

# Arizona Voter Roll Report 2024

## Top Takeaways

- [Every county in Arizona continually removes ineligible voter records](#)
- [In Arizona, an inaccurate registration rarely leads to a fraudulent vote cast](#)
- [Arizona's registration process includes verification of citizenship status](#)
- [Arizona can continue to improve its voter registration system](#)

## Background

In Arizona, robust safeguards ensure that only eligible voters cast ballots. Among other things, election officials conduct regular list maintenance to remove voters who have become ineligible (for example, by moving or dying). They also verify a voter's federal ID and citizenship before they can register to vote. **As in the rest of the country, voter fraud in Arizona is extremely rare.**

Claims about [ineligible voters](#) have been widespread in Arizona since 2020, when [unsubstantiated](#) arguments began circulating that the 2020 election in the state was stolen. Many of these claims relate to noncitizens voting, people casting ballots in the name of deceased voters, or people voting multiple times. Because Arizona voters deserve to feel confident in their election system, this document takes a closer look at those claims.

**So how do we know that Arizona maintains its voter rolls?** A first step is to monitor the public voter file and analyze changes to the data over time, which is exactly what VoteShield has been doing since 2018. In order to determine the health of the voter registration list, each month we request a copy of every voter registration record in the state. This information is **publicly available** per law, and the public version of the file does not include sensitive personal information such as driver's license or social security numbers.<sup>1</sup>

Every public voter record in Arizona that has been added, removed, or modified since 2018 has been recorded and analyzed by our systems. Our software has tracked over 62 million granular field changes across the state's 15 counties. We can flag groups of changes that might indicate violations of state or federal law, cyber-attacks, or other issues. We operate fully independently and objectively, and share our findings directly with state and local election officials to resolve any issues.

As a result of this continuous monitoring, we can clearly observe each county across the state regularly registering, updating, inactivating, and removing voter records each month. Zooming out to the state level, in the figure below we observe spikes of removals and inactivations. These periodic upticks indicate regular, ongoing maintenance, largely in odd-numbered years following federal election cycles.

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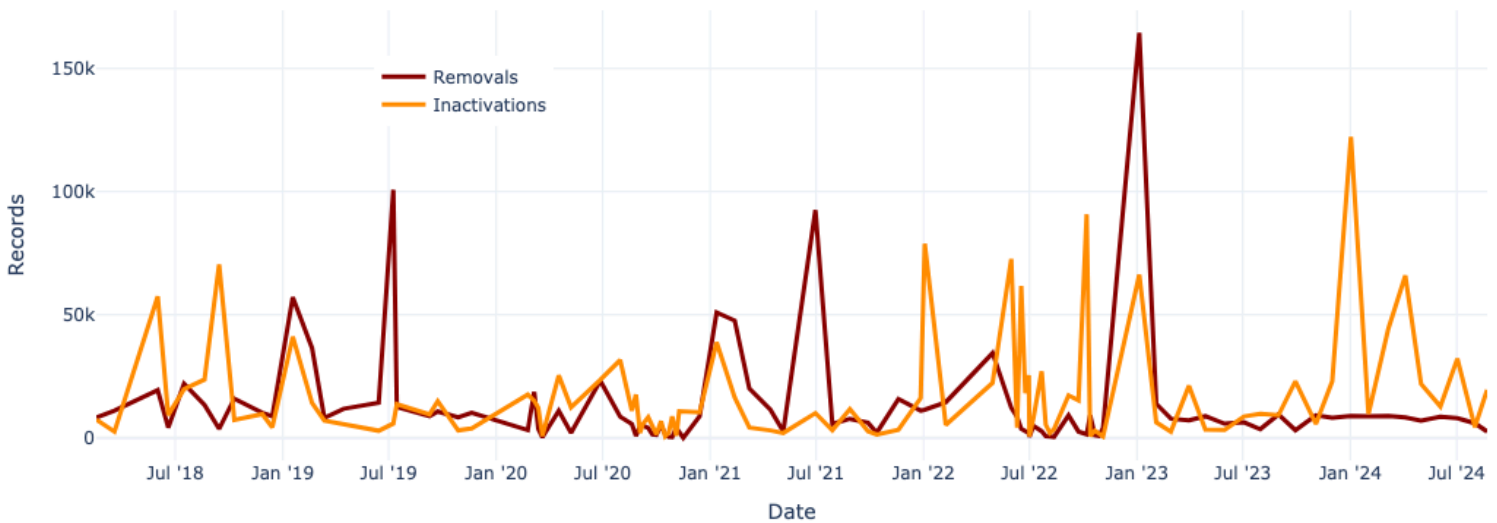
<sup>1</sup> [Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-168](#)

## Analysis

### Every county in Arizona continually removes ineligible voter records

Since 2020, Arizona has inactivated or removed more than 25% of voter records. State law requires counties to conduct annual voter registration list maintenance that is compliant with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).<sup>2</sup> This includes systematically identifying and inactivating the records of registered electors suspected of having changed addresses. It also includes removing the records of registered electors upon the elector's request, upon the death of the elector, upon confirmation that the elector moved out of the county, or after the elector's record has been inactive for two consecutive federal general elections.

Voter Registration Record Removals & Inactivations in Arizona, 2018-2024 (VoteShield)



**Critically, there is no “correct” amount of list maintenance** we can expect from a given state each year, since state populations are constantly changing in varied ways. Rather, there is a clearly stated process we can expect states to follow, and our data suggests that Arizona has done so. Our analysis of Arizona's voter file data since the start of 2020 shows that, consistent with requirements, every county in Arizona has both inactivated and removed voters at least once every calendar year. Between the last Presidential Election on November 3, 2020 and August 22, 2024:

- Approximately **1 million unique active records have been inactivated** (21% of all unique active records in the voter file during this period).
- Approximately **724 thousand unique records have been removed** (11% of all unique records in the voter file during this period).
- In total, approximately **1.7 million unique voter records have been removed or inactivated** (26% of all unique records during this period).

<sup>2</sup> [Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-165](#), [Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-166](#)

Moreover, it appears that counties are generally routinely and systematically removing records that have been inactive for two federal general election cycles. In order to better understand these dynamics, we identified records in our data that appeared to have been inactive for two consecutive federal general elections as “likely eligible for removal”<sup>3</sup> and evaluated whether those records were removed from the voter file in the leadup to the next general election.

- Following the 2022 general election, 83% of the records that we identified as “likely eligible for removal” have been removed.

These removals have been consistent across counties; over both periods, every county except La Paz removed the majority of records that we identified as likely eligible for removal.

## **In Arizona, an inaccurate registration rarely leads to a fraudulent vote cast**

In Arizona, voter fraud is exceptionally rare, and all known cases have been investigated.

In the 2020 general election more than 3.4 million Arizonans voted.<sup>4</sup> Of those ballots cast, only three specific allegations of voter fraud were reported.<sup>5</sup> This makes the effective rate of fraud literally less than one in a million.

In two of these cases, voters (separately) attempted to cast a ballot on behalf of a deceased relative. In both of these cases, the voter had died approximately one month prior to election day when mail ballots had already been sent to their addresses. The ballots were subsequently signed and returned by each voter’s daughter, both of whom were subsequently sentenced to probation and fined.<sup>6</sup> Even in this extreme case when a voter passed away so close to the election as to prevent their registration from being canceled in time, authorities were able to identify the issue and take appropriate action.

In the third case, an individual filled out a voter registration form falsely claiming that he had not been convicted of a felony, or that his rights had been restored. He subsequently cast a ballot in the general election which was later identified by the Arizona Attorney General’s Office Election Integrity Unit.<sup>7</sup> No other cases of ineligible voters casting ballots in the election were identified, including any instances of noncitizens voting.

In addition to the maintenance practices described above, several processes keep ineligible voters from registering to vote and casting a ballot:

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<sup>3</sup> State and county election officials have the most accurate information about eligibility for removal from the voter rolls. It is highly likely that some of the records that we identified as “likely” eligible for removal were not actually eligible for removal.

<sup>4</sup> [https://apps.azsos.gov/election/2020/2020\\_general\\_state\\_convass.pdf](https://apps.azsos.gov/election/2020/2020_general_state_convass.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud/search?state=AZ>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/woman-who-cast-deceased-mothers-ballot-2020-election-sentenced>, <https://www.12news.com/article/news/local/arizona/arizona-woman-krista-michelle-connor-avoids-jail-for-voting-dead-moms-ballot/75-a5fec210-2055-4058-8a6d-9de1de7a31c9>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/pima-county-man-sentenced-prison-illegally-voting-2020-election>

- Registration: Arizona residents can register to vote in person, online, or via mail. In person and mail registrations require a confirmation of address, or an affirmation that the voter does not have an address, and online registration requires a state driver's license or ID.<sup>8</sup>
- In-Person Voting: Voters must provide one form of photo identification or two forms of non-photo identification when they vote in person. If a voter cannot provide proof of identity, they will be issued a provisional ballot – which will only be counted if the voter can provide proof of identity to the County Recorder by the 5th day following the election.<sup>9</sup>
- Mail Voting: Counties can require that a voter provide an identification number, such as a driver's license number or partial Social Security number, in order to request a mail ballot.<sup>10</sup>

## Arizona's registration process includes verification of citizenship status

**Cross-partisan election experts concur that "noncitizens voting in federal elections are virtually nonexistent."**<sup>11</sup> Despite the lack of any evidence that noncitizen voting could impact elections, Arizona has imposed additional burdens on registration that risk disenfranchising voters who do not have easy access to documents that prove their citizenship.

Before registering a new voter, election officials take steps to verify the voter's citizenship. Depending on whether they use a federal or state voter registration form, new Arizona voters must either provide proof of U.S. citizenship or sign an attestation that they are a U.S. citizen in order to register to vote, depending on whether the voter applies using a state voter registration form or a federal voter registration form. If the applicant uses the federal form without providing documentary proof of citizenship but signs the attestation of citizenship, they will be registered to vote in federal elections per the National Voter Registration act but cannot vote in state elections.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, when an applicant uses the federal voter registration form, election officials look for proof of the applicant's U.S. citizenship in government records such as from the Motor Vehicle Division. If the officials find proof of citizenship, the applicant will become registered for both state and federal elections. If proof of non-citizenship is found, their application will be rejected and they will be unable to register to vote for any election. If the voter applicant uses the state form and does not provide proof of citizenship, their application will be rejected and they will be unable to register to vote for any election.

In addition, there are criminal penalties, both for potential voters who knowingly submit false information on their applications and for government officials who knowingly process registration applications with unverified eligibility.

<sup>8</sup> <https://azsos.gov/elections/voters/registering-vote>

<sup>9</sup> <https://azsos.gov/elections/voters/voting-elections/election-day-voting>

<sup>10</sup> <https://tracker.votingrightslab.org/states/arizona#requesting-mail-ballots>

<sup>11</sup> <https://electiontaskforce.org/rebutting-allegations-of-widespread-voter-fraud-by-noncitizens/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://azsos.gov/elections/about-elections/elections-procedures/vr-procedures>

## Recommendations

### Arizona can continue to improve its voter registration system

Given its size and complexity, it is likely that some duplicate records in the Arizona voter database do exist. The definition of a duplicate is clear: one or more extra records for the same real voter.

But identifying true duplicates requires access to sensitive personal information such as social security or drivers' license numbers, which are removed from the public voter file. **Claims from outside groups that purport to identify specific examples of duplicate registrations should be viewed with caution.** Only the Secretary of State's office, and its legally designated agents such as the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), can access sensitive personal data in the voter file.<sup>13</sup>

There are many causes of duplicate records. For example, because a voter moved to a new county within the state, and registered to vote there without canceling their prior registration (a step that is not legally required). These duplicates can confuse the public and potentially undermine public confidence in elections, even though duplicate registrations are not inherently fraudulent, or even unlawful.

Even with sensitive personal information available to election officials and their agents, identifying duplicate records can be challenging. Election officials must act with extreme caution when removing duplicates, because removing a false duplicate risks disenfranchising a lawful voter. Nonetheless, as was the case in the examples of voter fraud above, any individual who used a duplicate registration to vote more than once would be thoroughly investigated and held accountable.

Currently, Arizona operates a hybrid voter database where some functions are fulfilled at the county level and others by the state.<sup>14</sup> Upgrading the Arizona Voter Information Database (AVID) voter database to a top-down system, hosted by the state, would simplify the process of identifying duplicate records across counties. It would also reduce the likelihood of duplicate records being created in the first place, by simplifying the process for voters who move to a new county. Migrating a voter database, especially in a state as large as Arizona, is a very complicated and expensive project.<sup>15</sup> While completely eliminating duplicates is likely impossible, the benefits offered by a centrally managed, top-down database is worth consideration.

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<sup>13</sup> The data ERIC receives is cryptographically hashed before being transmitted, so it cannot compromise the privacy of Arizona voters. ERIC uses the hashed data and advanced matching software to help Arizona election officials identify voters who may have duplicate registrations in other states, for example if they have recently moved. <https://ericstates.org/security/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://azsos.gov/elections/about-elections/elections-procedures/vr-procedures>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gpb.org/news/2023/03/13/state-unveils-new-voter-information-system>

## **About VoteShield**

[VoteShield](#), a project of [Protect Democracy](#), is a software platform that analyzes publicly available voter databases and tracks changes over time. Our mission is to ensure that US voter rolls are secure, accurate, and complete. We can identify unexpected or improper changes, and we work collaboratively with election officials to resolve potential issues in their voter databases before they might adversely affect an upcoming election.