

PROVIDING IMPORTANT SERVICES

TEXT SUMMARY

The state of California provides many services to citizens. It does so directly through State agencies and programs, and indirectly through local governments.

Education is one of the most important—and expensive—responsibilities of the State. Local governments fund primary and secondary education, with some help from the State. The State also administers public university systems.

California works to promote citizens' welfare through many means. For example, the State funds public health programs such as **Medicaid**, which gives low-income families medical insurance. The State also contributes to **welfare**—cash assistance to the poor. This is an **entitlement** program—one in which anyone who meets the eligibility require-

ments is entitled to receive benefits. States promote public welfare in many other ways, including enforcing antipollution laws and protecting worker safety.

The State protects public safety by providing police units and correctional facilities for people convicted of State crimes. State corrections spending has greatly increased because of increased numbers of convicts and lengths of prison terms.

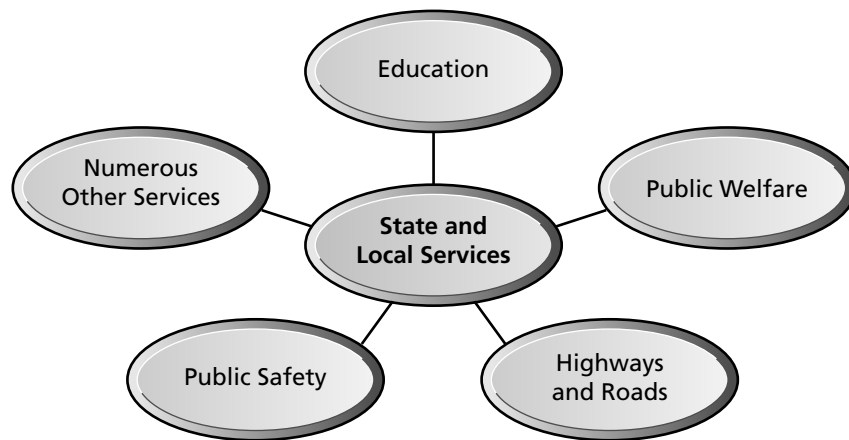
California also builds and maintains all highways and roads within its boundaries. California receives federal funds to assist with interstate highway maintenance.

State and local governments vary greatly in the services they offer. State budgets vary according to the degree of each State's **urbanization**—the percentage of State population living in cities of more than 250,000 people or in suburbs of more than 50,000 people.

THE BIG IDEA

State and local governments provide numerous expensive services for their citizens.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Services Provided by State and Local Government



Of all State services, education is the most expensive.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do States promote public welfare?

2. **Diagram Skills** Name three specific services provided by State and local governments.