

# THE GOOD ELECTIONS PROJECT

*Insights into what Arizonans value  
most when it comes to elections*







## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# What Arizonans Say Makes a Good Election

## What This Report Is About

Elections are essential to a healthy democracy. The **Good Elections Project** was created to explore a vital question often overlooked in election debates: **What defines a successful election in the eyes of Arizonans?**

Public discussions about elections can become narrowly focused—on how quickly ballots are counted, individual procedures, or isolated technical issues. These debates often miss the bigger picture.

The **Good Elections Project** asks a different set of questions of Arizonans: **What should a good election deliver, regardless of party, candidate, or outcome? And what is most important?**

To answer these questions, CFA conducted a statewide, nonpartisan public opinion survey to understand what Arizonans value in elections, how much they trust our systems today, and what they want to see in 2026 and beyond.

This report lifts up the voices of Arizonans and offers a principle-driven roadmap that election officials, policymakers, media, and community leaders can use to strengthen understanding and trust in Arizona's elections.

Across political, generational, and geographic lines, a clear picture emerges:

- Fair & secure elections matter and people still believe their vote counts.
- Arizonans trust the people who run elections.
- Arizonans agree on what a “good election” should deliver.
- People support practical steps to keep election systems strong and point to opportunities to enhance the voter experience.
- Misinformation is a concern to nearly everyone.

Taken together, the findings show that Arizonans are not divided about whether elections matter or what elections should deliver. They already share strong expectations and want to ensure the design of our system aligns with shared principles.





## Why CFA Conducted This Survey

For more than two decades, CFA has conducted independent public opinion research to center and elevate the voices of Arizonans. CFA shares these findings broadly to inform discussion, strengthen public understanding, and support decision-making grounded in shared public values.

The Good Elections Project continues that commitment. Elections are one of the most powerful ways in which the priorities of Arizonans are expressed and advanced. CFA is committed to ensuring that these priorities are clearly understood by leaders and translated into action.

The Good Elections survey shows that Arizonans have a strong, shared standard for what elections should deliver. That matters because it:

- Anchors democracy in lived public values—when we know how people define a “good election,” we can assess election systems by whether they reflect those values, not by the loudest or most partisan voices in the debate.
- Provides a roadmap for building and sustaining trust—leaders can point to the specific principles Arizonans agree on and ensure policies, investments, and practices are aligned with them.
- Strengthens civic health for the long term—clear, shared expectations about elections make it easier for Arizonans to stay engaged, hold institutions accountable, and work across differences.

**This report is an invitation to act on that vision—turning what Arizonans say they want from their elections into the everyday reality of how our system works.**



## KEY FINDINGS

### Shared Principles: Arizonans Agree on What Good Elections Should Deliver

#### Fair and Secure Elections are a Core Civic Value

Arizonans are nearly unanimous: fair and secure elections are essential to democracy. Agreement is high across party affiliations and age groups.

This shared belief is one of the strongest points of consensus CFA has seen in any statewide survey. It provides a powerful foundation for conversations about elections in Arizona.

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

**Fair and secure elections are important to maintain a healthy democracy.**

**97%**

of Arizonans agree  
that fair and secure  
elections are essential  
to a healthy democracy

REPUBLICAN	<b>98%</b>
DEMOCRAT	<b>95%</b>
IND/UN	<b>98%</b>
AGES 18-29	<b>97%</b>
AGES 30-44	<b>95%</b>
AGES 45-64	<b>98%</b>
AGES 65+	<b>98%</b>

## Shared Definition of a “Good Election”

The survey asked Arizonans to rate how important nine principles are to a good election in Arizona. Across the board, Arizonans expressed strong support:

- At least **83%** say each principle is essential or important.
- Six of the nine principles are at 92% or higher.
- When asked what is most essential, accuracy and trustworthy election officials top the list, followed closely by transparency, safety, and voter access.

These expectations hold across parties and ages, with only modest shifts in emphasis among different groups.

ALL ARIZONANS	ESSENTIAL	TOTAL IMPORTANT
<b>Accuracy: Every ballot is counted and counted correctly</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>Trustworthy: People running elections are objective and impartial</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>Transparency: Election processes are clear and observable</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>Safety of voters and election workers</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>Voter access: Voting is equally easy for all eligible voters</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>93%</b>
Fiscal responsibility: Taxpayer dollars are spent wisely	61%	93%
Voter participation: High voter turnout	61%	92%
Multiple options/ways for people to vote (e.g voting early, voting by mail etc.)	50%	83%
Speed of results: Delivering results quickly	44%	87%

Across groups, a **good election is one where every ballot is counted correctly, the process is visible and understandable, and people trust those administering the system—while ensuring that all eligible voters can participate.**

## KEY FINDINGS

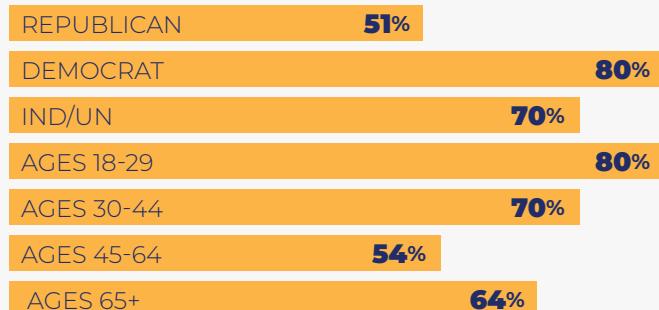
# Confidence & Trust in 2026

## Trust in Election Administration

Beyond principles, Arizonans express broad confidence in the people who administer Arizona's elections.

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

**We can trust the local and state officials who administer our elections to ensure that they are conducted fairly, accurately, and securely.**



## Confidence Looking Ahead

The survey also asked Arizonans how confident they are about key aspects of the 2026 election.

**As we look ahead to the 2026 election in Arizona, how confident are you that each of the following will occur?**

	ALL ARIZONANS	REP	DEM	IND/UN	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+
Most Arizonans will accept the certified election results	73%	79%	71%	68%	72%	71%	68%	79%
I personally will accept the certified election results	80%	78%	87%	78%	80%	77%	80%	84%

Despite national debates and rhetoric, most Arizonans expect elections to function as they should and are committed to doing their part by accepting valid results.

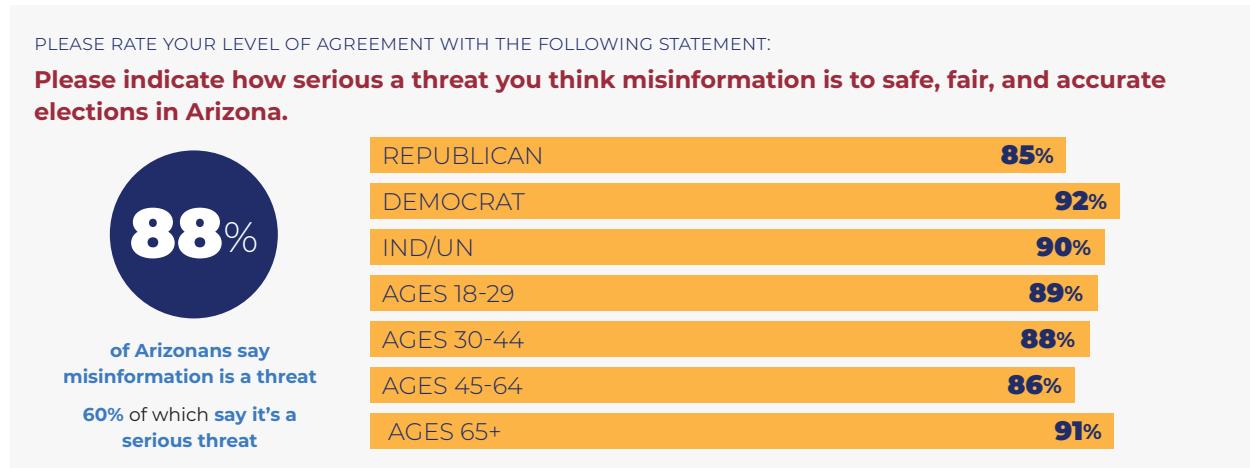
For leaders, election officials, and community organizations, this is an opportunity to reinforce that confidence by continuing to communicate clearly, operate transparently, and show how Arizona's election systems reflect the principles residents say they value most.

## KEY FINDINGS

# Misinformation Concerns Nearly Everyone, and Arizonans are Clear on Whom They Trust

## Misinformation as a Cross-Cutting Concern

Concern about misinformation is one of the clearest areas of shared ground in the survey—and a direct invitation for trusted voices to step up.



In open-ended responses, Arizonans describe concerns about:

- Conflicting or partisan information
- Confusion about how and where to vote
- Lack of accessible, unbiased explanations of ballot measures and candidates

## Trusted Messengers on Election Information

When it comes to whom they rely on, Arizonans tend to trust those closest to the work of running elections and nonpartisan civic voices.



## KEY FINDINGS

# How Arizonans Want Elections to Work on the Ground

Arizonans want multiple trusted ways to vote, value convenience and inclusion, and are open to changes that increase participation in critical stages of the election process. Arizonans express strong support for preserving key features of the current system:

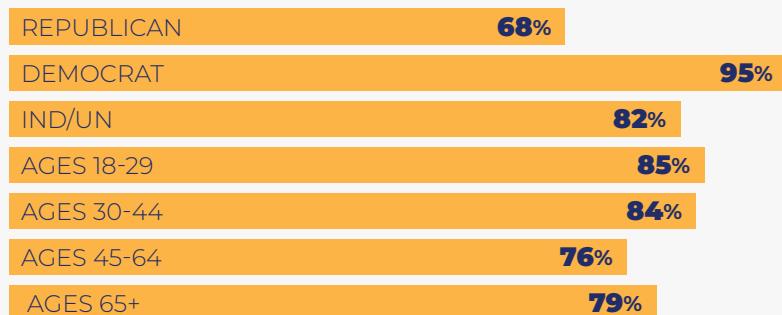
## Arizonans Support Early Voting By Mail to Continue

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

**Do you support or oppose continuing to allow Arizona voters the option to vote early by mail?**



of Arizonans  
overall support



Note, in Arizona, early voting includes in-person voting before Election Day and voting by mail. Mail ballots can be returned by mail on or before Election Day or dropped off in person on Election Day. This question specifically asked about voting by mail as part of early voting. In 2024, 81% of Arizona ballots were cast through early voting mail ballots: 73% returned by mail on or before Election Day and 8% dropped off in person on Election Day.

## Keep Election Day Ballot Drop-Off, Even If Results Take Longer

Below are two statements you might hear regarding the timing of election results. Please indicate which statement best matches your perspective.



**Voter A believes we need to have election results sooner**, even if it means limiting convenient voting options. We should stop ballot drop-off a few days before Election Day to speed up results.

**A:** All **31%** | 18-29 **43%** | 30-44 **31%** | 45-64 **27%** | 65+ **27%**  
REP **45%** | DEM **12%** | IND/UN **33%**



**Voter B believes it should be easy and convenient for eligible citizens to vote.** We should continue allowing voters to drop off their early ballots up to and including Election Day. It's worth it to ensure every voter has a chance to vote, even if it means waiting longer for final election results.

**B:** All **69%** | 18-29 **57%** | 30-44 **69%** | 45-64 **73%** | 65+ **73%**  
REP **55%** | DEM **88%** | IND/UN **67%**

Ballot is valid and counted;  
envelope must be postmarked 6 days prior to Election Date (noted on ballot)  
and no later than 7pm on Election Day  
06-1511

La boleta sea válida y contada;  
en el dorso de este sobre  
a más tardar 6 días antes del Día de la  
Electoral  
y a más tardar a las 7pm del Día de la Elección  
06-1511



## Interest in Changing How Primaries Work

In Arizona, many political races are effectively decided during the Democratic or Republican party primaries, which are funded with taxpayer dollars. Independent voters can vote in a party primary, but they must first request a party's ballot—which does not apply to the Presidential Preference Election, where only voters registered as Democrats or Republicans can participate.



of Arizonans support  
some form of change  
that makes primaries  
**more accessible**  
to all voters

### Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

- **21%** It's reasonable for political parties to decide who votes in their primaries. If someone chooses not to register with a party, they shouldn't be able to vote in that party's primary.
- **27%** It's not fair that independent voters have to take extra steps to participate in party primaries. Since primaries are publicly funded, all registered voters should have the same access.
- **45%** Arizona should replace party primaries with an open primary system. In an open primary, all candidates, regardless of party, appear on the same ballot and any registered voter can vote for any candidate.

## Enhancing the Voter Experience

When presented with a number of steps that have been proposed in recent years to make elections work better and improve the voter experience, Arizonans show a high level of consensus on a number of actions.

### Please indicate whether you personally support or oppose each of the following ideas that some have proposed as ways to improve participation or confidence in elections.

	ALL	REP	DEM	IND/UN	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+
Add more voting centers	<b>89%</b>	91%	95%	83%	80%	89%	93%	92%
Increase staffing and resources to process and count ballots more quickly	<b>89%</b>	89%	92%	87%	80%	86%	93%	96%
Shorten wait times at the polls on Election Day	<b>87%</b>	88%	88%	87%	79%	88%	91%	90%
Expand early voting locations or hours	<b>83%</b>	75%	94%	82%	84%	86%	83%	77%
Make Election Day a state or federal holiday	<b>78%</b>	77%	79%	78%	78%	83%	83%	67%

## Arizonans Back Investments in Election Administration, Even if it Means a Small Tax Increase

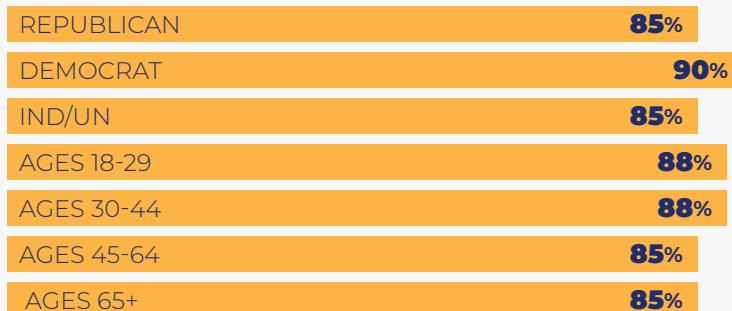
Arizonans recognize that strong, well-run elections require resources—and they are willing to invest.

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

**Some election improvements—like hiring more workers, upgrading equipment, or improving vote counting—may require additional funding. Would you support or oppose increasing funding for Arizona's elections to improve how they are run?**

**87%**

of Arizonans support



PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

**Would you support increased public funding to improve the way elections are run in Arizona if that meant a small increase in your state taxes?**

**76%**

of Arizonans support



For policymakers and funders, this is a clear signal: **Investing in election administration has broad public backing.**



# Where Perspectives Differ Offers Useful Insight

While the consensus is remarkable and worth centering, Arizonans do not agree on everything. The survey data also show meaningful differences across political affiliation, age, and lived experience. These differences do not erase shared priorities; instead, they offer important clues about how people engage with elections, what shapes their confidence, and ways to enhance voter experience.

**For example, younger voters (ages 18-29) stand out as an important group to watch as Arizona's electorate continues to evolve.** They are more supportive of modernization reforms than older Arizonans and report different patterns in where they trust election information and how they experience voting options.

	18-29	65+
Automatic voter registration	78%	46%
Same-day voter registration	74%	41%
Trust people on social media for accurate election information	54%	7%
Voting by mail is convenient	45%	67%

## Turning Shared Priorities Into Action

This report is a first look at a deeper body of work. Arizonans have given us a clear standard for what “good elections” should deliver. That clarity matters because it gives leaders, election officials, and communities a shared reference point for any changes proposed in the years ahead.

CFA will continue to share and explain these findings through additional data releases, briefings, and tools.

## Share Arizonans' Priorities and Make an Impact

We invite you to use this roadmap in your own work:

- Policymakers—inform election design and voter experience improvements with these insights.
- Community leaders, public officials, and election administrators—use these findings in planning, communications, and outreach.
- Journalists and media organizations—draw on this data in election coverage, especially on how elections are run and what voters value.
- Residents and civic groups across Arizona—share these insights and help neighbors understand how elections work and how they can participate.

**Additional resources, data, and tools: [arizonafuture.org/goodelectionsaz](http://arizonafuture.org/goodelectionsaz)**

# About This Project

The Good Elections Project is a collaboration between **Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA)** and the **Mechanics of Democracy Lab (MODL)** at Arizona State University. It was created to explore a vital question often overlooked in election debates: *What defines a successful election in the eyes of Arizonans?*

Public discussions about election reform can become narrowly focused—on how quickly ballots are counted, individual procedures, or isolated technical issues. These debates often miss the bigger picture.

The Good Elections Project steps back and asks Arizonans to define the foundational principles of a good election and to identify practical steps that would strengthen trust, access, participation, and confidence over time.

The project aims to:

- Move conversations about elections beyond outcomes and rhetoric.
- Ground decision-making in shared public principles and trusted facts.
- Provide a public, data-driven definition of election quality that can guide future reforms.

CFA and MODL believe that by focusing on what Arizonans say elections should deliver, leaders can better align systems with public values now and in the future.

**To learn more and explore Good Elections Project resources, visit:**  
[arizonafuture.org/goodelectionsaz](http://arizonafuture.org/goodelectionsaz)

## About the Partners

### **Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA)**

CFA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan "do-tank" that brings Arizonans together to create a stronger and brighter future for our state. Through its extensive survey research & communications, Arizona Progress Meters, and impact initiatives & programs in education, workforce, and civic health, CFA listens to Arizonans to learn what matters most to them, shares trusted data about how Arizona is doing in those priority areas, brings critical issues to public attention, and works with communities and leaders to solve public problems. CFA's work is focused on building [The Arizona We Want](#) – a research-informed vision of success for the state, where all Arizonans, now and in the future, thrive and enjoy sustained prosperity, unmatched quality of life, and real opportunity.

### **Mechanics of Democracy Lab (MODL)**

Founded and led by former Maricopa County Supervisor Bill Gates at ASU's School of Public Affairs, Mechanics of Democracy Lab (MODL) applies practitioner-informed research to strengthen election systems and restore public confidence. MODL's mission includes correcting misinformation and fostering informed public discourse around elections.

Together, CFA and MODL are collaborating to lift up Arizonans' voices and connect data, practice, and public understanding.

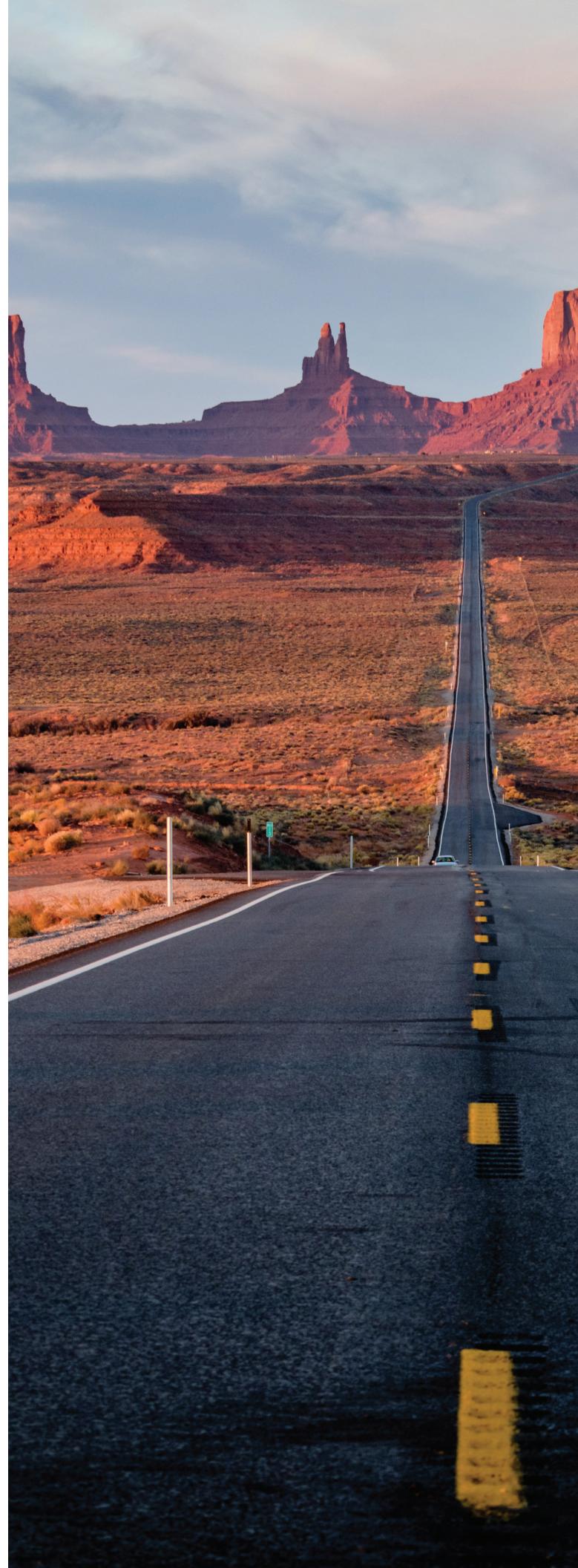
## Survey Methodology

CFA's Good Elections survey was fielded November 3-8, 2025 by Noble Predictive Insights, an Arizona-based public opinion research firm. The survey included 1,136 Arizona residents ages 18 and older, reached via opt-in online panel and text-to-online, and was conducted in English and Spanish. The sample includes 338 Hispanic/Latino respondents. The full sample was weighted to reflect the Arizona general population by gender, region, age, race/ethnicity, and education according to recent Census data. The Hispanic/Latino sample was weighted to reflect the Arizona Hispanic/Latino population by gender, region, age, and education. The margin of error is approximately  $\pm 2.9$  percentage points for the full sample and  $\pm 5.3$  points for the Hispanic/Latino sample. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

## Supporters & Acknowledgments

### **Thanks to our supporters:**

The Good Elections Project is supported in part by Don Budinger, The Burton Family Foundation, Vitalyst Health Foundation, John and Kathleen Graham, Pivotal Foundation, Thomas R. Brown Family Private Foundation Fund held at the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, Save Democracy, Arizona Democracy Resilience Network (ADRN), and The Lodestar Foundation.



# THE GOOD ELECTIONS PROJECT

**Insights into what Arizonans value  
most when it comes to elections**

---

Learn more and explore data, stories, and resources at:

**[arizonafuture.org/goodelectionsaz](http://arizonafuture.org/goodelectionsaz)**



**[arizonafuture.org](http://arizonafuture.org)**

455 N. Third Street, Suite 260, Phoenix, AZ 85004 | [in](#) [X](#) [f](#) [o](#) @arizonafuture