

Government Operations

Section 1: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Local Control

As stated in Chapter I, Section 2, General Provisions, local control is the primary policy corner stone of CSAC.

B. County As State Agent vs. County As Local Entity

Those areas where counties act primarily as agents of the state in performing a state service - and do so with substantial state financing - should be distinguished from areas of local interest or state and local interest when determining the basis for applying statewide standards and supervision.

C. Scope Of Services

Each county should determine the scope and extent of the governmental services that it will render in response to the needs and desires of the local community. Each county should further examine its ability to support such services, always subject to the requirement to provide mandated services as state agents.

D. Uniformity In Services

In performing mandated duties, the degree of uniformity required should be carefully determined, with emphasis on the purpose of each requirement with the goal of uniformity not for uniformity's sake, but to serve a specific beneficial purpose. Progress can come only from the application of a variety of administrative approaches and methods.

E. Freedom To Devise Program Operating Policies

Counties should be free to devise their own operating policies for all government programs not financed wholly or substantially by federal or state funds.

F. Whole Responsibility With Board Of Supervisors

To be directly responsible to the people, general control of county government should be placed wholly with the board of supervisors.

G. Non-Partisan Nature Of County Government

The office of county supervisor should continue to be non-partisan, enabling the people to vote on the basis of local issues and to enable supervisors to solve local problems without binding allegiances to political parties.

Section 2: ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING (EDP)

A. General Principles

Counties are fully aware of the benefits that automation can provide for the improvement of government function and pledge their cooperation to the state and federal governments in developing the means to fully utilize electronic resources.

B. State And County EDP Policies

Differences in state and local applications of EDP must be fully recognized in order that efforts at excessive standardization will not reduce the effectiveness of the total system.

Section 3: CIVIL DEFENSE

Civil defense activity is urgently needed as insurance against disaster. Counties support the principle that realistic preparation is essential to ensure public safety.

Section 4: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

Emphasis must be given to the different government organizational structures that exist throughout the state and to the principle of "local control." Legal constraints and time-consuming restrictions have severely limited the use of the charter as a method of obtaining local control. The State Constitution and statutes should be revised to provide authorization for counties to independently organize by local control.

The principle of local control also applies to the issue of elected "ministerial" officials. The board of supervisors should have authority to submit proposals for appointment of elected officials to the voters.

The following policies are therefore adopted:

1. Local government should be allowed maximum flexibility to structure its organization through the process of "local option control."
2. Current laws should be changed to allow all counties to submit to their electorate the questions as to whether elected non-legislative officials, except District Attorney, should be appointed by the board of supervisors.

Section 5: LIBRARY SERVICES

A. General Principles

The continued vitality of our free and democratic society and the effective operation of government at all levels is dependent on an informed and knowledgeable citizenry. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all levels of government, including county government, to assure that all people have access to sources of knowledge and information that affect their personal and professional lives and society as a whole.

The public library is a supplement to the formal system of free public education and a source of

information and inspiration to persons of all ages, as well as a resource for continuing education. As such, public libraries deserve adequate financial support from all levels of government.

Counties are among the traditional providers of library and information services to the people. Counties form a natural region for the provision of this service. Citizens expect free library services that are responsive to local needs.

County library service is a regularly and favorably perceived service of county government. County library branches are often the visible identity of the community served, especially where there are no other public meeting places in the region. They are everyday evidence that county government cares about the local community.

B. Intergovernmental Relationships

The state is urged to recognize public libraries as part of the system of public education and should consider providing financial assistance to support their operation. County leadership is essential to the promotion of cooperative undertakings in order to achieve the most effective, equitable and economical efforts to assist libraries.

Cooperative undertakings are guided by CSAC's policy in Intergovernmental Relationships (Chapter I, Section 3).

C. Local Control

Library service is viewed as a locally provided service that is most effective when adapted to satisfy local needs.

D. Efficiency, Economy And Effectiveness

Quality library service is enhanced by the multi-jurisdictional use of resources to provide the best service at the lowest cost.

County libraries provide economies of scale that help make economic and efficient library service available to all county residents. In small counties, it is frequently economically impractical to have any library except the countywide service. In larger counties with independent city or district libraries, the county library frequently can make available services or provide specialized expertise at a cost far less than the smaller libraries.

E. State Role In The Provision Of Library Services

The state should recognize its responsibility to county government by providing assistance, when appropriate, after considering the state's total revenue and expenditure situation for public library service in accordance with Chapter 1.5, Part II of the Education Code, Sections 18010 through 18031.

The state should also provide adequate funding for the continuation and strengthening of support for the interjurisdictional library cooperatives established under Education Code, Section 18700 through 18766.

All state laws providing funding to counties for library services and to interjurisdictional library cooperatives in which counties are involved should be adequately funded.

F. Government Information

County library facilities provide an efficient and effective means to distribute information about government operations and services because of ready availability and easy accessibility to county residents. This capability is enhanced when library staff are trained in the provision of information, established communications and delivery links and a high public visibility.

G. Privacy And Censorship

Recognizing the right of an individual to privacy, circulation records and other records identifying the names of library users with specific materials are to be confidential in nature.

Recognizing the responsibility of library service to provide materials for values of interest and information and enlightenment of all people of the community, in no case should library materials be excluded because of the race, nationality or the social, political, or religious views of the authors. Furthermore, libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our time. No library materials should be prescribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

Section 6: SPECIAL DISTRICTS

See Chapter VII: PLANNING, LAND USE AND HOUSING, Section 5.

Section 7: ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS

A. Voting System Certification

Counties will support efforts to reform the current certification process for voting systems. Counties have experienced significant delay and unexpected actions which have made it almost impossible to update their voting systems.

B. Distribution Of Federal And State Voting System Funding

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds must be distributed to counties on a fair basis, through a formula agreed to by the counties, to provide certainty regarding the receipt of those funds.

CSAC will continue to closely monitor the Voting Modernization Board and their allocation of Proposition 41 funds. The Voting Modernization Board currently has an application deadline of January 1, 2006 in which counties must enter into a contract with a vendor in order to receive funds. Due to the delays in certification, the new requirement regarding the Accessible Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (AVVPAT), counties may need additional time to decide which system to purchase in order to comply with HAVA.

C. Reimbursement For Special And Vacancy Election Costs

Counties will also support efforts to reinstate language directing the state to provide reimbursement to counties that hold a special election to replace a member of Congress and/or a member of the state Legislature due to a vacancy or death. Also support efforts to create language that would reimburse counties for the cost of special elections called for other reasons.