



## Growing ND by the Numbers

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#### Local Governments in North Dakota

*North Dakota ranks fourteenth among states in the number of local governments with a total of 2,685. The breakdown includes 53 county governments, 1,670 sub-county general purpose governments (357 municipalities and 1,313 townships), and 962 special purpose governments (183 school districts and 779 special districts like airport authorities, park districts and water districts).*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau State & Local Government Snapshot, July 2016

### Census of Governments Measures Economic Activity

The Census of Governments (CoG) is the most comprehensive, comparable and precise measure of government economic activity. The CoG is conducted every five years (ending in 2 and 7) and participation is voluntary. The current CoG is the 2012 Census. The purpose of the survey is to provide statistics about governments and their financial activities. Data requested from the governments include revenue data like taxes (property, sales, tobacco, etc.), charges, interest and other earnings. Expenditure data is also collected by both function (education, highways, water, health, etc.) and accounting category (current operations, capital outlays, etc.). In addition, debt-related and financial assets data is also collected.

The data from the governments census is used by the U.S. Congress, federal agencies, state and local governments, educational and research organizations, and the general public. Examples

of how the data is used include development of: the government component of the gross domestic product (GDP) estimates, national income accounts, personal income figures for state and county areas, allocation of certain federal grant funds, legislative research, comparative studies of state and local government finances, and public and fiscal policy analysis/ research.

The population of interest for this survey contains the 50 state governments and 90,056 local governments (counties, municipalities, townships, special districts, and school districts) including the District of Columbia.

This survey combines data from several government finance surveys, including the 2014 State Government Finances, 2014 State and Local Public Employee-Retirement Systems, and the 2014 Elementary-Secondary Education Finances.

They are used as inputs to construct the State and

Local government finance data.

Data reported from the Census of Governments includes list/structure of governments, government employment and payroll, and government finance.

The 2017 CoG is already underway and has been distributed. Data collection will continue into 2017. The first data release will be 2018 and continue through 2019. In between the years of the five-year survey, a sample of state and local governments is surveyed. This sample set of governments is updated with new selections every five years.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau report "Individual State Descriptions: 2012", Sept. 2013 and website information

**Local Events Reflected in the Survey Data**

*Williams County, the fastest growing county in the nation in 2013, had a rapid expansion in infrastructure. Indications in the 2013 State and Local Government Finance Survey were increased general revenue for local governments in North Dakota (up 13.4%), increased highway spending at the local level (up 32.8% in North Dakota), and increased educational spending (up 10% from the previous year).*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau State & Local Government Finance Snapshot, July 2016

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## North Dakota Details from the Government Surveys

North Dakota's participation in the government survey is rather low at 74.9%, placing us forty-fourth in the nation.

According to the recently released Survey of Government Employees, North Dakota has 39,915 employed by all levels of government from local to state. More than 50 percent are employed in the education area. The next highest employment areas include highways, health and police protection

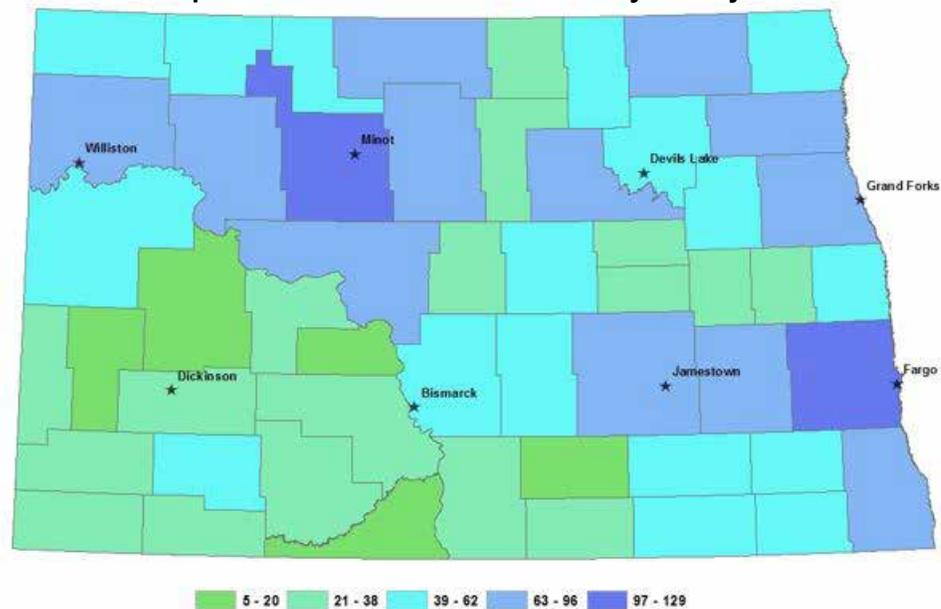
at 5.5, 5.1 and 4.4 percent respectively.

*and Local Tax Revenue*

The latest summary of state and local government tax revenue for North Dakota shows that almost 75 percent comes from just two sources. The highest being severance tax at 40 percent and the next being general sales tax at 34 percent. After that, the nearest is individual income tax at just under ten percent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Governments - 2012, Summary of State

**Map of the Number of Governments by County**



*Governments by county in North Dakota. Total includes county and local governments.*

Source: North Dakota Census Office 2016 Map using data from the 2012 Census of Governments

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