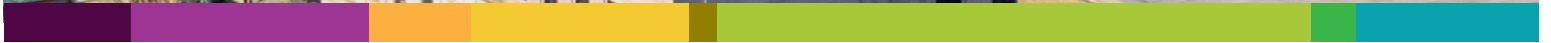
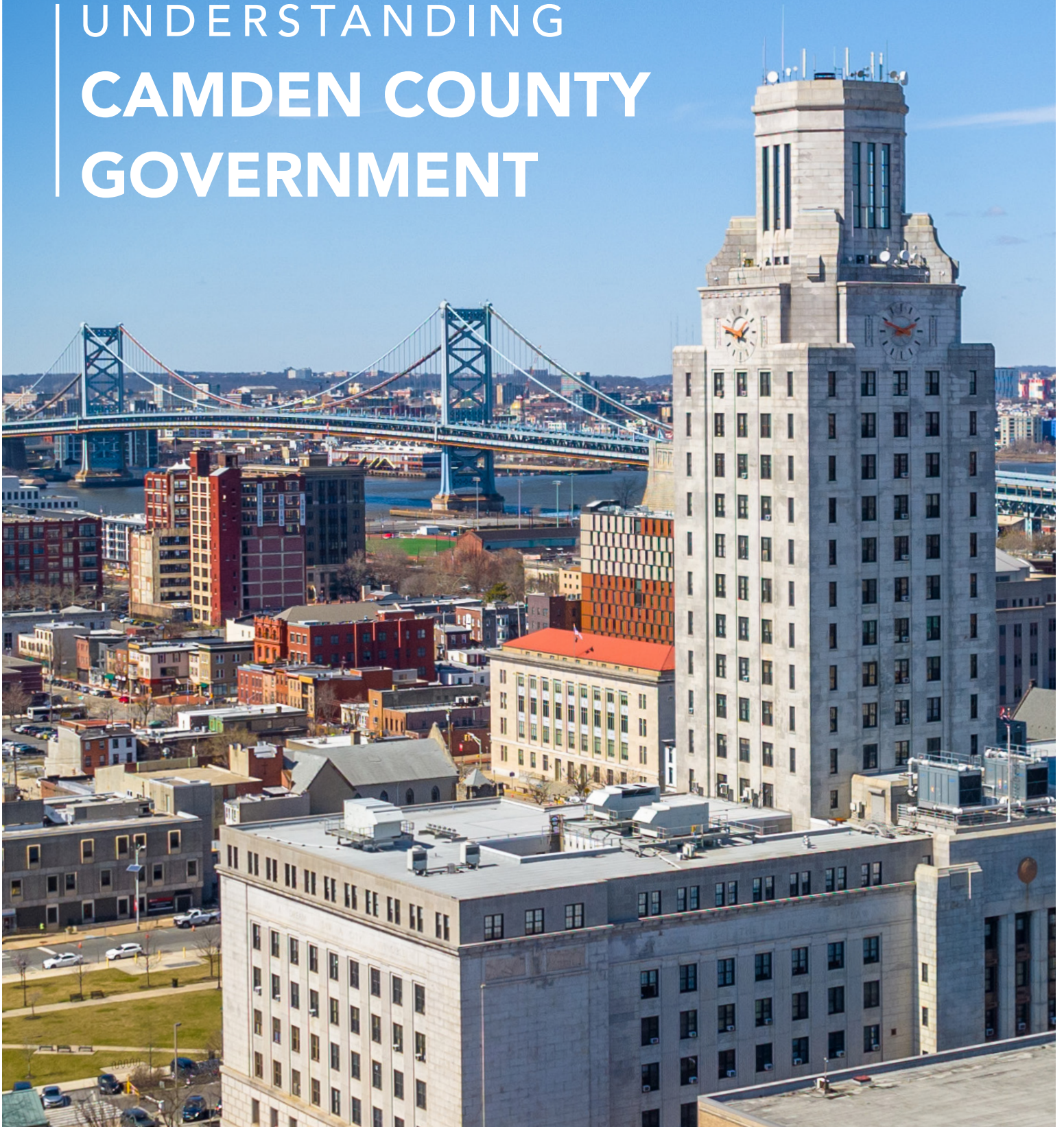




Making It Better, Together.

# UNDERSTANDING CAMDEN COUNTY GOVERNMENT



# Camden County Board of Commissioners

Louis Cappelli, Jr., Director

Edward T. McDonnell, Deputy Director

Jeffrey L. Nash

Jonathan L. Young, Sr.

Melinda Kane

Al Dyer

Virginia Betteridge

## Row Officers

Surrogate

Michelle Gentek-Mayer

County Clerk

Joseph Ripa

Sheriff

Gilbert "Whip" Wilson

Prosecutor

Grace C. MacAulay

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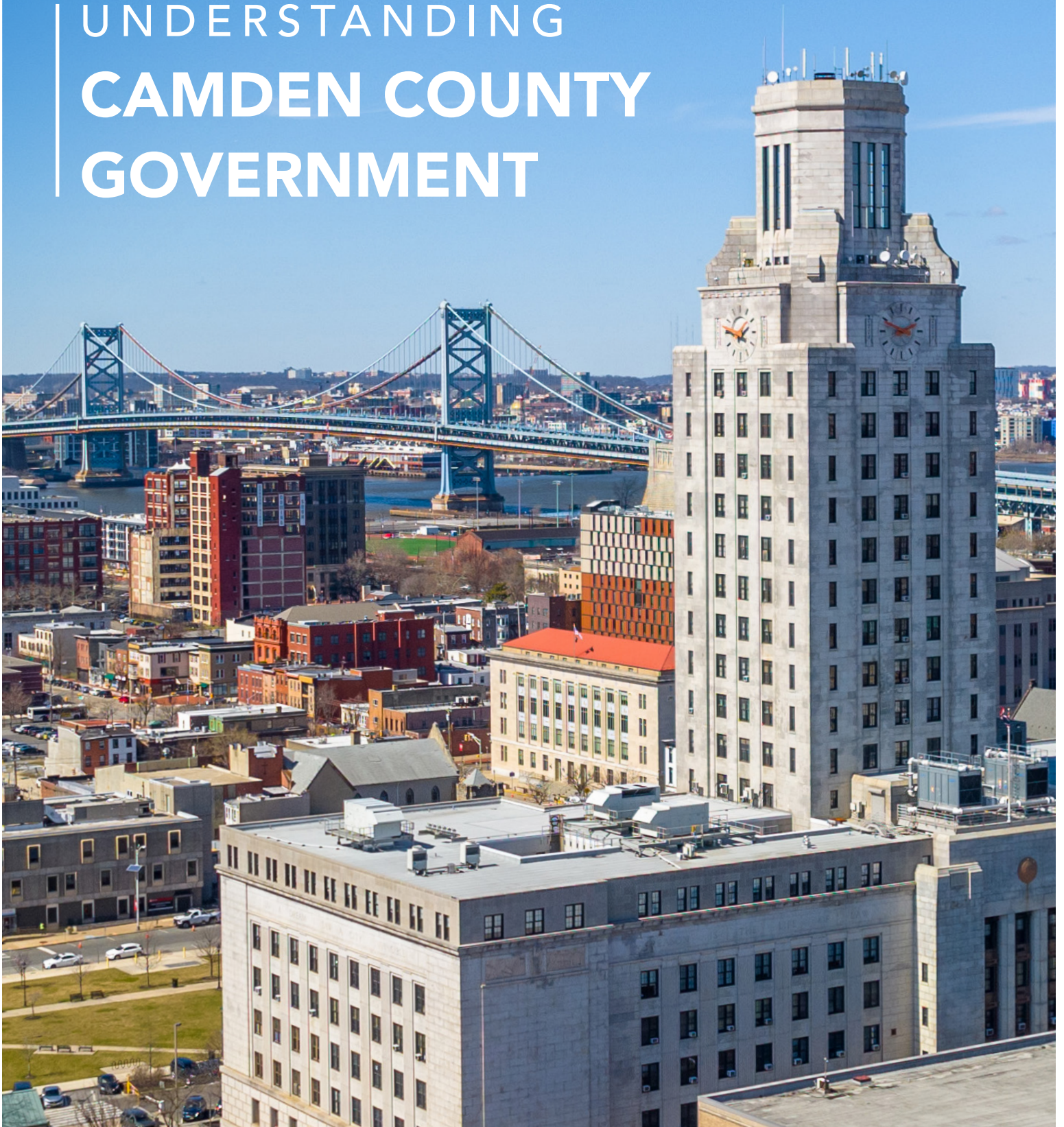
     
CamdenCountyNJ





Making It Better, Together.

# UNDERSTANDING CAMDEN COUNTY GOVERNMENT





Department of Events  
and Community Outreach

Edward T. McDonnell  
Commissioner Liaison

Frank R. Filipek, Jr.  
Director



Making It Better, Together.

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## YOUR GOVERNMENT

Thank you for your interest in how New Jersey's 21 counties works. Understanding your local government, the services it provides, and how to access those services is a good way to learn about what we can do for you, even before you are eligible to vote.

## ABOUT NEW JERSEY'S COUNTIES:

**What is the purpose of a county?** The purpose of a county is to improve the daily lives of its residents. The people who live, work, and play in Camden County are our highest priority, so nearly everything county employees and elected commissioners do flows from our responsibility to maintain and improve things, like public safety and health, roads and bridges, transportation, and economic conditions. We want to help everyone who calls Camden County home to live here in safety and with dignity.

**Why are counties created?** Traffic and roads in need of repair have always been a reoccurring issue in the Garden State. When New Jersey was first settled in the 1600s, travel was difficult, and citizens needed to be able to access government services wherever they lived statewide. Counties provide us with the convenience of being able to conduct official business within a few miles, rather than hours away. Fun facts: New Jersey's first county – Essex County – was established in 1681, while Union County was the last to be established, in 1857. Camden County was established in 1844.

**How many counties are in NJ?** There are 21 counties in the state of New Jersey. In alphabetical order, they are: Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Salem, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren.

**How is a county different from a municipality or city?** Think of a state as a set of nesting boxes; at the center, the smallest box is a municipality. Municipalities are the villages, boroughs, townships, and cities that people live and work in. The next-largest box is a county, where municipalities are located. For example, the municipality of Haddon Heights is located within the county of Camden. The largest box, which holds the counties and municipalities nested within it, is the state of New Jersey.

**What are the powers and responsibilities of county government?** A county government has many powers and responsibilities. One of the more important obligations of county government is prioritizing the safety of the residents in its communities. This includes administering and enforcing state laws, ensuring the safety of our roads, and making sure all schools, businesses, restaurants, and public buildings are inspected regularly and are repaired as needed. Other county government powers and responsibilities include collecting taxes, assessing property values, recording, and storing public documents, conducting elections, and issuing licenses for businesses, and marriages. They also have the power and responsibility of providing facilities and services for the community. Which includes community centers, public libraries, hospitals, and parks.

## Some Famous People from Camden County:

- Kelly Ripa: Actress, TV Personality
- Steven Spielberg: Film Director
- Joe Flacco: New York Jets Quarterback
- Phil Zimmerman: Computer Scientist
- Tasha Smith: Actress, TV Director, Producer
- Lauren Cohan: Actress

## Famous Firsts in Camden County

### Drive-In Movie Theaters

- On June 6, 1933, the first drive-in theater in the United States opened on Crescent Boulevard in Camden on a 10-acre plot. Moviegoers paid 25 cents apiece and 25 cents per car, but no group was charged more than \$1. About 600 people attended the Camden Theater on opening night.
- First known as "Park-in Theater" the term "drive-in" didn't take hold until several years later. The Camden theater, like most drive-ins, showed mostly low-budget B-movies. It closed three years later.

### Canned Soup

- The first condensed soup in America was cooked and canned at Campbell's Soup Company in Camden County, in 1897.
- The company flourished in the city of Camden during the next century. Although the company relocated its processing facilities, the corporate headquarters is still located in the city.

### Ship Building

- The Esterbrook Pen Company and New York Shipbuilding Corporation established themselves in Camden before World War I. By then a popular saying was, "on Camden's supplies, the world relies."

**Fun Attractions to Visit in Camden County:** There are endless opportunities for fun in Camden County that have attracted people from all over New Jersey and surrounding areas. From history and museums to the aquarium and riding waterslides, Camden County has it all!

- Adventure Aquarium in Camden: Features around 8,000 animals living in semi-aquatic, freshwater, and marine habitats.
- Battleship New Jersey in Camden: The most decorated war ship in United States history.
- Diggerland USA in Berlin: The only construction-themed adventure park in the United States.
- Freedom Mortgage Pavilion in Camden: An outdoor amphitheater that hosts many concerts and music festivals throughout the year.
- Peter Mott House in Lawnside: A mid-19th century house where freedom-fighter owners were instrumental in helping enslaved people headed North to freedom in the days of the Underground Railroad.
- Walt Whitman House in Camden: The last residence of renowned American poet Walt Whitman.
- Indian King Tavern Museum in Haddonfield: A colonial American tavern which was the site where the New Jersey Legislature adopted its Great Seal in 1777. It was named the first State Historic Site in 1903.

## FUN FACTS:

- Households with a computer (2017-2021): **92.9%**
- Households with a broadband Internet subscription (2017-2021): **87.9%**



## INFORMATION ABOUT CAMDEN COUNTY:

**Population:** 523,485

### Age:

- Under 5 years old: 5.9%
- Under 18 years old: 22.7%
- 65 years or older: 16.3%

### Race:

- Caucasian: 68.2%
- Black or African American: 22.0%
- American Indian and Alaska Native: 0.7%
- Asian: 6.2%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0.1%
- Two or More Races: 2.8%
- Hispanic or Latino: 18.5%

**Veterans:** 21,984

### Income:

- Median household income (2017-2021): \$75,485
- Per capita income in past 12 months: \$38,907
- Persons in poverty: 12.0%

**Housing Units:** 213,486

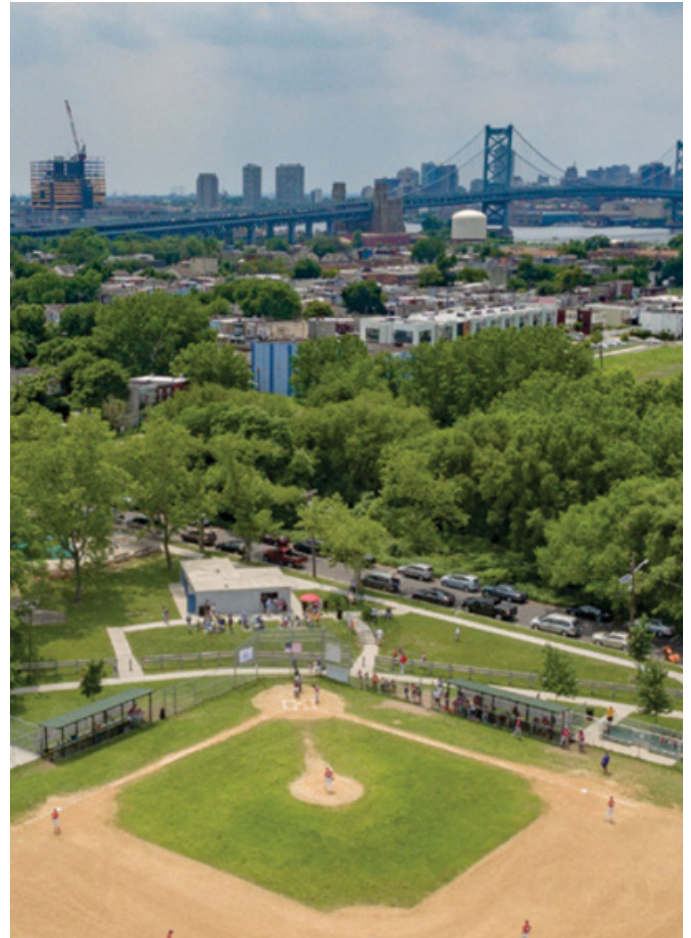
**Households:** 196,939

**Businesses:** 11,443

**Size of County:** Miles: 227.3 square miles

- Cherry Hill Township has the largest population in Camden County, with 74,553 residents counted in the 2020 census. Winslow Township covers 58.19 square miles, making it our geographically largest municipality.
- Camden County has 36 municipalities of diverse sizes and populations. Most county residents live in five municipalities with populations over 30,000: Cherry Hill (74,553), Camden (71,791), Gloucester Township (66,034), Winslow (39,097) and Pennsauken (37,034).
- As of the 2020 census, Camden County was New Jersey's ninth-most populous county.

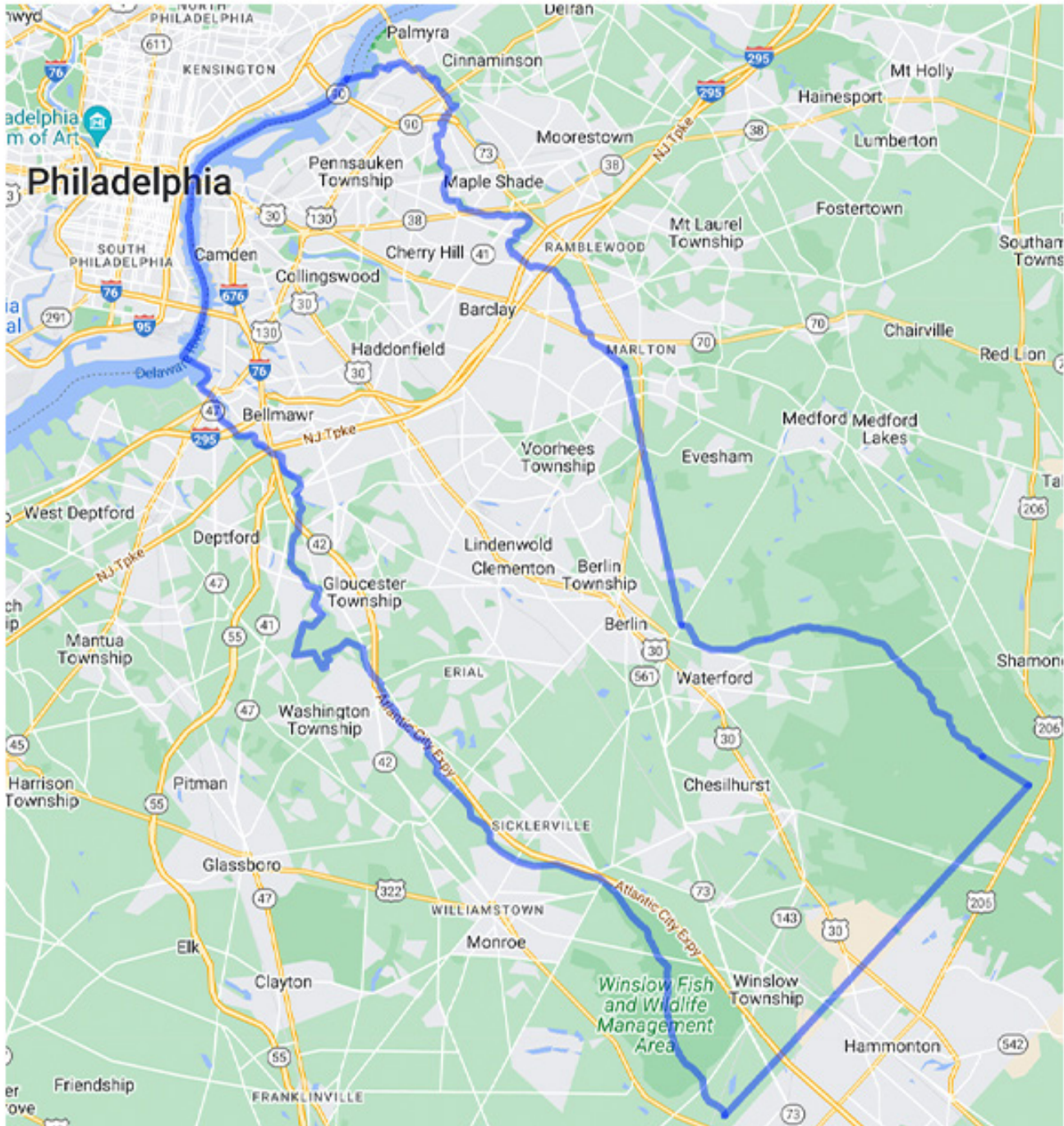
**List of Municipalities:** Audubon, Audubon Park, Barrington, Bellmawr, Berlin Borough, Berlin Township, Brooklawn, Camden, Cherry Hill, Chesilhurst, Clementon, Collingswood, Gibbsboro, Gloucester Township, Gloucester City, Haddon Township, Haddon Heights, Haddonfield, Hi-Nella, Laurel Springs, Lawnside, Lindenwold, Magnolia, Merchantville, Mount Ephraim, Oaklyn, Pennsauken, Pine Hill, Pine Valley, Runnemede, Somerdale, Stratford, Tavistock, Voorhees, Waterford, Winslow, Woodlynne.



### Distance from Camden County:

Camden County is close to many major metropolitan areas in the United States. See below, using the City of Camden as the starting point.

- Philadelphia, Pa.: 11 minutes, 5.1 miles
- Wilmington, Del.: 35 minutes, 33 miles
- Cape May, N.J. 1.5 hours away, 89 miles
- New York City, N.Y.: 1.5 hours, 97 miles
- Baltimore, Md.: 1.45 hours, 106 miles
- Washington, D.C.: 2.5 hours, 143 miles
- Pittsburgh, Pa.: 5 hours, 308 miles
- Boston, Mass.: 5 hours, 309 miles
- Chicago, Ill.: 12 hours, 763 miles
- Miami, Fla.: 17.15 hours, 1190 miles
- Houston, Texas: 22.45 hours, 1548 miles away
- Los Angeles, Calif.: 40 hours, 2713 miles





## ABOUT CAMDEN COUNTY GOVERNMENT:

### Who runs a County?

A county is run and governed by a Board of Commissioners who have authority over and responsibilities to the county. Commissioners are elected by that county's residents. Commissioners are responsible for administering the law, representing county interests at the state and federal level, participating in long-range planning, and managing the county budget and finances. Each of Camden County's seven commissioners have their own assignments and areas of focus within the county's Departments.

### How does the Commission system work?

The Camden County Board of Commissioners is a board of seven people who govern Camden County, New Jersey. It is led by the director and deputy director, who are chosen by the Board of Commissioners each year. Each commissioner serves a three-year term, with the terms staggered so that only two or three commissioners run for reelection in each election cycle. This simplifies each election cycle and ensures leadership continuity.



### As of January 2023, Camden County's Commissioners are:

#### Director Louis Cappelli Jr. (Term ends December 2026)

- Responsibilities: Leads the Commissioners and is responsible for county administration, and the public safety of county residents, working closely with the Camden County Police Department.
- Accomplishments: Commissioner Director Cappelli upgraded the county's emergency 911 system and merged the county's mental health and substance abuse programs.

#### Deputy Director Edward T. McDonnell (Term ends December 2025)

- Responsibilities: All county finances, including personnel, purchasing, and insurance. Deputy Director McDonnell also supervises the superintendent of elections and the Board of Elections.
- Accomplishments: A champion for programs and services for disabled people, Deputy Director McDonnell founded the first Miracle League Baseball Team in the state of New Jersey.

#### Commissioner Jeffrey L. Nash (Term ends December 2024)

- Responsibilities: Works with the Department of Parks and community groups. Commissioner Nash improves public access to programs while improving their overall efficiency.
- Accomplishments: Commissioner Nash led an expansion of Camden County College's campus to Camden and Cherry Hill and financed a \$90 million improvement to the college's main campus in Blackwood.

#### Commissioner Jonathan L Young, Sr. (Term ends December 2026)

- Responsibilities and Achievements: Works closely with the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Corrections, the Juvenile Detention Center, the One-Stop Career Center, the Workforce Development board, and the Department of Sustainability, as well as with the Camden County Animal Shelter.

#### Commissioner Melinda Kane (Term ends December 2024)

- Responsibilities: Oversees the Office of Veterans Affairs, the Construction Board of Appeals, the Library Commission, and the Cultural & Heritage Commission.

#### Commissioner Al Dyer (Term ends December 2024)

- Responsibilities: Commissioner Dyer's primary assignments include working closely with the Department of Public Works, the Camden County Planning Board, and the Mayors' Association.

#### Commissioner Virginia Betteridge (Term ends December 2025)

- Responsibilities: Commissioner Betteridge's primary assignments are oversight of the Department of Children, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Board of Social Services.

## **ABOUT CAMDEN COUNTY ROW OFFICERS:**

**Row officers are elected officials that investigate city finances, run elections, keep records and manage foreclosures in the city.**



### **County Clerk Joseph Ripa:**

As County Clerk, Joe has managed the process of updating and modernizing the Clerk's Office, paying special attention to the office's energy efficiency, staff productivity, and technology use. He also works on encouraging active voter participation through the Camden County Vote By Mail Program.

As the keeper of the records for the county, the Clerk's Office has two major divisions: the Registry Division and the Election Division. The Registry (Real Estate Recording) Division handles all matters pertaining to the land records of the county as a Constitutional Row Officer. The Election Division handles an array of election services and statutory responsibilities as prescribed by the legislature and the State Constitution.



### **Sheriff Gilbert "Whip" Wilson:**

The Camden County Office of the Sheriff provides a variety of law enforcement services and support using state of the art technology in a prompt, efficient and courteous manner to the county's residents and visitors. The office also works with various agencies and departments throughout the county, state and country. The staff of 194 includes 157 sworn officers and 29 civilian staff.

The Sheriff's Office's responsibilities are mandated by statute and include functions in both civil and criminal areas of the law such as: Court Security Bureau, Investigations Bureau, Bureau of Criminal Identification, Civil Process Bureau, Transportation Bureau.

The Sheriff's Office also provides ancillary services including: Probation/Child Support Units, Technical Service Unit (Bomb Squad), Canine (K-9) Unit (drug and bomb sniffing dogs)/Patrol Division, Camden County Emergency Response Team (S.E.R.T)



### **Surrogate Michelle Gentek-Mayer:**

Michelle Gentek-Mayer has served as Surrogate of Camden County Surrogate Court since 2016. Her work focuses on community outreach, with the goal of ensuring that Camden County residents have access to the services and tools needed for successfully resolving legal matters including adoptions, guardianships, and estate planning. Under Surrogate Gentek-Mayer, the department has offered community education opportunities such as The Conversation of a Lifetime (an estate-planning workshop), improved services for the county's Spanish-speaking residents, and the opening of an additional satellite office in Voorhees.



### **Prosecutor Grace C. MacAulay:**

The Camden County Prosecutor is a constitutional officer appointed by New Jersey's Governor. The county prosecutors' term of office is five years. The Prosecutor's Office investigates and prosecutes all indictable crime in this county of about 523,700 residents. Camden County, which includes the urban environment of Camden, inner-ring suburbs and still-growing bedroom communities, is a diverse region in Southern New Jersey. As a result the Prosecutor's Office's dedicated, professional staff must be flexible and quick to adjust to the needs of its residents. The State Office of Counterterrorism has also designated the prosecutor as the coordinator of counter-terrorism efforts for local police departments in the county.

## WHAT DOES A COUNTY DO FOR RESIDENTS?

The Camden County Government is dedicated to improving quality of life for all Camden County residents by providing a wide variety of services, programs, and special events. The Board of Commissioners represents constituents in all of Camden County's 37 municipalities through close partnerships with local, state, and federal partners. County government is made up of many different departments and agencies. Some are listed below, along with a summary of responsibilities for each one.

**Board of Taxation:** Assists residents in navigating the processes of property tax assessment and appeals. Other services for residents include:

- Assisting residents with property tax assessments and manages appeals for residents.
- Maintaining a database for residents to search for property information such as assessment, owners, and sales data.
- Obtaining assistance through the Taxpayer Bill of Rights. The board helps all property taxpayers receive the information and assistance they need to understand and meet their property tax responsibilities.

**Camden County Library System:** Provides a library of recreational, informational, and educational needs for all eligible library users. Other services for residents include:

- Curbside pickup services outside all county libraries.
- Meeting rooms for Camden County organizations and residents.
- Classes, lessons, and events on many topics free to residents of all ages.

**Camden County Police Department:** The primary law enforcement agency for the City of Camden. Enforces local, state, and federal laws via responsibilities including:

- Patrolling assigned zone and answering to 911 calls.
- Preventing and investigating illegal activities, disturbances, accidents, etc.
- Keeping general order and peace in communities.

**Camden County Technical Schools (CCTS):** Provide career training programs, academic courses, and extracurricular activities to students in grades 9 through 12.

- CCTS has two campuses, one each in Pennsauken and Gloucester Township. CCTS offers 30 career programs and academic courses.

**Children's Services:** promotes and supports high-quality, affordable, and accessible childcare for all families. Other department services for residents include:

- Helping residents find high quality childcare services for parents.
- Assisting parents find financial assistance for childcare services.
- Training and educating future childcare providers with the proper tools to keep all children safe in county day care centers and in-home daycares.

**Clerk's Office:** Offers a vast array of services including passports, trade name registration, notary public, and property records.

- Responsible for registration, election, and other veteran services, such as housing deeds, voting by mail, election results, registering to vote, and trade name registrations.

**Corrections & Juvenile Justice:** To provide a safe and secure environment for the residents and staff of the Camden County Juvenile Detention Center, with careful intervention, educational opportunity, and true mentoring.

- Holds boys and girls from Camden County who are accused of delinquent behavior and are awaiting action by the Family Court.
- Responsible for overseeing juveniles and helping transition to civilian life.
- Offers many different educational opportunities and reentry programs for those in the center.

**disABILITIES:** The Division of Programming for Individuals offers a range of activities for disabled and special needs individuals. Year-round activities include a Miracle League Baseball Team, golf lessons, exercise, choir and more. Other services for residents include:

- Offers support for caregivers who have a child with special needs.
- Hosts many online and in-person recreation and programs.
- Hosts summer camps for children with special needs.

**Elections and Voting:** Provides voters with an efficient election and voting process. Other services for residents include:

- Managing all aspects of elections in the county, including school board, town, city, state and federal elections.
- Assisting residents who want to register to vote by mail.
- Placing and maintaining vote by mail drop boxes throughout the county.

**Environmental Affairs:** Manages programs and projects including recycling and solid waste management, litter clean-up, household waste collections, and more. Other services for residents include:

- Informing and educating the citizens of Camden County about environmental issues that affect everyone's lives.
- Promoting and advocating for recycling opportunities.
- Offering hazardous waste drop-off days for residents to safely throw away household materials that can't be put in the trash.
- Providing days for residents to safely shred documents.

**Events & Community Outreach:** Manages marketing and community outreach for all Camden County departments and offices. Other services for residents include:

- Providing special events such as planning, coordinating, budgeting, advertising, etc.
- Managing weekly newsletter and all social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.
- Developing campaigns to educate the public on dangers of fentanyl, gun safety, health initiatives etc.
- Offers hundreds of events, initiatives and programs for our residents to enjoy including the Martin Luther King Freedom Medal award ceremony, Best of Class, music festivals and more.

**Health and Human Services:** Protects, promotes, and improves health quality for Camden County residents. Other department services for residents include:

- Providing free seasonal flu shots each fall.
- Protecting residents and managing COVID-19 responses to protect the county as a whole.
- Inspecting restaurants for health and safety compliance, and ensuring that all gas pumps are dispensing the correct amount of gas to customers.
- Providing vaccination and immunization services at the County HealthFirst health clinic and mobile sites throughout the county.

**Mental Health and Addiction:** Ensures the availability of treatment services for people suffering from drug and/or alcohol addiction. Other services for residents include:

- Offering referrals and information on addiction and mental health services available in the county.
- Providing education, resources, and opportunities to residents on managing mental health needs and addictions and destigmatizing mental health needs.
- Offering medication drop boxes to residents looking to dispose of older prescription drugs.

**One-Stop Career Center:** The source for all your job search needs. Other services for residents include:

- Helping job-seekers with training and job search opportunities.
- Providing training classes and job fairs for job-seekers.

**Parks and Recreation:** Provides and maintains 21 parks and 2,000 acres of land for recreational use, including ball fields, playgrounds, and waterways for fishing. Other department services for residents include:

- Presenting concerts at four of the larger parks during the summer, free to residents.
- Ensuring parks and open spaces are clean and safe for all residents.
- Managing a marina on the Delaware River.
- Offering programs and classes for all ages.

**Prosecutor's Office:** Our countywide criminal investigative agency, which also conducts all criminal court activities for the county. Additional services and responsibilities include:

- Providing our citizens with skilled professional investigation and prosecution of criminal offenders by using all available resources.
- Enforcing laws without prejudice, and in a timely manner.
- Providing leadership and supervision over chiefs of police and municipal prosecutors.
- Prosecuting all complaints, suits, and controversies on behalf of the county.

**Public Safety:** Ensures public safety of all residents. Other department services include:

- Operating the Communications Center, a state-of-the-art facility where 911 calls and texts are received and processed to insure the proper emergency service reaches you as quickly as possible.
- Providing fire investigations in Camden County where arson is suspected or if someone dies. Investigations are conducted by the County Fire Marshal.
- Training community members to take care of themselves, their families, and their neighbors in the event of a disaster. Training is provided by the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Offering snow removal for seniors each winter.

**Public Works:** Maintains over 400 miles of County highways for driver and pedestrian safety. Other department services for residents include:

- Fixing potholes on county roads
- Snow plowing on county roads.
- Manages permit and planning for new buildings throughout the county.

**Senior Services:** The Aging and Disability Resource Connection pairs seniors and disabled adults with the services they need to thrive within their community. Other services for residents include:

- Providing seniors with opportunities for social interaction and companionship with their peers in a quality environment, through the Senior Wellness Center.
- Assisting seniors with admission procedures, paperwork, and Medicaid guidelines for nursing home placement.
- Providing free legal assistance workshops for seniors.
- Hosting many online and in-person events and programs.

**Sheriff's Office:** Provides a variety of law enforcement services and support, as efficiently as possible to the residents, visitors, agencies and departments throughout Camden County and the State of New Jersey. The office is comprised of many units and divisions, including:

- Court Security Bureau, which provides security for the Hall of Justice complex and its 29 courtrooms.
- Transportation Bureau, responsible for transporting adult and juvenile remands.
- Bureau of Criminal Identification, which maintains photographs, fingerprints and criminal histories of all persons arrested for indictable offenses in the county
- KP Unit, Bomb Unit, Emergency Response Team.

The Sheriff's Office is also responsible for:

- Enforcing court orders including foreclosures, and warrants.
- Keeping the peace in our communities.

**Surrogate's Office:** Responsible for duties related to wills, guardianships of minors and incapacitated people.

Other services for residents include:

- Providing free senior citizen legal workshops throughout the year.
- Assisting all residents with wills and trusts.
- Offering wedding services and ceremonies.

**Sustainable Camden County:** Promotes and practices environmental sustainability throughout the county, including residences, schools, municipalities, businesses, and for visitors. Other services for residents include:

- Providing sustainable horticultural resources and information to county residents through the Camden County Certified Gardeners program.
- Operating Tool Libraries in Gloucester Township and Cherry Hill for residents to borrow tools for personal use.
- Operating a Bike Share program in Gloucester Township and Cherry Hill for residents to borrow bicycles for personal use.
- Promoting eco-friendly and sustainable living options and ideas to protect our environment.

**Veterans Affairs:** Serves all Camden County veterans and their families. Other services include:

- Assisting veterans to understand their qualifications and eligibility for programs.
- Providing information on veteran benefits and compensation.
- Bestowing service medals for veterans.
- Hosting vigils and events to honor Camden County veterans.