

# TAC Legislative Conference

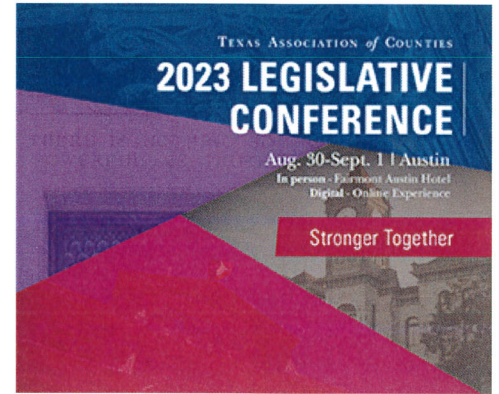
August 30 - September 1, 2023

(In person or online)

Fairmont Austin Hotel

101 Red River St.

Austin, TX 78701



Online registration is closed. In-person registration is available on-site. For virtual registration, call (512) 615-8979.

For more information contact [Deanna Auert \(mailto:Deanna.Auert@county.org\)](mailto:Deanna.Auert@county.org) or [Rachel Kucera \(mailto:Rachel.Kucera@county.org\)](mailto:Rachel.Kucera@county.org) at (800) 456-5974.

In response to your feedback, we again will present this year's TAC Legislative Conference as a hybrid event (in person or online). We hear you and understand the demand to expand our services and offer multiple ways for you to connect with us.

Join us in person or online Aug. 30-Sept. 1 as we continue to explore new ways to share important information with you and your county.

The Texas Association of Counties' Legislative Conference offers county officials and staff unique opportunities to become more involved in the Texas legislative process. It is a time to learn how state lawmakers view pressing county issues and share how those views and issues affect local constituents.

Join your peers in public service from across the state, either in person or virtually, at the premier conference for county government in Texas to get in-depth analysis of what transpired during the 88th Legislature. The conference focuses on important policy issues and how they affect county government and local taxpayers.

## What is a hybrid conference?

A hybrid conference combines an in-person event with a virtual component. That means you can join us in person at the Fairmont Hotel in Austin, or you can join from your county through a virtual conference platform.

## Registration Fees

Registration Type	Early Bird	After Aug. 7
In-Person County Official or Staff	\$275	\$350
In-Person Half-Day Fee (Wednesday & Friday, county official or staff only)	\$75	\$75
In-Person Single-Day Fee (Thursday only)	\$205	\$255

In-Person Non-Member (government)	\$330	\$380
In-Person Non-Member (corporate half day, single day or full attendance)	\$480	\$530
In-Person Spouse Fee	\$100	\$100
Virtual Registration	\$200	\$275

Please make checks payable to Texas Association of Counties.

**\*In-person registration fee does not include access to the virtual platform.\***

NOTE: All participants (online and in person) must register by July 14 to receive conference giveaway.

## Virtual Registration

Once you have registered for the virtual event, a personalized participation link will be emailed to you a few days before the start of the program.

**Note:** Event confirmation emails will come from Events@Accelevents.com (mailto:Events@Accelevents.com) to the email address that was used to register for the event.

## How to access the virtual event platform:

Conference attendees will need to access the internet and use a browser to log in and join the virtual event. While almost all internet browsers (Google Chrome, Firefox, etc.) should allow the event to be accessed, we've found that it works most smoothly in Google Chrome, as other browsers may experience issues. Internet Explorer is not a supported browser for the event.

Google Chrome is a free download. However, some county information technology departments may require county staff members to get approval before downloading new software.

## Special Services

To ensure that our conference is ADA accessible to all, please contact Deanna Auert (mailto:deannaa@county.org) or Rachel Kucera (mailto:rachelk@county.org) at (800) 456-5974 if you need assistance.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONFERENCE SPONSORS!

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**Fairmont Hotel (<http://www.fairmont.com/austin/>) (SOLD OUT)**

**101 Red River St.**

**Austin, TX 78702**

**(512) 600-2000**

**\$210 single/double, plus applicable tax**

**Check-in: 3 p.m. | Checkout: Noon**

- The host hotel, Fairmont Austin Hotel, is sold out.
- If you would like to be added to the waiting list, please email Rachel Kucera (<mailto:rachelk@county.org>) with your arrival and departure dates.
- If you must cancel a room reservation, please notify Rachel Kucera (<mailto:rachelk@county.org>) (<mailto:deannaa@county.org>). In the event of a waitlist, this allows others an opportunity to stay at the host hotel.

## **Surrounding Hotels:**

**Hampton Inn & Suites Austin - Downtown / Convention Center**

**200 San Jacinto Blvd**

**Austin, TX, 78701**

**(512) 472-1500**

**Hyatt Place Austin Downtown**

**211 E 3rd St**

**Austin, TX, 78701**

**(512) 476-4440**

**Courtyard by Marriott Austin Downtown/Convention Center**

**300 East 4th Street**

**Austin, TX, 78701**

**(512) 236-8008**



**Overnight Parking** (Prices\* shown include a 25% discount for attendees.)

\*Prices may change.

	Valet Parking	Self-Parking
0-3 Hours	\$18	\$11.25
3-6 Hours	\$24	\$18.75
Daily – Overnight	\$36.75	\$27

#### **Internet**

Due to popular request, TAC has negotiated to have Wi-Fi available in the meeting space. A conference password will be provided at the event.

High-speed internet access in guest rooms and all areas of the hotel is complimentary for all Fairmont President Club Members. Membership is free! Sign up at [www.fairmont.com/fpc](http://www.fairmont.com/fpc) (<http://www.fairmont.com/fpc>).

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**Wednesday, Aug. 30**

**8 a.m.-5 p.m.**

**Registration and Information Desk Hours**

**12:45-1:45 p.m.**

**Private Meeting: Core Legislative Group Networking and Training (*in-person only*)**

Before the general session, Core Legislative Group members will have an opportunity to look at successes and the hard work CLG members did during the legislative session. A panel of CLG members will be discussing their experiences this session, from preparation to office visits and testifying in a hearing. This event is for current Core Legislative Group members. However, if you would like to attend, please register for the Core Legislative Group at the CLG Lounge on the fifth floor.

*Moderator: Ms. Kelsey Bernstein, Legislative Consultant – Justices of the Peace and Constables Association and Core Legislative Group Coordinator, Texas Association of Counties*

*Speaker: Mr. Noe Barrios, Director of Legislative Services, Texas Association of Counties*

**Noon-2 p.m.**

**Meet and Greet Exhibitors**

2-4:30 p.m.

**Opening General Session** *(in-person and live online)*

**Welcome**

*Presiding: Mr. Nathan Craddock, Tom Green County Auditor and President, Texas Association of Counties*

*Ms. Susan M. Redford, Executive Director, Texas Association of Counties*

**Legislative Overview**

*Mr. Noe Barrios, Director of Legislative Services*

**Stronger Together**

Secretary Nelson's remarks will focus on how county and state governments can work together to best serve Texans and what Texas can do today to ensure a strong future.

*Texas Secretary of State Jane Nelson*

4:30-6 p.m.

**Exhibit Hall Welcome Reception**

5-6:30

**New Official Networking Event** *(in-person only)*

Were you elected or appointed from Nov. 8, 2022-Aug. 30, 2023? If yes, you are invited to attend our first New Official Networking event on Wednesday, Aug. 30. RSVP online when you register. Formal Invitation to follow.

**Thursday, Aug. 31**

7 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Registration and Information Desk Hours**

7-7:50 a.m.

**Breakfast**

**1. From the Legislature to the Gavel: A Discussion about the State of our Judiciary after the 88th Legislative Session**

Join us for a panel discussion from judges and the Texas Office of Court Administration on how recent legislation will impact our court systems. Learn about how engagement and expert testimony positively affected legislative outcomes.

*Moderator: Ms. Kelsey Bernstein, Legislative Consultant – Justices of the Peace and Constables Association and Core Legislative Group Coordinator, Texas Association of Counties*

*Speaker(s): Hon. J.R. Woolley, Waller County Justice of the Peace*

*Ms. Megan Lavoie, Administrative Director, Texas Office of Court Administration*

*Hon. Jimmy Sylvia, Chambers County Judge*

**2. Mental Health: Confinement, Restoration and Recidivism**

The expansive intersection between local public safety and mental health was again a priority of the Texas Legislature this year. This panel will discuss new legislation targeting county jail mental health backlogs, state mental health resources for beds and staffing, and local mental health programs designed to reduce reoffending through continuity of care once a person is released from custody.

*Moderator: Mr. Skylor Hearn, Legislative Consultant – Sheriffs' Association, Texas Association of Counties*

*Speaker(s): Hon. Jacob Putman, Smith County District Attorney*

*Hon. Brian Hawthorne, Chambers County Sheriff*

**3. Broadband Funding – Helping Counties Bridge the Digital Divide**

The 88th Legislature has committed a historic amount of funding for broadband in Texas. This session will cover the grant application process that lies ahead and how your county can make a quality investment for its future.

*Moderator: Ms. Megan Molleur, Legislative Consultant – Texas District & County Attorneys Association and Federal Issues Coordinator, Texas Association of Counties*

*Speaker(s): Ms. Andrea Pacheco, Broadband Outreach Coordinator, Texas Broadband Development Office*

*Ms. Ginny Lewis Ford, Executive Director, Texas Association of Regional Councils*

*Ms. Jennifer Harris, Federal Program Officer, U.S. Dept. of Commerce (NTIA)*

*Ms. Jennifer Prather, Chief Executive Officer, Totalcom Communications, LLC*

*Mr. Joseph Seeber, Chief of Staff, Representative Trent Ashby*

**4. Grant Funding for Counties: New and Increased Funding Opportunities**

Come to this session for a recap of new and increased grant funding for counties included in the state budgets and a refresher on new and recurring federal grant opportunities for which counties are eligible. You will also hear about the sustainability of state grant funds, the strings attached to grant programs and the cost versus the benefit to counties of accepting grant funds.

*Moderator: Ms. Zelma Smith, Financial Analyst, Texas Association of Counties*  
*Speaker(s): Ms. Kimberly Lile Dowty, Associate Director, Texas Association of Regional Council*  
*Mr. Nathan Cradduck, Tom Green County Auditor and President, Texas Association of Counties*  
*Ms. Julie Lindsey, Assistant Director, Legislative Budget Board*

**5. ARPA, Year 3: Impact Assessment & Ongoing Obligations**

The American Rescue Plan Act's historic investment directly in Texas counties has benefitted communities statewide in a wide variety of ways. As projects mature and deadlines approach, share in success stories and hear cautionary tales from leaders delivering for their counties.

*Moderator: Mr. Pete Winckler, Legislative Consultant – Texas Association of County Auditors, Texas Association of Counties*  
*Speakers: Hon. Curtis Parrish, Lubbock County Judge*  
*Hon. Connie Scott, Nueces County Judge*  
*Mr. Tramer Woytek, Judicial Resource Liaison & County Relations Officer, Texas Association of Counties*

9 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Exhibit Hall Hours** (*in-person only*)  
*Open during lunch, noon-1:30 p.m.*

9:05-9:30 a.m.

**Refreshment Break**

9:30-10:35 a.m.

**Legislative Discussion Sessions (repeat 1-5)** (*in-person and live online*)

- 1. From the Legislature to the Gavel: A Discussion about the State of our Judiciary after the 88th Legislative Session**
- 2. Mental Health: Confinement, Restoration and Recidivism**
- 3. Broadband Funding – Helping Counties Bridge the Digital Divide**
- 4. Grant Funding for Counties: New and Increased Funding Opportunities**
- 5. ARPA, Year 3: Impact Assessment & Ongoing Obligations**

10:35-10:55 a.m.

**Refreshment Break**

**6. Elections: Standardization and Centralization of Elections**

Join the esteemed panel to learn updates on new election laws passed during the legislative session. The panel will discuss implementing new laws, with best practice procedures for counties.

*Moderator: Ms. Nanette Forbes, Legislative Consultant – County & District Clerks' Association, Texas Association of Counties*

*Speakers: Hon. Heather Hawthorne, Chambers County Clerk*

*Ms. Christina Adkins, Director of Elections, Secretary of State's Office*

*Ms. Jennifer Doinoff, Elections Administrator, Hays County*

**7. Emergency Management: Texas Water – Too Much or Not Enough? Recent Legislative Investments in Texas Water Infrastructure and Planning & Management**

Whether there is too much or not enough, water can be a major emergency. During the last few sessions, the Texas Legislature has made historic investments in the state's water future. In 2019, the legislature addressed flood planning and infrastructure funding by creating the Texas Infrastructure Resiliency Fund and the Flood Infrastructure Fund. These funds will likely see an influx of new money after the final passage of HB 1 during the 2023 legislative session. In 2023, the Legislature also created and appropriated over \$1 billion dollars to capitalize the new, Texas Water Fund to address water supply issues and help pay for new water development projects and upgrades to water infrastructure.

*Moderator: Ms. Elizabeth Choate, Legislative Consultant – County Treasurers' Association of Texas, Texas Association of Counties*

*Speaker(s): Ms. Sarah Kinkle, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, Texas Water Conservation Association*

*Ms. Brooke Paup, Chair, Texas Water Development Board*

*Senator Charles Perry, Texas Senate*

*Representative Tracy King, Texas House of Representatives*

**8. Property Taxes: Boost or Burden?**

Property tax relief was the campaign promise heard across Texas. What did the 88th Legislature do to provide relief to property owners? Listen to industry experts explain what was passed by the Legislature, what it means for your communities, and long-term impacts to consider.

*Moderator: Ms. Caroline Love, Legislative Consultant – Tax Assessor-Collectors Association, Texas Association of Counties*

*Speaker(s): Hon. Larry Gaddes, Williamson County Tax Assessor-Collector*

*Mr. James LeBas, Principal, Tax & Fiscal Consulting*

*Mr. Bobby Preisler, Division of Legal Services, Harris County Appraisal District*

**9. NACo: Counties' Seat at the Table in Washington, D.C.**

Join the National Association of Counties' leadership for a discussion about their federal advocacy efforts and how your engagement can help secure federal policies and resources that support your county.

*Moderator: Ms. Megan Molleur, Legislative Consultant – Texas District & County Attorneys Association and Federal Issues Coordinator, Texas Association of Counties*  
*Speaker(s): Mr. Matthew Chase, Executive Director, National Association of Counties (NACo)*

**10. Law Enforcement: Perspectives on the Rural Law Enforcement Salary Assistance Grants**

The rural law enforcement grants provided through SB 22 mark a significant shift in the historic legislative aversion to funding local law enforcement salaries with state dollars. These grants will have a significant impact on most Texas counties and a life-changing impact on many women and men who serve in these local criminal justice agencies. This panel will provide insight on that effect.

*Moderator: Mr. Skylor Hearn, Legislative Consultant – Sheriffs' Association, Texas Association of Counties*

*Speaker(s): Hon. Staley Heatly, 46th Judicial District Attorney*  
*Hon. Greg Capers, San Jacinto County Sheriff*

Noon-1:30 p.m.

**Networking Lunch**

Dine with your fellow attendees, then take a tour of the exhibit hall and visit with vendors.

1:30-2:35 p.m.

**Legislative Discussion Sessions (repeat 6-10) (in-person and live online)**

**6. Elections: Standardization and Centralization of Elections**

**7. Emergency Management: Texas Water – Too Much or Not Enough? Recent Legislative Investments in Texas Water Infrastructure and Planning & Management**

**8. Property Taxes: Boost or Burden?**

**9. NACo: Counties' Seat at the Table in Washington, D.C.**

**10. Law Enforcement: Perspectives on the Rural Law Enforcement Salary Assistance Grants**

2:35-3 p.m.

**Ice Cream Social Break**

3-4:30 p.m.

**Meeting of County Affiliate Organizations (in-person only)**

*County associations organize and host a 1.5-hour meeting to discuss legislative issues or association business during the conference*

4:30-6 p.m.

**Legislative Reception**

This social event is an opportunity to celebrate all county officials who have volunteered their time and expertise to advocate on behalf of counties. Your efforts this session were critical to the success of protecting local government. Thank you for your efforts!

**Friday, Sept. 1**

8-10:30 a.m.

**Registration and Information Desk Hours**

8:30-9 a.m.

**Breakfast**

9-10:30 a.m.

**Closing General Session *(in-person and live online)***

**Local Control: Keeping Decision Making Local**

Local decision-making continues to be under attack. Join us for a discussion on recent legislative attempts to further erode local control.

*Moderator: Ms. Katy Estrada, Legislative Consultant – County Judges and Commissioners Association, Texas Association of Counties*

*Speaker(s): Rep. Todd A. Hunter, Texas House of Representatives*

*Hon. Andrew Eads, Denton County Judge*

*Hon. Tim Addison, Yoakum County Commissioner*

*Hon. Jennifer Tharp, Comal County District Attorney*

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*\*Agenda subject to change*