



All Counties Meet Benchmarks For Reopening

Certain businesses to reopen in all counties

The Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) announced that all 15 counties met benchmarks for safely reopening certain businesses. Businesses such as indoor gyms and fitness centers, bars serving food, and movie theaters are now allowed to reopen.

Graham County advanced to the moderate transmission stage of COVID-19, joining all other Arizona counties except Greenlee County, which remains in the minimal transmission stage. AZDHS Director Christ wrote “the choices Arizonans have made in the interest of public health have gotten us to this milestone.” She continued “COVID-19 remains in our communities, so it’s essential that everyone continue masking up, maintaining physical distance, washing our hands thoroughly and often, and taking other steps to reduce the spread.”

The state’s plan for safely reopening businesses requires that all three benchmarks on the AZDHS business dashboard be met for 14 days (allowing for a 12-day reporting delay) to move between transmission phases. The benchmarks are: cases per 100,000 residents, percent positivity, and COVID-like illness as a percentage of overall hospitalizations. To reopen, businesses must submit an online attestation that they are in compliance with COVID-19 guidelines. The businesses must post the attestation form where customers can see it.

To read the statement by AZDHS click [here](#).

To review AZDHS business benchmarks by county, click [here](#).

For more information on how to submit an online attestation form, click [here](#).

AZDHS issues COVID-19 update

Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) announced that for the fourteenth consecutive day, new daily COVID-19 cases remain below 1000. Since implementing a series of precautions in response to the June outbreak, the state has been effective in combating the virus. While July saw an average increase of 3,075 new cases a day, Arizona averaged 877 new cases a day in August and just 552 new cases a day in September.

AZDHS figures show that 82% of inpatient beds and 80% of ICU beds were in use, which includes people being treated for COVID-19 and other patients. COVID-19 patients were using 8% of all inpatient beds and 8% of ICU beds. Overall, 23% of ventilators were in use. The state's COVID-19 rate of spread (Rt) is now above 1 at 1.04 (the average number of people a COVID-positive individual will infect). Of known test results from last week, AZDHS reported that 4% have come back positive. A positivity rate of 5% or less is considered a good indicator that the spread is being controlled.

For more information on free COVID-19 testing sites click [here](#).

Arizona to receive rapid COVID-19 test

Governor Ducey announced that the state will receive 2.19 million Abbott rapid point-of-care tests from the federal government.

Developed by Abbott and administered by nasal swab, the rapid point-of-care test is a lateral flow test that detects the presence of protein antigens from SARS-CoV-2 in individuals suspected of COVID-19 and can produce results within 15 minutes. Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) is working with county health departments to prioritize these tests for K-12 schools and facilities like nursing homes where vulnerable individuals live. Shipments are expected to begin in the next seven to ten days.

By comparison, the total number of diagnostic tests completed in Arizona since the pandemic began includes more than 1.4 million diagnostic tests and more than 290,000 serology tests.

United States Supreme Court to hear Arizona case

The United States Supreme Court announced that it will review an Arizona elections law passed in 2016 that bars anyone but a family member or caregiver from returning another person's early ballot. [HB2023](#) (link here) restricted the practice of ballot harvesting in the state, unless the person collecting the ballot is a family member, a person living in the same household, or a caregiver.

After the law was signed groups including the Democratic National Committee and Arizona Democratic Party filed suit in federal district court

alleging that the law targeted minority voters, who were more likely to use ballot-harvesting services than white voters because of distance to ballot drop-off centers, distance to a post office and unreliability of mail service in low-income or minority communities. The suit also alleged that Arizona's practice of discarding ballots cast by voters in the wrong precinct violated the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The case moved quickly through the courts in 2016, with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling a week before the presidential election that the ballot-harvesting ban should be put on hold. But the U.S. Supreme Court lifted that injunction just three days before Election Day, allowing the laws to take effect. The case went back to federal district court, which upheld both laws in 2018. That decision was affirmed by a divided three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit.

In January 2020, the full 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 7-4 that both laws violated the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The court found that both laws had a lopsided impact on Latino, Native American and African American voters, which the act was designed to shield from discrimination. Appeals Court Judge William A. Fletcher wrote for the divided court that Arizona's practice of discarding ballots cast in the wrong precinct and criminalizing the collection of another person's ballot "have a discriminatory impact on American Indian, Hispanic and African American voters in Arizona" in violation of the Voting Rights Act. The ruling also said the ban on what Republicans have called ballot harvesting was enacted with "discriminatory intent."

In response to the decision, Attorney General Mark Brnovich appealed to the United States Supreme Court. Brnovich wrote "Arizonans are best suited to decide which safeguards are needed for our elections, not the Ninth Circuit. This lawsuit has broad implications for the rest of the country, and we are optimistic the Supreme Court will take this case and provide clarity for the rule of law."

The Supreme Court agreed to hear Brnovich's appeal and oral argument will occur this week. The law itself remains in effect.

To review the decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, click [here](#).

To read the United States Supreme Court order, click [here](#).

As more information becomes available, we will update you.

**October is Domestic Violence
Awareness Month**



Arizona Update on the Issues



[Click here to find the AGA analysis of the 2020 House races](#)

[Click here to find the AGA analysis of the 2020 Senate races](#)

Legislators' Birthdays



Happy Birthday
Speaker Rusty Bowers (R)
Tuesday, Oct. 20th

Representing LD25, Representative Bowers is the current Speaker of the House. A Mesa native, Bowers was first elected to the House in 1993 and served two terms as a state Senator until 2001. He returned to the Legislature in 2015. Bowers is a renowned artist in many mediums including, pencil, watercolors, and oils; he is also a remarkable sculptor of wood, clay, bronze and other materials. Many of his drawing, paintings, and sculptures are on display throughout the



Happy Birthday
Rep. Regina Cobb (R)
Friday, October 30th

Representing LD6, Representative Cobb is Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. Born in San Diego, Cobb moved to Kingman in 1993 after she received her D.D.S. from Case Western Reserve University. A practicing dentist, Cobb was first elected to the House in 2015 and is running unopposed in the upcoming general election. In addition to her Chairmanship, Cobb is a member of the House Education and Ways and Means committees. This session, her top legislative

United States. To add on to his already impressive resume, Bowers is an accomplished instrumentalist and singer. To wish Speaker Bowers happy birthday: rbowers@azleg.gov

priority was HB2668 which was signed into law by the Governor. This legislation brings more resources into Arizona's healthcare system by increasing Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) provider rates for hospitals, doctors and more. To wish Representative Cobb happy birthday: rcobb@azleg.gov

Arizona Governmental Affairs

Address:

99 E. Virginia Avenue, #180
Phoenix, AZ 85004
602.296.5966

[E-mail AZ Governmental](#)