



The Civic Federation

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A Brief Introduction to Cook County

With an estimated 5,287,037 residents, Cook County is the most populous county in the State of Illinois and the second most populous county in the United States, coming only after Los Angeles County in California.¹ The County is 946 square miles in size – of that only 15% is unincorporated by the City of Chicago or other municipalities. The role of Cook County government is to provide healthcare, court, and public safety services, as well as administer vital records and assess and collect property taxes. In 2009 Cook County had 24,404 full-time employees on its payroll.²

The Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) is the second-largest public health system in the nation. It provides emergency, acute, preventative, and other care to over 500,000 patients a year at its facilities. County Commissioners recently approved a strategic plan that will emphasize outpatient care and consolidation of facilities. To read more about the changes to CCHHS, [please read this post on the Civic Federation blog](#).

The Circuit Court of Cook County is presided over by Chief Judge Timothy C. Evans. With over 400 judges and 2.4 million annual cases, it is one of the largest court systems in the world. The Circuit Court system hears cases from across the County, including Chicago. The Cook County Sheriff's Office, led by Sheriff Tom Dart, is responsible for policing all unincorporated land in the County, as well as providing courthouse security and overseeing Cook County Jail, which has over 9,000 inmates.³

Cook County government is responsible for assessing and collecting property taxes on the 1.8 million parcels of property within the County on a tri-annual, ad-valorem basis. The County is also responsible for maintenance of 557 non-contiguous miles of highways, 1,474 lane miles of pavement, and 130 bridges.⁴

¹ U.S. Census Bureau , State and Local County Quick Facts – Cook County, Illinois, at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17/17031.html> (last visited on October 14, 2010).

² Cook County, Illinois, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended November 30, 2009, p. 220.

³ Ibid, p. 224.

⁴ Cook County Illinois, Highway Department, at http://www.co.cook.il.us/portal/server.pt/community/highway_department/298 (last visited on October 14, 2010).

Below is a list of County elected officials and commissioners as of October 2010 with links to their offices or websites. For an up-to-date list of officials, please [click here to visit the Cook County Leadership webpage](#).

The President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners is [Todd H. Stroger](#). County voters will elect a new County Board President on November 2, 2010. The new Board President will take office on December 6, 2010.⁵

Cook County Commissioners, listed by district:

1st [Earlean Collins](#)
2nd [Robert Steele](#)
3rd [Jerry "Iceman" Butler](#)
4th [William Beavers](#)
5th [Deborah Sims](#)
6th [Joan Patricia Murphy](#)
7th [Joseph Mario Moreno](#)
8th [Edwin Reyes](#)
9th [Peter N. Silvestri](#)
10th [Bridget Gainer](#)
11th [John P. Daley](#)
12th [Forrest Claypool](#)
13th [Larry Suffredin](#)
14th [Gregg Goslin](#)
15th [Timothy Schneider](#)
16th [Anthony J. Peraica](#)
17th [Elizabeth "Liz" Doody Gorman](#)

Cook County Elected Officials:

James M. Houlihan, [Assessor](#)
Dorothy Brown, [Clerk of the Circuit Court](#)
Joseph Berrios, [Commissioner of the Board of Review](#)
Brendan F. Houlihan, [Commissioner of the Board of Review](#)
Larry R. Rogers, Jr., [Commissioner of the Board of Review](#)
David Orr, [County Clerk](#)
Eugene Moore, [Recorder of Deeds](#)
Thomas Dart, [Sheriff](#)
Anita Alvarez, [State's Attorney](#)
Maria Pappas, [Treasurer](#)

Other Cook County Links:

[Forest Preserve District of Cook County](#)
[Cook County Health and Hospitals System](#)
[Circuit Court of Cook County](#)
[Organizational Chart of Cook County \[PDF\]](#)

⁵ 55 ILCS 5/2-6001.