

# Arizona Ballot Proofing

## WHAT IS BALLOT PROOFING AND WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

The process of producing a ballot is complex. County election officials do their best to make sure they have listed every contest and every candidate correctly. But mistakes happen. Ballot proofing helps catch mistakes before official ballots are printed. And that's important because mistakes caught after ballots are printed often cannot be fixed. Ballot proofing is therefore one of many tools to ensure that election results accurately reflect voter intent.

So who does this proofing? County officials will proof each ballot before sending it to the printer, but you have a role to play too. The more eyes on the near-final version of the ballot, the better. You should feel free to invite staff, voter protection volunteers, and others to participate.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PROOF A BALLOT?

Not long. It will take one person a few minutes per ballot to perform a complete review. Because mistakes are usually noticed by a fresh set of eyes, consider bringing in a second person to review.

## HOW DO WE PARTICIPATE IN THE PROOFING PROCESS?

In Arizona, every candidate has a right to participate in the proofing process. But you must complete your proofing quickly. Each County Board of Supervisors will send each candidate and each county party chair a ballot proof at least 45 days before election.<sup>1</sup> County chairs and candidates have five days to identify any errors. These near-final ballots are usually received via email.

Each county handles the proofing process differently and so you should reach out to any target counties now to confirm their process, including the date you should expect to receive a ballot to review.

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1 [A.R.S. § 16-461](#); [A.R.S. § 16-245\(C\)](#); [2019 Election Procedures Manual](#).

## WHEN DOES THE PROCESS START?

By law, ballots are sent to candidates and party chairs at least 45 days before the election. The state recommends that ballot proofs be sent 60 days before the election. So you should be looking for ballot proofs from each county **between September 4 and September 19, 2020.** Reach out to any relevant counties now to ask them to confirm when they will be sending you a ballot. And if you haven't heard from a county by September 19, be sure to contact them.

## HOW SHOULD WE REPORT ERRORS OR OMISSIONS?

Notify the county immediately, and no later than five days after receipt of the ballot proof, of any errors or omissions. Candidates are encouraged to email suggested changes to the counties and to follow up each email with a phone call.

## OTHER THAN ITEMS ON THE PROOFING CHECKLIST, IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC TO ARIZONA THAT WE SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR?

In Arizona, the offices should appear in the following order: President, U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, State Senator, State Rep., and other county and local offices.<sup>2</sup> Candidates should be listed in order of the number of votes received by the gubernatorial candidate of the same party in the preceding election in that same county.<sup>3</sup> This means that, if in the last election the Republican candidate for Governor in your county received more votes, the Republican candidates for the offices listed on the 2020 ballot (President, Senate, House, etc.) will appear first. Note: Litigation regarding this ballot order provision is ongoing<sup>4</sup> and the ballot order rules may change prior to the 2020 general election.

[Here](#) is a sample ballot from 2016.

## CONNECT WITH US!

Have questions? Need help?

Please reach out to us at:

[ballotquestions@digidems.com](mailto:ballotquestions@digidems.com)

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2 [A.R.S. § 16-502\(C\)](#)

3 [A.R.S. § 16-502\(E\)](#)

4 *See Mecinas v. Hobbs*, No. 2:19-cv-05547-DJH (D. Ariz.).