
A DESCRIPTION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY GOVERNMENT

GENERAL INFORMATION

Hillsborough County is geographically located mid-way along the west coast of Florida. The County's boundaries encompass 1,048 square miles of land and 24 miles of inland water for a total of 1,072 square miles. The unincorporated area encompasses 931 square miles or 87 percent of the total area. The municipalities of Tampa (the County seat), Temple Terrace and Plant City account for the remaining 141 square miles. According to the Bureau of Business and Economic Research of the University of Florida, the county's total population as of 1997 was 928,731 of which 590,863 live in the unincorporated areas.

SEVEN-MEMBER COMMISSION ELECTED TO GOVERN COUNTY

Hillsborough County, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, is guided by an elected seven-member Board of County Commissioners. Through partisan elections, three are elected to represent the entire county as a district and four are elected to represent single-member districts. Under a Charter Ordinance effective May 1985, the Board is restricted to performing the legislative functions of government by developing policy for the management of Hillsborough County. The County Administrator, a professional appointed by the Board, and his staff are responsible for the implementation of those policies.

COMMISSIONERS SERVE ON OTHER BOARDS

The Board of County Commissioners also serves as the Environmental Protection Commission. Individual Board members serve on various other boards, authorities, and commissions, such as the Hillsborough Area Rapid Transit Authority, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, West Coast Regional Water Supply Authority, Aviation Authority, Expressway Authority, Sports Authority, Board of Criminal Justice, Arts Council, Drug Abuse Coordinating Council, Metropolitan Planning Organization, Council of Governments and the Committee of 100 of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce.

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

In addition to the members of the Board, citizens also elect five Constitutional Officers: Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Sheriff, and Supervisor of Elections. The Board funds all or, in some cases, a portion of the operating budgets of these Constitutional Officers. The Constitutional Officers maintain separate accounting systems and expanded budget detail information.

OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Based on the degree of budgetary authority, taxing authority, the ability to obligate funds to finance any deficits and the ability to fund any significant operational subsidies, several other governmental entities also have their budgets reviewed and approved by the Board of County Commissioners: the Environmental Protection Commission, the Civil Service Board, the Planning Commission, the Legislative Delegation, and the Law Library Board. The budgets of these offices and the Constitutional Officers are included in this document.

ROLE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

The County Administrator is an appointed official who is responsible for carrying out all decisions, policies, ordinances and motions of the Board.

The departments under the County Administrator are responsible for providing road construction and maintenance, solid waste disposal, parks and recreation, emergency services and water and wastewater treatment for residents of unincorporated Hillsborough County. The departments also are responsible for providing social services and public assistance to residents countywide.

These departments are grouped into three offices: Management Services, Community Services, and Human Services. The Office of Management Analysis, the Office of Neighborhood Relations, and the Office of Public Affairs are three additional offices which report directly to the County Administrator.