or groups: by elected county officers or judges, by city officials, or sometimes even by local professional or nonprofit agencies. They manage their own finances and hire their own staffs. Those partly or wholly appointed by county officials or supported by county funds may be subject to some county contracting, purchasing, personnel, or ethics requirements. Only a few of the largest boards and commissions are discussed in this guide. Below is a list of many of these entities, along with their current websites. An up-to-date list of all boards and commissions, as well as current board openings and volunteer service opportunities, can be viewed at bc.cuyahogacounty.us.

KEY COUNTY & REGIONAL AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS*

NAME	WEB ADDRESS
Alcohol, Drug Addiction, & Mental Health Services Board	adamhsec.org
Audit Committee	bc.cuyahogacounty.us
Board of Developmental Disabilities	cuyahogaBDD.org
Board of Revision	bor.cuyahogacounty.us
Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority	portofcleveland.com
Cleveland Metropolitan Park District (Metroparks)	clevelandmetroparks.com
Community Based Correctional Facility Governing Board	cbcf.cuyahogacounty.us
Convention Visitors Bureau of Greater Cleveland (Destination Cleveland)	thisiscleveland.com
Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland	ceogc.org
Cuyahoga Arts and Culture	cacgrants.cuyahogacounty.us
Cuyahoga Community College	tri-c.edu
Cuyahoga County Advisory Council on Senior and Adult Services	dsas.cuyahogacounty.us
Cuyahoga County Board of Elections	boe.cuyahogacounty.us
Cuyahoga County Board of Health	ccbh.net
Cuyahoga County Community Improvement Corporation	bc.cuyahogacounty.us
Cuyahoga County Economic Development Commission	bc.cuyahogacounty.us
Cuyahoga County Investment Advisory Committee	bc.cuyahogacounty.us
Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation (County Land Bank)	cuyahogalandbank.org
Cuyahoga County Planning Commission	planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us
Cuyahoga County Public Library Board	cuyahogalibrary.org
Cuyahoga County Solid Waste Policy Committee	cuyahogaswd.org
Cuyahoga Local Emergency Planning Committee	lepc.cuyahogacounty.us
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority	cmha.net
District One Public Works Integrating Committee	planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us/dopwic
Gateway Economic Development Corporation of Greater Cleveland	gatewaysportscomplex.org
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority	riderta.com
Greater Cleveland Sports Commission	clevelandandsports.org
Group Plan Commission	groupplan.org
MetroHealth System Board of Trustees	metrohealth.org
Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency	noaca.org
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District	neorsd.org
Office of Homeless Services Advisory Board	ohscuyahogacounty.us
Personnel Review Commission	prc.cuyahogacounty.us
Public Defenders Commission	publicdefender.cuyahogacounty.us
Senior Transportation Connection of Cuyahoga County	ridestc.org
Soil & Water Conservation District	cuyahogaswcd.org
Soldiers & Sailors Monument Board of Trustees	soldiersandsailors.com
Solid Waste Management District	cuyahogarecycles.org
Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging	psa10a.org
Workforce Development Board	careeronestop.org

*Cuyahoga County's public school districts and joint vocational districts are separately listed in Chapter 12. Numerous other boards and commissions, especially those of an advisory nature, can be discovered and contacted by way of the county website, bc.cuyahogacounty.us. Many of those have current openings, and they invite civic-minded potential volunteers to contact them to express their interest.

CHAPTER 4

REGIONALISM

Because governmental needs cross municipal and township boundaries, other strategies besides the creation of special districts are sometimes used to enable joint efforts among communities in the county. The simplest of these strategies is the mutual aid contract; for example, municipalities may agree to share police or fire protection services in times of need. Two or more municipalities may also develop voluntary agreements to provide a service jointly in order to reduce overlap, as in shared dispatch or SWAT teams. Cities and villages may also agree to contract jointly with another governmental unit for the provision of specific services, such as those of the county board of health or the county sheriff's department. One department of the county's executive branch deals with a wide range of intergovernmental strategies, while various other public agencies and organizations address more specific needs or employ more specific approaches.

Regional Organizations

Department of Regional Collaboration

In order to encourage and support regional initiatives in the greater Cleveland area, Cuyahoga County government has established the department of regional collaboration. Detailed information may be found at regionalcollaboration.cuyahogacounty.us. Its current projects and accomplishments include the following:

- Increasing municipal participation in shared services by promoting efficiency and working closely with local officials
- Assisting the county executive and other departments in expanding and improving county-provided services
- Convening stakeholders on policy-specific matters within the departments of public safety, public works, human resources, finance, transportation, and others

- Creating and implementing the Public Works Shared Services Program to help municipalities cover the cost of their service equipment
- Supporting local collaborative projects
- Convening and facilitating outreach with community stakeholders and constituency groups.

Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA)

NOACA is a transportation and environmental planning agency that represents state, county, city, village, and township officials in greater Cleveland. NOACA addresses the transportation, air quality, and water quality needs of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties. The agency and its partners cooperatively develop and implement plans to ensure that travel throughout the region is safe, cost-effective, and environmentally sound. NOACA’s vision is to strengthen regional cohesion, preserve existing infrastructure, and build a sustainable multimodal transportation system to support economic development and enhance the quality of life in northeast Ohio.

The long-range NEO 2014 Transportation Plan outlines a “vision for Northeast Ohio’s transportation system through the year 2040, integrate the goals and strategies approved in the Regional Strategic Plan, identify strategies and projects for effectively moving people and goods, serve the mobility needs of residents, commuters, the transit-dependent, the physically challenged and visitors to the region with multimodal and sustainable transportation.”

In addition to being a main transportation policymaker, NOACA is also designated by the federal government as the area’s metropolitan planning organization, or MPO. In this capacity, it has played a large role in the work of the Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium. See Chapter 11 “Planning.”

The 37-member NOACA board of directors governs the agency in accordance with state and federal regulations and is made up of elected officials and administrators from NOACA’s five counties. Visit noaca.org for more information.

Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDDs)

Joint economic development districts can be formed by the action of several contiguous municipalities, regardless of county boundaries, to accomplish specific mutual development projects. They are autonomous special districts and are funded by assessments and contributions by the local governments that compose them. For example, the Village of Walton Hills in Cuyahoga County and the Township of Sagamore Hills in Summit County recently formed a JEDD for the purpose of improving economic welfare and employment opportunities in both communities.

Councils of Governments (COGs)

The governing bodies of two or more counties, municipalities, or townships in any combination may establish a regional council of governments. A COG may examine area concerns, such as police and fire protection, trash collection, or economic development, and may perform certain authorized functions. Member governments participate voluntarily through their elected leaders or their designees. The Suburban Council of Governments is composed of 62 communities in the four counties served by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. Within Cuyahoga County, there are currently at least five active COGs:

- West Shore Council of Governments encompassing the suburbs of Bay Village, Fairview Park, Lakewood, North Olmsted, Rocky River, and Westlake
- Heights-Hillcrest Regional Dispatch Center, whose members include Cleveland Heights, Richmond Heights, South Euclid, Shaker Heights, and University Heights
- Chagrin Valley Dispatch Council covering Bedford, Bentleyville, Chagrin Falls Township, Chagrin Falls Village, Euclid, Gates Mills, Highland Heights, Hunting Valley, Mayfield Heights, North Randall, Orange, South Russell, and Woodmere
- Northeast Ohio First Suburbs Consortium (see below)
- County Mayors and City Managers Association (see below).

Northeast Ohio First Suburbs Consortium

This large COG was founded in 1996 because leaders of 18 of Cleveland’s inner-ring suburbs recognized that public policy and common practice often result in new development at the outer edges of metropolitan areas rather than in redevelopment and maintenance of mature suburbs. The consortium advocates for revitalization of inner-ring communities and raises awareness of the problems caused by sprawl and urban disinvestment. Visit firstsuburbs.org for more information.

County Mayors and City Managers Association

A second large COG, formed in 1972, exists to combine the strength of all 57 county municipalities in order to speak with one voice to state government for fair funding and other matters of mutual concern. It cooperates with other associations and stakeholders to advance the interests of the wider region, and it provides a forum to educate its members on current issues in Ohio municipal government. Visit ccmema.org.

CHAPTER 5

TAXATION

Income Taxes

Municipal Income Taxes

Most Cuyahoga County municipalities levy a municipal income tax on certain types of income of everyone residing in or working in the municipality. The revenue collected is used to fund municipal operations and services like police, fire, and trash pick-up. Townships do not have the power to levy income taxes. Some municipalities provide a credit to their taxpayers for income tax paid to other municipalities. In Cuyahoga County, the Central Collection Agency and the Regional Income Tax Agency collect and then distribute income tax funds back to the municipalities.

State Income Taxes

State income tax revenue goes mostly to Ohio's general fund. Of that, 1.66 percent is currently allocated to the Local Government Fund (LGF), which is then distributed across the state to counties, municipalities, townships, and special districts. State income taxes allocated to the LGF have significantly decreased since 2011, when the percentage stood at 3.68 percent. Monies are distributed according to complex calculations that have varied over the years since the LGF was established in 1934. In addition to the LGF, the Ohio Constitution requires that at least 50 percent of state income tax collections be returned to the county, school district, or municipality in which the tax monies originated. This requirement is met by general revenue fund allocations to education and local property tax relief. Learn more at tax.ohio.gov.

Property Taxes

Various taxing districts in the county, including the county itself, cities, villages, townships, libraries, school districts, and other special districts, tap the same source of funds: the property tax. All property taxpayers within the county pay the same rate to support countywide government agencies, including the Cleveland Metroparks and the port authority. Likewise, the health and human services levy is uniform throughout the county and supports children and family services; the MetroHealth system; the alcohol, drug addiction and mental health board; the juvenile court; senior centers; and preschools. More information can be found in Chapter 6 “Fiscal Administration” or Chapter 7 “Social and Health Services.”

The tax rates for municipalities (cities and villages), townships, and school districts differ, reflecting the size and relative makeup of the tax base and voters’ willingness to be taxed for services. Because municipal and school district boundaries are not always the same, Cuyahoga County’s 59 cities, villages, and townships, overlaid by 33 school districts, produce differing tax rates within single communities.

Property tax rates are levied in mills, with one mill equaling one-tenth of a cent. Each parcel of land is appraised every six years, with valuations updated every three years. For taxing purposes, each parcel is assessed at 35 percent of market value. Real property owned or used by schools, hospitals, churches, or municipal corporations are exempt from property tax, as are pollution-control facilities. According to the Ohio Constitution, no property may be taxed in excess of 10 mills (“inside millage”) for all state and local purposes without the approval of the electors of the taxing district. Voter-approved millage over that amount is termed “outside millage.” Three state laws allow property tax credits in the form of direct reductions of taxes, and the state reimburses local governments for these tax losses:

- The Homestead Exemption, defined as tax relief for qualified “elderly” (65 or older) and/or disabled property owners with incomes below a certain level
- Tax relief in the form of a 10 percent reduction in each taxpayer’s real property tax bill
- An additional 2.5 percent rollback on residential real property taxes.

Board of Revision

The board of revision is the reviewing agency established in each county, under state law, primarily to investigate and hear complaints and adjust assessments of real property for taxation. The Cuyahoga County Board of Revision has three members: the county executive, one appointee of the county council president, and either the county fiscal officer or treasurer. The council president’s appointee may be either a member of council or any other elector of the county but cannot belong to the same political party as the county executive. The three-member board of revision may hire as many three-member hearing boards as necessary to manage the current caseload. The hearing boards must reflect the same bipartisan balance as the board of revision. The board of revision’s website, bor.cuyahogacounty.us, contains documentation relating to all complaints from tax year 2012 on. The board has the power to increase or decrease valuation or to order a reassessment. Appeals of a board of revision action may be taken to the state board of tax appeals or to common pleas court.

Sales Tax

Ohio introduced a 3 percent state sales tax in 1935. In 1967, when the state’s sales tax was raised to 4 percent, the Ohio General Assembly granted power to counties to levy a 0.5 percent “piggyback” sales tax on top of the state sales tax, with proceeds going toward the county’s general revenue expenses. Cuyahoga County levies the piggyback tax and has increased the rate periodically at increments allowed by state law: 0.5 percent increments until 1989, 0.25 percent since then. In 1974 the general assembly granted power to transit authorities to levy a sales tax of up to 1.5 percent on the same base as the state sales tax. The county regional transit authority (RTA) sales tax rate is 1 percent.

As of 2018, Cuyahoga County residents pay a total sales tax rate of total eight percent. Of that, 5.75 percent is the state sales tax, 1 percent goes to RTA, and 1.25 percent is for the county. The last 0.25 percent increase to the sales tax was approved by the county commissioners in 2007 and expires in 2027. Under the county charter, sales tax increases for county and RTA use must be approved by county council but can be rescinded by voters via referendum.

Miscellaneous Taxes

The **motor vehicle license tax** is a state-levied and state-collected tax that is distributed to local governments according to a formula set by law. It may be used for road construction and repair. Counties may, and Cuyahoga County does, levy an additional per-vehicle license tax.

The state **motor vehicle fuel tax** is levied on dealers involved in the use, distribution, or sale of fuel that powers motor vehicles. Revenues from the tax are earmarked for highway construction, traffic enforcement, and certain other transportation purposes. The total motor vehicle fuel tax rate is based on five different levies, each with a different provision for revenue allocation. After portions are set aside for refunds, highway bond retirement, the Waterway Safety Fund, the Local Transportation Improvement Program Fund, and the Grade Crossing Fund, the remaining receipts are distributed as follows: 75 percent to the state, 10.7 percent to municipalities, 9.3 percent to counties, and 5 percent to townships.

The **lodging or bed tax** is a county tax on lodgings in hotels, motels, and rooming houses for transient guests and cannot exceed six percent. These funds can be used for general revenue, convention and visitors bureau expenses, and convention center construction costs. Cuyahoga County levies a 5.5 percent lodging tax.

Voters in Cuyahoga County have approved ballot issues that add an **excise** or **“sin” tax** to purchases of cigarettes and alcohol within the county. The first, supporting sports facilities, originated in 1990. It has been renewed to continue until 2035. The second, supporting arts and culture, was first approved in 2006 and taxes only cigarette sales. It was renewed by voters in 2015 for another 10 years.

CHAPTER 6

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Cuyahoga County, as an agent of the State of Ohio, plays a significant role in the financial administration of all subdivisions within its boundaries. Assessment of real property, collection of property taxes, collection of state-levied taxes and license fees, distribution of state-levied and locally shared taxes, and tax budget procedure—all are the responsibilities of county government. The county also distributes “intergovernmental revenue,” money received from the state and federal governments to support state and federally mandated programs administered by the county, such as child support services, job and family services, and block grants for improving neighborhoods.

Fiscal Officer

Under the county charter, Cuyahoga County’s appointed fiscal officer exercises the powers and performs the duties imposed by general law on county auditors and county recorders. The officer must be a certified public accountant. The fiscal officer’s duties include the following:

- Assessing real property for taxing purposes and giving the county treasurer a list of all property in the county subject to general property taxation
- Serving as chief accounts officer for expenditures authorized by county council
- Ensuring that no county purchases are made without a certificate showing that funds are available for payment, and that no account is paid without a warrant drawn upon the county treasurer
- Enforcing all state laws on standards of weights and measures throughout the county
- Selling dog licenses

- Serving on the county budget commission and the county records commission (and on the board of revision if asked by the county executive)
- Supervising the office of budget and management
- Keeping records of all deeds, mortgages, plats, liens, land contracts, and other written documents presented for recording, and making the documents available to those requesting public records.

For more information, visit fiscalofficer.cuyahogacounty.us.

Office of Budget & Management (OBM)

Embedded in the fiscal office, the office of budget and management is in charge of analyzing and interpreting all financial matters affecting the county. It prepares, reviews, and monitors both operating and capital improvement budgets; estimates income and expenditures; provides analyses and recommendations in response to requests for funding; identifies new ways and means to provide services; and analyzes federal, state, and local legislation to determine its impact. As part of the budget and quarterly review processes, OBM tracks performance and statistical data, helps county officials make informed decisions, and advocates for the county's interest at public forums. OBM's webpage can be accessed at fiscalofficer.cuyahogacounty.us.

Treasurer

The county treasurer is the custodian of all county funds, whether from tax collections, fees for services, or the sale of bonds and other securities. The treasurer is the disbursing agent for expenditures authorized by county council and the Cleveland Metroparks Board of Park Commissioners, and is also responsible for managing the county's investment portfolio. The account books of the treasurer are subject at all times to public inspection and are examined biennially by state examiners. The treasurer must make daily reports showing receipts, payments, and balances to the county fiscal officer, whose books must balance with those of the treasurer. Visit treasurer.cuyahogacounty.us to learn more.

Budget Commission

The organization and duties of the county budget commission are prescribed by state law. The county charter states that the commission’s members are the county executive, fiscal officer, and prosecutor. Its primary functions are:

- Auditing annual tax budgets of the 105 taxing authorities in Cuyahoga County.
- Determining annual property tax rates for each taxing authority.
- Issuing an “Official Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources” to each taxing authority. This document is a statement of all estimated revenues and is used as a budgetary tool to review spending.
- Distributing all collected property tax revenues to 38 cities, 19 villages, two townships, 33 school districts, nine library systems, and four county taxing authorities (county executive, port authority, Tri-C, and Cleveland Metroparks). More than \$2.4 billion of tax revenues were distributed in 2018.

The budget commission ensures that local taxes are collected in accordance with the Ohio Constitution and statutes and that proper amounts are set aside to pay principal and interest charges on tax-supported debt. The commission is also responsible for the calculation and allocation of the Local Government Fund. The budget commission staff has a direct working relationship with the fiscal officers, school treasurers, and other public officials in Cuyahoga County. Appeals from the decisions of the commission can be filed with the Ohio State Board of Tax Appeals. The budget commission’s web page can be accessed at fiscalofficer.cuyahogacounty.us.

The Budget

Cuyahoga County operates with a two-year budget, its timing aligned with state budgetary practice. However, it is reviewed at the halfway mark and is usually explained to the public in annual terms. Current figures can be reviewed on county council’s website, council.cuyahogacounty.us; click on the “Reports & Presentations” tab.

The pie charts on the following two pages show approximate percentages for both revenues and expenditures in the year 2017, both for the county’s general fund and for its much larger all-funds budget, which hovers near or above \$1.5 billion. The term “all-funds” means that restricted funds from federal, state, and local sources are included, along with unrestricted revenue that either flows to or is generated by the county. Unrestricted revenue may be spent at the discretion of county council.

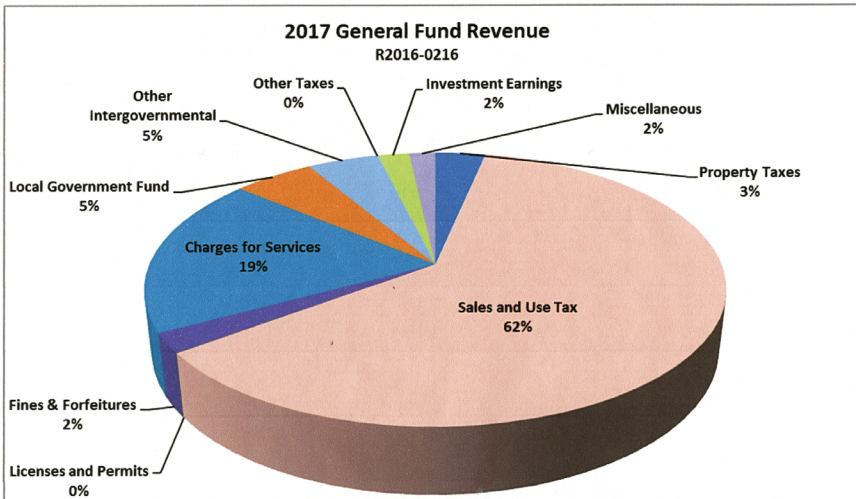
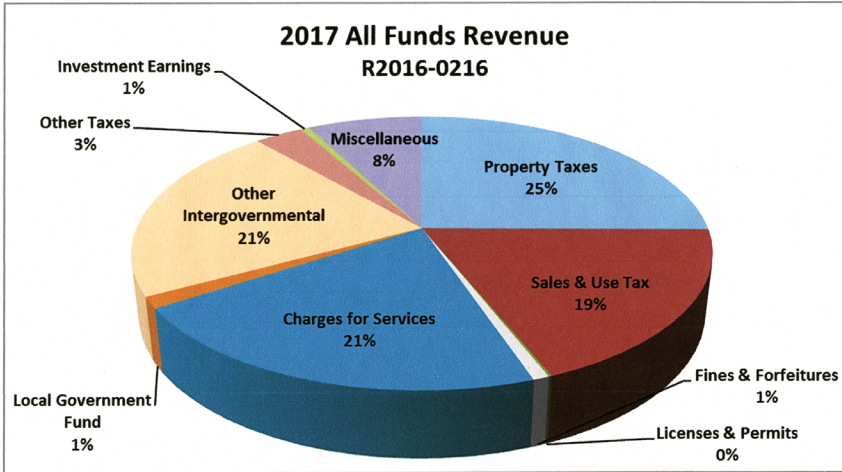
Office of Procurement and Diversity

The prudent spending of county funds is a major fiscal responsibility. The office of procurement and diversity (OPD) manages all purchasing of equipment, materials, supplies, construction, and services for all county departments, agencies, and elected officials. It also conducts the competitive bidding process in compliance with state laws and county ordinances. Through the office’s cooperative purchase plan, any local municipality may purchase goods or services jointly from county-approved vendors and contractors, thereby receiving the same bulk terms and conditions as the county receives. Contracts under \$500,000 are reviewed and approved by the board of control, a committee of key officials and council members who meet weekly in public session. Larger contracts come before county council.

Along with its primary responsibility for the judicious spending of county funds, the OPD is also responsible for making sure all vendors and contractors abide by county ordinances regarding ethical practices and diversity. In order to do business with the county, all vendors and contractors must undergo ethics training, especially in the area of conflicts of interest. They are subject to suspension or debarment for a fixed time if found by the inspector general to be in violation of a county ordinance. A debarment review board exists to hear appeals by contractors who have been debarred. County ordinances and rules also require that vendors and contractors be selected according to strict standards of inclusion. The OPD seeks to ensure that all contractors and subcontractors reflect equal opportunity for small businesses, minority businesses, and women’s businesses. Visit opd.cuyahogacounty.us.

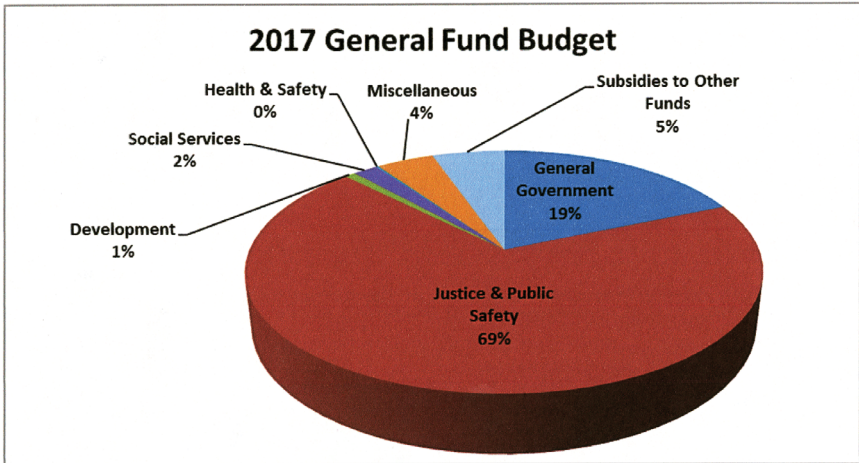
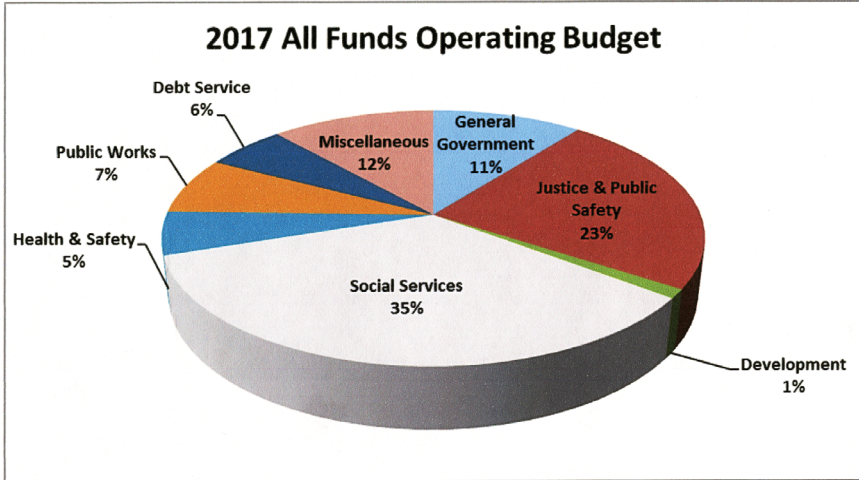
Where the Money Comes From

2017 Budget Update



Where the Money Goes

2017 Budget Update



Investment Advisory Committee

County funds that are not immediately spent are temporarily and carefully invested. The investment advisory committee, required by state law and made up of five appointed leaders from the financial community, oversees the management of the county's investments to ensure that they are comprehensive, inclusive, wise, and in accord with state and county policies. They meet quarterly to advise the county executive.

CHAPTER 7

SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Cuyahoga County is a mecca for both public and private health care and human services. The county government administers many state and national programs with pass-through state and federal funds. These programs are uniform across Ohio and include Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps), and child support services. Additionally, the county is a key location for many nongovernmental providers of health care and human services—from the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals to Planned Parenthood, the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, and small neighborhood nonprofits. This chapter describes the facilities and services provided directly by the county department of health and human services, a major part of the executive branch of county government, as well as those administered separately by quasi-governmental county boards and commissions or by a few large private or faith-based nonprofits devoted to providing health or social services.

Department of Health and Human Services

This sprawling department is funded largely through the county's general fund and health and human services tax levies. It accounts for over one-third of the county's general fund, consists of many subdivisions, and provides numerous services for county residents.

Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

DCFS provides short-term and extended family services to ensure the safety and well-being of children. Services may include medical care, mental health treatment, behavioral intervention, parenting classes, trauma therapy, and counseling. DCFS handles the (216) 696-KIDS hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week (including holidays) to screen and assess referrals of suspected child abuse and neglect. A trained child protection specialist determines whether to assign the referral for investigation.

The division strives to keep families together or reunite them, if it is safe to do so. When a child must be removed from the home, staff works to place the child with kinship or foster families who meet that child’s individual needs. DCFS staff recruits, trains, and conducts home studies for potential foster parents, kinship caregivers, and adoptive parents. In cases when a child comes into the permanent custody of the county, DCFS manages an adoption process that involves application, training, home study, matching, and post-adoption services. Visit cfs.cuyahogacounty.us.

Job and Family Services

The purpose of this division is to promote healthcare and economic stability for the county’s vulnerable residents. Its most important functions include the local administration of the federal Medicaid program, which provides free health insurance for low income adults, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and children of low-to-moderate-income families, as well as well-child checkups, dental care, vision care, medications, hospitalization, and emergency care. The division also administers child care, temporary cash, emergency assistance, and food assistance along with aid programs for residents with special needs, such as the blind and the disabled. For more information, visit cfs.cuyahogacounty.us.

Office of Child Support Services (OCSS)

OCSS administers the county’s child support establishment and enforcement services. Staff members support families with paternity testing, support orders, and parent location. The county’s Fatherhood Initiative seeks to strengthen families by encouraging fathers to play a more active role in nurturing and raising their children. Among its many programs are a boot camp for new dads, employment assistance, pregnancy prevention, and school-based services. A webpage for “Child Support Services” can be found at cfs.cuyahogacounty.us.

Senior and Adult Services

This division collaborates with local communities to empower seniors and adults with disabilities to live successfully by providing resources and support to preserve their independence. Adult Protective Services investigates allegations of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Home Support Services furnishes assistance for those with special health-care needs. Information outreach helps needy adults access appropriate benefits and provides home

energy assistance and referral services. The division also explores options for independent living and partners with community social services for senior centers and adult daycare. For more information, visit dsas.cuyahogacounty.us. For access to senior transportation services, see cuyahogaseniorsride.org.

Office of Reentry

This office focuses on the transition of offenders from prisons or jails back into the community. It supports reentry research and provides community education. Its goals are to offer a continuum of opportunities to support reintegration into neighborhood life. For more information, see reentry.cuyahogacounty.us.

Invest in Children — Office of Early Childhood

The office of early childhood, officially renamed Invest in Children, was created to prepare children to enter school ready to learn and in good mental and physical health. The office is structured as a public/private partnership and implements its programs in collaboration with community-based organizations. The current priority of Invest in Children is raising the quality, availability, and accessibility of preschool options for families across the county. Other important programs include consultation and services for children with mental health issues, training for family childcare providers, and home visits to families of children under six years old. Home visiting programs reach high-risk families with visits from a registered nurse or community health worker during pregnancy and throughout very early childhood. For more information, see investinchildren.cuyahogacounty.us. Invest in Children also produces an annual child fatality review committee report. That committee researches and works to reduce preventable deaths of children from the prenatal stage through adolescence. Its reports may be read at protectingourfuture.cuyahogacounty.us.

Office of Homeless Services (OHS)

This office coordinates the joint Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care program to prevent homelessness and to assist home-less people through a network of organizations. There is a coordinated intake (CI) location for individuals and families who are experiencing a housing crisis. CI staff members assist households in exploring safe alternatives to shelters. The OHS receives more than \$26 million in federal funds annually to support permanent housing units for homeless individuals and families. For more information, visit ohs.cuyahogacounty.us.

Family and Children First Council

This body brings together specialists from every county agency that serves children to improve programs and services. Every year, this council presents to the state a plan outlining its priorities. Programs include an annual service coordination update and a child well-being plan. The council is also responsible for carrying out local strategies to educate the public, strengthen families, and influence public policy. For more information, see fcfc.cuyahogacounty.us.

Key Health and Social Services Boards and Commissions

These important providers of public programs and services for county residents have their own appointed governing boards but retain some budgetary and personnel connections to the elected county government.

County Board of Health

The county board of health is a general health district that administers and enforces all public health and sanitation laws of the state of Ohio. The county health district's jurisdiction, originally limited to small villages and townships, expanded as a result of entering into contracts with separate municipal health districts. It now covers all municipalities within the county except the city of Cleveland, which maintains its own board of health. In addition to the required programs, the county board of health sets policies and provides programs to ensure that residents of its district live in a healthy and environmentally safe community.

The board administers programs in two divisions: prevention and wellness, as well as environmental public health services. The division of prevention and wellness provides services such as breast and cervical cancer screening, vaccinations for preventable diseases, pregnancy prevention and family planning, maternity care, programs for schools, and programs for children with special needs. The division of environmental public health services is concerned with land use, watershed protection, wastewater treatment, injury prevention, healthy environments, and food protection, including restaurant inspections. Several additional programs receive support and administrative oversight by the county.

The five members of the board of health are appointed to five-year staggered terms by a district advisory council comprising 22 members — the mayors of the county’s 19 villages, a trustee from each of the two townships in the county, and the county executive. For more information, see ccbh.net.

MetroHealth System

The MetroHealth System is a comprehensive public health-care provider with a 1,100-bed hospital that has been serving the community for more than 155 years. It provides services at more than 25 sites within the county and is a principal teaching center of the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Its main campus, MetroHealth Medical Center, has a Level I trauma center and a regional burn center. As the county hospital, Metro serves any resident regardless of ability to pay. Partially supported by Cuyahoga County taxpayers through the health and human services property tax levy, Metro estimates that in the year 2015 the county’s contribution was \$40 million, although the value of care delivered amounted to more than \$110 million. It is governed by a board of seven members, who are appointed by the county executive with approval by county council. Its budget is approved annually by county council. For more information, see metrohealth.org.

Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board (ADAMHS)

ADAMHS plans, funds, and monitors public mental health and addiction treatment and recovery services delivered to residents of Cuyahoga County. This is a quasi-independent board governed by a board of 18 directors who are unpaid. Its services are available and accessible to all county residents. Its programs include a recovery-oriented system of care, free online behavioral health screenings, suicide prevention, addiction and mental health crisis services, and public education. It is also on the front lines fighting the current opioid epidemic. For more information, visit adamhsc.org.

Board of Developmental Disabilities

The mission of this board is to support and empower people with developmental disabilities to live, learn, work, and play in the community. Programs include behavioral and healthcare services and support for early

childhood, school-age, and adult populations and their families, including early intervention, assistive technology, various therapies, and logistical supports such as group homes and transportation. For more information, see cuyahogabdd.org.

Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland

This board channels federal funds to local programs to improve economic opportunity in the metropolitan area. It sponsors neighborhood multi-service centers, administers Head Start programs, and operates some senior nutrition sites, the Comprehensive Youth Program, and the Emergency Energy Assistance Program. Visit ceogc.org.

Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA)

CMHA is a special district which, through two federally assisted housing programs, owns and manages property and subsidizes rents to provide eligible low-income residents safe, affordable housing. It serves approximately 55,000 people. CMHA maintains an accredited police department to ensure residents' safety and a social services department to enhance residents' quality of life. It also provides homeownership opportunities for qualified families, employment training, and support for the elderly. The Housing Choice Voucher Program provides rental assistance for qualified families.

CMHA is led by a five-member board of commissioners. Two board members are appointed by the mayor of Cleveland, two by Cleveland City Council, and one by the mayor of the municipality with the second largest number of CMHA-managed housing units, currently East Cleveland. One of the board members appointed by the mayor of Cleveland must be a CMHA resident. For more information, see cmha.net.

Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging

This agency coordinates planning and channels federal funds to agencies serving the elderly. It provides no direct services, but funds a network of agencies to deliver a broad array of services and is the local administrative agency for Ohio's PASSPORT program, serving at-risk adults with nursing home placement. See psa10a.org for more information.

Private Health and Social Service Agencies

Two large and nationally respected hospital systems, the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals, maintain main campuses and suburban branches with in- and out-patient treatment facilities. Several smaller hospitals provide neighborhood or faith-based alternatives. Catholic Charities, the Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries, Jewish Family Services, the City Mission, and other religious and secular services provide, for example, resettlement of refugees or clothing and shelter for those in need. A few other nonprofits are listed here, although there are many others. Each maintains its own website.

- The **Care Alliance Health Center** provides medical and dental services to the homeless and those living in and around public housing in Cleveland.
- The **Center for Community Solutions** (previously known as Federation for Community Planning) provides research and planning to help the human services network achieve best results. It is an independent organization supported by United Way, foundation grants, and endowment income.
- The **Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center** provides programs and services for the hearing-impaired, with a staff of audiologists, sign language interpreters, and speech therapists, at four locations in the metropolitan area.
- The **Cleveland Sight Center** serves the visually impaired and those born deaf or blind.
- The **Cleveland Treatment Center** offers services for those with chemical dependencies.
- **Cleveland Works** specializes in recruiting and training persons who receive Ohio Works First assistance and also helps with job search and placement.
- **First Call for Help**, a service of United Way, provides a 24-hour information and referral line for other programs in health and human services. Calls are handled in English and Spanish.
- The **Free Clinic** provides medical, mental health, and dental care for the underserved and those without other resources. It

also advocates for policy changes that improve the level and breadth of healthcare services.

- The **Greater Cleveland Food Bank** is the largest hunger relief organization in Northeast Ohio. In 2016, it provided 50 million meals to residents of Cuyahoga, Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake, Ashland, and Richland counties.
- **Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity** marshals volunteers and donors to build or rehabilitate affordable homes to revitalize Cleveland neighborhoods.
- **Planned Parenthood** provides a wide range of women’s health and reproductive services for patients of limited means.
- **United Way** and **Community Shares** both raise funds to support member agencies that provide health and social services for those in Cuyahoga and surrounding counties.

CHAPTER 8

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Another key function of all county governments is building and maintaining public infrastructure and facilities. This is largely but not exclusively the role of the county's department of public works. The department has five divisions, each headed by an administrator responsible for the whole division and its several components.

Department of Public Works

Design and Construction Division

The administrator of the design and construction division, traditionally known as the county engineer, oversees the engineering and maintenance of all roads, sewers, and bridges in Cuyahoga County that are not otherwise a part of state or federal infrastructure. Technically, while many of these roads are owned by the county, the local municipalities through which they pass are responsible for their maintenance. That is also true for culverts and storm and sanitary sewer lines within their municipal boundaries, regardless of ownership. However, because many cities and villages do not have the resources to do all this work, the county has entered into shared service contracts with 39 municipalities (so far) to provide some or all of the work required to maintain bridges, streets, culverts, and sewers in those communities. The county is directly responsible for those facilities in two unincorporated communities, Olmsted Township and Chagrin Falls Township. This division also manages the county's fleet of vehicles and equipment employed in the performance of public works tasks.

Facility Design and Maintenance Division

This division oversees the construction and maintenance of county-owned buildings. The facility design section prepares architectural designs for all new county buildings, while the county architect oversees construction and hires contractors as necessary. The maintenance section handles upkeep of all county-owned buildings. Those leased by the county are maintained by their landlords, a benefit that explains why about half of county space is currently leased, not owned. The custodial services section does the day-to-day job of keeping county-owned buildings clean and functional.

Finance and Operations Division

Public works general fund monies come from property taxes and may be spent on any project, but monies from other sources, such as license or sewer fees, are earmarked for specific purposes. Finance and operations has the following responsibilities:

- Overseeing all public works spending to ensure that all restricted funds are properly spent and accounted for
- Providing available and supervised parking for thousands of county employees
- Producing much of the printed material used by the county
- Coordinating mail delivery to all county offices
- Operating the state-mandated county animal shelter.

The **County Animal Shelter** accepts only stray dogs. It does not accept dogs surrendered by owners and it does not accept any cats. It also provides adoption services and humane education support for schools, libraries, and other groups. It issues dog licenses, as does the county fiscal office, and the kennel is funded entirely by license sales. A humane animal control advisory board assists with kennel operations and makes recommendations for improving the quality of animal care and control. To see the shelter's inventory of potential pets, visit cuyahogapets.com. Cleveland and some other municipalities also maintain animal shelters.

Property Management/Leasing Division

This division is responsible for buying, selling, and leasing the county’s land and properties. It handles legal transactions and also negotiates and executes leases. Its administrator oversees two additional properties: the county airport and the county archives. Since Ohio law requires the county to retain all public records, the archive stores them and provides document management services for all county government offices. It also provides a research library, open to the public, for all stored county documents.

Planning and Programming Division

This division coordinates the work of the other four divisions. It has a large facilities maintenance staff in a wide range of trades. When a problem is identified with either a county or local public works project, it is assigned to a project manager. That person shepherds it through completion, after which it is turned over to the government responsible for it.

For more information, visit publicworks.cuyahogacounty.us.

Department of Sustainability

The county’s department of sustainability, established in 2014, is tasked with making Cuyahoga County as environmentally sustainable as possible, committing itself to the quest for clean and efficient energy. The department approaches that mission on three levels: county governmental operation, local community effort, and individual engagement.

At the county level, clean-energy plans include solar rooftop panels on county facilities, large-scale arrays on currently unusable landfills or brownfields, and a wind turbine farm on Lake Erie. Project Icebreaker, a pilot project expected to begin in 2018, will determine whether wind turbines can survive the ice floes of a Lake Erie winter. If successful, hundreds will be built about nine miles offshore, away from shipping lanes and migratory bird routes, providing a major source of clean, renewable energy to the whole area. Additional plans to promote energy efficiency include upgrading the public works department’s large fleet of cars and heavy vehicles and requiring higher standards for building construction and renovation. The new “green” county administration building already reflects these standards.

More of the department’s efforts are focused on supporting the county’s communities, groups, and individuals. Its Clean Energy Financing Hub

provides energy-efficiency audits and potential financing for upgrades and other local conservation measures, and it has already supported the installation of solar panels on public garages, recreation centers, and other structures. The department partnered with the GreenCityBlueLake Institute to publish the booklet “Sustainable Cuyahoga,” a toolkit to help each community and its residents evaluate their own potential for sustainability. Its solar co-op, like other co-ops, offers its members information sharing and cost savings through group discounts.

Finally, the department has also channeled federal seed money into a bike share enterprise that expects, within several years, to provide the public with hundreds of bikes at up to 100 stations throughout downtown and its environs. To read the toolkit or the departments’ strategic plan, visit executive.cuyahogacounty.us.

Publicly Owned Facilities

In addition to the county administration building, the justice center complex, the courthouse, the juvenile justice center, and other administrative facilities throughout Cleveland and its suburbs, Cuyahoga County either directly or through special districts owns several other high-profile structures. The convention center and its adjacent Global Center for Health Innovation opened in 2016, as did the new county-owned convention center hotel. Hilton Worldwide Holdings leases and operates the hotel, while the Cuyahoga County Convention Facilities Development Corporation operates and maintains the other two components of the complex. Learn more at ccfdc.org.

County taxes and bond issues financed Progressive Field and Quicken Loans Arena, which are leased to the Cleveland Indians and the Cleveland Cavaliers, respectively. Both facilities are owned and partially maintained by the Gateway Economic Development Corporation of Greater Cleveland, one of the county’s many independent special districts, whose board is appointed by city and county officials. See gatewaysportscomplex.org. First Energy Stadium, leased to the Cleveland Browns, is owned by the city of Cleveland. However, all three facilities are periodically renovated through countywide excise taxes and bond issues.

Construction and maintenance of the Port of Cleveland, the county’s extensive waterfront and harbor infrastructure, is one of the main responsibilities of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, one of Northeast Ohio’s largest special districts. See Chapter 10 “Transportation” for a fuller description of the port authority.

Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS)

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) is a special district formed in 1972. It covers most of Cuyahoga County, plus portions of Lake, Summit, and Lorain counties. The sewer district is governed by a seven-member board of trustees who serve five-year terms. Currently, three members are appointed by the mayor of Cleveland, one by the Cuyahoga County Executive, and three by the Suburban Council of Governments, a COG representing 62 suburban communities, including some outside of Cuyahoga County.

Funding for NEORS comes from sewer fees charged to homeowners. It handles sewage treatment for the county and those municipalities that do not own their own treatment facilities. Municipalities are responsible for the collection of storm and sewer water within their jurisdictions. Responsibility for these waters is transferred to NEORS at interceptor sewers. From these interceptors on, NEORS is responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of the sanitary system. Because Cleveland-area sewers were built before there were separate systems for storm and sewage water, all storm and waste water must be treated together at one of NEORS's three sewage treatment centers. Visit neorsd.org for more information.

Solid Waste Management District

The county's cities, villages, and townships are the primary collectors of trash, yard waste, construction debris, recyclables, large discarded items, and hazardous materials. The solid waste management district aids local governments by promoting and supporting recycling programs. In addition, the district keeps lists of waste-transfer stations, construction and demolition debris landfills, and registered compost facilities in the county. Its services are free to all local governments. Links to all programs can be found at cuyahogarecycles.org.

City of Cleveland Water Department

The city of Cleveland's water department supplies water to about 70 communities in northeastern Ohio, each of which pays Cleveland for the water. Visit clevelandwater.com.

Public Utilities

Public utilities serving county households include a privately owned electricity provider, The Illuminating Company, a subsidiary of First Energy Corp. First Energy produces electricity using traditional fossil fuels as well as nuclear, solar, and wind power. Natural gas for the area is provided by Dominion Energy. These utilities are publicly traded companies and are regulated by the Public Utility Commission of Ohio (PUCO). Telephone, cable TV, and internet services vary from customer to customer and community to community. They are provided by large private companies such as AT&T, Spectrum, or Verizon. Internet, cable and satellite TV, and cellular phone service providers are regulated to some extent by the Federal Communications Commission. The PUCO regulates telephone companies that provide local and long-distance service on landlines within Ohio. The websites for further information include firstenergycorp.com, dominionenergy.com, and puco.ohio.gov.

CHAPTER 9

JUSTICE AND THE COURTS



Justice Center

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement in Cuyahoga County falls to the county sheriff, the police forces of the 57 municipalities (some of which share resources like emergency dispatch and SWAT teams), and the additional police agencies employed by the Cleveland Clinic, University Circle, the Cleveland Metroparks, and the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority. County government also provides for the court system with its related prosecuting attorney, public defender, and correctional facilities.

The Prosecutor

The staff of the county prosecutor's office investigates charges, presents evidence to grand juries, indicts, and presents cases against defendants accused of serious violations of Ohio law. If a trial is necessary, the prosecutor tries the case, usually in the court of common pleas. The prosecutor also represents public officials, courts, and county agencies in civil matters. See Chapter 3 "County Government" for more information. Visit prosecutor.cuyahogacounty.us.

The Sheriff

The sheriff, appointed by the county executive, is the chief law enforcement officer in the county. The sheriff's department, which employs more than 1,000 people, provides local police assistance, court security, jail operations, a detective bureau, a narcotics task force, a sex offender unit, SWAT teams, and even a marine patrol. Deputies serve warrants and subpoenas and conduct sales of foreclosed properties. The sheriff's department also handles investigations of certain matters within Cuyahoga County or upon the request of a local police agency. In occasional circumstances, the sheriff may investigate suspected criminal wrongdoing within county government or its agencies. Visit sheriff.cuyahogacounty.us.

The Public Defender

The Public Defenders Commission, through its appointed public defenders, provides legal services to indigent defendants in criminal cases. The commission consists of five members, three appointed by the county executive and two by the common pleas court. The public defender's office has four divisions: felony, juvenile, municipal, and appellate. It employs approximately 100 attorneys, law clerks, paralegals, social workers, investigators, and support staff. Public defenders handle more than 10,000 cases a year. Learn more at publicdefender.cuyahogacounty.us.

The Medical Examiner (ME)

The office of the county medical examiner, formerly called the coroner, serves the needs of law and justice by practicing legal and forensic medicine. As part of the ME's primary duty to determine the cause of suspicious deaths and issue death certificates, the office maintains a regional forensic science laboratory and has the power to convene formal inquests, subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and provide evidence. The laboratory performs scientific examinations in the areas of forensic pathology, trace evidence, serology, DNA, paternity testing, audio and video analysis, computer forensics, toxicology, controlled substance analysis, and forensic chemistry. The medical examiner also collaborates with LifeBanc to coordinate an organ donor program and maintains a forensic toxicology laboratory to administer drug-testing programs. Visit medicalexaminer.cuyahogacounty.us.

The Clerk of Courts

The county clerk of courts serves the general and domestic relations divisions of the county’s court of common pleas and also Ohio’s eighth district court of appeals, even though the office is actually a part of the executive branch of county government. The clerk’s duties primarily include the filing and disposition of all court documents and the collection and disbursal of all court monies, including child support payments and bail bonds. See coc.cuyahogacounty.us.

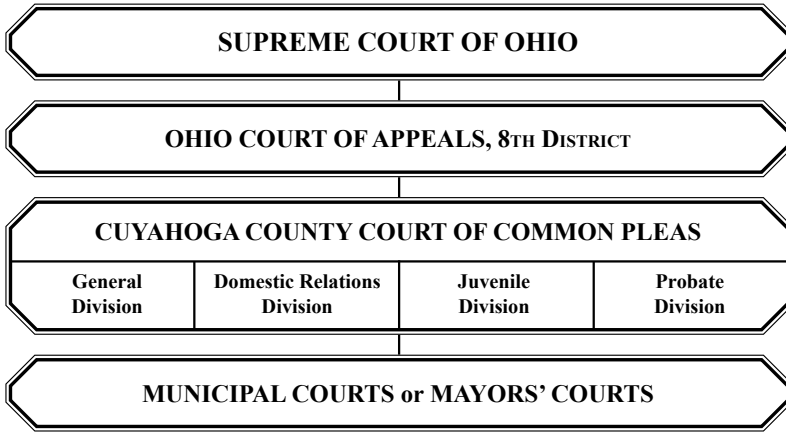
Correctional Facilities

The Cuyahoga County Corrections Center (jail) is currently located in the downtown Justice Center Complex, with an annex in the city of Euclid and another planned for Bedford Heights. It is the second-largest jail in Ohio and houses an average daily population of 2,168 inmates. It has a full-service kitchen and social services unit, and it partners with MetroHealth System to provide a medical clinic and pharmacy. It also provides psychiatric and dental services and employs full-time physicians and nurses along with a full complement of corrections officers. The county maintains a juvenile detention center at the new juvenile justice center on Quincy Avenue and the Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility in Highland Hills. Cleveland maintains its own house of correction in Highland Hills, and there are also several smaller jails around the county that serve municipal courts and local police forces. Visit the corrections link on the sheriff’s website at sheriff.cuyahogacounty.us.

Department of Public Safety and Justice Services

This department provides a wide range of public safety and justice services to residents and first responders of Cuyahoga County, while embracing current and new technologies in the public safety field. It administers the Cuyahoga Emergency Communications System, emergency management, fiscal and grant services, and the Witness Victim Service Center. It also partners with the City of Cleveland to operate the Family Justice Center and the Northeast Ohio Regional Fusion Center. The department’s website, ja.cuyahogacounty.us, contains further information.

OHIO'S COURTS IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY



Ohio Courts

The court of common pleas is the trial court of original jurisdiction in Ohio. Appeals from judgments in these courts can be made to state appellate courts and finally to the Supreme Court of Ohio. Ohio also has municipal courts and mayors' courts, which are of limited jurisdiction and usually hear only minor cases.

Supreme Court of Ohio

The Ohio Supreme Court has final jurisdiction to interpret provisions of the Ohio Constitution and statutes passed by the Ohio legislature. Voters elect six associate justices, plus a chief justice elected specifically to that position. The Ohio Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction and original jurisdiction in specified matters. The supreme court establishes the rules governing the practice of law and procedures for all courts in the state of Ohio. See supremecourt.ohio.gov.

Ohio Court of Appeals, 8th District

Courts of appeals have intermediate appellate jurisdiction to hear appeals from common pleas and municipal courts. Ohio is divided into 12 appellate districts, of which Cuyahoga County comprises the entire eighth. Twelve judges are elected to the eighth district court of appeals, one of whom is selected by the judges to serve as administrative judge. Learn more at appeals.cuyahogacounty.us.

Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas

The court of common pleas has original jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases arising in the county as well as in juvenile, probate, and domestic relations matters.

The **general division** of the court of common pleas handles most civil and criminal cases in the county, while municipal courts handle misdemeanors that occur within their boundaries. At present there are 34 judges serving the court. In response to the needs of residents, the court has established a number of special dockets to hear particular matters, including a drug court docket, a mental health and developmentally disabled court docket, an asbestos docket, and a veterans treatment court docket. For more information, visit cp.cuyahogacounty.us.

The **probate division** probates wills and certain trust agreements. In addition, it issues marriage licenses, supervises adoptions, processes name changes, supervises the commitment of mentally ill individuals to institutions, oversees guardianship, and handles other related proceedings. Visit probate.cuyahogacounty.us.

The **domestic relations division** has jurisdiction in cases of divorce, alimony, annulments, and child support under the Federal Uniform Support Act. The court may also appoint guardians ad litem to represent minors involved in domestic disputes. In addition, there is a domestic violence coordinator to assist individuals in filing for domestic violence civil protection orders. Learn more at domestic.cuyahogacounty.us.

The **juvenile division** deals with cases involving delinquent, unruly, neglected, abused, and dependent minors as well as juvenile traffic offenses. The court operates the juvenile detention center as a holding facility for minors awaiting hearings or final disposition of their cases. The court may offer residential and nonresidential services for minors. The court also determines paternity and hears charges against adults for the neglect, abuse, or delinquency of a minor. Its website is juvenile.cuyahogacounty.us.

Municipal Courts

Municipal courts have jurisdiction over traffic violations, misdemeanors alleged to have been committed within that municipality, and civil suits where the amount in controversy does not exceed \$15,000. Felony cases are transferred to the court of common pleas. Municipal courts also

have jurisdiction in forcible entry and detainer cases, housing disputes, and housing code violations if the court has a housing division. Each municipal court covers its own operating costs, primarily from revenue raised by court fines and fees. As of this writing, there are 13 municipal courts in Cuyahoga County, although proposals to consolidate some are occasionally floated. Where courts serve multiple jurisdictions, each municipality may have its own law director and prosecutor.

MUNICIPAL COURTS IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY

Court	Website	Jurisdiction
Bedford	BedfordMuni.org	Bedford, Bedford Heights, Bentleyville, Chagrin Falls, Chagrin Falls Township., Glenwillow, Highland Hills, Moreland Hills, North Randall, Oakwood, Orange, Solon, Warrensville Heights, Woodmere
Berea	BereaMunicipalCourt.org	Berea, Brook Park, Middleburg Heights, Olmsted Falls, Olmsted Township, Strongsville
Cleveland	CMCOH.org	Cleveland, Bratenahl
Cleveland Heights	ClevelandHeightsCourt.com	Cleveland Heights
East Cleveland	ECCourt.com	East Cleveland
Euclid	CityofEuclid.com/community/court	Euclid
Garfield Heights	GHMC.org	Brecksville, Cuyahoga Heights, Garfield Heights, Independence, Maple Heights, Newburgh Heights, Valley View, Walton Hills
Lakewood	LakewoodCourtOH.com	Lakewood
Lyndhurst	LyndhurstMunicipal Court.org	Gates Mills, Highland Heights, Lyndhurst, Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Richmond Heights
Parma	ParmaMuniCourt.org	Broadview Heights, Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, Linndale, North Royalton, Parma, Parma Heights, Seven Hills
Rocky River	RRCourt.net	Bay Village, Fairview Park, North Olmsted, Rocky River, Westlake
Shaker Heights	ShakerHeightsCourt.org	Beachwood, Hunting Valley, Pepper Pike, Shaker Heights, University Heights
South Euclid	SouthEuclidCourt.com	South Euclid

Mayors' Courts

Some municipalities still maintain mayors' courts, which handle minor traffic violations; they impose fines and collect fees.

Judges

Judges in Ohio are elected by voters at regular general elections and serve a term of six years. Each seat on the common pleas bench is distinguished from the others by its separate starting date, always early in January of the year following judicial elections. To be eligible to run for a judicial position, a candidate must be an attorney licensed to practice law in the state of Ohio with a minimum of six years of legal experience. Judicial vacancies due to death or resignation may be filled by appointment of the governor. Judges are required to be residents within the borders of the jurisdiction of the court on which they serve. Judicial candidates are nominated in party primary elections but run in nonpartisan general elections.

Juries

Eligible jurors can be selected at random from either a certified list of all registered voters as recorded on the registration list for the last general election or from a list of all individuals issued driver licenses who are 18 years of age or older and who would be eligible to register and vote in the next general election. Cuyahoga County uses the voter registration list to select jurors. For more information on jury duty, visit the court of common pleas website at cp.cuyohogacounty.us.

A grand jury hears and considers evidence by the prosecutor to determine whether there is probable cause to believe a crime was committed. Grand jury proceedings are not open to the public. Generally, there are three annual grand juries, one for each four-month term of the court. Often there is more than one grand jury empaneled during each term, and Cuyahoga County occasionally appoints a special grand jury.

CHAPTER 10

TRANSPORTATION

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

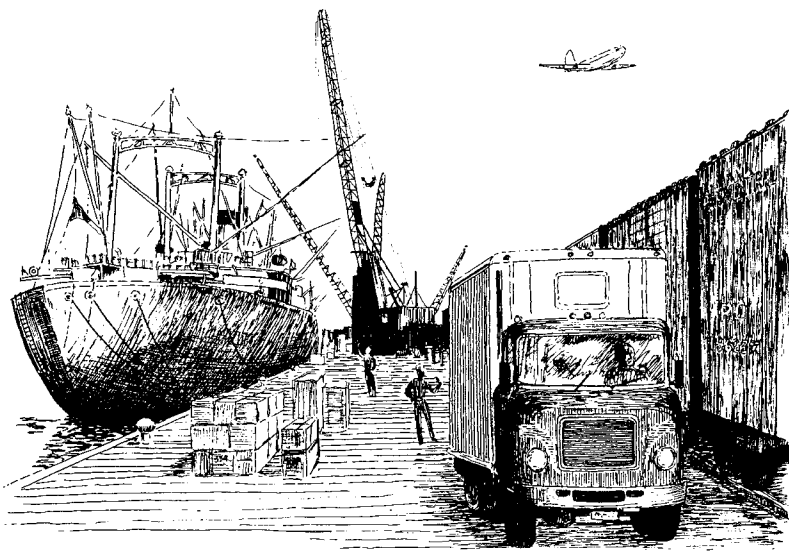
RTA provides bus and light-rail transportation throughout the county. It was created in 1975 after citizens of Cuyahoga County voted to fund a transit proposal with a permanent one percent sales tax. As a special district separate from municipal governments, RTA is a single-purpose political subdivision authorized by the state. Its 10-member board of trustees, four of whom are appointed by the City of Cleveland, three by the Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, and three by Cuyahoga County, control and manage all aspects of its operations. RTA operates three light-rail systems and numerous bus lines throughout the area. RTA's website is riderta.com.

Cleveland – Cuyahoga County Port Authority

The Port of Cleveland is a leading port on the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway system for waterborne cargo. When the port authority was established as a special district in 1968, the state empowered it to submit a property tax levy up to one mill and to issue bonds upon voter approval. A nine-member board of directors sets the policies and procedures governing the port. The city currently appoints six members to the board while the county appoints three, all to four-year terms.

The port authority is also a catalyst for economic development and job creation in the region, providing cost-effective access to capital for development, redevelopment, and expansion of facilities through its fixed-rate financing program. Since 1993, more than 70 companies, developers, local governments, and nonprofits have collectively secured nearly \$2 billion for projects, among them the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

The port authority performs many other necessary functions, such as the annual dredging of the Cuyahoga River and of Lake Erie shipping channels. It also repairs or replaces deteriorating bulkheads that line shipping channels and maintains the previous dumping site for dredged sediments now known as the Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve. Plans for the near future include stabilizing the Irishtown Bend hillside to stop its slow but relentless slide into the river. The port authority expects to rid the river of contaminants by the year 2019, the 50th anniversary of Cleveland’s most famous river fire. See portofcleveland.com.



Port of Cleveland

County Airport

The Cuyahoga County Airport, Robert D. Shea Field, sits on 660 acres of land that stretch across Richmond Heights, Highland Heights, and Willoughby Hills. Although the airport sometimes functions as a reliever airport for Cleveland Hopkins International Airport, it primarily provides services for private and business aircraft. The airport itself includes a runway, hangars and tie-down areas, an FAA tower that operates seven days a week, a luxury Jet Center, and avionics and crash/fire/rescue services.

The airport’s operation is funded by tenant ground leases, fixed annual rents, hangar fees, and fees on fuel sales, aircraft landings, and parking. Services include flight training, plane charter, air taxi, and

aircraft rental. Amenities include an 18-hole golf course, a jogging trail, and the potential for a full-service restaurant. Currently more than 1,200 people are employed at various businesses based at the county airport. For more information, see the county airport link on the homepage of publicworks.cuyahogacounty.us.

Cleveland Hopkins International Airport and Burke Lakefront Airport

The city of Cleveland owns and operates two airports, Cleveland Hopkins International Airport and Burke Lakefront Airport. Cleveland Hopkins serves airlines that provide both domestic and international destinations as well as private and corporate aircraft, while Burke serves only private and corporate aircraft. Both are under the oversight of the Director of Port Control for the City of Cleveland. For more information, see clevelandairport.com and burkeairport.com.

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)

NOACA is the federally designated agency for determining recipients of federal highway transportation funding in northeast Ohio. More information about NOACA and its role in transportation and planning is found in Chapter 4 “Regionalism.”

CHAPTER 11

PLANNING

Urban development, if not well-planned, can simply follow the road and transit networks wherever they lead, often out into the open and away from urban centers where population, jobs, and infrastructure once clustered. The result is urban sprawl, which has seriously damaged Cleveland's core and its bordering suburbs. Good planning can prevent problems and create solutions. Planning and preparedness in additional areas, such as land use and public safety, are also vitally important in local communities, in the county, and across northeast Ohio. Ohio law provides that local governments may create regional planning commissions. These commissions may make studies, plans, and recommendations concerning the development and welfare of the county and region.

County Planning Commission

The county planning commission's mission is to provide services in support of short- and long-term comprehensive planning for quality of life, environment, and economic development of Cuyahoga County and its cities, villages, and townships. The county planning commission is empowered to contract and coordinate with local governments, state and federal governments, local planning commissions, area councils of governments, and neighboring planning areas.

The current work of the county planning commission is focused on the following:

- Working with cities, villages, and townships on their master plans
- Providing zoning, development, and other planning services for local governments
- Assisting county departments on topics ranging from housing and economic development to environment and transportation

- Partnering on countywide projects with agencies such as Cleveland Metroparks, NOACA, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and other governmental and nonprofit organizations.

The county planning commission has 11 members—three county representatives, seven mayors appointed by the county executive, and a representative of the mayor of Cleveland. For more about the work of the county planning commission see countyplanning.us.

Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency

NOACA is responsible for planning transportation in the five-county northeast Ohio region including Cuyahoga County. For more information about its role in regional land use planning, see Chapter 4 “Regionalism.”

Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium

NEOSCC is a coalition of metropolitan planning organizations and 33 governmental and educational entities across a 12-county area formed in 2009 to produce a long-range framework for regional land use named Vibrant NEO 2040. Its vision and plan, along with extensive data, maps, and a full report can be accessed at vibrantneo.org, and see Chapter 4 “Regionalism.”

Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank)

The mission of the Cuyahoga County land bank is to acquire properties strategically, return them to productive use, reduce blight, increase property values, support community goals, and improve the quality of life for county residents. It seeks to revitalize neighborhoods, promote economic growth, create job and workforce development opportunities, commit to healthy and sustainable redevelopment of property in the county, and assist local governments in effective use and reuse of vacant property. A nine-member board of directors governs the operations of the land bank. Board members include the county treasurer, the county executive or the executive’s

designee, one member of county council, and two representatives of the city of Cleveland. The remaining four members are selected by the county government’s representatives on the board. The appointed members of the board serve two-year terms and are compensated only for their expenses. See cuyahogalandbank.org for more information.

Community Improvement Corporation

The purpose of the community improvement corporation is to advance, encourage, and promote the industrial, economic, commercial, and civic development of Cuyahoga County. It is the county’s review agent for industrial revenue bond financing and economic development lending activity. The corporation’s board of trustees has 11 members, each appointed to a three-year term by the county executive. The appointments must be confirmed by county council. Learn more at bc.cuyahogacounty.us.

Local Emergency Planning Committee

LEPC’s mission is to educate, inform, and assist regulated facilities in Cuyahoga County in protecting people and the environment from hazardous material (“hazmat”) releases through hazard reduction, accident prevention, and emergency preparedness. It is one of 88 such committees, one for each county in the state. Twenty-three members are appointed to the committee by the county, with each member serving a two-year term. The LEPC provides:

- General services to the public, other government agencies, and regulated facilities including data processing of annual chemical inventories for an estimated 800 facilities
- Planning for emergency responses to releases of hazardous substances
- Receipt of emergency notifications when hazardous substance releases occur
- Information to the public about local chemical inventories and hazmat releases
- Coordination of training and exercises for emergency responses.

Visit lepc.cuyahogacounty.us for more information.

CHAPTER 12

EDUCATION

K-12 Public Schools

State Board of Education

Ohio's State Board of Education was created in 1956 to oversee public education in Ohio. The state board determines educational policy for Ohio's public schools, appoints a state superintendent of public instruction, certifies teachers, allocates state and federal funds for elementary and secondary education, and adopts and enforces educational standards. It has no taxing authority and is dependent on the general assembly for funds. The board's 11 elected members represent the state's 11 state board districts, each comprising three state senate districts. Each term is four years and the election is nonpartisan. Eight additional board members are appointed by the governor, and the chairs of the state senate and the state house education committees are ex-officio nonvoting members.

City, Local, and Exempted Village School Districts

As of 2017, there were 373 public schools in Cuyahoga County serving 120,186 students. School districts, like counties and local governments, are subdivisions of the state and must fulfill state requirements. They are categorized as "special districts" because they provide a single function: in this case, education.

Four types of school districts provide elementary and secondary education in Ohio: city, local, exempted village, and joint vocational. All types exist in Cuyahoga County. Twenty-seven of the county's 33 districts are city school districts. Three are local school districts (Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, and Richmond Heights), one is an exempted* village school

*An "exempted" district is exempt from control by the county's Educational Service Center. Under state law, after 1954 no new exempted village school district could be formed, but those formed prior to that year, including Chagrin Falls, could retain their status.

district (Chagrin Falls), and two are joint vocational districts. Both the small exempted village and local school districts may, with state board of education approval, become city school districts if the population of their largest city reaches at least 5,000.

Each city, local and exempted village school district except Cleveland's (see separate section below) is governed by its own locally elected board of education, composed of two to seven members depending on the district's type and size. Every board of education can exercise considerable discretion regarding educational services provided in its district. School district boundaries do not necessarily coincide with municipal boundaries, and those municipalities served by school districts have no jurisdiction over them. Each school board appoints a superintendent to administer the district's schools and a treasurer to handle its finances. Each school board also has the power to submit property or income tax levies to district voters.

Educational Service Center (ESC)

The county's three local school districts (Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, and Richmond Heights) are under the general supervision of the Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio—formerly known as the ESC of Cuyahoga County. As of mid 2018, its governing board still consists of five members elected by those three districts' voters.

The ESC's administrative staff provides services that small school districts may not be able to provide efficiently on their own. These include advice on legal, financial, personnel, and curricular matters, as well as psychological, special education, and learning disability services. The ESC cannot levy taxes or submit bond issues, so local districts pay for county services with revenue from their own tax levies. The ESC, however, does distribute state and federal education funding to the three local districts.

While the ESC directly serves the county's three local districts for now, it also supports numerous other northeast Ohio districts with services that cross district boundaries, including professional development, implementation of federal and state regulations, and development of community partnerships. It may also conduct countywide educational studies in cooperation with the county's school districts. One of its programs is the First Ring Superintendents' Collaborative, an association of 17 superintendents of school districts that surround the city of Cleveland. The collaborative is designed to help districts address challenges related to poverty, mobility, diversity, and the achievement gap. For more information, see escneo.org.

Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD)

An exception to Ohio’s traditional forms of school district governance is the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, which has a nine-member board of education appointed by Cleveland’s mayor. In accordance with a state law that went into effect in 1998 (two years after the system reached “fiscal emergency” status), the mayor must fill each board vacancy from a list of qualified persons provided by a nominating panel made up of 11 representatives of various stakeholder groups in the city. The presidents of Cleveland State University and Cuyahoga Community College are ex-officio nonvoting members of the board. The CMSD Board of Education, in turn, appoints a chief executive officer to manage the district’s affairs. Visit clevelandmetroschools.org to learn more.

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY

District	District website	Communities served
Bay Village	BayVillageSchools.com	Bay Village
Beachwood	BeachwoodSchools.org	Beachwood
Bedford	Bedford.k12.oh.us	Bedford, Bedford Heights, Oakwood, and Walton Hills
**Berea	Berea.k12.oh.us	Berea, Brook Park, Middleburg, and part of Olmsted Falls
*Brecksville-Broadview Heights	BBHCSD.org	Brecksville, most of Broadview Heights, and part of North Royalton
Brooklyn	Brooklyn.k12.oh.us	Brooklyn
Cleveland Metropolitan	ClevelandMetroSchools.org	Most of Cleveland, Bratenahl, Linndale, Newburgh Heights, and parts of Brookpark and Garfield Heights
Cleveland Heights-University Heights	CHUH.org	Cleveland Heights, University Heights, and part of South Euclid
East Cleveland	East-Cleveland.k12.oh.us	East Cleveland and part of Cleveland Heights
Euclid	EuclidSchools.org	Euclid
**Fairview Park	FairviewParkSchools.org	Fairview Park
*Garfield Heights	GarfieldHeightsCitySchools.com	Garfield Heights
Lakewood	LakewoodCitySchools.org	Lakewood

Maple Heights	MapleSchools.com	Maple Heights
Mayfield	MayfieldSchools.org	Gates Mills, Highland Heights, Mayfield Heights, and Mayfield Village
**North Olmsted	NorthOlmstedSchools.org	North Olmsted
*North Royalton	NorthRoyaltonSD.org	North Royalton
**Olmsted Falls	OFCS.net	Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township
Orange	OrangeSchools.org	Hunting Valley, Moreland Hills, Orange Village, Pepper Pike, and Woodmere Village
Parma	ParmaCitySchools.org	Parma, Parma Heights, and Seven Hills
Rocky River	RRCS.org	Rocky River
Shaker Heights	Shaker.org	Shaker Heights and part of Cleveland
Solon	SolonSchools.org	Solon and Glenwillow
South Euclid-Lyndhurst	SEL.k12.oh.us	South Euclid, Lyndhurst, and part of Richmond Heights
**Strongsville	StrongNet.org	Strongsville
Warrensville Heights	Warrensville.k12.oh.us	Warrensville Heights, Highland Hills, and North Randall
Westlake	WLake.org	Westlake

EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT IN (MOSTLY) CUYAHOGA COUNTY

District	District website	Communities served
Chagrin Falls	ChagrinSchools.org	Bentleyville, Chagrin Falls Township, Chagrin Falls Village, and part of Russell Township

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY

District	District website	Communities served
*Cuyahoga Heights	CuyHts.k12.oh.us	Brooklyn Heights, Cuyahoga Heights, and Valley View
*Independence	Independence.k12.oh.us	Independence
Richmond Heights	RichmondHeightsSchools.org	Richmond Heights

*Member of Cuyahoga Valley Career Center

**Member of Polaris Career Center

Joint Vocational Districts

Ohio law requires that school districts make vocational education available to all students in 11th and 12th grades. The required technology-based programs are usually more expensive to provide than a traditional academic program, so school districts may combine resources to form a joint vocational district. Each is governed by its own board, whose members are appointed from the school boards of the member districts. Like other school boards, joint vocational district boards have the power to submit levy requests to their voters.

The Cuyahoga Valley Career Center serves Brecksville/Broadview Heights, Cuyahoga Heights, Garfield Heights, Independence, and North Royalton in Cuyahoga County, and Nardon Hills, Revere, and Twinsburg in Summit County. The Polaris Career Center serves Berea, Fairview Park, North Olmsted, Olmsted Falls, and Strongsville. Establishment of a joint vocational district requires approval from the State Board of Education and the boards of each included school district. The state's vocational education requirements may also be met by individual school districts or through contracts between or among districts. An example of a less formal joint project is the West Shore Career-Technical District in Lakewood, which also serves Bay Village, Rocky River and Westlake city schools.

Special Education

Under the federal government's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), public schools must ensure that a free appropriate public education is available to all children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21. Students with disabilities are educated in classrooms alongside nondisabled students to the greatest extent possible. This can require using classroom aides or specialized materials and equipment. If a special education student cannot be adequately served in a public school, the state funding for that student is used to support his or her education in an alternative public program or a registered private program, which may be year-round or residential. When this occurs, the public school district where the student lives drafts an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which is carried out by the alternative program. The Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio supports school districts in providing special education services. For more information, see escneo.org.

Charter Schools

In Ohio, the term “community schools” is often used to denote charter schools. Under state legislation passed in 1997, charter schools are part of the state’s public education system. However, they can be independent of a school district, have their own governing boards, and are free of many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. These schools can be nonprofit or for-profit institutions. Some, referred to as “virtual schools,” are internet- or computer-based. With some exceptions, any person, group, or entity may apply for state board of education approval to establish and sponsor a charter school. The application must include a mission statement, a financial plan, specific educational goals, and the names of any nonprofit or for-profit management companies involved. The state board exerts some control in that it may revoke approval if adequate yearly student progress and proper financial management are not shown.

Teachers must be licensed by the state, and the school’s admission policy may not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, or disability. It may also not discriminate on the basis of sex unless it is a single sex school. In addition, the state’s financial reporting system must be followed, and financial information must be made available to the public. Charter schools are funded by taxpayers on the same per-pupil basis as traditional public schools. Under Ohio law, a city school district must provide transportation and a variety of other services to charter students living within their district. This is true of students at private and parochial schools, as well. Charter schools also receive federal funds allocated under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Voucher Program

The past few decades have seen a growing national movement to provide publicly funded vouchers for eligible students to attend private, parochial, or other nonpublic schools. Payments are given directly to parents to pay for their child’s education at a school of their choice and are deducted from funds that would have previously been allotted to the public school district in which the student lives.

Ohio offers five voucher programs to students in grades K-12. The vouchers, called “scholarships” by the state, use state money to pay tuition to nonpublic schools. One state program, the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring program, is only for students who live in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Two others are called “EdChoice Scholarship” programs.

One is income-based and the other is offered to students who would otherwise be assigned to a low-performing public school outside of Cleveland. All three programs set a maximum amount of money that can be paid via a voucher. The maximums vary from \$5,000 to \$5,700. The two other voucher programs are offered to families whose children have special needs or are autistic; the maximum amount that can be offered per student is \$20,000.

Public School Funding

Ohio’s school districts are primarily funded through local property tax levies approved by each district’s voters. House Bill 920, a 1976 state law embedded in the state constitution in 1980, freezes the revenue that school districts may collect from property taxes at the dollar amount collected at the time a levy was passed. Thus, even if property values rise, revenue allocated to a public school district does not rise. This lack of revenue growth makes it necessary for Ohio school districts to ask voters to approve new school levies every few years. Because property values and voter willingness to support public education vary within the county, there are considerable differences in per-pupil expenditures among the county’s districts. Voters in some Ohio school districts have approved an income tax option to provide revenue that can keep pace with inflation, but none of these districts are in Cuyahoga County.

Since 1920, the state has also contributed funds to school districts. Currently, state funds are allocated to districts using a formula to assure a minimum per-pupil expenditure as a combination of local taxes and a state contribution, known as “foundation funding.” To this end, the formula takes into account student enrollment as well as the property and income wealth of the district. There is additional state funding for supplemental programs like adult education, driver’s education, and the purchase of school buses. Total funding for school vouchers and charter school per-pupil allotments (see above) for those students living in a particular district is deducted from the foundation funding for that district. Federal funding to public schools is primarily used to support specific programs or services.

In a 1997 lawsuit, *DeRolph vs. the State of Ohio*, the Ohio Supreme Court declared Ohio’s school funding system to be unconstitutional. In subsequent rulings, the court maintained that Ohio’s school funding system remains unconstitutional, but conceded that there was no judicial remedy. However, the ruling did lead to increased investment by the state in local school construction throughout Ohio.

Adult Education

Adult basic and literacy education (ABLE) programs provide free services to enable adults to acquire the skills to succeed in post-secondary education, job training, and employment. Offerings include basic math, reading, writing, General Equivalency Diploma (GED), the adult diploma program, English as a second language (ESL), computer literacy, and employment skills. ABLE programs in Cuyahoga County are administered through Cuyahoga Community College, Cuyahoga County public libraries, Parma City School District, Polaris Career Center, and Seeds of Literacy, a nonprofit organization that provides free GED preparation and basic education to adults in Greater Cleveland.

Higher Education

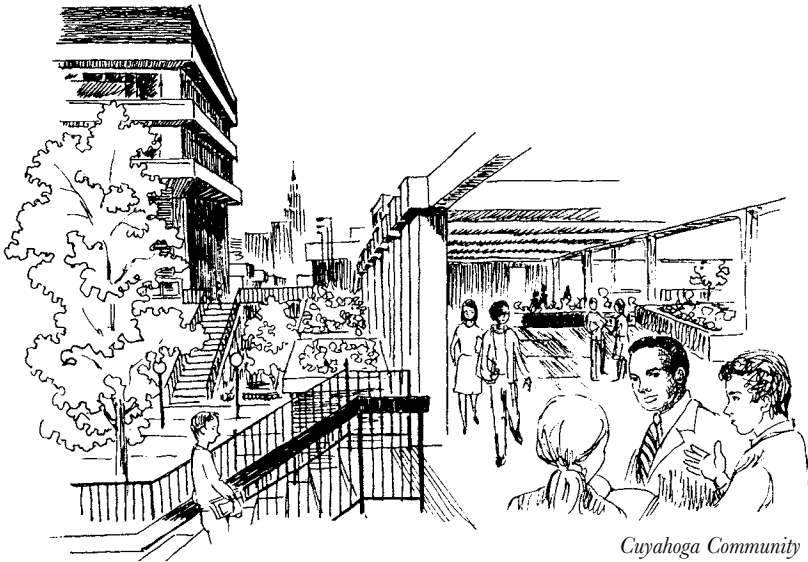
Ohio's Department of Higher Education oversees a multitude of offerings at the post-secondary level that include not only academic coursework at public and private colleges and universities, but also career and technical programs. The department is governed by the Ohio Board of Regents, whose nine members are appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Ohio Senate. The chairs of the education committees of the Ohio House and Senate serve as ex-officio members of the board, which is chaired by a chancellor who also serves as a member of the governor's cabinet. Cuyahoga County has two public institutions of higher education: Cleveland State University and Cuyahoga Community College.

Cleveland State University (CSU)

CSU in downtown Cleveland is part of Ohio's network of universities offering four-year undergraduate as well as graduate and professional programs. Once largely serving commuting students, CSU in recent years has seen the number of resident students grow significantly. Its board of trustees has nine members appointed by the governor for nine-year staggered terms, two nonvoting elected faculty representatives, and two nonvoting appointed student representatives. For more information, see csuohio.edu.

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C)

Cuyahoga Community College is a two-year institution offering academic liberal arts and business courses as well as career and technical programs to full- and part-time students. It has four campuses — Eastern in Warrensville Heights, Metro in downtown Cleveland, Westshore in Westlake, and Western in Parma — but it also offers classes in other locations across the county. Its board of trustees has nine appointed members serving five-year terms. Tri-C is one of the county’s special districts and is funded partly by tuition, partly by state aid, and partly by a voter-approved countywide property tax levy. A universal course equivalency classification system allows for smooth transfer of student credits throughout the state’s public higher education institutions. For more information, see tri-c.edu.



Cuyahoga Community College

Private Colleges and Universities

Cuyahoga County also boasts a number of fully accredited private colleges and universities. Foremost among them are Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, John Carroll University in University Heights, Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, Notre Dame College in South Euclid, and Ursuline College in Pepper Pike.

CHAPTER 13

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries in Ohio represent yet another type of special district. Ohio law provides several ways libraries may be formed, but in Cuyahoga County all libraries are either school district libraries, each with a board of trustees appointed by the board of education, or county district libraries, with trustees appointed by county council and the court of common pleas. The resources of all public libraries are free and open to any resident of Ohio. All offer access to printed materials, electronic books and magazines, research databases, and interlibrary loans. The State Library of Ohio monitors library district service areas and makes sure that no citizen is taxed by more than one library system.

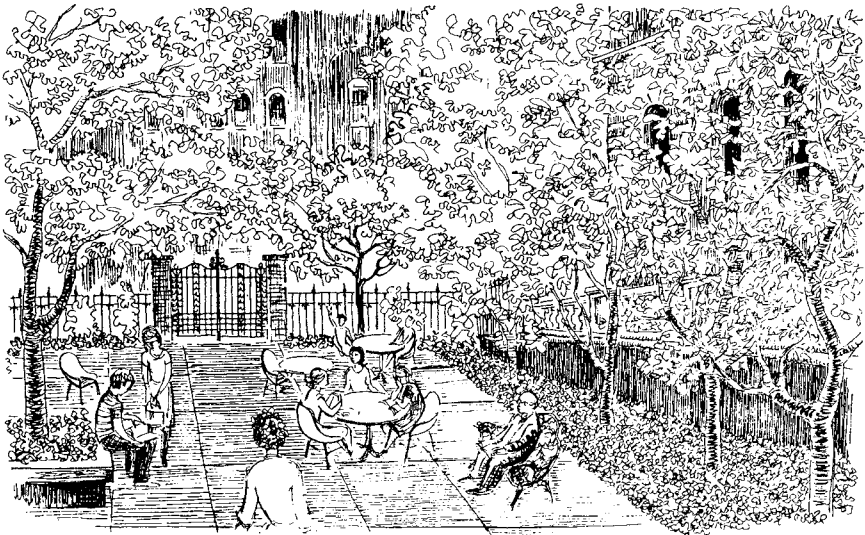
In 1985, the state government created a fund, now called the Public Library Fund (PLF), which directed 6.3 percent of the state's income tax receipts to public libraries across the state. In the 2018-2019 state budget, the percentage of state funding that goes to public libraries has been reduced to 1.68 percent. PLF funds are distributed to each county, which then distributes the funds to the public libraries within its borders. The other stream of public funding for libraries permitted by law is the local property tax. Since 2008, libraries have depended less on state funds than on property taxes, fees, fines, and grants.

County Library System

The Cuyahoga County Public Library is a county district library founded in 1923. Its 28 branches and MetroHealth Service Point serve 47 communities. The library is governed by a seven-member board of trustees, three appointed by Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas judges and four by Cuyahoga County Council. Trustees serve seven-year staggered terms and receive no compensation. Taxes for the library system are levied only on the communities served. More complete information about services can be found on the library's website, cuyahogalibrary.org.

Cleveland Public Library

The Cleveland Public Library (CPL), a school district library, was founded in 1869. It is governed by a board of seven trustees appointed by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District Board of Education. Members serve for four years and are not compensated. The library has 29 branches, including the main downtown branch on Superior Avenue. The downtown branch is a Federal Depository Library and, as such, houses selected U.S. government publications and documents dating from 1886 to the present. The Ohio Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled is part of Cleveland Public Library. The City of Cleveland’s Public Administration Library, founded in 1912, is a CPL department. Housed in Cleveland City Hall, it is one of the oldest municipal reference libraries in the country and is the official depository of all city publications and reports. Additional information can be found at cpl.org.



Eastman Garden – Cleveland Public Library

Other School District Libraries

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights, East Cleveland, Euclid, Lakewood, Rocky River, Shaker Heights, and Westlake public libraries are also school district libraries. Their boards are appointed to staggered terms of seven years by the boards of education in their communities, which are also their taxing authorities. Each of these libraries offers specialized services and collections that reflect the needs of the community.

Commonly provided services include foreign language collections, ethnic heritage collections, homework centers, online databases, services for the homebound, and computing centers. Each library's website provides information about the services offered.

Library Consortiums

CLEVNET and SearchOhio are consortiums that allow cardholders in one member library to access books in other member libraries. Cleveland Public Library and some other school district libraries are members of CLEVNET, which extends to 12 counties in northern Ohio. Cuyahoga County Public Library and other school district libraries are members of SearchOhio.

Library Websites

Cleveland Public Library: cpl.org

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library: heightslibrary.org

Cuyahoga County Public Library: cuyahogalibrary.org

East Cleveland Public Library: eastclevelandpubliclibrary.org

Euclid Public Library: euclidlibrary.org

Lakewood Public Library: lakewoodpubliclibrary.org

Rocky River Public Library: rrpl.org

Shaker Heights Public Library: shakerlibrary.org

Westlake Porter Public Library: westlakelibrary.org

CHAPTER 14

PARKS, CONSERVATION, AND RECREATION

Cleveland Metroparks

Greater Cleveland is ringed by a 23,000-acre “Emerald Necklace” of public parks and parkways called the Cleveland Metroparks. The park system officially dates back to 1917, 12 years after William Stinchcomb, a self-taught engineer, conceived of the idea of an outer chain of parks with connecting boulevards. Cleveland Metroparks is now a special district, governed by a three-member volunteer board of park commissioners appointed to three-year terms by the presiding judge of the probate court of Cuyahoga County. Just over 60 percent of the park system’s current budget comes from a 10-year, 2.7-mill property tax, which voters last approved in 2013.

The system’s 18 large parks, called “reservations,” are: Acacia, Bedford, Big Creek, Bradley Woods, Brecksville, Brookside, Euclid Creek, Garfield Park, Hinckley, Huntington, Lakefront, Mill Stream Run, North Chagrin, Ohio-Erie Canal, Rocky River, South Chagrin, Washington, and West Creek. Hinckley Reservation, in Medina County, is the one park located outside of Cuyahoga County. Some of the parks have picnic areas, nature centers, and other event or program facilities available for rent, and the system includes eight public golf courses. You can find more information about the Metroparks and make reservations for the use of park facilities at clevelandmetroparks.com.

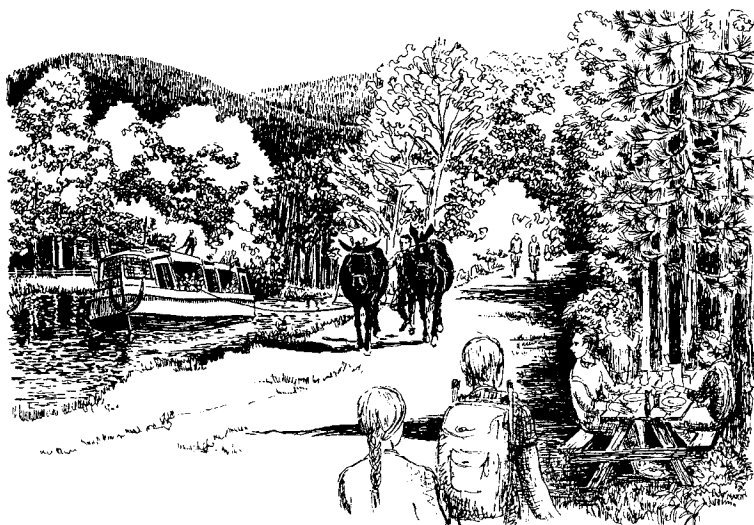
Metroparks Zoo

The Metroparks zoo has evolved, since its founding in 1882, into an animal conservation agency with worldwide influence. It is the largest provider of informal science education in northeast Ohio, and it serves as a global conservation resource committed to protecting endangered species. It houses animals from around the world, often in large natural

habitats, as well as a veterinary clinic to care for them. The zoo is managed by its executive director and governed by the Metroparks board of commissioners. The Cleveland Zoological Society, its trustees and members, help to promote and support the zoo and its many projects. Visit clevelandzoosociety.org and clevelandmetroparks.com/zoo.

The Ohio and Erie Canalway National Heritage Area

This national heritage site encompasses an area around the first 110 miles of the old Ohio and Erie Canal. Of particular interest to Cuyahoga County is the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail, an 85-mile trail along the canal from Cleveland south to Summit, Stark, and Tuscarawas counties. The hiking and biking trail is not yet continuous as of 2018, but current plans are for the trail to run the entire 110 miles of the national heritage area. Find out more at ohioanderiecanalway.com.



Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail

Cuyahoga Valley National Park

The historic and scenic Cuyahoga River valley between Cleveland and Akron was officially designated in June 1975 as the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area through legislation initiated by area Congressional representatives and supported by citizens who wanted to

save the valley from urbanization. It was designated a national park in 2000 and is the only national park in Ohio. The park's 49,000 acres wind around the Cuyahoga River for 22 miles. It features:

- Large natural zones of flood plains, tributaries, high plateaus, steep wooded ravines, and rock outcroppings
- Cultural history exhibits covering the Paleo-Indian period through the Late Woodland culture
- Western Reserve history depicted at Hale Farm and Western Reserve Village
- Portions of the Ohio and Erie Canal
- The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad line from Rockside Station in Independence to Akron Northside Station
- A bike and hiking path that links the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail from Cleveland to Portsmouth.

More information is available at nps.gov/cuva.

Other Parks and Facilities

Some of the largest outdoor attractions in the county are the large lakefront park, beach, and marina west of downtown Cleveland known as Edgewater Park and the bird sanctuary to the east known as Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve. The former, although owned by the city of Cleveland, is maintained by Cleveland Metroparks; and the latter, formerly called Dike 14, is maintained by the port authority. Cleveland and its 58 suburban communities own and maintain more extensive green spaces, scenic areas, and recreation areas. The private nonprofit Nature Center at Shaker Lakes provides a wide menu of outdoor programs for young people.

Soil and Water Conservation District

Over the years, the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and its partner, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Services, have provided assistance to address natural resource conservation, including the soil-water connection. The

SWCD helps communities with clean water permits, storm-water pollution prevention, urban agriculture, native seed sales, timber harvesting, rain gardens, wildlife conservation camps, and more. Members of SWCD's board of supervisors are elected to three-year terms and serve without pay. Learn more at cuyahogaswcd.org.

Cooperative Extension Service

The Cuyahoga County Cooperative Extension Service is a function of The Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, which has a presence in every county. It links communities, businesses and the general public to research and development resources in areas such as natural resources, urban farming, green technology and gardening. The 13-member County Extension Advisory Committee helps it to develop programs. See cuyahoga.osu.edu.

County Fair

The Cuyahoga County Fair has a history reaching back to 1893. Except for one year during the Depression and two years during World War II, the event has been held every year at the county fairgrounds in Berea. Alongside its recreational, educational, and livestock features, the fair demonstrates agribusiness products and techniques, encourages constructive youth activities, and promotes the industrial, commercial, and educational interests of the county. The county holds title to the fairgrounds, but events and programs are organized and promoted by the nonprofit Cuyahoga County Agricultural Society, which is controlled by a board of up to 21 directors elected by society members. Any resident of Cuyahoga County may become a society member by paying annual dues. Learn more at cuyfair.com.

Other Outdoor and Indoor Recreation

Cuyahoga County, its residents, and visitors support many other cultural, botanical, and scientific amenities as well. Cuyahoga Arts and Culture is a special district dedicated to helping fund greater Cleveland's arts (broadly defined) programs and institutions through a grant process with monies raised via an excise tax on the sale of cigarettes. Some of the county's largest, most widely known amenities deserve special mention here:

- **Children’s Museum of Cleveland**, in its remodeled Euclid Avenue mansion
- **Cleveland Botanical Garden**, now a part of Holden Forests and Gardens
- **Cleveland Cultural Gardens**, 30 nationality gardens north of University Circle
- **Cleveland Museum of Art**, with renowned permanent and traveling exhibits
- **Cleveland Museum of Natural History**, with its planetarium and wildlife center
- **Cleveland Orchestra**, appearing regularly at Severance Hall
- **Great Lakes Science Center**, with its IMAX theater
- **Greater Cleveland Aquarium**, on the west bank in the Flats
- **Playhouse Square**, with its downtown complex of large and small theaters
- **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame**, in its iconic lakeside home
- **Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Cleveland**, in the center of University Circle
- **Western Reserve Historical Society**, including the Crawford Auto-Aviation Museum

Combined with countless more local cultural and entertainment offerings, ubiquitous inviting green spaces, and downtown Cleveland’s three major league sports teams, Cuyahoga County residents and visitors enjoy lively recreational options. Visit thisiscleveland.com for current events and exhibits.

CHAPTER 15

ELECTIONS

The Ohio Constitution specifies who may vote, the arrangement of candidates' names on a ballot, the way ballot issues are explained, and the rules for state and most local primary elections. Laws regulating elections are adopted by the state legislature, while the secretary of state is responsible, through county boards of elections, for carrying out the provisions of those laws.

In 2002, the federal government enacted the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), wide-ranging election reform legislation meant to improve the operation of elections nationwide. In response to HAVA requirements, Ohio transitioned from punch-card ballots and lever voting to electronic voting machines or optical scan ballots. Cuyahoga County uses optical scan ballots. To safeguard voter rights further, voters in Cuyahoga County in 2014 passed an amendment to the county charter adding the following provisions: that the "right to vote shall be a fundamental right" in the county, that elections in the county "shall be free and open," and that the county has the right to enforce these provisions through legal action "to protect the right to vote and access to the ballot and to undertake measures to promote voter registration and participation, including ... promotion of early voting."

Voting Information

Any U.S. citizen who has been a resident of Ohio for 30 days and is at least 18 years old may register and vote. Seventeen-year-olds may register and vote in a primary election if they will be 18 on or before the date of the next general election. A citizen may register by mail, in person at any city hall, at most libraries, at auto license bureaus when applying for or renewing a driver's license, and at other locations where voter registration forms are available. Numerous citizen groups also conduct registration drives. Beginning in January 2017, an Ohio citizen with a current Ohio driver's license or state identification card has been able to register online using a form available on the secretary of state's website, myohiovote.com.

In even-numbered years, county, state, and national officials are elected, while in odd-numbered years, local and school district offices are filled. Amendments to the Ohio Constitution or municipal charters, local or school tax levies, and other state or local issues may be placed on the ballot at any primary or general election in any year.

General elections in the United States are always held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of every year. Most Ohio primary elections are held on the corresponding date in May. Exceptions to that rule are for the earlier Ohio presidential primary every four years and for later local primaries if provided for by local home rule charters. The methods for filing candidacies or gaining ballot access are spelled out on the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections website, boe.cuyahogacounty.us.

Political Parties

The Ohio Revised Code defines two types of political parties—major and minor. A “major political party” is one whose candidate for governor or nominees for presidential electors received not less than 20 percent of the total vote cast for either office at the most recent regular state election. A “minor political party” is one whose candidate for governor or nominees for presidential electors received at least three percent of the total vote cast for either office at the most recent regular state election. A small party that fails to meet the 3 percent threshold can also qualify as “minor” if it files a petition with the secretary of state that meets certain requirements regarding the number of signatures and congressional districts of the petitioners.

In each county, the party’s central committee, consisting of representatives elected from each precinct, is responsible for directing party activity within the county. In Cuyahoga County, both the Republican and Democratic parties’ central committees delegate authority to an executive committee. These executive committees recommend to the secretary of state the people to be appointed to the county’s board of elections, control party expenditures and appointments, and decide on each party’s candidates in the primaries. A party may form a “district committee” for any judicial, senatorial, or congressional district that crosses county lines.

Board of Elections

County boards of elections in Ohio are not under the authority of county government; they are administrative arms of the Ohio Secretary of State. The secretary of state appoints a board of elections in each county to carry out election laws. There are four members of every county board — two from each of the two major parties. The secretary of state’s appointments are chosen from recommendations made by the executive committee of each party’s central committee. The secretary of state has the power to cast the deciding vote in case the board is evenly divided on any issue.

Each county board of elections elects its own chairperson from among its members. Its duties include:

- Registering voters
- Maintaining records of registered voters
- Selecting polling locations
- Providing election equipment and supplies
- Reviewing and certifying the sufficiency and validity of petitions and candidate nomination papers
- Printing and delivering ballots
- Issuing certificates of election (or of nomination, in primaries) to successful candidates.
- Certifying election results to the secretary of state.

The board of elections appoints election officials who staff each of the precincts at the polling locations within the county—usually two from each major party, but not more than two from the same party. They are responsible for the direct administration of an election. County boards of elections are responsible for conducting recounts when requested by losing candidates or by the leaders of a losing campaign issue. The annual budget request for the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections must be approved by county council, since all funds for operations and equipment come from the county general fund, as mandated by state law. Visit boe.cuyahogacounty.us.

Ohio Elections Commission

The Ohio Elections Commission investigates reported violations of election laws and may impose a fine or send its findings to the appropriate county prosecuting attorney for action. The commission is composed of six members appointed by the secretary of state, three each from lists submitted by the state central committees of the two major parties. These six members appoint a seventh who is not affiliated with either party. Violations of election laws may be reported at elc.ohio.gov.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland could not have compiled and condensed this information without the help of many of its members as well as many providers of countywide services in the greater Cleveland community.

We especially thank Cuyahoga County Director of Communications Mary Louise Madigan, who first encouraged us to update the 1994 edition of *Here's Cuyahoga County* and who connected us to many current officeholders and staff members who together with Ms. Madigan patiently fact-checked the information our LWV reporters gathered through interviews, documents, and web searches.

These LWV researchers and copy readers—along with editorial staff members Nancy Dietrich, Marcia Goldberg, Maggie Jorgensen, and Lynda Mayer—were responsible for the research and refinement that went into each of these 15 chapters: Maryann Barnes, Lisa Cech, Virginia Dawson, Janis Ford, Carol Gibson, Penny Jeffrey, Kathy Kosiorek, Lynn McClelland, Laurel Rowen, and Becky Thomas.

County officers and employees who shared valuable information with our research team or who diligently fact-checked much of this material include Hugh Blocksidge, Colleen Brown, Judith Cetina, Glenn Coyne, Michael Dever, Jennifer Elting, Nicole English, Mike Foley, Colleen Kelly, Maggie Keenan, Eddy Kraus, Karlton Laster, Brent Lawler, Robert McClelland, Joseph Nanni, Mindi Naticchioni, Michelle Norton, Gregory Popovich, Kahlil Seren, Jonathan Shick, and Robert Triozzi.

The content of *Here's Cuyahoga County* also extends to topics beyond those overseen by county government into related areas such as local government, public schools, regionalism, transportation, libraries, parklands, elections, and other public entities. We were helped in this coverage also by knowledgeable experts, including Jocelynn Clemings, William Currin, Shawn Davis, Mark Freeman, William Friedman, Grace Gallucci, Earl Leiken, Nancy Levin, Georgine Welo, and William Whitney.

Without contributions by these and others too numerous to list, the production of this LWV citizens' handbook would not have been possible.

SOURCES

Cuyahoga County’s official website, *cuyahogacounty.us*, plus the individual websites of its major departments and agencies, are cited and linked throughout this publication, should readers wish to explore any topics further or to contact more current information sources. Web sources for other areawide public services and entities are also cited in the text where they are discussed.

Public officials and staff members who provided valuable information via personal, telephone, or email interviews are listed by name under “Acknowledgements.”

Illustrations are reproduced from the originals created for the 4th edition of *Here’s Cuyahoga County* by LWV member Nancy Martt of Chagrin Falls.

2017 Budget graphs come from the website of the Cuyahoga County Office of Budget and Management.

The photograph of the county administration building is courtesy of the Cuyahoga County Department of Information Technology.

Other helpful sources:

- *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, eds. David Van Tassel and John Grabowski, 2nd edition, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996, and its online edition, *ech.cwru.edu*, maintained by Case Western Reserve University in collaboration with the Western Reserve Historical Society.
- Pertinent sections of Cuyahoga County’s codified ordinances and charter, and several provisions of the Ohio Revised Code.
- The Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court 2015 Annual Report.
- The Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association Legal Directory.

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER CLEVELAND

- Serves all of Cuyahoga County and is a part of the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters of Ohio
- Is a nonpartisan political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy
- Takes action on local, county, state and national governmental issues after study and member consensus
- Neither supports nor opposes any candidate or political party
- Welcomes to membership all women and men, age sixteen and over.

CHAPTERS OF THE LWVGC:

- Bay Village
- Cleveland
- Cleveland Heights/University Heights
- East Cleveland
- Fairview Park
- Hillcrest
- Lakewood
- Rocky River
- Shaker Heights
- Westlake/North Olmsted

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER CLEVELAND EDUCATION FUND

The LWVGCEF is the educational arm of the LWVGC that works to increase voter registration and election turnout. It promotes an informed electorate through the collection and dissemination of factual, nonpartisan information about candidates, timely issues, and the operations of local governmental bodies.