



THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS WORK TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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WE WORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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The County Administrative Board – close to you

Because we are a link between people and municipalities on the one hand, and between the government, Parliament and national authorities on the other, we have a unique position in the democratic system. Sweden is divided into twenty-one counties; each county has a County Administrative Board and a county governor. The County Administrative Board is a coordinating national authority with supervisory responsibilities. We are also a public service authority and can hear appeals.

The County Administrative Board is the most versatile of Sweden's authorities; our issues and our competence cover the entire social span. We have lawyers, biologists, architects, foresters, engineers, public relations officers, archaeologists, veterinarians, sociologists, economists and many others.

Our aims are to provide good service with open accountability that is based on the rule of law. Changes in society

are resulting in increasing demands for accountability and accessibility. The County Administrative Board are developing services that help private persons and organisations to carry out their tasks regardless of time and place.

Electronic services should be simple to use and facilitate the County Administrative Board's own administration.

This brochure provides more information about what we do and why we do it. You are welcome to turn to your County Administrative Board with questions and opinions.

Welcome!







What we do

The County Administrative Board must ensure that decisions made by the government and Parliament, and which affect the county, are as effective as possible. Therefore, we:

- provide advice and information
- monitor and check that various organisations comply with laws and guidelines
- perform our duties as an authority – issuing permits, hearing appeals against municipal decisions and compiling information
- coordinate the county's strengths by taking initiatives and organising meetings and activities
- provide contributions to various kinds of activities.

We also have other tasks as an authority, where we make decisions or impose measures in accordance with laws and other democratically made decisions.

Some examples are the payment of state wage guarantees, registration of foundations, authorisation of security companies and wrecking yards, as well as rent deposits. We also make decisions about licences for pawnshops, bingo halls and some lotteries, surveillance cameras and the disposal of cremated remains.

Protecting the environment

Our task as regards environmental protection means that we work with businesses and activities in the county that pose environmental hazards. Actions that could damage the environment may not be carried out without permission from the County Administrative Board. Examples of hazardous activities are surface treatments, foundries, the pulp and paper industry, energy facilities, sawmills, agriculture, ports, waste depots, food industries, wastewater treatment plants and quarrying or mining. In accordance with the Swedish Environmental Code we are responsible for the inquiries into, and supervision of, the larger activities in the county. When carrying out an inquiry we evaluate the activity's environmental impact, based on the environmental impact assessment that was submitted.

Decisions about permits are notified by the Environmental Court, or the Environmental Licensing Delegation of the County Administrative Board, and regulate how environmental impact is to be minimised.

The County Administrative Board also works with the treatment of polluted areas in order to reduce contamination in the surrounding area. We besides supervise and carry out some inquiries into water-related operations such as filling in, construction in water and other actions that affect water conditions.

The County Administrative Board also works comprehensively as a coordinator with environmental targets and health protection issues. We ensure that organisations and activities adhere to the Environmental Code and its regulations, court judgements and other decisions. We are as well responsible for supervisory guidance for the municipalities. This means that we evaluate, follow up and coordinate supervisory activities and provide support and advice to other supervisory authorities.







Nature conservation and management

The County Administrative Board's work with nature conservation deals with protecting valuable areas and species, both in water and on land. Our activities should also make it easier for people to use the outdoors and see what nature has to offer. The natural landscape, natural resources and biological diversity should be both preserved and developed.

We work with the county's protected areas and Natura

2000 sites, which are part of the EU's network for nature protection in Europe. The main aim of a nature reserve is to protect a certain habitat and, frequently, to make the area accessible to the general public. This means establish new reserves and that we administer existing ones using management measures such as clearing and constructing fences and paths.



Another important task for nature conservation is surveying Sweden's flora and fauna. Each part of the country has its own unique nature with different conditions for plant and animal life. We make inventories of the occurrence of rare and red listed animals and plants, as well as proposing various conservation measures in order to ensure a rich flora and fauna. The information we collect is besides used for municipal planning, different types of development and as a basis for improving nature conservation and outdoor activities.

Environmental objectives

The Swedish Parliament has decided that we must have a coherent environmental policy for a sustainable Sweden. The overall objective is that coming generations will inherit a society in which the major environmental problems have been solved.

Work on environmental objectives is based on sixteen national environmental quality objectives and seventy-two national interim objectives. The County Administrative Boards have been assigned the task of adapting, defining and giving a concrete form to fifteen of the sixteen national environmental quality objectives, in order to suit them to regional conditions. The Swedish Forest Agency is responsible for the sixteenth objective, Sustainable Forests.

The environmental objectives include climate and energy issues, chemical management, waste issues and

treatment of contaminated areas. The environmental objectives also include issues relating to surface, ground and coastal water, the preservation and development of valuable natural and cultural environments and sustainable planning for land and water.

Consultation with municipalities, county councils and other organisations has meant that the regional environmental objectives, which have been adopted by each County Administrative Board, have received broad support from the counties. Participation is vital to the objectives' credibility and effectiveness. Concrete proposals for measures that contribute to fulfilling the targets have been connected to the regional environmental objectives. The effects of these measures are the subject of ongoing assessment.





Thriving rural areas

We have the right to make demands about the quality of our food. Naturally, it should taste good. It should besides be nutritious and produced in a manner that respects people, animals and the environment.

The County Administrative Board actively promotes more environmentally-friendly agriculture, increased organic cultivation and the preservation of valuable grazing lands. The aim is to have thriving rural areas with active agriculture.

The EU's agricultural policy is aimed at supporting farming. Every year the County Administrative Board distributes EU funding to farming businesses in order to support ordinary food production and the preservation of grazing land, tree-lined avenues and stone walls in the natural and cultural landscape. The County Administrative Board must ensure that changes to the agricultural landscape are made with respect for animals, plants and insects – in order to preserve biological diversity. This is why you have to apply for permits when digging ditches or removing copses, for example.









Animal welfare

Our task is to promote improved animal health and animal protection. All those who own animals are responsible for treating them well and protecting them from unnecessary suffering and illness. This is the point of the Swedish Animal Welfare Act, to regulate how animals are kept and cared for. This includes designing the space in which the animal lives, so that it behaves in a natural manner. Therefore, we review drawings for animal stalls and check game enclosures to ensure that the requirements are fulfilled.

The County Administrative Board has the primary responsibility for checking that animal welfare regulations are complied with. We inspect how owners look after their animals and can also decide that an animal should be taken care of due to ill treatment. If the police take charge of a mistreated animal, it is the County Administrative Board's duty to decide whether it can be properly rehoused or whether it is so mistreated it should be put down.

If a contagious animal disease were to break out in Sweden, it is often the county veterinarian who coordinates the efforts to control it in each county. For example, the county administrative boards' veterinarians were on stand-by when bird flu was spreading in Europe.



Hunting and fishing management

Hunting and fishing are our oldest means of support, but they are now important leisure activities as well. Hunting should be carried out with its focus on biological diversity and a natural balance. We are responsible for providing information to hunters and landowners, registering hunting grounds, awarding licences and collecting and compiling shooting statistics. We as well take inventories and administer the occurrence of large carnivores in the county, as well as appointing hunt supervisors.

Some species may normally not be hunted, but occasionally they can cause major problems. We work on preventing and compensating damage. It is also the County Administrative Board that, on occasion, issues licences for “protective hunting”.

The County Administrative Board’s unit for reindeer husbandry grants the right to hunt and fish on State owned land above the cultivation limit and on reindeer grazing areas.

The County Administrative Board can answer your questions about commercial fishing, water usage, angling and fish conservation.

Our task is to promote long-term, sustainable fishing run by financially stable businesses and to do so in a variety of ways. We also take decisions about financial support from the EU for both commercial fishing and fish farming.

If you plan to start a fish farm, or to introduce fish or crayfish must obtain a permit from their County Administrative Board. This is important if we are to avoid the spread of foreign fish species and diseases.

The County Administrative Board can create fish conservation areas. We do this in order to increase opportunities for more people to go fishing and to preserve fish populations. If you wish to manage fish conservation in a lake you can obtain both assistance and grants from us. We as well provide grants for liming acidified lakes and for the restoration of crayfish waters.





Responsibility for the highlands

Norrbottnen, Västerbotten, Jämtland and Dalarna have almost seven million hectares of highland areas. The County Administrative Boards are responsible for managing these areas and granting the use of land, as well as hunting and fishing rights.

Every year we grant almost quarter of a million fishing days and around 40,000 small game hunting days. We are as well responsible for the national trail system with bridges, wind shelters and for marking winter and summer trails. These trails are important, both for mountain safety and so that visitors don't damage sensitive areas.

We also have special nature and conservation rangers. They monitor and manage mountain reserves, check hunting, fishing and terrain vehicles, as well as taking inventories and protecting large carnivores.

The County Administrative Board also works with issues relating to reindeer husbandry. The Sámi have reindeer grazing rights on about 40 percent of the area of Sweden and the County Administrative Board and the Sámi villages cooperate on keeping track of reindeer. We have a supervisory role in ensuring that regulations are followed and mediate in conflicts relating to grazing or carnivore inventories, for example. However, since the year 2007, Sametinget, the Sámi Parliament, has taken over many of the tasks related to reindeer husbandry that were previously the responsibility of the County Administrative Boards.









Preserving our cultural heritage

The County Administrative Board is responsible for protecting, preserving and providing information about the county's cultural environment.

This means that we promote utilisation of the historic values found in the cultural landscape, a responsibility that stretches from ancient remains to industrial history. We want to preserve valuable cultural environments and cultural landscapes for the coming generations.

We take inventories and protect valuable buildings, ancient remains and cultural landscapes. This could be

anything from a castle in Skåne to a shieling in Jämtland, or a mediaeval church on Gotland and an abandoned industrial site in Bergslagen. We provide information about the value of the things we protect.

Much of our work deals with ancient remains, buildings and churches. We also work with places related to industrial history and the cultural landscape in its entirety.

The County Administrative Board may grant subsidies for the preservation of, and information about, valuable cultural environments.

Everyone's right to attractive housing in good surroundings

Housing is important for all of us. The County Administrative Board works to ensure that our homes and their surroundings are pleasant. We provide information about the state funding that is available when building or rebuilding homes for the elderly, and we encourage environmentally sustainable construction.

Do you have a house of cultural-historical interest, that uses traditional building materials and workmanship that is more expensive than the current standard? If so, you may be entitled to financial support for renovations. Grants are also available for radon decontamination of houses (radon is a carcinogenic gas).

You can apply for grants if you would like to reduce your electricity consumption and convert from electric heating to district heating or individual heating using biofuel. Grants are also available for installing solar panels, energy-efficient windows and for making public buildings more energy efficient.

The municipalities are responsible for housing provision. All Sweden's inhabitants should have somewhere to live. At the County Administrative Boards we provide advice and help the municipalities with information and planning.





Developing trade and industry

Stimulating economic growth in the counties is vital to the welfare of Sweden. Strong regions and businesses are a prerequisite for improving Sweden's economic development capacity and ability to compete internationally.

Our mission is to contribute to the development of trade and industry so that employment and economic growth are promoted. This is achieved by giving financial assistance to small and medium sized enterprises that have a planned investment for further expansion and also by giving grants to project initiatives whose aim is to promote economic development. We also participate in some projects and often lead projects for development in collaboration with other organisations.

Regional development over the past 10 years has been carried out through efforts by the County Administrative Boards, or by self-governing bodies or through bodies of regional cooperation. Regardless of whether it is the County Administrative Board, a self-governing body or a regional cooperative body that is in charge it is their responsibility to ensure that the county has a regional economic development program as well as a regional economic growth program.

The purpose of these programs is to identify and better utilise the particular conditions of the county and region, and to assemble the county's resources into efforts that provides the greatest impact and results for growth.

The County Administrative Boards also have a responsibility to provide information about issues relating to competitiveness and promote effective competition, in both the public and private sectors.







Reliable, environmentally friendly transport and communication

We travel to work and to school, to leisure activities, shops and public services. Goods and products are transported between companies by road or rail. At our computers we communicate through various types of networks.

The County Administrative Board influences the design of the transport network for traffic and for data communications, in both the long and short term. We help to shape the future's infrastructure. Improvements to roads, making public transport wheelchair-friendly and measures to increase road safety are all part of what we do.

Traffic should flow smoothly and safely, but it may not disturb residents or have a major impact on natural and cultural landscapes. Our role is to assess the consequences of various road plans and ensure that we save land and water resources. We also carry out similar assessments when expanding sea and air travel within the county.







Gender equality

Gender equality means that women and men should have the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all areas of life. All social development should be characterised by consideration for gender equality.

In order for men and women to have equal power to shape society and their own lives the government has established four long-term interim objectives for gender equality policy:

- an equal distribution of power and influence
- economic equality between women and men
- an equal distribution of unpaid care and household work
- men's violence against women shall come to an end.

The County Administrative Board's task is to promote equality in the county based on the government's national gender equality policy. We coordinate, support and follow up work

for gender equality in the county and are responsible for social analyses, seminars and project activities, for example.

We provide information and support the county's employers and the trade union organisations so that they are able to meet the requirements of the Swedish Equal Opportunities Act.

The County Administrative Board monitors and observes how the social services work with issues relating to men's violence to women. The County Administrative Board has been specially tasked by the government to combat honour-related violence. For example, we work with prevention and support, action plans in schools and training staff who work with children and young adults or young women. We cooperate with a number of different authorities and organisations.





Good opportunities for all

There are many reasons why people from different parts of the world come to Sweden. For example, it may be that they are searching for asylum, they are family members of Swedish citizens that were born abroad, or they may have found a job or a partner in Sweden.

The municipalities have the primary responsibility for welcoming new immigrants who have received residence permits and for introducing them to Swedish society. The initial period is vital if new arrivals are to have a positive start in their new country. Good integration needs a good beginning with Swedish language skills and knowledge about Swedish society. These are the things that make it possible to be part of the community and to earn your own livelihood.

There is a great deal of immigration to the counties with big cities, which means it can be difficult to meet the need for housing and for Swedish classes. Meanwhile, smaller municipalities welcome immigration. In these municipalities immigration can help to maintain and improve services, especially where the average age is increasing and the population declining.

The County Administrative Board has the operative responsibility for negotiating and drawing up agreements with municipalities about the reception and introduction of new arrivals in the county. The task of the County Administrative Board is also to develop and follow up this introduction, which we do together with authorities, municipalities and the county council. The County Administrative Board should also work to promote integration policy objectives.

These objectives refer to equal rights and responsibilities regardless of ethnic background, and society's development towards mutual respect for everyone, regardless of background.

The objectives are:

- equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for everyone, irrespective of ethnic and cultural background
- social cohesion built on diversity
- social development characterised by mutual respect for differences within the boundaries that follow from society's fundamental democratic values in which everyone, irrespective of background, should take an active and responsible part.



Good health on equal terms

The county administrative boards are tasked with creating the right social conditions for good health on equal terms for the entire Swedish population. Public health deals with everything from the individual's own choices and habits, to issues such as the external environment and democratic rights in society. Some of the areas of public health in which the county administrative boards are particularly active are equality, integration, the environment, urban planning, social conditions, antidiscrimination measures and issues relating to drugs and alcohol.

Drug and alcohol issues involve preventive measures, the distribution of state funds and supervisory activities. Preventive measures involve coordinating and developing work on carrying out the national alcohol and narcotics action plans, as well as work on achieving targets in the fields of doping and tobacco. As regards supervisory activities, the county administrative boards ensure that the municipalities check age limits, licences to serve alcohol and smoking restrictions in public areas.







Emergency preparedness in the community

We live in a society that has many risks. Serious accidents occur, environmental disasters and storms; extensive power cuts and other difficulties place society under great strain. In order for us to be able to better manage such events, society must be well prepared. At most incidents it is the municipal fire and rescue service which is responsible for leading and executing the emergency response.

For incidents that require a greater response the County Administrative Board is able to take over the leadership of the operation in order to ease cooperation. In difficult situations, where a number of municipalities are affected and several authorities and organisations are involved, the County Administrative Board ensures the coordination of the operation and of information. We therefore cooperate with many authorities, including the Police, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute and the county council.

The County Administrative Board checks that the municipal fire and rescue service can perform the tasks it is assigned. It is also our job to use aerial fire patrols to detect forest or wildfires. In order to prevent serious incidents we inspect facilities that handle hazardous chemicals and carry out dangerous processes.

We are continuously working on the long-term creation of a less vulnerable society. Examples of preventive measures are burying overhead wires to reduce the risk of power cuts and not building houses in flood-prone areas. The County Administrative Board is a member of various networks in order to learn about and to practice emergency management skills.





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Free elections – the foundation of Swedish democracy

Every fourth year we vote for the politicians and political parties that will lead the municipalities, county councils and the Parliament. Every fifth year we vote for the people who will represent Sweden in the European Parliament. The County Administrative Board is one of the authorities that ensure that the election is properly held and that voting is done correctly.

We make sure the electoral area is the right size, that the municipality's election officials receive training

and support and that ballot papers are printed. After the election we recount all the ballot papers and make decisions about which papers should be rejected. The County Administrative Board allocates seats and appoints members and substitutes to the county council and municipal authority. The Swedish Election Authority does the equivalent work for the Parliament. When a politician retires during a term of office we appoint new delegates on the request of the municipality and county council.

Permits issued by us

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

- environmentally hazardous activities
- management of hazardous waste
- sale of hazardous chemicals
- extraction of gravel, rock and peat
- exemptions for construction on some protected shorelines
- consultation on actions and activities that affect the environment
- permits for digging drainage ditches

ANIMAL WELFARE

- preliminary examination of buildings and some animal stalls
- permission to feed game with animal waste
- granting an exception to the prohibition on burying dead horses

HUNTING AND FISHING MANAGEMENT

- elk hunting (registration of areas, licences)
- protective hunting (e.g. destruction of beaver dams)
- game enclosures and game preservation areas (founding, alteration)
- appointment as hunting and fishing supervisor and nature and conservation rangers
- introduction permits for fish and crayfish
- farming permits for fish and crayfish
- permission to use certain commercial fishing equipment
- permission to use forbidden fishing methods or capture protected species as part of biological surveys

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HIGHLANDS

(NOT ALL COUNTIES)

- hunting and fishing on state land in highland areas

PRESERVING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

- permission to make alterations to objects protected by the Swedish Act concerning Ancient Monuments and Finds

GOOD HEALTH ON EQUAL TERMS

- dispensation for those under 18 who wish to marry

OTHER

- security companies
- bingo and some other gambling activities
- permission to spread cremated remains
- pawnshops
- surveillance cameras

Our supervisory responsibilities

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

- large, environmentally-detrimental activities
- chemical management
- dams and other water regulation
- protected natural areas

ANIMAL WELFARE

- animal protection
- foodstuff controls
- veterinary activities

HUNTING AND FISHING MANAGEMENT

- hunting (overall)
- game enclosures

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HIGHLANDS (NOT ALL COUNTIES)

- monitoring the number of reindeer in the Sámi villages
- hunting and fishing supervision on state land in highland areas
- trails (walking and snowmobile trails on state land in highland areas)

PRESERVING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

- compliance with the Swedish Act concerning Ancient Monuments and Finds

EVERYONE'S RIGHT TO ATTRACTIVE HOUSING IN GOOD SURROUNDINGS

- some issues according the Swedish Planning and Building Act

GOOD HEALTH ON EQUAL TERMS

- municipal application of the Swedish Alcohol Act

OTHER

- surveillance cameras
- foundations
- chief guardian committee
- pawnshops
- authorised security companies
- alcohol and tobacco law

Grants available from us

NATURE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

- liming lakes and waterways
- fish conservation funding for fish conservation and supervision
- structural funding, EFF, European Fisheries Fund 2007-2013
- biological restoration in limed areas
- preventive measures for game damage
- compensation for game damage
- compensation for seal damage

THRIVING RURAL AREAS

- direct subsidies for agricultural land
- environmental compensation payments
- business subsidies
- project subsidies

HUNTING AND FISHING MANAGEMENT

- measures for preventing damage due to protected animals
- compensation for game damage
- contributions from the elk conservation fund (inventory, information, training)
- contributions to fish conservation measures
- EU structural funding for the fishing industry
- fishing in various lakes
- fish species and strains in fish farms

PRESERVING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

- grants for ancient remains, buildings and cultural landscapes

EVERYONE'S RIGHT TO ATTRACTIVE HOUSING IN GOOD SURROUNDINGS

- replacing windows
- radon decontamination
- heating with solar energy
- switching from electric heating to another energy source
- investment grants for homes for the elderly
- energy efficiency measures in public buildings
- biofuel facilities in newly built houses

DEVELOPING TRADE AND INDUSTRY

- business subsidies to strengthen competitiveness, provide economic growth and increase employment
- funding for projects in regional growth (not all counties)
- EU subsidies for trade and industry, authorities and organisation, which can contribute to increased employment and entrepreneurship through project work (not all counties)
- subsidies for commercial service provision in rural areas

GOOD HEALTH ON EQUAL TERMS

- grants for personal representatives
- funding for alcohol and drug prevention
- subsidies for women's crisis centres
- subsidies for efforts to combat honour related violence and oppression



County Administrative Board of Blekinge
371 86 KARLSKRONA
Tel: +46 (0)455 87000
e-mail: blekinge@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/blekinge

County Administrative Board of Dalarna
791 84 FALUN
Tel: +46 (0)23 81000
e-mail: dalarna@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/dalarna

County Administrative Board of Gotland
621 85 VISBY
Tel: +46 (0)498 292100
e-mail: gotland@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/gotland

County Administrative Board of
Gävleborg
801 70 GÄVLE
Tel: +46 (0)26 171000
e-mail: gavleborg@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg

County Administrative Board of Halland
301 86 HALMSTAD
Tel: +46 (0)35 132000
e-mail: halland@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/halland

County Administrative Board of
Jämtland
831 86 ÖSTERSUND
Tel: +46 (0)63 146000
e-mail: jamtland@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/jamtland

County Administrative Board of
Jönköping
551 86 JÖNKÖPING
Tel: +46 (0)36 395000
e-mail: jonkoping@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/jonkoping

County Administrative Board of Kalmar
39 1 86 KALMAR
Tel: +46 (0)480 82000
e-mail: kalmar@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/kalmar

County Administrative Board of
Kronoberg
351 86 VÄXJÖ
Tel: +46 (0)470 86000
e-mail: kronoberg@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/kronoberg

County Administrative Board of
Norrbotten
971 86 LULEÅ
Tel: +46 (0)920 96000
e-mail: norrbotten@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/norrbotten

County Administrative Board of Skåne
205 15 MALMÖ
291 86 KRISTIANSTAD
Tel: +46 (0)40/044 252000
e-mail: skane@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/skane

County Administrative Board of
Stockholm
Box 22067
104 22 STOCKHOLM
Tel: +46 (0)8 7854000
e-mail: stockholm@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/stockholm

County Administrative Board of
Södermanland
611 86 NYKÖPING
Tel: +46 (0)155 264000
e-mail: sodermanland@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/sodermanland

County Administrative Board of Uppsala
751 86 UPPSALA
Tel: +46 (0)18 195000
e-mail: upsala@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/upsala

County Administrative Board of
Värmland
651 86 KARLSTAD
Tel: +46 (0)54 197000
e-mail: varmland@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/varmland

County Administrative Board of
Västerbotten
901 86 UMEÅ
Tel: +46 (0)90 107000
e-mail: vasterbotten@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/vasterbotten

County Administrative Board of
Västernorrland
871 86 HÄRNÖSAND
Tel: +46 (0)611 349000
e-mail: vasternorrland@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/vasternorrland

County Administrative Board of
Västmanland
721 86 VÄSTERÅS
Tel: +46 (0)21 195000
e-mail: vastragotaland@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/vastragotaland

County Administrative Board of Västra
Götaland
403 40 GÖTEBORG
Tel: +46 (0)31 605000
e-mail: vastragotaland@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/vastragotaland

County Administrative Board of Örebro
701 86 ÖREBRO
Tel: +46 (0)19 193000
e-mail: orebro@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/orebro

County Administrative Board of
Östergötland
581 86 LINKÖPING
Tel: +46 (0)13 196000
e-mail: ostergotland@lansstyrelsen.se
www.lansstyrelsen.se/ostergotland

The County Administrative Boards' web
portal with joint services:
www.lansstyrelsen.se



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