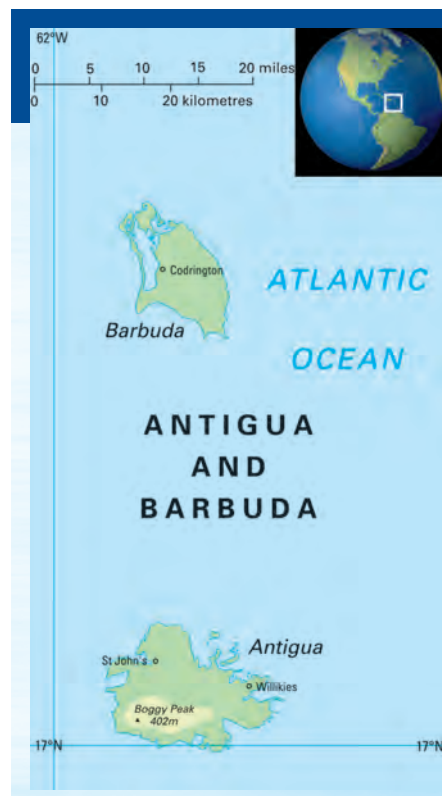


The local government system in

# Antigua & Barbuda



## Key facts

**POPULATION (2004 Census):** 76,886  
**AREA<sup>2</sup>:** 442 sq km  
**CAPITAL:** St John's  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO GDP<sup>4</sup>:** 0.74%  
**CURRENCY:** East Caribbean dollar (XCD)  
**HEAD OF STATE:** HM Queen Elizabeth II  
**GOVERNOR-GENERAL:** Dame Louise Lake-Tack  
**HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:**  
 Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer  
**FORM OF GOVERNMENT:** constitutional monarchy  
**PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:** bicameral  
**STATE STRUCTURE:** unitary  
**LANGUAGES:** English (official), Antiguan Creole (recognised)  
**NATIONAL ELECTIONS:** last: March 2009, turnout: 80.27%, next: March 2011  
**LOCAL ELECTIONS:** last: 2009, turnout: 87% next: 2011

Council; and one at the discretion of the governor-general.

## 2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 2.1 Constitutional provisions:

There is no constitutional provision for local government; however the Barbuda Council (see below) is enshrined in the constitution in Cap. 123.

### 2.2 Main legislative texts:

There is presently no local government legislation in Antigua. The Barbuda Council is governed by the Barbuda Local Government Act (1978), Cap. 44.

## 3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 3.1 Local government within the state:

There are no district or parish councils in Antigua whilst on Barbuda there is one local government body, the Barbuda Council.

### 3.2 Ministerial oversight:

On the island of Antigua the Ministry of Education, Sports, Youth and Gender Affairs (MESYGA) has oversight of the Local Government Department. Within this ministry, the Local Government Department falls within the Office of the Minister of State with responsibility for Sports, Local Government and Special Projects (OMS SLS). The OMS SLS has taken on the responsibility for providing technical support to the Department in the form of a consultant dedicated to conducting a review of the local government system in existence and to making recommendations for its future development. The Department has its own

## SUMMARY

Antigua and Barbuda is a bicameral parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy with two levels of government, central and local. Local government is manifested in a single local authority, the Barbuda Council, which governs the affairs of the Barbuda dependency. There is no constitutional provision for local government across Antigua; however the Barbuda Council is enshrined in the constitution. The Ministry of Education, Sports, Youth and Gender Affairs in Antigua is responsible for the oversight of the Local Government Department. The Barbuda Council reports directly the Office of the Prime Minister and is empowered to collect taxes to deliver goods and services as well as to administer and regulate agriculture, forestry, public health, public utilities and roads for the island.

## 1. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Antigua and Barbuda is a federal constitutional monarchy with bicameral parliamentary democracy. The head of government is the prime minister who advises the governor-general on the appointment of ministers. Parliament

comprises the House of Representatives and the Senate. The 17 members of the House of Representatives are elected by universal suffrage for a term of up to five years. The 17 members of the Senate are appointed by the governor-general as follows: 11 on the advice of the prime minister, one of whom must be a resident of Barbuda; four on the advice of the leader of the opposition; one on the advice of the Barbuda

**Table 1.** Distribution of councils and population (2001 Census)

Parish/dependency	No. of districts (for Census enumeration)	Population
St John's (city)	95	24,451
St John's (rural)	74	20,895
St George's	22	6,673
St Peter's	17	5,439
St Philip's	19	3,462
St Paul's	28	7,848
St Mary's	20	6,793
Barbuda	5	1,325
Redonda	-	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>76,886*</b>

\* The projected populations for 2010 will be 90,801, Antigua & Barbuda Statistics Division



Table 2. Revenue and expenditure of local government in Barbuda 2009-2010

Revenue (EC\$),000		Expenditure (EC\$) ,000	
<b>Government transfer</b>			
Int. trade and transaction tax	615	Barbuda Council	847
Domestic trade & transaction tax	7,363	Admin. and common services	8,865
<b>Locally raised revenue</b>		Agriculture	2,943
Tax from property and rights	348	Health	4,220
Commercial operations	5,704	Works and general purposes	4,120
Licences and service fees	576	Pensions and gratuities	1,520
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,274</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,515</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, Sports, Youth and Gender Affairs <sup>4</sup>

budgetary allocation but this mainly covers administrative costs and has been funding its community development projects through alliances with the private sector and NGOs.

### 3.2 Council types:

The Barbuda Council was established in 1976 by the Barbuda Local Government Act (1978) and is an 11-member body consisting of nine directly elected and two ex-officio members (Barbuda's House and Senate representatives) who serve four-year terms. Elections are held every two years in March with four seats and five seats becoming vacant at alternate polls. The council is empowered to make by-laws to govern the affairs of the island.

## 4. ELECTIONS

### 4.1 Recent local elections:

The last local elections were held for the Barbuda Council in March 2009 with an 87% turnout. The next election is scheduled in 2011.

### 4.2 Voting system:

The election is undertaken by single non-transferable vote and universal suffrage of the citizens of Barbuda.

### 4.3 Elected representatives:

No information provided for this edition.

### 4.4 Women's representation:

In the latest election there were no women elected or nominated as councillors.

## 5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### 5.1 Legal requirement:

No information provided for this edition.

### 5.2 Implementation:

No information provided for this edition.

### 5.3 E-government:

There is currently no e-government strategy.

## 6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There are no organisations of local government.

## 7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Local Government Department in Antigua operates as a regular government department and not a local government structure, since there is no legislation to support this.

The Barbuda Council reports directly the Office of the Prime Minister.

## 8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

In Barbuda, the council prepares annual estimates of revenue and expenditure which are submitted to the Minister of Finance for the approval of parliament. The Antigua Local Government Department is monitored by the Ministry's permanent secretary and, like all ministry departments, the Audit Department.

## 9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

### 9.1 Locally raised revenue:

The Local Government Department in Antigua has no authority to levy taxes. The Barbuda Council is empowered by the Barbuda Local Government Act (1978), Cap. 44, Section 19, Sub-section xviii to collect taxes to deliver goods and services. The council proposes by-laws to implement all new taxes which are tabled in parliament for approval.

### 9.2 Transfers:

The Barbuda Council receives an annual grant to supplement its locally raised revenue and any deficit is covered by a transfer of funds from central government.

### 9.3 Local authority staff:

The central government of Antigua and Barbuda covers all administrative costs and salaries for the Antigua Local Government Department, which in 2009/2010 came to EC\$531,062. The Barbuda Council pays its secretary and all public officers from local tax revenue.

## 10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

District officers of the Local Government Department in Antigua are assigned responsibilities for constituencies and are required to identify areas of need in each area and report to the relevant authorities for action. The Local Government Department is also responsible for working with community groups to establish street names and signage.

The Barbuda Council administers and regulates agriculture, forestry, public health, public utilities and roads for the island.

### References and useful websites

1. Antigua and Barbuda Census 2001 [www.ab.gov.ag/gov\\_v2/government/statsandreports/statsandreports2005/complete\\_census\\_summary\\_report.pdf](http://www.ab.gov.ag/gov_v2/government/statsandreports/statsandreports2005/complete_census_summary_report.pdf)
2. UN statistics <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2008/Table03.pdf>
3. IMF statistics [www.imf.org/external/data.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/data.htm)
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7. Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/constitutions/antigua/antigua-barbuda.html>