

# Arizona

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Arizona ranks 39th among the states in number of local governments, with 639 as of June 2002.

## **COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (15)**

There are no areas in Arizona lacking county government. The county governing body is called the board of supervisors.

## **SUBCOUNTY GENERAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS (87)**

### **Municipal Governments (87)**

Municipal governments in Arizona are locally designated cities and towns. There are no significant differences in population, legal powers, or status between city and town governments that would affect their classification for census purposes. The minimum population requirement for incorporation is 1,500.

### **Township Governments (0)**

Arizona has no township governments.

## **PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS (245)**

### **School District Governments (231)**

The following types of school districts in Arizona are counted as governments for census purposes:

- Common school districts
- Community college districts
- Joint common school districts
- Joint technological education districts
- Joint unified school districts
- Provisional community college districts
- Unified school districts
- Union high school districts

All types of school districts listed above are governed by elected boards. They may levy ad valorem taxes and, with voter approval, may issue bonds. With the exception of provisional community college districts, these districts may levy ad valorem taxes and, with voter approval, may issue bonds. Provisional community college districts receive funding primarily through the levy of a hotel tax and issuance of revenue bonds.

### **Dependent Public School Systems (14)**

Arizona statutes authorize the following types of dependent public school systems:

Systems dependent on county governments (14):

- County accommodation schools
- County special education cooperatives

The county accommodation schools, which provide education on military reservations or in territory that is not included within the boundary of a school district, are directly under the supervision of the county superintendent of schools. They are not counted as separate governments. In June 2002, nine Arizona counties operated such schools.

County special education cooperatives, which provide special education programs for exceptional children, are formed by agreement between two or more school districts. They are administered by one of the participating school districts, or by the county superintendent of schools. They are not counted as separate governments. In June 2002, three of these cooperatives were reported in operation.

## **SPECIAL DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS (305)**

Arizona statutes authorize the creation of a variety of special districts or authorities that are counted as governments. These are discussed in detail below.

### **Active Management Area Water Districts**

This district is established by public petition, followed by a hearing for the purpose of supplementing the water supply of active management areas through indirect groundwater storage and recovery projects. A board of eleven elected directors governs the district. The district may collect fees and may issue revenue bonds. No districts of this type were reported in operation as of June, 2002.

### **Agricultural Improvement Districts**

These districts, which provide for irrigation, drainage, water storage, and electric generation and transmission facilities, are created by the county board of supervisors upon petition of landowners followed by a hearing and referendum. An elected board of directors governs the district; as an alternative, districts encompassing more than 175,000 acres may be governed by an elected board of directors and an elected council. The district may fix

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charges, levy ad valorem taxes, issue bonds, and, with voter approval, may issue general obligation bonds. The only district of this type reported in operation as of June 2002 was the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District.

The Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District, established in 1937, holds title to the Salt River Project properties operated by the Salt River Valley Water Users' Association, a private corporation organized in 1903 to operate the federally-constructed Salt River Project. The Salt River Valley Water Users' Association continues to operate the irrigation and drainage system of the district under contract. The district also operates electric power generation and transmission facilities.

### **Agriculture Preservation Districts**

Districts for the maintenance of land for agricultural purposes may be established by petition of property owners to the county board of supervisors, followed by a public hearing and establishment of the district by the county board if the petition is approved. A board elected by landowners, and appointed by cities and counties having land in the district governs each district. The district may collect fees, rentals, and charges for services.

### **Community Park Maintenance Districts Encompassing an Area of 160 Acres or More**

Districts for the maintenance of community parks may be established by petition to the county board of supervisors, followed by a public hearing. An elected board of supervisors governs each district. The districts may fix fees, rentals, and charges, levy property taxes, and borrow money. No districts of this type were reported in operation as of June, 2002.

Districts having fewer than 160 acres are governed by the county board of supervisors, and are not counted as separate governments. See "Subordinate Agencies Areas," below.

### **County Water Authorities**

These authorities may be formed in any county with a population of more than 90,000 and less than 120,000 for the purpose of acquiring, constructing and operating projects to transport, deliver and treat water. The board of directors consists of persons appointed by the town and city members. The authorities may collect dues and invest revenues in securities and deposits.

### **Drainage Districts**

Drainage districts are established upon petition of landowners to the county board of supervisors followed by a hearing and referendum, to provide for drainage of agricultural lands. An elected board governs the district. The

district may levy ad valorem taxes, impose special assessments, and issue bonds with voter approval. For irrigation and drainage districts, see "Irrigation Districts," below.

### **Electrical Districts**

Electrical districts for the purpose of obtaining power for irrigation water pumping are established by the county board of supervisors upon petition of landowners followed by a hearing and referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and charge rates. The districts may also issue bonds upon voter approval.

### **Fire Districts**

Districts to provide fire protection in unincorporated areas are formed by petition to the board of supervisors, followed by a public hearing. An elected district board, or an elected chief and secretary-treasurer, govern each district. The district may levy ad valorem taxes and may, upon voter approval, issue bonds.

### **Flood Protection Districts—1921 Law<sup>1</sup>**

These districts are created to provide for flood control on petition of landowners to the county board of supervisors, followed by a public hearing. An elected board of directors governs each district. The district may levy ad valorem taxes. Voter approval is required for the levy of assessments and the issuance of bonds.

County flood control districts established under the 1978 law, and that are governed by the county board of supervisors, are not counted as separate governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

### **Groundwater Replenishment Districts**

Groundwater replenishment districts are established by petition to the county board of supervisors, followed by a public hearing and resolution. The purpose of these districts is to replenish the supply of groundwater. An elected board of nine directors governs each district. The districts may collect fees and charges, levy ad valorem taxes, and, with voter approval, may issue general obligation and revenue bonds.

### **Health Service Districts**

These districts to provide health clinics and related facilities are established by petition to the county board of supervisors followed by public hearing. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may fix rentals and charges, levy ad valorem taxes, and, upon voter approval, may issue bonds.

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<sup>1</sup>Formerly referred to as flood control districts.

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## **Hospital Districts**

After petition by voters, public hearing, and approval by the Arizona Department of Health Services, hospital districts may be established by the county board of supervisors to provide hospital facilities. An elected board of directors administers each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes, collect rent, and, after voter approval, issue bonds.

## **Irrigation Districts**

Irrigation districts may be created to provide irrigation, domestic water supply, and electric power after petition of landowners to the county board of supervisors, followed by hearing and referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy a water tax, ad valorem taxes and special assessments, and may fix tolls and charges. Voter approval is required for bond issues. In addition, "irrigation and drainage districts," with both irrigation and drainage powers, may be established under this law.

## **Irrigation Water Delivery Districts**

These districts are established by the county board of supervisors to provide irrigation water after petition of landowners and a public hearing. An elected board of trustees governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes, fix rates and fees, and incur indebtedness.

## **Joint Powers Airport Authorities**

This authority was established by an act of the state legislature in order to use a previous military airbase for public purposes. A board of directors appointed by the governing bodies of the cities, towns and counties that are members of the authority governs this entity. The authority may impose fees and charges, collect an ad valorem tax provided by member governments, and may issue revenue and refunding bonds.

## **Pest Abatement Districts—1983 Law**

Districts to control public health pests may be established by petition to the county board of supervisors, after public hearing and voter approval. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes.

## **Pest Control Districts—1957 Law**

These districts are created by the county board of supervisors upon petition of crop owners or landowners, after hearing and referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy special assessments.

## **Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority**

This authority is established upon petition of the county board of supervisors to obtain, transport, deliver, and treat water. The board of county supervisors and each city

or town belonging to the authority may appoint one member. The authority may collect fees, and special assessments, and issue revenue bonds.

## **Power Districts**

Districts to generate and distribute electric power may be established by the county board of supervisors upon petition of landowners followed by a public hearing and referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and issue bonds upon voter approval.

## **Public Transportation Authorities**

Metropolitan public transit authorities may be established by a governing body of a municipality that has at least 51 percent of the population of the county. If no such municipality exists, the governing bodies of more than one municipality may act jointly together to form an authority provided that the total population is at least 51 percent of the county. If the population of the unincorporated areas in a county is greater than 51 percent, then the county board of supervisors may establish the authority. A board of 5 to 11 directors governs each authority. The initial board is selected by the governing bodies of all participating governments, but elections are held after the initial term. The authority may issue bonds, levy a metropolitan public transit authority property tax, fix fares and other charges, and receive gifts and contributions from other sources.

Regional public transportation authorities may be established in counties over 1,200,000 population (Maricopa) to provide transit service after voter approval of a transportation excise tax levy. The authority board of directors consists of one member appointed by each member city, plus one member appointed by the county. The authority may issue revenue bonds, fix fees and charges, accept grants and loans, and determine the amount of annual tax levies. In the 1997 Census, these authorities were referred to as metropolitan public transit authorities. The Metropolitan Public Transit Authority in the Phoenix area was formed under this law to coordinate transit service, but does not operate transit service itself.

Regional transportation authorities may be established in counties between 400,000 and 1,200,000 population (Pima). The authority board members are selected by member governments of the regional council of governments. The authority may fix fares and other charges, receive contributions from federal and local governments, receive the proceeds of the county transportation excise tax, and issue limited obligation and revenue bonds. In the 1997 Census, these authorities were referred to as metropolitan public transit authorities.

Intergovernmental public transportation authorities may be established in counties under 400,000 in population. A board of directors that consists of 5 to 9 people govern

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the authority. One director is selected from each participating county's board of supervisors, with the remainder of the board apportioned to the authority's participating municipalities and counties. The authority may collect charges for services and accept grants or gifts from other sources.

### **Sanitary Districts Encompassing an Area of 160 Acres or More**

Sanitary districts to provide sewerage facilities may be established by the county board of supervisors on petition of property owners followed by a public hearing. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may collect fees and rent, levy ad valorem taxes and, after voter approval, may issue bonds.

Districts having fewer than 160 acres are governed by the county board of supervisors, and are not counted as separate governments. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

### **Special Health Care Districts**

These districts were established to provide medical care and ambulance services. A board of five directors governs each authority. The special healthcare districts may collect rent, and, with voter approval, issue bonds and receive county collected ad valorem taxes.

### **Special Road Districts**

These districts, which build and maintain highways and bridges, are established by the county board of supervisors on petition of taxpayers and after referendum. An elected board of trustees governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and issue bonds upon voter approval.

### **Water Conservation Districts (multicounty)**

These districts, authorized by 1971 legislation, are established by the Director of Water Resources on petition of three or more counties, or on petition of voters, followed by a public hearing, to contract with the Secretary of the Interior for water from, and payment of costs of, the Central Arizona Project. An elected board of directors governs each district; the number of members is determined by county population. The district board may fix and collect charges, levy ad valorem taxes, and accept grants. The Central Arizona Water Conservation District was established under this law.

## **SUBORDINATE AGENCIES AND AREAS**

Shown below are various governmental designations in Arizona that have certain characteristics of governmental units, but that are classified in census statistics as subordinate agencies of the state or local governments and are

not counted as governments. Legal provisions for some of the larger of these are discussed below (see "Public School Systems," above, regarding educational agencies of this nature).

Among the subordinate agencies and areas listed below, some represent "special taxing areas" within the territory of an established government. This method of financing additional services in limited areas by property taxation, while also used by some municipal and township governments in a few states, is more widely utilized by county governments. In the listing below of authorized county-related agencies, a bullet (\*) appears for each entity of this kind—i.e., any that may individually serve a portion rather than all of a county and for which a tax may be levied against the assessed value of property in the area served.

**Arizona Power Authority (state).** This authority was created by a special act for the generation and transmission of electric power. A commission appointed by the governor governs the authority. The authority may fix rates, fees, and tolls, and may issue revenue bonds.

**Housing authorities (municipal and county).** Municipalities and counties may establish housing authorities by resolution of the governing body. A board of housing commissioners governs each authority; the members are appointed by the mayor of a city or town or by the county board of supervisors. Rentals for housing projects are fixed by the government creating the authority, and bonds for housing authority purposes are issued by the sponsoring government. The sponsoring governments may also accept federal grants.

**Industrial development authorities (county or municipal).** Authorities of this type are established to finance and lease airport, commercial, convention, electric, gas, health care, industrial, pollution control, port, residential, sewerage, solid waste disposal, and water supply facilities, on the approval of the county or municipal governing body. A board of directors, appointed by the county or municipal governing body, governs each authority. Industrial development authorities may make loans to mortgage lenders, charge rents, and issue revenue bonds.

### **Natural resource conservation districts (state).**

These districts may be established to carry on soil conservation programs on petition of landowners to the state land commissioner followed by a public hearing and referendum. A board of five supervisors governs each district; three are elected and two are appointed by the state land commissioner. District revenues are limited to voluntary donations, gifts, and contributions. These districts have no bondissuing powers.

**Slum clearance and redevelopment commissions (municipal).** General legislation authorizes cities and towns to establish these agencies. The commissioners are

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appointed by the mayor with the approval of the governing body. All administrative and fiscal powers are vested in the municipality; the commissioners perform only the specific duties assigned to them.

Other examples include:

### **State**

Arizona Exposition and State Fair Board (formerly the Arizona Coliseum and Exposition Center Board)  
Arizona Health Facilities Authority  
Arizona Housing Finance Authority  
Arizona International Development Authority  
Arizona Industrial Commission  
Arizona Space Commission  
Arizona Technology Development Authority<sup>2</sup>  
Arizona Water Protection Fund  
Arizona Wine Commission  
Commission on the Arizona Environment<sup>3</sup>  
Cotton pest control districts  
Greater Arizona Development Authority  
Radiation Regulatory Agency  
Registration districts (vital statistics)  
Tourism and Sports Authorities  
Wastewater Management Authority of Arizona<sup>4</sup>  
Water districts  
Water Infrastructure Finance Authority

### **County**

Air pollution control districts  
Airport authorities (counties)  
Antinoxious weed districts  
Community park maintenance districts with an area encompassing fewer than 160 acres  
County flood control districts  
County jail districts

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<sup>2</sup>Laws authorizing the Arizona Technology Development Authority were repealed in 1999.

<sup>3</sup>Laws authorizing the Commission on the Arizona Environment were repealed in 1997.

<sup>4</sup>Laws authorizing the Wastewater Management Authority of Arizona were repealed in 1998.

County library districts  
County sports authorities  
County television improvement districts  
Domestic water improvement districts  
\*Improvement districts (county)  
Maricopa County Stadium District  
“No fence” districts  
Pollution control corporations (county)  
Public health services districts  
Rural road improvement districts  
Sanitary districts encompassing an area of fewer than 160 acres  
Special flood control districts

### **Municipal<sup>5</sup>**

Airport authorities (municipal)  
Community facilities districts  
Improvement districts (municipal)  
Lake Havasu Sanitary District (governed by city council)  
Municipal property corporations  
Phoenix Civic Improvement Corporation<sup>6</sup>  
Phoenix Civic Plaza Building Corporation  
Pollution control corporations (municipal)  
Tucson Community Center Authority

### **Other**

The grazing districts in Arizona are areas for federal administration of grazing lands. They are not counted as separate governments.

### **Private corporations**

The Arizona Student Loan Finance Corporation is classified as a private corporation. It is not counted as a government.

Arizona laws also provide for various types of local areas for election purposes and administration of justice.

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<sup>5</sup>Municipal property corporations and the Tucson Community Center Authority are organized under the nonprofit corporation law, but upon payment of their debt, title to their property reverts to the creating government.

<sup>6</sup>This corporation is organized under the nonprofit corporation law, but its directors are appointed by the city council.