

## **Metropolitan and county government offices**

Metropolitan and county government offices are the government's territorial administrative agencies with general powers. The 20 government offices constituting the largest units of territorial public administration operate in the county seats, while in the case of the capital and Pest County in Budapest.

Government offices coordinate and facilitate the territorial implementation of governmental responsibilities in accordance with the relevant legal rules and the government's decisions [in more detail see Act CXXV of 2018 on governmental administration and Government Decree No. 86/2019. (IV. 23.) Korm. on metropolitan and county government offices and district (metropolitan district) offices]. They additionally have administrative, appeals, monitoring, coordinating, information gathering, proposal-making and reviewing powers which facilitate the adoption and implementation of central decisions that duly take account of the characteristics and specific needs of territorial public administration.

Government offices proceed as authorities at second instance in administrative proceedings instituted before district (metropolitan district) offices operating as their branch offices, while in some cases of special importance as authorities at first instance in relation to more than a thousand administrative responsibilities and powers. They also act in a supervisory role in respect of local governments in order to maintain their compliance with the law in accordance with the provisions of the Fundamental Law. In connection with the fulfilment of their responsibilities, they take part in the development of certain sector- and policy-specific documents as well as in the territorial implementation of decisions. As part of this, they monitor the local investment environment, and gather and relay to central decision-makers the experiences of county stakeholders (employers, universities, local governments, occupational chambers, civil-society organisations).

Developing and operating an effective, robust and customer-friendly public administration system is among the government's highest priorities. In this context, promoting the "Service Provider State" image and providing public services for members of the public and businesses to the highest standards are important tasks of government offices. In the interest of attaining the above goals, the government has recently adopted a number of reform measures, including the restructuring of the central level of public administration (streamlining of organisational structure and powers) which took place in 2016, the reinforcement of districts (review and delegation to district level of powers), the modernisation of administrative processes, the reduction of bureaucracy and the extension of single-window administration (e.g. integration of tax-related customer service points into government windows).

District (metropolitan district) offices constitute the smallest units of territorial public administration, operating in 174 towns and in 23 districts in Budapest. Their fundamental job is the administration of affairs delegated to their competence (below county level). In the interest of providing more effective public services for members of the public and businesses, district (metropolitan district) offices operate integrated customer service points, so-called Government Windows which provide single-window administration with national competence. At Government Windows available in almost 300 locations members of the public can submit requests (for forwarding to the relevant proceeding authorities) regarding any administrative matter, a few exceptions apart, have the opportunity to have their affairs seen to with respect to almost a hundred different issues, and can obtain information on the relevant proceedings and the documents necessary for administration regarding more than 1,500 case ranges. Additionally, administrative services are also provided in document offices

and at customer service points dealing with specific affairs (e.g. land office, pension insurance, labour affairs, etc.), while in the case of small villages services are provided in the branch offices of district offices as well as by administrative assistants.

Mobile Government Window Customer Service Points are flexible, mobile customer service offices which can be readily deployed and are able to swiftly and effectively adjust to changing needs and circumstances (at present available in 10 counties, extension of fleet to cover the entire country is under way). With the introduction of this new service, customers living in settlements which do not have government windows or which are otherwise disadvantaged from the viewpoint of transport infrastructure are able to take care of their administrative affairs – including affairs related to identity cards, residency cards, passports, driving licences and customer portal registration – locally. Mobile Government Window Customer Service Points can additionally offer integrated administrative customer services at various venues, based on the needs of public institutions (educational institutions, hospitals, etc.), as well as at major events.