

Arizona State Government

Arizona, like our country, has a government that makes rules and decisions for the state. Let's learn about how it works!

The US Constitution gives the federal government in Washington D.C. some jobs but leaves most others to the states. For example, the US government is responsible for maintaining an Army and Navy and for making our coins, but the Arizona government is responsible for schools and public safety.

State Constitution

This is the most important list of rules for the government of the state of Arizona. It assigns jobs to different parts of state government and sets the rules they must follow. For example, the state Constitution sets some of the basic rules for the school system, which is one of the most important jobs of the state government.

Governor

The state of Arizona has one governor. The governor's primary job is to ensure the state runs smoothly by ensuring the laws are followed and enforced. The governor also assists the legislature in deciding on new laws, how much citizens will have to pay in taxes, and how to spend the money raised by state taxes.

State Legislature

This is like a big group of people who meet to make laws for Arizona, chosen from smaller areas of Arizona called districts. The legislature has two parts:

- Senate: This is where senators meet after the districts' voters choose them.
- House of Representatives: This is where representatives meet after the districts' voters also choose them.

State Courts

If there is a disagreement about the laws, the courts in Arizona help decide who is right. Judges listen to both sides and make decisions based on the Constitution and laws.

State Laws

Arizona has laws everyone must follow, like our classroom rules. The lawmakers (senators and representatives) decide on these laws to keep people safe and happy. These laws must follow both the US Constitution and the Arizona Constitution. While choosing lawmakers is how citizens usually help make laws, Arizona also has other ways to let citizens help make the rules.

State Taxes

The state government costs money to run, and thus, citizens must provide a certain amount of their money to the state government, which is called taxes. Within limits set by the Constitution, the legislature decides how much money citizens will have to pay in taxes and what that money will be spent on.

State Symbols

Arizona has special symbols representing the state, like the saguaro cactus and the Grand Canyon. These symbols show what Arizona is proud of.

- The 5Cs (copper, cattle, cotton, citrus, climate)

Copper: Copper mines have long produced the orange metal used to make pennies, roofs, electrical wiring, and machines.

Cattle: Arizona's wide open spaces have been places where ranchers and dairy farmers could raise cattle for hamburgers, milk, and leather.

Cotton: Cotton, used to make much of our clothing, grows well in Arizona when canals can be built to bring water to the fields.

Citrus: Arizona's hot weather has long been an excellent place to grow oranges, lemons, grapefruit, and other citrus.

Climate: Arizona's dry and hot climate has long attracted tourists who want to escape cold winters elsewhere.

State Flag

Arizona's flag represents the state. It includes red and yellow rays that represent the 13 original colonies and the setting sun in the west. These colors are based on the Spanish flag carried by Coronado. The bottom half of the flag is the same blue color as the U.S. flag. The star is copper because Arizona produces the most copper in America!



State Capital

Phoenix is the capital city of Arizona. It's where the state government meets and works to make decisions for the whole state.



Voting

People in Arizona get to vote for leaders like the governor, senators, and representatives. This helps decide who will make the laws and run the state government. In Arizona, citizens can also sometimes vote directly on whether they like or dislike a proposed law. Citizens can also attend meetings of state or local governments to say what they think about laws before they get made.

Tribal Governments

Arizona's tribal governments are also elected by voters, such as members of the Indian communities they serve. These governments set most of the rules for the reservations within Arizona, operate schools, provide tribal police, and offer other services within the reservation's borders.