

Overview of the Delaware County Government

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Introduction

This presentation is designed to help you understand how government works in Delaware County, PA. The most important information is within the slides with links to more detailed information for those who need it. Navigating the presentation is simple: you can either scroll through the entirety of the document, or you can take advantage of the hyperlinks in the table of contents. References are provided at the end of the presentation in the same order as the slides. Simply copy and paste the URL's into any browser.

Table of Contents.

[History](#)

[Education Level](#)

[Location](#)

[Finances](#)

[Demographics](#)

[Welfare](#)

[Municipalities](#)

[Public Health](#)

[Home Rule Charter](#)

[Judicial Pyramid](#)

[Elected Officials](#)

[Judicial Contests](#)

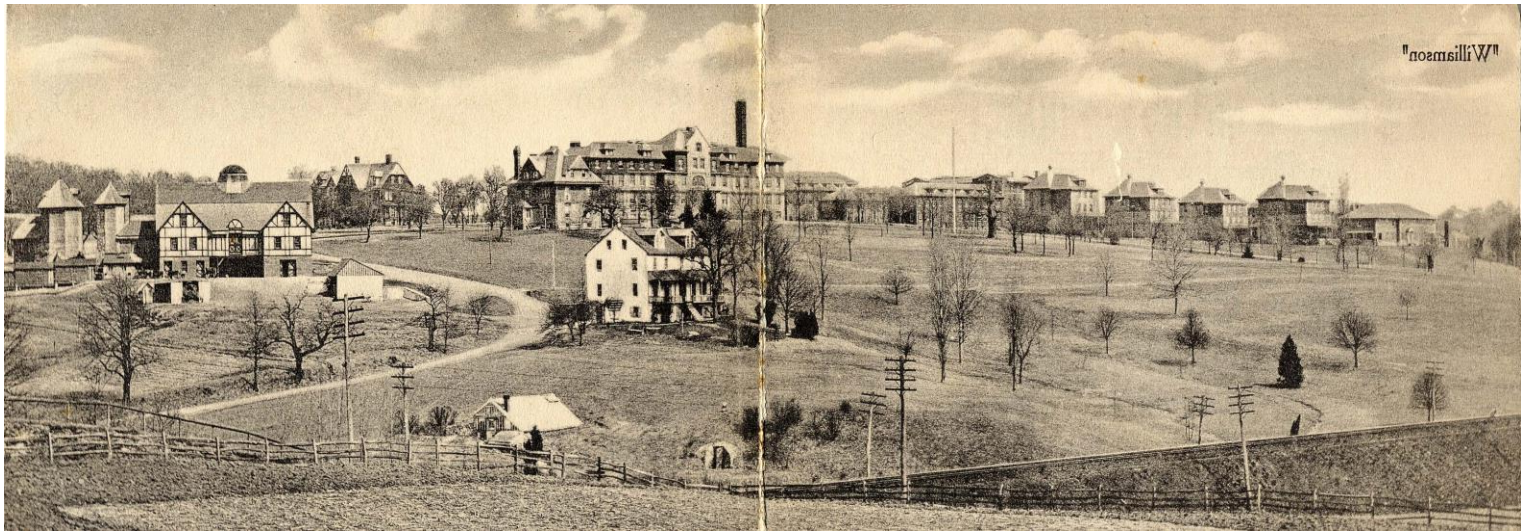
[County Council](#)

[Emergency Preparedness](#)

[Election](#)

[References](#)

History



- Delaware County - **oldest settled area of Pennsylvania**
- 184 square miles in area
- Ruled by Sweden in 1643
- Founded by William Penn as the colony of Pennsylvania,
- Served as sanctuary for all oppressed people
- Population surge in 1900's as more people moved to suburbs
- Second highest population density in Pennsylvania.

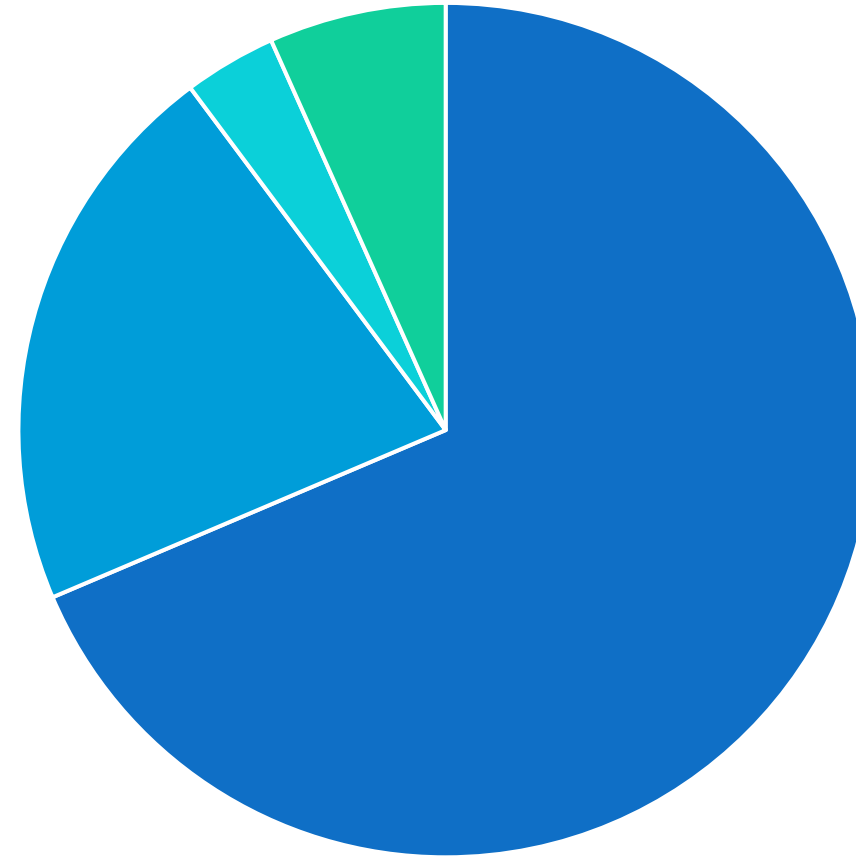
Demographics

Population: 564,751

Racial Composition:

- 68.6% White
- 21.2% African American
- 3.5% Hispanic or Latino
- 6.7% Other

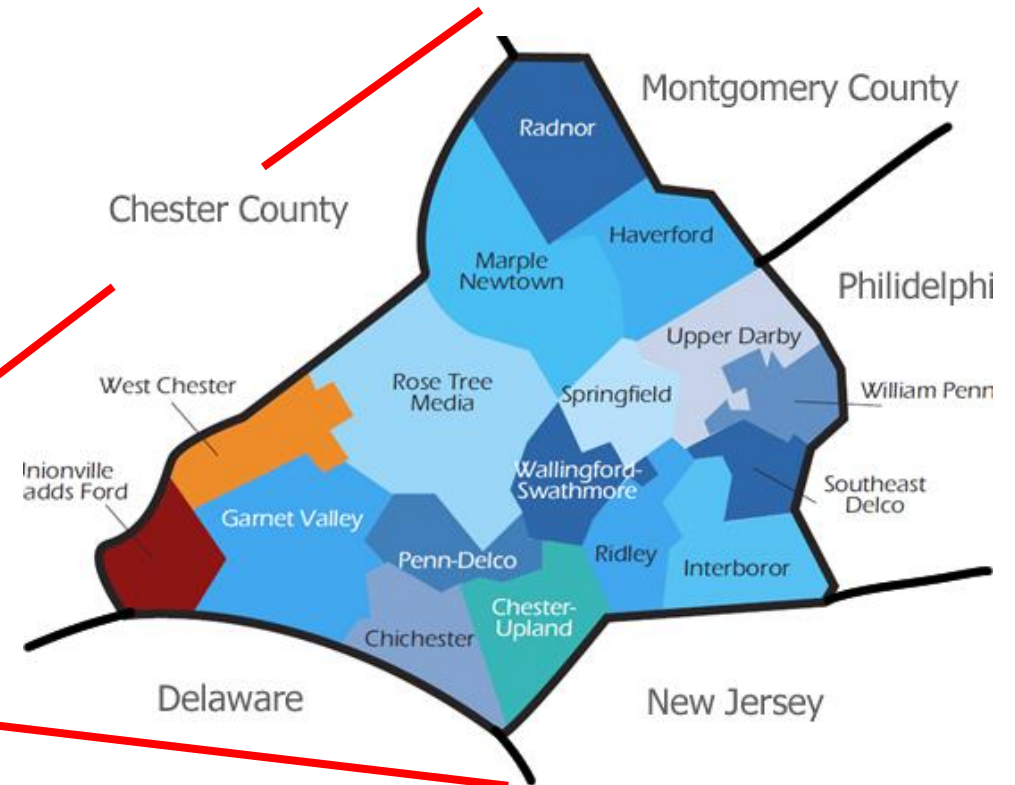
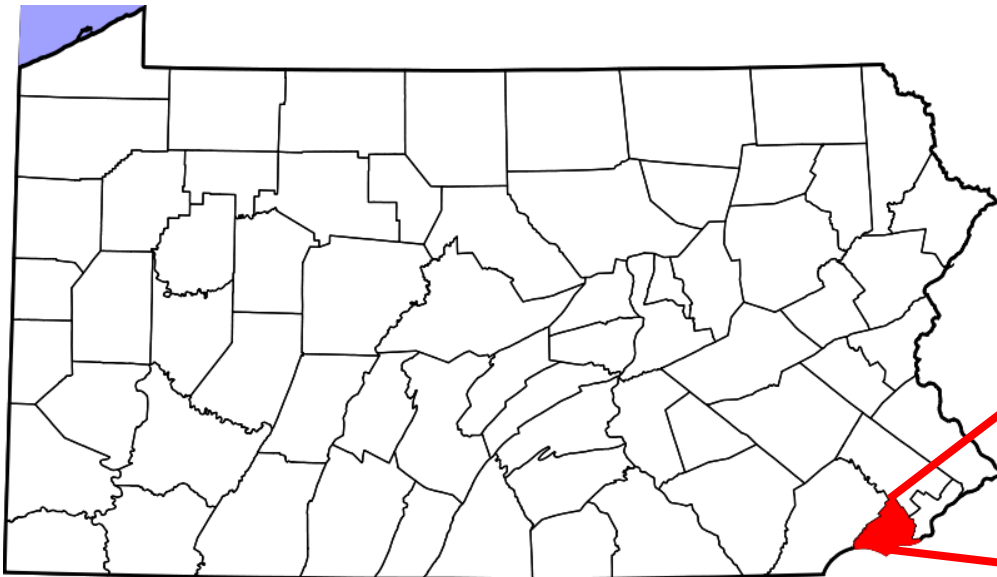
Racial Composition



■ White ■ African-American ■ Hispanic or Latino ■ Other

Where is Delaware County?

- Located in the Southeast of Pennsylvania
- Bordering Chester County, Montgomery County, Philadelphia County, Delaware and New Jersey



Municipalities

In Pennsylvania, everyone lives in a

- school district
- county
- and municipality. ¹

Municipality type

- **Not** related to population size
- Determined by form of government



¹ [HTTPS://DCED.PA.GOV/DOWNLOAD/CITIZENS-GUIDE-TO-PENNSYLVANIA-LOCAL-GOVERNMENT-PDF/?WPDMDL=57750](https://dced.pa.gov/download/citizens-guide-to-pennsylvania-local-government-pdf/?WPDMDL=57750)

Types of Municipalities of Delaware County

Under Pennsylvania law there are four types of incorporated municipalities:

- Cities
- Boroughs
- Townships
- Towns

Delaware county has 49 municipalities.

Further Reading:

[Differences between Municipalities \(Page 8\)](#)

Contact Information:

[List of Municipalities](#)

BOROUGHES

- Operate under Borough code
- Establishes Borough Council as the governing body
- Some are divided further into wards
- Has a mayor and councilpersons

CITIES

- Operate under Third Class City Code
- Establishes City Council as governing body
- Has a major and 4 or 6 councilpersons

FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIPS

- Operate under First Class Township Code
- Establishes board of commissioners as governing body
- 5 or more elected township commissioners elected every 4 years

SECOND CLASS TOWNSHIPS

- All towns are 2nd class unless 1st class status has been voter approved
- Operate under Second Class Township Code
- Establishes Board of Supervisors as governing body
- Elected at large for 6 years

Home Rule Charter

Effective in 1976, the Home Rule Charter allowed the Delaware County to become a Home Rule county.

This allows the county to self-govern without receiving a charter from the state, although they cannot do anything forbidden by state or federal law.¹

“The Home Rule Charter gives County Council the authority to pass ordinances, resolutions and proclamations and to provide budget and personnel to the needs of the residents as they arise.”²

Further Reading

[More information on Home Rule Charter](#)

[Full text of Home Rule Charter](#)

¹ [HTTPS://DEFINITIONS.USLEGAL.COM/H/HOME-RULE/](https://definitions.uslegal.com/h/home-rule/)

² [HTTP://WWW.CO.DELAWARE.PA.US/HOMERULE.HTML²](http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/homerule.html)

Elected Officials

- 5 County Council Members
- Sheriff
- District Attorney
- Controller
- Register of Wills

Each official must be above 25 years old and is elected for four-year terms.

The District Attorney and Register of Wills must be lawyers. ¹

County Council

- Five member body elected to staggered four year terms of office. ¹
- Responsible for all legislative and administrative functions of the County Government.
- Allowed a large amount of authority due to the Home Rule Charter.

Further Reading:

[Information about County Council](#)

Contact Information:

[Current County Council members](#)

Duties of the County Council

- Passes ordinances, resolutions and proclamations
- Adopts a budget each year
 - Sets tax rates
 - Raises money for major projects by selling tax-exempt municipal bonds
 - Distributes grants for social programs
- Decides the best means of providing services for the well-being of the County
- Determines the degree of participation of the County in the intergovernmental programs involving federal, state and local governments.
- Works on economic development, public transportation, waste disposal, human services, housing, land use and culture.

Appointments of County Council

The County Council appoints the following positions: ¹

- County Clerk
- Coroner
- Recorder of Deeds
- Jury Commissioners
- Commissions and Authorities
- Treasurer
- Board of Personnel Grievances and Performance Review
- Board of Tax Assessment Appeals
- Board of Elections
- Legal Staff
- Board of Institution Management
- Public Defender
- Office of Judicial Support
- Court House Police
- Executive Director

County Council Meetings

- Every Wednesday at 10:00 A.M. (usually lasts around 1.5-2 hours)
- Attended by Executive Director, County Controller, County Solicitor and County Clerk
- Open to the public with time for public participation.¹
- Archives of previous meeting videos, agendas and “minutes” (synopsis) on DC Website

Further Reading:

[County Council Meeting Videos & Agendas](#)

[Previous Meeting Videos](#)

[Previous Minutes \(2018\)](#)

¹[HTTP://WWW.CO.DELAWARE.PA.US/CM/INDEX.HTML](http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/cm/index.html)

Sheriff

- Required under PA State Constitutions require to serve as chief peace officer of the county. ¹
- Duties are to:
 - Provide security and protection for the Court of Common Pleas
 - Provide security and protection for Juvenile Court
 - Court Room Security and Prisoner Transportation
 - Serve and enforce all orders of the Court of Common Pleas

Further Reading:

[Mission Statement](#)

[Duties of the Sheriff](#)

Contact Information:

[Sheriff Telephone Directory](#)

[Ask the Sheriff](#)

¹ [HTTP://WWW.CO.DELAWARE.PA.US/SHERIFF/INDEX.HTML](http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/sheriff/index.html)

District Attorney

- Prosecutes crimes. ¹
- Oversees:
 - Chief Deputy District Attorney
 - Deputy District Attorneys of:
 - Law
 - Trial
 - Violence. ²

¹ [HTTPS://LEGAL-DICTIONARY.THEFREEDICTIONARY.COM/DISTRICT+ATTORNEY](https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/district+attorney)

² [HTTP://WWW.DELCODA.COM/DAS-OFFICE/ORGANIZATIONAL-CHART](http://www.delcoda.com/das-office/organizational-chart)

Further Reading:

[Delco District Attorney Website](#)

Contact Information:

[Contact the Delaware County DA's Office](#)

[Contact Division Assignments](#)

Controller

Responsible for:

- Overseeing and controlling the expenditure of funds.
- Appointing at least one deputy controller to assist them.¹

Further Reading:

[Delaware County Controller](#)

Contact Information:

[Controller Contact Information](#)

¹ [HTTP://WWW.CO.DELAWARE.PA.US/DEPTS/CONTROLLER.HTML](http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/depts/controller.html)

Register of Wills

- Principal duty is the probate of wills.
- Serves as the Clerk of the Orphans' Court
- Issues all marriage licenses for Delaware County.
- His/her office is located in
201 West Front Street, Media, PA.

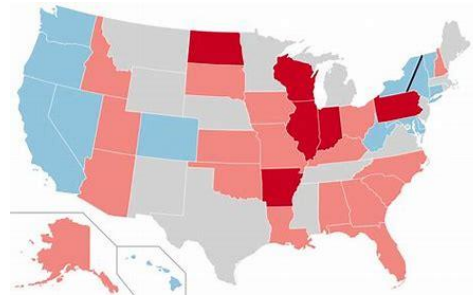
Further Reading:

[Delaware County Website](#)

Contact Information:

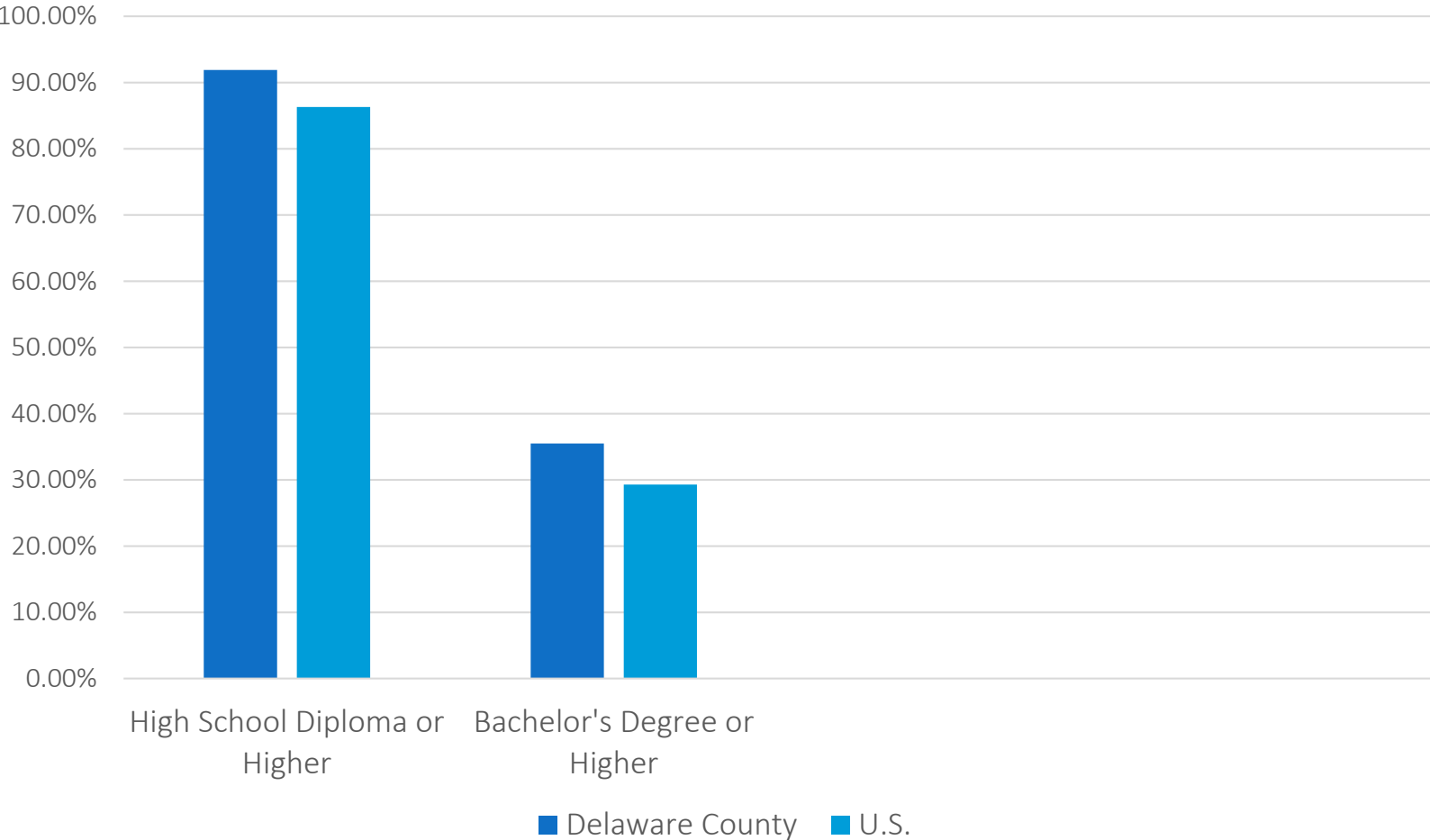
[Phone Directory](#)

General Elections



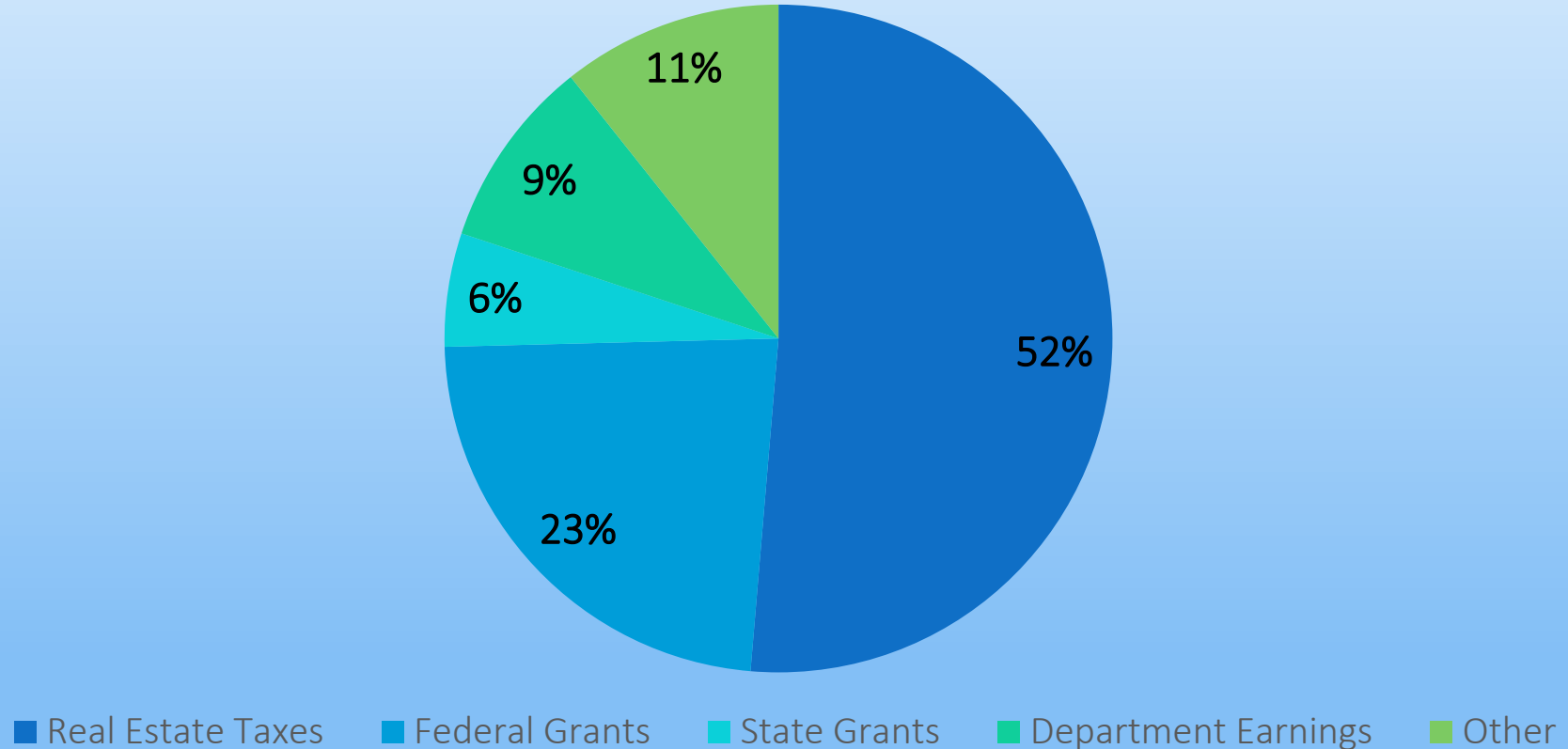
- Always held the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November
- Even numbered year:
 - U.S. senators and U.S. representatives to Congress
 - Pennsylvania governor, lieutenant governor, general assembly, attorney general, auditor general, state treasurer
- Odd numbered years (Municipal Election):
 - County and city officials
 - Judges and magisterial district judges
- Every 4 years:
 - Presidential Election

Education Level



Tax Rates/Revenues

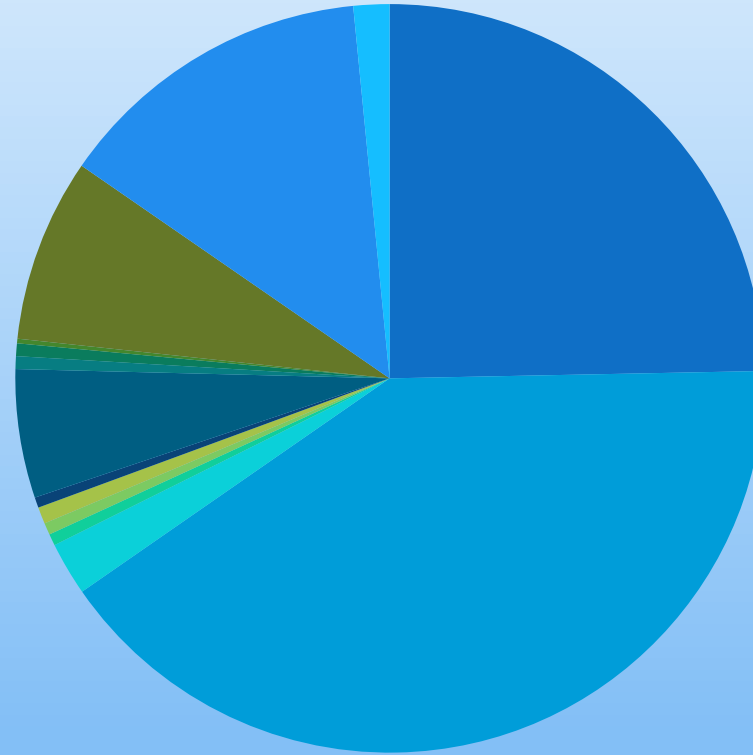
Annual Revenue of Delaware County



Total Annual Revenue:
\$336,457

Spending/Expenses

Annual Spending of Delaware County



Total Annual Spending:
\$354,286

- Social Welfare
- Administration of Justice
- Transportation
- Parks
- Registration and Elections
- Tax Administration
- Financial Management
- General Government
- Miscellaneous
- Other Subsidies
- Other Expenditures
- Debt Service
- Employee Fringe Benefits
- Insurance

Welfare



- Covered by the Department of Human Services, which branches out into:
 - Behavioral Health
 - Children and Youth Services
 - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
 - Early Learning Resource Center
 - Early Intervention
- Helps people of all income levels to get the help they need

Public Health

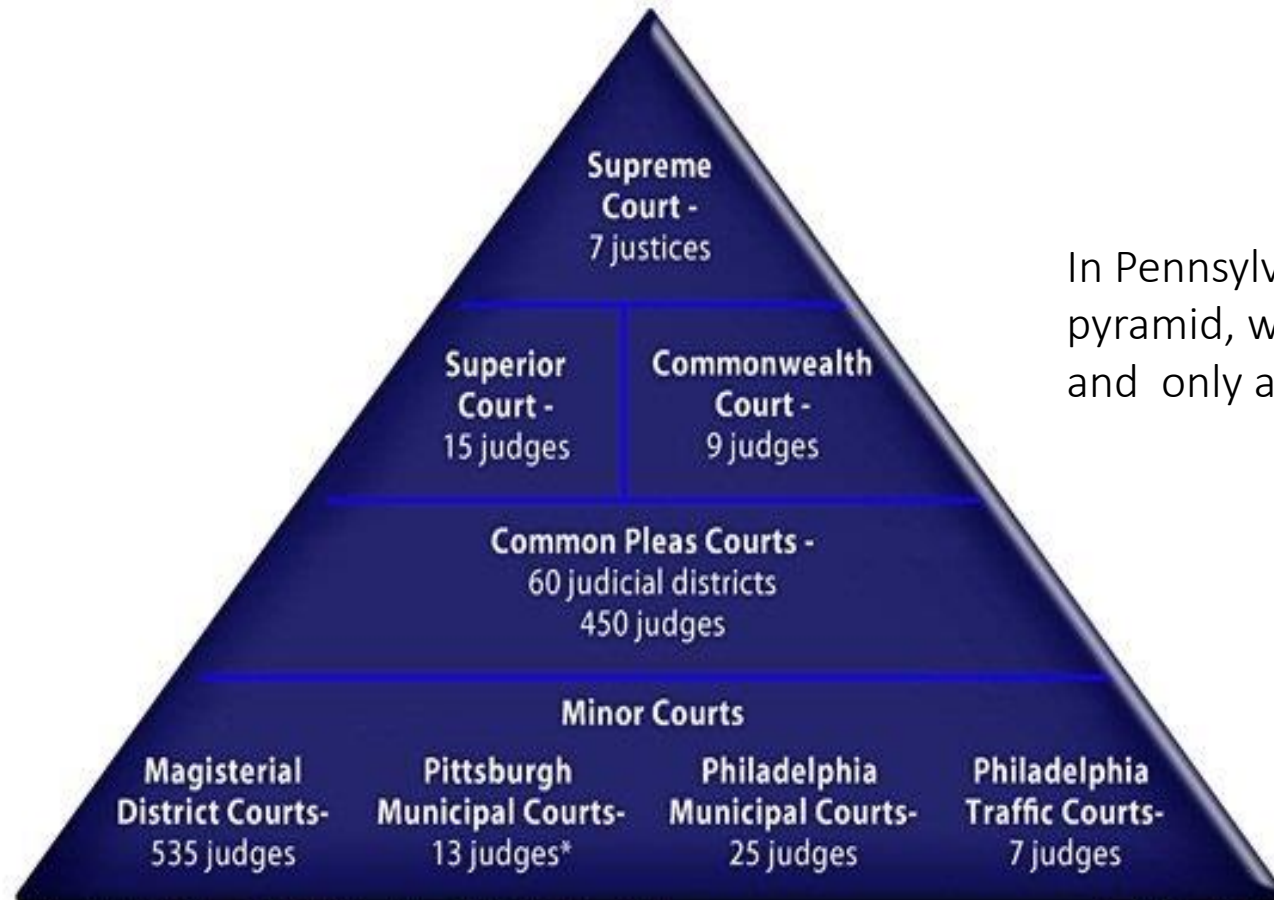
- Provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health
 - Free STD testing
 - Free or low cost immunizations
 - Free tuberculosis disease clinic
- Delaware County State Health Center located in
151 W. 5th Street
Chester, Pa 19013
- West Nile Virus Surveillance and Control provided by Penn State and funded by the PA Department of Environmental Protection

Delaware Department of Inter-Community Health



- Promotes wellness
- Protects safety
- Prevents disease
- Partners with local boards of health, emergency personnel, public health providers, and residents.

Judicial Pyramid



In Pennsylvania, the judicial system is similar to a pyramid, with many lower courts on the bottom and only a few higher courts on the top.

*included in the total 535 Magisterial District Court judges

As of May 2012

Court System of PA

- Appellate courts
- Courts of Common Pleas
- Minor Courts



- Judges can be either partisan or bipartisan. They can run in either the Democratic or Republican primaries, or even both. Judges who win both primaries will run unopposed in November.
- Judges are forced to retire at the age of 75.

Magisterial District Courts

- Lowest level of judicial authority
- Handle all traffic cases, minor criminal cases, and civil cases involving small sums of money
- Do not have to be lawyers, but must meet training requirements before serving
- Elected for a term of 6 years



Courts of Common Pleas

- General trial courts
- Organized into 60 districts
- Hears cases involving large sums of money and/or serious crimes.
- Judges elected for 10 years, and can be retained by a yes or no vote.



Appellate courts

- Highest court in PA: the Supreme Court
- Two intermediate appellate courts:
 - Superior Court
 - Commonwealth Court
- Initial term of 10 years, can be retained by a yes/no vote.



Emergency Preparedness

Tune In: Delco Alert is an emergency notification system that will alert residents via cell phone or email

Evacuate: if authorities order an evacuation, leave the area affected by the hazard. Bring adequate supplies. Do not go to your children's school.

Shelter-In Place: Remain indoors until further notice. Move to an interior room with no openings to the outside.

Always remain tuned in to a local radio station or TV channel. Remain calm, and only call 911 to report an immediate life-threatening emergency.

Delaware County authorities will notify all county residents via text message, phone call, or email if there is an emergency. They will instruct residents to either evacuate or shelter-in place.



References

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