



# Barbados



## Key Facts

**POPULATION (Census 2010<sup>4</sup>):** 280,010  
**AREA<sup>2</sup>:** 430 sq km  
**CAPITAL:** Bridgetown  
**CURRENCY:** Barbadian dollar (BBD)  
**HEAD OF STATE:** HM Queen Elizabeth II  
**GOVERNOR-GENERAL:** Sir Elliott Belgrave  
**HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:** Prime Minister Freundel Stuart  
**FORM OF GOVERNMENT:**  
 constitutional monarchy with parliamentary democracy  
**PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:** bicameral  
**STATE STRUCTURE:** unitary  
**LANGUAGES:** English (official), Bajan (recognised)  
**NATIONAL ELECTIONS: last:** 2013 **turnout:** 62% **next:** 2018  
**LOCAL ELECTIONS:** there is no elected local government  
**WOMEN COUNCILLORS:** na  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government expenditure 2013/14<sup>3</sup>:** 0.8%

## SUMMARY

Barbados is a parliamentary democracy without elected local government. However, the Constituency Council Act 2009 created a Department of Constituency Empowerment (DCE) within the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, which is tasked with overseeing the creation and activities of constituency councils within Barbados' 30 constituencies.

### 1. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Barbados is a parliamentary democracy with a bicameral parliamentary system. The head of state is HM Queen Elizabeth II who appoints, and is represented by, a governor-general who is a national of the country. The parliament comprises an elected House of Assembly and an appointed Senate. The House of Assembly has 30 members elected by universal adult suffrage every five years. The Senate has 21 members appointed by the governor-general: 12 on the advice of the prime minister, two on the advice of the leader of the opposition and the remaining seven at the governor-general's discretion. The prime minister, usually the leader of the majority party, is head of the government. The governor-general appoints 18 ministers to the cabinet from within the House of Assembly on the advice of the prime minister.

### 2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

#### 2.1 Constitutional provisions

There is no constitutional<sup>4</sup> provision for local government.

#### 2.2 Main legislative texts

The main legislative text governing local government is the Constituency Council Act 2009, the latest amendment to which was on 26 September 2014.

#### 2.3 Proposed legislative changes

No current legislative changes proposed.

## 3. GOVERNMENT

#### 3.1 Local government within the state

There is no elected local government in Barbados. Local governance is delivered through appointed councillors who are chosen after a detailed process that begins with their applying to serve. For administrative purposes Barbados is divided into 11 parishes plus the capital city of Bridgetown. These are further divided into 30 electoral districts or constituencies, each of which has a constituency council (CC).

#### 3.2 Ministerial oversight

The Department of Constituency Empowerment (DCE) within the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development has responsibility for Barbados' constituency empowerment programme and, by extension, for the CCs. In addition to the creation of both the DCE and the CCs the programme will also in the future create constituency empowerment centres.

#### 3.3 Constituency councils

Constituency councils (CCs) have been established in all 30 constituencies across Barbados. Local governance in Barbados takes the form of a voluntary constituency-based model which forms an integral part of Barbados' constituency empowerment programme.

Each CC consists of 15 persons appointed by the minister, including a chairman and a treasurer. Individuals are invited to apply to serve on the CC for the area in which they live or with which they are otherwise associated. A selection committee of senior civil servants makes recommendations to the minister on who should be selected to serve on the CCs. Significant attention is paid to selecting persons who have relevant community experience and/or who represent a special interest group. The local member of parliament is an ex-officio member of the CC. Members hold office for a term of two years and are eligible for reappointment for a further term.

The CC is defined as 'a legally established body of local representatives, who have been appointed and given the authority to voice the concerns of the various residents of the constituency', and its role is 'to maintain links with the Government and its agencies; and to effectively and efficiently assist in the management of resources assigned for the development of the given constituency'.

The CC has a number of sub-committees which gather socio-economic information on the constituency, paying particular attention to demographic and geographic particularities. The sub-committees then advise the CC as to the major needs and concerns in their areas. Larger projects are worked on in partnership with the DCE and other stakeholders. Many smaller projects are carried out by the CCs in direct collaboration with the community. The CC also acts as an advocacy group and supports public and private sector organisations through lobbying on behalf of constituents.

**Table 1: Distribution of councils and population (Census 2010)**

Parish	Constituency councils	Population (Census 2010) <sup>1</sup>	% rural <sup>6</sup>
Christ Church	5	54,336	na
St Andrew	1	5,139	na
St George	2	19,767	na
St James	3	28,498	na
St John	1	8,963	na
St Joseph	1	6,620	na
St Lucy	1	9,758	na
St Michael*	11	88,529	na
St Peter	1	11,300	na
St Philip	3	30,662	na
St Thomas	1	14,249	na
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>277,821</b>	<b>32.4</b>

\* includes the capital city of Bridgetown

Source: DCE communication with CLGF

## 4. ELECTIONS

### 4.1 Recent local elections

There is no elected local government in Barbados.

### 4.2 Voting system

Not applicable.

### 4.3 Elected representatives and

### 4.4 Women's representation

As per the amendments made to the Constituency Council Act 2009, dated 26 September 2014, each council will have 11 members appointed by the minister, including a chairman and a treasurer. Members hold office for a term of two years and are eligible to hold office for a maximum of six years or three terms. In the selection process for nominated councillors, efforts are made to ensure all vulnerable groups are included. Across the 30 CCs men and women are both well represented, and there is also a rich diversity of age and experience.

## 5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### 5.1 Legal requirement and

### 5.2 Implementation

The 2014 amendment to the Constituency Council Act 2009 requires that each CC hold annual public meetings to update local residents on its progress and agenda for the prescribed period. Previously this requirement was biannual.

The Constituency Council Act 2009 requires CCs to build databases of their constituency in collaboration with government departments and to identify the priority needs of their constituency based on supporting data. The Act invites the public to submit requests to the CCs outlining any particular needs, and these must be discussed at CC meetings and formally reported on.

### 5.3 E-government

There is no e-government strategy though the CCs each have a website where issues raised can be publicly displayed along with minutes of meetings and news.

## 6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There are no organised country-wide associations of local government in Barbados.

## 7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The DCE has set up formal protocols with all major government departments on behalf of the CCs, which allow for the fast-tracking of issues that have arisen at CC level. The CCs have named contact persons within various ministries and are free to contact them directly. Regular meetings are held between the leadership of the CCs and the ministry to share best practice and ideas as well as to address any common concerns that may arise.

## 8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

Each CC must keep adequate financial and other records for seven years and submit these monthly to the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, through the DCE. Each CC must also be audited annually. The auditor general may at any time carry out an investigation or audit of the accounts of a CC. Additionally the DCE must submit a detailed account of the activities of each CC by the end of the financial year.

## 9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

### 9.1 Locally raised revenue

CCs have no authority to raise local revenue.

### 9.2 Transfers

Each of the 30 CCs receives approximately BBD100,000 per annum from central government. CCs receive money in tranches and have their accounts replenished only when there is a satisfactory report on spending. The funds are kept in central accounts and released to the CCs as projects and programmes are undertaken and reported on.

Each CC has its own bank account into which its money is deposited. The chairman and treasurer sign off expenditure on behalf of the CC.

### 9.3 Local authority staff

There is an officer of the DCE (a full-time salaried public servant) posted in every constituency, whose role is to liaise with the public on behalf of the CCs.

Members of the constituency councils receive an annual stipend of BBD120 (US\$60) each, except for the chairman, who receives BBD200 (US\$100). All members of councils therefore serve on a voluntary basis.

## 10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

CCs provide a wide range of services based on the needs of their constituents. CCs are also expected to effectively and efficiently assist in the management of central government resources assigned for the development of each constituency, within a framework of good governance.

### References and useful websites

- Population and Housing Census 2010, Barbados Statistical Service, [www.barstats.gov.bb/files/documents/PHC\\_2010\\_Census\\_Volume\\_1.pdf](http://www.barstats.gov.bb/files/documents/PHC_2010_Census_Volume_1.pdf)
- UN statistics surface area <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2008/Table03.pdf>
- Based on figure of BBD 100,000 transfer to each constituency council provided in the profile by the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development and the 2013-14 Govt of Barbados approved estimate total expenditure of BBD 3,893,011,645
- 4a. Constitution of Barbados [www.oas.org/dil/The\\_Constitution\\_of\\_Barbados.pdf](http://www.oas.org/dil/The_Constitution_of_Barbados.pdf)  
b. Constituency Council Act 2009 [www.barbadosparliament.com/htmlarea/uploaded/File/Act/2009/The%20Constituency%20Councils%20Act%202009.pdf](http://www.barbadosparliament.com/htmlarea/uploaded/File/Act/2009/The%20Constituency%20Councils%20Act%202009.pdf)
- Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development [www.socialcare.gov.bb](http://www.socialcare.gov.bb)
- Data on rural population figures: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL>
- Constituency Councils of Barbados [www.CCs.gov.bb](http://www.CCs.gov.bb)
- Government of Barbados [www.gov.bb](http://www.gov.bb)
- UNDP HDR Barbados country profile <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BRB>

**Table 2 Aggregate income and expenditure for constituency councils 2013/14**

Income	BBD mn	Expenditure	BBD mn
Centre-local transfers	3	Administration	na
Locally raised revenue	0	Services	na
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development communication with CLGF



## Annex A. Summary of service provision by different spheres of government in Barbados

Services	Delivering authority		Remarks
	Central government	Constituency councils	
<b>GENERAL ADMINISTRATION</b>			
Police	■		
Fire protection	■		
Civil protection	■		
Criminal justice	■		
Civil status register	■		
Statistical office	■		
Electoral register	■		
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
Pre-school (kindergarten & nursery)	■		
Primary	■		
Secondary	■		
Vocational & technical			
Higher education	■		
Adult education			
<b>SOCIAL WELFARE</b>			
Family welfare services	■		
Welfare homes	■		
Social security	■		
<b>PUBLIC HEALTH</b>			
Primary care	■		
Hospitals	■		
Health protection	■		
<b>HOUSING &amp; TOWN PLANNING</b>			
Housing	■		
Town planning	■		
Regional planning	■		
<b>TRANSPORT</b>			
Roads	■		
Transport	■		
Urban roads	■		
Urban rail	■		
Ports	■		
Airports	■		
<b>ENVIRONMENT &amp; PUBLIC SANITATION</b>			
Water & sanitation	■		
Refuse collection & disposal	■		
Cemeteries & crematoria			
Slaughterhouses	■		
Environmental protection	■		
Consumer protection	■		
<b>CULTURE, LEISURE &amp; SPORTS</b>			
Theatre & concerts	■		
Museums & libraries	■		
Parks & open spaces	■		
Sports & leisure	■		
Religious facilities	■		
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Gas services	■		
District heating	■		
Water supply	■		
Electricity	■		
<b>ECONOMIC</b>			
Agriculture, forests & fisheries	■		
Local economic development/promotion	■		
Trade & industry	■		
Tourism	■		

**KEY**

- Sole responsibility service
- Joint responsibility service
- Discretionary service