



November 2023 County Government 101

County government roles are on the 2024 ballot. The offices up for election in 2024 are four-year terms for County Supervisor, Sheriff, Recorder, Treasurer, Assessor, Attorney, Clerk of the Court, School Superintendent, and Superior Court Judge. Many of these seats go unopposed. In most cases, reasonable people serve in our counties, but in this era of political upheaval, it is more important than ever to pay attention, volunteer for a candidate, or even throw your own hat into the ring.

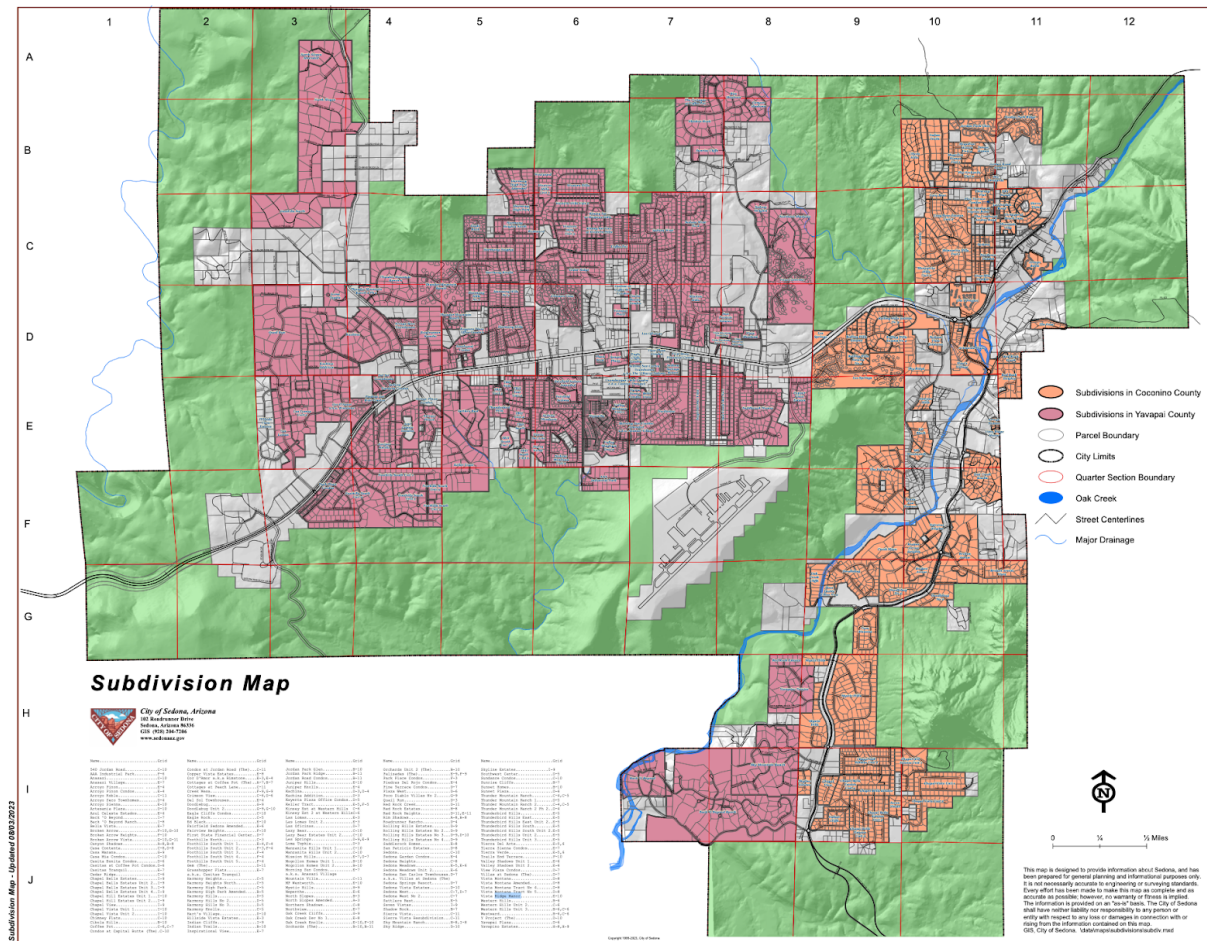
A little background history:

Yavapai County is one of the four original Arizona counties formed in September 1864, one year after the Arizona Territory was established. The County was originally 65,000 square miles and was called the “Mother of Counties” because Apache, Coconino, Gila, Maricopa and Navajo Counties were later formed from it. The Coconino County line was carved out of Yavapai in 1891 so Sedona’s early settlers could conduct county business in Flagstaff instead of Prescott. In 1959, the annexation of Sedona was discussed, but no action was taken due to the prohibitive cost.

How are county boundaries drawn through Sedona city limits?

This informational map below is available for viewing in a larger format [here](#).

The Village of Oak Creek (not shown) lies in an unincorporated part of Yavapai County and is not part of the City of Sedona.



County Supervisors:

Yavapai and Coconino counties have five supervisors. [Yavapai District 3](#), including most of Sedona, is represented by Democrat [Donna Michaels](#), who is seeking reelection in 2024. As of 11/03/23, there are [no challengers](#) for Dist. 3 Supervisor.

[Coconino District 3](#) has been represented by Democrat [Matt Ryan](#) for 27 years, and he has recently announced his [retirement](#) at the end of **this year**. The Coconino Board of Supervisors have accepted applications for a Democrat to fill his seat. The public will then have a chance to comment on the finalists (who have not yet been announced) before the board selects a replacement later this year to finish the rest of Ryan's term. For the 2024 General Election, Democrat Joseph Wright and three Republicans [have filed statements of interest](#) to run for this position.

About the County Supervisors

The County Board of Supervisors are elected to four-year terms and provide direction to the County Administrator and several other county departments. The board is like the City Council, except its jurisdiction covers all the county and unincorporated areas. Board members decide the county tax rate and approve the county budget. The County Board of Supervisors oversees health, road, parks, libraries, law enforcement, and other municipal services. The Board also has the power to fill vacancies in the county and legislative offices, other boards and commissions, pass resolutions and enact ordinances and regulations as authorized by state law. The Board has the authority to make decisions on a variety of issues, such as zoning changes, resolutions, and ordinances. Additionally, the board of supervisors has the power to remove and replace election precincts, appoint election inspectors and judges as well as canvass election returns, declare election results, and issue certificates.

Source: Arizona Clean Elections Commission

County Sheriff:

The Yavapai County Sheriff, Republican [David Rhodes](#), is seeking re-election. He is being challenged by two Republicans and one Independent [who have filed](#) statements of interest for the 2024 election.

The Coconino County Sheriff is Democrat [Jim Driscoll](#), who has announced he is [retiring](#) at the end of his term. Democrat Bret Axlund and one Republican [have filed](#) statements of interest in running for this position.

About the County Sheriff

The County Sheriff must reside in the county that they are elected in and they cannot practice law while serving as Sheriff. The County Sheriff is elected to office for a term of four years. County Sheriff's in Arizona has the power to enforce the law in unincorporated areas of the county, serve superior court orders and warrants all over the county, collect delinquent taxes, conduct and/or coordinate search and rescue missions in the county and oversee the county jail and care of prisoners. The sheriff also has legal authority over all county elected offices. The sheriff can authorize offices in any city or town outside the county when it is presumed to be in the public's best interest. The office of the County Sheriff can call for the assistance of as many citizens of the county as necessary to fulfill their duties and obligations. The sheriff can also form a posse if he or she believes it is necessary.

Source: Arizona Clean Elections Commission

County Recorder:

The Yavapai County Recorder is Republican [Michelle Burchill](#), who was appointed by the Yavapai County Supervisors in 2022 and is seeking re-election. She replaced longtime Recorder Leslie Hoffman, a Republican who [resigned in 2022](#) after a year and a half of threats and criticism from supporters of former President Donald Trump. The same reason prompted Yavapai Election Director Lynn Constable to resign along with Hoffman.

The Coconino County Recorder is Democrat [Patty Hansen](#), who has not filed a statement of interest for re-election. Two Democrats (Bernadine Lewis & Aubrey Sonderegger) and one Republican ([former State Rep. Bob Thorpe](#)) [have filed](#) statements of interest to run for Recorder in 2024.

About the County Recorder

The County Recorder keeps public records and is responsible for voter registration and early voting. The County Recorder maintains public records so the public can access public records and government information as needed for personal and/or business purposes. For elections, the County Recorder's Office is in charge of processing and maintaining voter registration records. Additionally, the County Recorder's Office administers early voting, including mailing out early ballots and providing on-site early voting locations. The County Recorder's Office also verifies voter signatures on early ballot affidavits and petitions (when required by law). The term is for four years.

Source: Arizona Clean Elections Commission

County Treasurer:

The Yavapai County Treasurer is Republican [Chip Davis](#). To date, [no potential candidates](#) have filed statements of interest to run for this seat.

The Coconino County Treasurer is Democrat [Sarah Benatar](#), who is [seeking re-election](#) in 2024.

About the County Treasurer

The County Treasurer is in charge of disbursing money from the treasury, investing surplus funds, and pursuing those who have not paid their county taxes. The County Treasurer holds the role of the tax collector and the treasurer of all schools and special districts within the county. He or she collects all real and personal property taxes for the state, county, and incorporated cities and towns, school and special districts, and distributes the tax revenue to multiple jurisdictions. The County Treasurer's office may perform duties as registrar, paying and transfer agent for bond issues of the county, school, and special districts. The County Treasurer's office receives all revenues, manages credit accounts, compensates school and county warrants, and invests county and school funds with the guidance of the Board of Supervisors acting as the Board of Deposits.

Source: Arizona Clean Elections Commission

County Assessor:

The Yavapai County Assessor is Republican [Judd W. Simmons](#), who is seeking re-election and has no challengers.

The Coconino County Assessor is Democrat [Amando Ruiz](#), who is seeking re-election, and also has no challengers.

About the County Assesor

County assessors are elected to office for a term of four years. The county assessor is accountable for identifying, mapping, and assessing all properties in their counties for property tax and other functions.

Source: Arizona Clean Elections Commission

County Attorney:

The Yavapai County Attorney is Republican [Dennis McGrane](#), appointed in 2022, who is seeking re-election.

The Coconino County Attorney is Democrat [William Ping](#), who has [announced](#) he is not seeking re-election. One Democratic candidate, Gary Pearlmutter, has [filed](#) a statement of interest in running for Coconino Attorney.

About the County Attorney

The County Attorney is the public prosecutor of the county and serves a four-year term. His or her duties include: Representing the superior and other courts in the county in prosecutions for public offenses, draw up indictments, defend the county in legal proceedings, offer written opinions to county officers on issues regarding duties of the office, Act as the legal counsel to the board of supervisors, act as an attorney for school districts, and for the community college districts. Arizona's Revised Statutes state: "No person shall be eligible for the Office of County Attorney unless he is an attorney at law, licensed and in good standing in this state."

Source: Arizona Clean Elections Commission

County Clerk of the Court:

The Yavapai County Clerk of the Superior Courts is Republican [Donna McQuality](#).
The Coconino County Clerk of the Superior Court is Democrat [Valerie Wyatt](#).
At this time, neither candidate has filed a statement of interest for the 2024 election.

About the County Clerk of the Courts

The County Clerk of the Courts is an elected position and he or she serves a four year term. The county clerk oversees various administrative duties and assists the public in navigating the court system without offering legal advice. The County Clerk of the courts maintains records of court cases, grants marriage licenses, implements programs to help with child support enforcement, spousal maintenance, and/or parenting time in child support cases.

Source: Arizona Clean Elections Commission

County School Superintendent:

Republican [Tim Carter](#) is the longtime Yavapai County Schools Superintendent, who will [retire](#) at the end of 2024. Two Republicans have [filed](#) statements of interest.

The Coconino County School Superintendent is Democrat [Cheryl Mango-Paget](#), who is running for re-election. As of 11/2/23, there were no challengers.

About the County School Superintendent

The County school superintendent has the responsibility to record all official acts and issue reports, laws, circulars, forms, and instructions for school officers. The Superintendent has the authority to appoint board members of school districts to fill vacancies and collaborate with the board of supervisors to administer all school elections. In coordination with the department of education and other state departments, The county superintendent provides assistance to school districts, private and charter schools, county free library districts, city and town libraries, nonprofit and public libraries, tribal libraries, and tribal schools on the use of student data, staff development, curriculum alignment, and technology to improve student achievement and school progress goals.

Source: Arizona Clean Elections Commission

Superior Court Judge

Yavapai County Division 4 Judge, the [Honorable Krista M. Carman](#) is running for re-election in a nonpartisan election. Running for re-election in Division 7 is the

[Honorable Michael R. Bluff](#) and for Division 8 is the [Honorable Debra R. Phelan](#). Re-elected in 2022, Division 5 Judge the Honorable Celé Hancock has announced her resignation, effective January 2, 2024 following her [arrest and conviction for DUI](#). Governor Katie Hobbs is responsible for appointing a replacement to fill the remaining three years left of the Division 5 term.

About the Superior Court Judge

Every county in Arizona has at least one Superior Court Judge. In the counties that have more than one Superior Court judge because of a large population, the county is divided into divisions where the Superior Court holds authority over that division. The Superior Court acts as the court of appeals for municipal and justice courts. In addition to appeals from lower courts, the Superior Court generally rules on matters including but not limited to: property crimes, wills, naturalizations, and divorces. The Superior Court also has original jurisdiction where another court is not designated authority. Superior Court judges serve four-year terms. There are now more than 100 Arizona Superior Court judges, most of them are in Maricopa and Pima counties. Currently, Superior Court judges are elected in nonpartisan elections in every county except Coconino, Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal.

Source: Arizona Clean Elections Commission

2024 Election Dates:

- March 19, 2024 Presidential Preference Election
- August 6, 2024 Primary Election
- November 5, 2024 General Election

Let's Hear from Local Officials

DORR Educational Breakfast

In Person and at Home

Friday, Nov 17, 2023, 9:30am

The role of local elected officials forms the backbone of governance at the community level. These officials are a bridge between the community and higher levels of

government. Their decisions directly affect the quality of life for residents as they're accountable for addressing the unique needs and challenges of their constituents. Join DORR in hearing what is encompassed in the jobs they perform and exploring the challenges they face in serving their communities. This presentation will highlight the importance of voting from the top to the bottom of the ballot as we reflect on the importance of local governance.

[Details and guest bios here.](#)

Come Join Us In Person or On Zoom

To help our members keep informed about important issues, we are now running our monthly breakfast meetings both in person AND Zoom.

9:30 am on Friday, Nov 17, 2023

The Sedona Community Center
2615 Melody Lane in West Sedona
Coffee, tea and light refreshments

\$10 donation per person

ZOOM Details

Topic: DORR Breakfast

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89569635520?pwd=L00xbGRUZEVNa294Zm4yNjFMeGQ3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 895 6963 5520

Passcode: 288900

Dial by your location

+1 669 444 9171 US

