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SUPERVISOR
DISTRICT III
P.O. Box 428, St. Johns, AZ 85936

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF APACHE COUNTY**

P.O. BOX 428
ST. JOHNS, ARIZONA 85936

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RYAN N. PATTERSON
MANAGER-CLERK
ST. JOHNS, AZ 85936

**NOTICE OF A PUBLIC MEETING AND AGENDA OF
THE APACHE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.02(H), the public will have physical access to the meeting room thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the meeting.


**Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, First Floor
Apache County Annex, 75 West Cleveland Street
St. Johns, Arizona
March 24, 2026
9:00 a.m. MST**


1. Sheriff's Office: Discussion and possible approval of the Mutualink agreement pursuant to A.R.S. §41-1722 for the Schol Safety Inoperable Communications Systems.
2. Election Department: Discussion and possible approval of amended 2020 HAVA Election Security Sub-Grant Application.

The Board of Supervisors may recess and reconvene the meeting in the County Manager's Conference Room, 75 West Cleveland Street, 2nd Floor, St. Johns, Arizona

3. Work session of the following items:
 - Election Department: Vote Centers, Poll Worker Pay, Spanish language on printed ballots.
 - Finance Department: Fiscal Year 2027 Budget, PILT Apache County Budget Appropriation, Audit strategy to full A-1 compliance
 - County Manager: Engineering Department Update, Round Valley Rodeo Grounds and Community Development Update


One or more members of the Board of Supervisors may participate telephonically or through video communication.

Posted this 19th day of March 2026 at 2:00 p.m. by 


Ryan N. Patterson
Clerk of the Board

Apache County Board of Supervisors
AGENDA ITEM REVIEW FORM

Submitter's Name: Apache County Sheriff's Office

Date/Signature:  March 4, 2026

Describe in detail what you want to say to the Board and what action you want the Board to take:

Discussion and possible approval of the Mutualink agreement pursuant to A.R.S. § 41-1722 (School Safety Interoperable Communications Systems).

BOS Meeting Date Requested Special Meeting Requested

PRE-AGENDA ITEM REVIEW

Legal Review: _____

Signature 

Finance Review: _____

Signature _____

Human Resources Review: _____

Signature _____

Other Review: _____

Signature _____

Reviews completed, item approved for Agenda. Board Clerk's Initials _____

Apache County Sheriff's Office
Renewal of Operations, Maintenance & Sustainment Agreement
Apache County Interoperability & School Safety System
One-Year Base Term with Optional Renewals

COUNTY STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND GOVERNANCE

This Agreement is a County-directed renewal intended to preserve operational readiness and system integrity of the existing Apache County Interoperability & School Safety System. The purpose of this renewal is to prevent degradation of previously deployed capabilities. At the same time, Apache County completes a structured evaluation cycle addressing system performance, utilization, accountability, and long-term program direction.

This renewal maintains continuity of operations only. It does not authorize expansion, onboarding of additional participants, or acquisition of new equipment beyond the currently deployed configuration unless separately approved by the Apache County Board of Supervisors. Governance, funding decisions, and program continuation remain exclusively within the authority of Apache County. Technical service descriptions are included to define operational support requirements due to the County's limited in-house technical staffing; however, all policy determinations, compliance oversight, and future program modifications remain subject to County review, audit findings, applicable law, and legislative oversight.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Apache County Sheriff's Office (ACSO), on behalf of Apache County, renews this Operations, Maintenance, and Sustainment Agreement to ensure uninterrupted availability of the County's existing school safety interoperability capabilities pursuant to A.R.S. §41-1733. This Agreement maintains licensed access, operational support, and maintenance services for the currently deployed system configuration only.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, Apache County and Mutualink, Inc. previously executed an agreement for the deployment of an interoperability and school safety communications system;

WHEREAS, Apache County desires to sustain existing operational functionality while continuing County-led evaluation of program effectiveness, utilization, and inclusion;

WHEREAS, funding has been appropriated by the Arizona Legislature to support operations and maintenance for FY26;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

“Effective Date” means the date in which both parties legally sign the agreement.

“Agreement” means this contract, including all attachments, exhibits, statements of work, and amendments, as executed between the parties.

“Customer” means the entity or organization receiving products or services under this Agreement.

“Contractor” means the entity providing products, services, support, or maintenance under this Agreement.

“System” means the Mutualink communications platform and all associated hardware, software, network infrastructure, and services managed or maintained under this Agreement.

“Managed Services” means ongoing support, administration, monitoring, and management of systems, users, devices, and network resources provided by the Contractor.

“Maintenance” means scheduled and unscheduled activities performed to sustain operational performance, including updates, patches, repairs, and performance tuning.

“Upgrades” means enhancements, version changes, or modifications to the system components or software that improve performance, security, or functionality.

SECTION 2. PURPOSE

The Contractor shall provide operations, maintenance, and support services as directed and approved by the County to sustain the existing System configuration.

SECTION 3. TERM AND TERMINATION

3.1 Term. This Agreement becomes effective upon final execution and continues for one (1) year.

3.2 Renewal. Any renewal is subject to written approval by the Apache County Board of Supervisors.

3.3 Termination for Convenience. The County may terminate this Agreement for convenience with thirty (30) days' written notice.

3.4 Termination for Cause. Either Party may terminate for material breach following a thirty (30) day cure period.

SECTION 4. COMPENSATION

4.1 Annual Cost. \$275,000 for the base term.

4.2 Payment Terms. Net thirty (30) days from receipt of invoice.

4.3 No Expansion Presumed. Pricing reflects only the existing system configuration. Any modification requires separate County authorization.

4.4 System Acceptance and Ongoing Verification.

- Annually, the Contractor shall demonstrate system functionality to the Apache County Sheriffs Office or other County representative.
 - For purposes of this Agreement, “Operational Readiness” means that the System, as currently deployed and configured, is functioning in accordance with the scope of services and service levels set forth herein and is capable of performing its intended technical functions within a properly configured and operational network environment.
 - Operational Readiness will be evaluated using the technical and functional requirements outlined in AZ 41-1733. The County may require written certification of system functionality based on these legislative requirements.
 - The County agrees to provide reasonable cooperation, including timely access to necessary facilities, network connectivity, and designated personnel, to enable completion of the demonstration 90 days prior to contract renewal date.
 - If any inability to demonstrate Operational Readiness or any period during which the System is offline results from the County’s, its participating agencies’ or any customers’ failure to provide reasonable cooperation, access, required information, conduct required training, or timely responsiveness to the Contractor, such condition shall not constitute a failure by the Contractor under this Agreement, shall not be grounds for termination, and shall not relieve the County of its obligation to make timely payment.
 - If the system is offline and does not meet Operational Readiness, the County agrees to provide written notice and the Contractor shall have thirty (30) days to remediate any deficiencies. The County agrees to act with haste to accommodate facility access requests, training scheduling requests and any other actions required on part of the County to bring the system back into compliance.
 - Termination without penalty under this section shall apply only if the deficiency is solely attributable to the Contractor
 - In the event of termination pursuant to this section, the County shall remain responsible for payment for services performed through the effective date of termination.
-

SECTION 5. SCOPE OF SERVICES

All services shall be performed subject to County approval, scheduling, and direction.

5.1 Operations & Maintenance

- Monitoring, updates, and maintenance are limited to the existing configuration
- No hardware lifecycle extension beyond supported manufacturer standards without County approval

5.2 Training & Readiness

- Training provided upon County request
- County retains authority to determine readiness criteria and reporting requirements

5.3 Reporting

- Contractor shall provide County-defined annual operational and readiness reports upon request

5.4 Defined Deliverables and Functional Requirements

Contractor shall maintain the System in fully operational condition throughout the term of this Agreement. At minimum, deliverables shall include compliance with technical and functional requirements outlines in AZ 41-1733 as of the date of this agreement.

- Performance of the foregoing deliverables is dependent upon the County's compliance with its responsibilities under this Agreement, including maintenance of network connectivity, system configurations, training requirements, and cooperation of participating users.
- Failure to meet the foregoing requirements shall constitute a material breach only if such failure is (i) material, (ii) attributable solely to the Contractor, and (iii) not cured within thirty (30) days following written notice from the County.

5.5 Contract Monitoring and Audit Rights

- Contractor shall maintain records reasonably sufficient to demonstrate its performance of the services described in this Agreement.
- Upon reasonable written request, Contractor shall provide documentation reasonably necessary to verify compliance with the operational readiness testing set forth herein. Such documentation may include written operational readiness certification if provided at the request of the County, or records relating to training, installation, or services performed under this agreement.
- The County, State of Arizona, and any authorized oversight agency shall have the right to inspect, audit, and copy such records upon reasonable notice. Any review shall be conducted upon reasonable notice, during normal business hours, and in a manner that does not unreasonably interfere with Contractor's operations.
- The review rights under this section are limited to records directly related to Contractor's performance under this Agreement and shall not include access to Contractor's internal financial records, proprietary information, or unrelated business records.
- Failure to cooperate with audit request may constitute a material breach only to the extent such failure is material, is directly attributable to the Contractor's acts or omissions, and remains uncured thirty (30) days after written notice from the County.

SECTION 6. SERVICE LEVELS

Contractor shall use commercially reasonable efforts to maintain a minimum system uptime of 99.5% (excluding scheduled maintenance and excluded events (as defined below), provide 24/7 emergency support, and respond to critical issues within four (4) hours.

Excluded Events: Downtime shall not be included in uptime calculations to the extent caused by:

- Scheduled maintenance performed in accordance with this agreement
- Force majeure events, including but not limited to acts of God, natural disasters, severe weather, fire, flood, pandemic, governmental action, or customer non-compliance
- Internet service provider outages or public telecommunications failures
- Failure or malfunction of third-party systems, including school networks, camera systems, hardware or infrastructure not under Contractor's direct control
- County-controlled network configurations, firewall changes, or unauthorized system modifications
- Acts or omissions of the County, participating agencies, or third parties.

The uptime service level applies only to the availability of the core Mutualink-hosted platform and associated network infrastructure directly managed by Contractor. The uptime obligation does not extend to the availability or performance of third-party systems, participating entity networks, school infrastructure, camera systems, internet connectivity, power supply, or any other components not under Contractor's direct operational control.

Repeated material failure to meet the uptime service level, due solely to Contractor-controlled causes and not otherwise excused under this Agreement, for two (2) consecutive months or three (3) months in any contract year may constitute cause for termination; provided that minor or isolated deviations shall not constitute chronic failure.

SECTION 7. COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Provide the Contractor with reasonable and timely access to facilities, equipment, systems, and network infrastructure as required to perform maintenance, upgrades, and support services.

7.2 The County agrees to use reasonable efforts to assist Mutualink in ensuring access to necessary personnel and facilities to enable support. Mutualink acknowledges and agrees to comply with all security and access control procedures and health and safety rules, policies, and directives.

7.3. Maintain IP connectivity from Mutualink to all endpoints in the system.

7.4 Refrain from making an unauthorized change to the system configurations, firewall configurations, and network infrastructure.

7.5 Internally coordinate with users for all patch deployment and reboots required.

7.6 Ensure no unauthorized relocation, modification, or tampering with installed equipment or software.

7.7 Operate the system in accordance with documented procedures, guidelines, and training provided by the Contractor.

7.8 Maintain the security and integrity of the County's own internal network, including authentication, firewall, and access control policies.

7.9 Notify the Contractor promptly of any security incidents, breaches, or network changes that may impact system performance or service delivery.

7.10 Notify the Contractor in writing of any building modifications, camera changes, and/or operational changes that may impact ERPs or response.

7.11 Understand that floorplan updates after installation are not included under this Agreement and may require separate scoping and pricing.

7.12 Report system incidents promptly and provide timely cooperation and information necessary to support troubleshooting and resolution.

7.13 Be responsible for coordination with third-party vendors not under contract with the Contractor when required for integrated system operations or network access.

7.14 Ensure that all use of the system and services complies with applicable laws, regulations, and organizational policies.

SECTION 8. EXCLUSIONS

8.1 New site installations or expansions beyond the originally contracted system configuration.

8.2 Site visits or service calls required as a result of County negligence, misuse, or unauthorized modification of equipment, firewall configurations, or software.

8.3 Relocation or reconfiguration of equipment initiated by the County, including any physical movement or alteration of installed systems.

8.4 Support for third-party systems or integrations not covered under this agreement.

8.5 Restoration of service due to deliberate tampering, security breaches caused by County actions, or failure to follow documented operational procedures.

8.6 Costs associated with the replacement or repair of equipment damaged through County negligence, abuse, or environmental factors outside the Contractor's control.

8.7 Floorplan updates or modifications for previously installed systems; Mutualink is not responsible for maintaining or updating customer-provided floorplans after the initial installation. Any request for updates or changes to floor plans will incur an additional cost.

8.8 If the original equipment manufacturer no longer supports network infrastructure hardware, it will be excluded from the hardware repair and replacement services.

GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

This Agreement incorporates all prior discussions and replaces any previous agreements for operations, maintenance, software licensing, and services relating to the System. Any amendments must be in writing and signed by both Parties.

This Agreement and the Project are subject to and governed by the laws, rules, and regulations of the State of Arizona and those of Apache County.

Mutualink shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and standards, including but not limited to public records requirements, conflict-of-interest statutes, data privacy obligations, and statutory certification requirements applicable to public contracts.

SIGNATURES

APACHE COUNTY

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

MUTUALINK, INC.

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____



Apache County Sheriff's Office

Date: March 4, 2026

Justification for Approval - Mutualink Interoperable Communications Agreement

Purpose

Approval allows the Apache County Sheriff's Office to continue using the Mutualink system to coordinate emergency communications among law enforcement, schools, and public safety agencies.

Audit Context

- The Arizona School Safety Interoperable Communications Systems audit found the need to improve contract documentation, procurement, and statutory clarity regarding the Mutualink agreement.
- The audit did not find any operational issues with the system itself, but it highlighted the need for corrective measures to improve contractual compliance.

Corrective Measures Implemented

- Conducted a full internal review of the existing agreement and supporting documentation.
- Created a revised contract that includes the necessary Apache County contractual language and compliance provisions.
- The revised agreement was submitted to the Apache County Attorney for a legal review.
- Collaborated with Mutualink representatives to align on contract terms.
- Confirmed compliance with Arizona legal requirements and county procurement policies.
- Removed or clarified provisions that conflicted with county policy.

Operational Importance

- The Mutualink system supports coordinated emergency and school safety communications.
- The system is integrated into the Sheriff's Office environment and supports partner agency interoperability.

Good-Faith Compliance Effort

- The Sheriff's Office took these actions to:
 - Respond to audit recommendations
 - Ensure compliance with legal and procurement standards
 - Safeguard county interests
 - Sustain the continuity of essential public safety communications

Recommendation

Approval of the revised agreement will formalize corrective actions, ensure compliance with statutory and county requirements, and keep the Mutualink system operational to support public and school safety.

Apache County Board of Supervisors
AGENDA ITEM REVIEW FORM

date/time stamp

Submitter's Name: (Individual, Organization, or County Department)

Megan Hill/Elections Department

Date/Signature: 3/5/20 M Hill

Describe in detail what you want to say to the Board and what action you want the Board to take:

1. Discussion and possible approval of amended 2020 HAVA Election Security Sub-Grant Application.

BOS Meeting Date 3/24/25

PRE-AGENDA ITEM REVIEW

Legal Review: _____

Signature _____

Finance Review: _____

Signature _____

Human Resources Review: _____

Signature _____

Other Review: _____

Signature _____

Reviews completed, item approved for Agenda. Board Clerk's Initials _____

2020 HAVA ELECTION SECURITY SUB-GRANT APPLICATION



KATIE HOBBS
SECRETARY OF STATE

General Information Section:

County Name: Apache County

County Recorder's Name: Larry Noble

Work Address: 75 W. Cleveland, PO Box 425, St. Johns, AZ 85936

Direct Telephone Number: 928-337-7515

Direct Email: Inoble@apachecountyaz.gov

County Elections Director's Name: Megan Hill

Work Address: 75 W. Cleveland, PO Box 428, St. Johns, AZ 85936

Direct Telephone Number: 928-337-7537

Direct Email: mhill@apachecountyaz.gov

Secondary Information Section (County Contact for Sub-Grant Related Questions):

County Employee's Name: Megan Hill

Direct Telephone Number: 928-337-7537

Direct Email: mhill@apachecountyaz.gov

Project Activities, Intent, and Goals

What item(s)/service(s) is the County Recorder's / Elections Director's Office purchasing with the awarded funds?

See attached explanations

What is the project's total projected cost?

What is the projected expenditure date?

What is the project's intent and expected result?

How does the project fall into at least one category of the federal HAVA expenditure guidelines? Please specifically state which category.

Please explain how this project will enhance election technology or make election security improvements. If the project will not enhance election technology or security, please explain how this project will enhance or improve elections and/or how it will protect against and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?

How will this project benefit registered voters in Federal Elections?

Please describe in detail a clear and comprehensive plan for your requested project.

If your project is not approved, please provide a detailed explanation on how this may affect your County.

What item(s)/services is the County Recorder's/Election Director's office purchasing with the awarded funds?

Construct a secure lobby and tabulation room in the Elections Department. Purchase new laptops, updated security cameras, voting booths, 75' limit signs, generators with cables to connect them, voter education signs for polling places.

What is the project's total projected cost?

\$97016.92

What is the project's expenditure date?

No later than June 15, 2026

What is the project's intent and expected result?

This project intent is to increase both security and transparency of Apache County Elections. The secure lobby and tabulation room will provide much needed physical security for the Election Department staff and equipment. New laptops will be more secure than the existing out-of-date computers the Recorder's office staff members are using. New cameras in both offices will increase ballot security and transparency. Voting booths will increase accessibility at early voting and election day locations. Generators and cables to connect them will ensure the central count location has backup power on election night and that every IT staff member has a generator with them out and about on election day. New signage for polling places will educate voters on voting procedures and voting rights.

How does the project fall into at least one category of the federal HAVA expenditure guidelines? Please specifically state which category

All these projects/items are either to increase election security, voter education or voter accessibility.

Please explain how this project will enhance election technology or make election security improvements. If the project will not enhance election technology or security, please explain how this project will enhance or improve elections and/or how it will protect against and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?

These projects will increase election security by:

Creating a secure location for the Elections Department and tabulation equipment.

Providing up to date and secure laptops for voter registration and signature verification.

Increasing transparency and ballot security by improving the quality of our live streaming cameras.

Providing a backup power source for the central count location and ensuring all IT staff deployed across the county on election day have a generator so the closest staff member can respond to a voting location that loses power.

Increasing voters knowledge of their rights.

How will this project benefit registered voters in Federal Elections?

Voters in Federal Elections will vote in more secure and safe elections and be better educated about voting procedures and voting rights while doing so.

Please describe in detail a clear and comprehensive plan for your requested project.

We plan to have everything ordered or completed by the end of May to avoid any overlap with the projects and the July primary election. The lobby in the Elections office will be constructed to be secure and allow people in without giving them access to staff and equipment. It will have a customer service window which will allow staff to assist visitors safely and securely. The tabulation room will have a glass wall running the entire length so everything inside is visible to observers while remaining secure.

If your project is not approved, please provide a detailed explanation on how this may affect your County.

If these projects are not approved, we will have to continue to make do with what we have and do our best to serve the voters of Apache County. Without these projects/items both Elections Department staff and election night workers are at risk of physical harm and tabulation equipment is out in the open area of the Elections Department. Our Recorder's office staff will continue to use their out-of-date computers which slow their ability to process late early and provisional ballots and delay the curing process.

**Apache County Board of Supervisors
AGENDA ITEM REVIEW FORM**

date/time stamp

Submitter's Name: (Individual, Organization, or County Department)

County Manager _____

Date/Signature: _____

[Handwritten Signature] 3/19/26

Describe in detail what you want to say to the Board and what action you want the Board to take:

Work session of the following items:

- Election Department: Vote Centers, Poll Worker Pay, Spanish language on printed ballots.
- Finance Department: Fiscal Year 2027 Budget, PILT Apache County Budget Appropriation, Audit strategy to full A-1 compliance
- County Manager: Engineering Department Update, Round Valley Rodeo Grounds and Community Development Update

BOS Meeting Date 3/24/26

PRE-AGENDA ITEM REVIEW

Legal Review: _____

Signature _____

Finance Review: _____

Signature _____

Human Resources Review: _____

Signature _____

Other Review: _____

Signature _____

Reviews completed, item approved for Agenda.

Board Clerk's Initials _____

Voting Centers

With the help of the Recorder's office and the County Attorney's office we have come up with a plan to switch from precinct based voting locations to voting centers. The biggest difference between the 2 models is when our locations are precinct based and a voter goes to any precinct other than the one they are registered in they have to vote an out of precinct provisional ballot on an Express Vote Machine. With voting centers that same voter can go to any location and receive a standard ballot. This transition will not require purchasing additional equipment as we already have poll books and ballot on demand printers for all our locations. Some but not all of the benefits of voting centers are:

- All voters registered in Apache County can vote at any Apache County voting center
- Voters can go to the voting center closest to where they work, shop, get their mail or visit friends and family
- Streamlined election operations
 - All election day equipment will be programed uniformly, eliminating the possibility of equipment being programmed for the wrong location
 - Simplifies poll worker procedures and training
 - Lowers the chance of a poll worker mistakenly giving out the wrong ballot because the ballot is printed specific to each voter instead of selected by a poll worker on the Express Vote Machine
- More equipment at the voting centers will decrease wait times
 - Higher number of accessible voting machines at larger locations will allow voters to get vision, hearing and translation assistance faster
 - Additional poll books at larger locations will decrease wait times
- Decreased number of provisional ballots
 - Voting at the precinct you are registered to vote in will no longer be a requirement, which will eliminate out of precinct provisional ballots
 - Less work for the Recorder's office processing provisional ballots after the election
- Faster results
 - Decreased provisional ballots will increase the number of ballots counted on election night
 - Decreased provisional ballots will decrease the time it takes the Recorder's office to complete processing ballots after the election

**Proposed locations for vote
centers**

Chinle
Concho
Cornfields
Cottonwood
Dennehotso
Eagar
Fort Defiance
Ganado
Houck
Kinlichee
Klagetoh
Lukachukai
Lupton
Many Farms
McNary
Nazlini
Nutrioso
Oak Springs (internet?)
Red Mesa
Red Valley
Rock Point
Rough Rock
Round Rock
Sanders
Sawmill
St. Johns
St. Michaels
Steamboat
Sweetwater
Tachee
Teec Nos Pos
Vernon
Wheatfields
Wide Ruins
Window Rock



Eslir Musta,
Elections
Director/
Assistant County Manager

March 10, 2026

Megan Hill, Apache County Elections Director

Whitney Juszczak,
Elections Assistant Director

Transmitted via email

RE: Utilization of vote centers in Coconino County

Holly Roth,
Election Database
Coordinator

Dear Megan,

Sharon Sifling,
Training and
Outreach
Coordinator

I appreciate the opportunity to share Coconino County's experience with vote centers. Coconino County adopted the vote center model to improve voter access and administrative efficiency across a large and geographically diverse jurisdiction.

Lynndel Custodio
Logistics Coordinator

Vote centers allow any eligible voter in the county to cast a ballot at any open location on Election Day. Through the use of electronic pollbooks and ballot-on-demand systems, voters receive the correct ballot style regardless of where they vote. This flexibility has helped reduce barriers for voters who may work, travel, or live far from their assigned precinct.

Denise Anderson
Recruiter Coordinator

Ray Daw,
Native American Outreach
Coordinator

The utilization of vote centers has also improved the voter experience. By consolidating resources into fewer, well-equipped locations, we are able to staff vote centers with more experienced and highly trained election workers who can better assist voters and resolve issues quickly.

Margaret Penado,
Enterprise Risk Manager

Since implementing vote centers, Coconino County has seen a decrease in provisional ballots because voters can be issued the correct ballot in real time at any vote center. Additionally, the use of vote centers reduced the need for precinct-based polling places by approximately 16 percent between the 2022 and 2024 elections, while increasing voter convenience and strengthening election security.

Todd Hare,
Elections Specialist

Vote centers have also improved access in Native American communities within the county. Strategically locating vote centers in key community locations helps address long travel distances and transportation challenges that can affect rural and tribal voters.

Michelle Billy,
Native American Outreach

Overall, the vote center model has strengthened our ability to provide accessible, efficient, and transparent elections. I would be happy to provide additional information about our experience should it be helpful to your board.

Sincerely,

/s/
Eslir Musta



NAVAJO COUNTY

Election Services

Rayleen Richards
Election Director

Lorna Spencer
Warehouse technician

Christen Haddox
Election Coordinator

"Proudly Serving, Continuously Improving"

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide information regarding Apache County's consideration of transitioning from traditional precinct-based polling locations to a Vote Center model for upcoming elections. This letter outlines the administrative and operational benefits associated with Vote Centers and how this approach may support continued improvements in election management within the county.

A Vote Center model allows any eligible Apache County voter to cast a ballot at any designated location within the county, regardless of their residential precinct. This model has been implemented in many jurisdictions to enhance accessibility and streamline election operations, particularly in counties with broad geographic areas, varied population density, and increasing logistical demands.

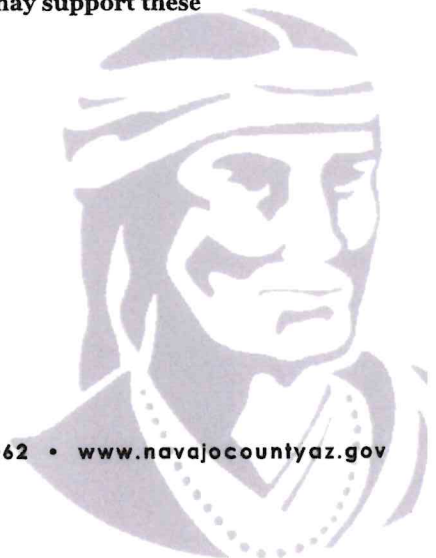
From an administrative standpoint, several key operational benefits are associated with Vote Centers:

- Improved access and flexibility for voters by offering multiple countywide locations, which can better accommodate travel, work schedules, and rural distances.
- Modernized voter check-in processes using electronic pollbooks and ballot-on-demand technology, ensuring each voter receives the correct ballot style at any location and reducing the need for provisional ballots.
- Streamlined staffing needs, allowing for more consistency in training, support, and oversight at each site.
- Enhanced standardization of Election Day procedures, which contributes to smoother operations and more effective issue resolution.

The Elections Department remains committed to evaluating tools and models that promote accessibility, accuracy, and efficiency while maintaining compliance with all applicable election laws and procedures. The Vote Center model offers administrative advantages that may support these goals.

Sincerely,

Rayleen Richards
Elections Director





THE NAVAJO NATION

February 5, 2026

Via Email and USPS

Apache County Board of Supervisors
Dr. Joe Shirley, Jr., District 1 Supervisor
Alton Joe Shepherd, District 2 Supervisor
Nelson Davis, District 3 Supervisor
Post Office Box 428
St. Johns, AZ 85936

Re: Support for Apache County Voting Centers; Solutions for Oak Springs and Mexican Water Voters

Dear Honorable Supervisors:

The Navajo Nation strongly supports the use of Voting Centers in place of precinct-based polling places Apache County, and requests that the Board of Supervisors approve the use of Voting Centers in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes 16-411(B)(4).

Voting Centers will enable voters to choose from any open location rather than limit a voter to a single assigned location. Most Navajo voters drive a very long distance to cast their votes on election day, and if they drive to the wrong precinct—a frequent and easy mistake to make on the Navajo Nation—they may not have time, transportation, or fuel funds to then drive another long way to get to their sole precinct polling place. If Apache County shifts from precinct voting to Voting Centers, poll workers will be able to verify a voter has not already cast a ballot, provide each qualified voter with a proper ballot, and the ballot will be counted.

We understand Voting Centers require reliable internet service, and this is currently a challenge in the Oak Springs community. Choice NTUA Wireless is providing a fixed wireless solution in Oak Springs, and is already in communication with the Apache County Election Department and technical team on timing and strategy.

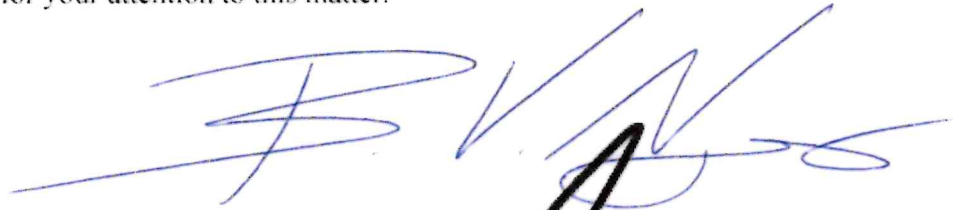
We also understand Apache County is concerned there is not a proper building for a voting location in the Arizona portion of the Mexican Water community. We encourage the Election Department to continue to work with the Navajo Nation Department of Justice to serve Mexican Water voters, whether that be a suitable temporary structure for primary election and general election voting, or frequent free shuttle transportation from Mexican Water to the nearest Voting Center(s).

We respectfully ask the Board of Supervisors to authorize Voting Centers for the 2026 primary and general elections, and further request that Apache County work with the Navajo Nation to find solutions to ensure qualified voters in the Mexican Water and Oak Springs communities are able

to conveniently cast their ballots. If you have questions or concerns about this request, please contact Frances Sjoberg, Principal Attorney, Navajo Nation Department of Justice at fsjoberg@navajo-nsn.gov or (602) 341-8099.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



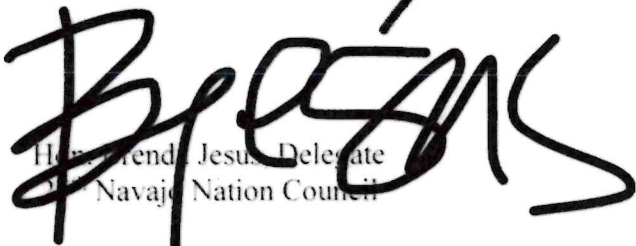
Dr. Buu Nygren, President
THE NAVAJO NATION



Hon. Crystalyne Curley, Speaker
25th Navajo Nation Council



Hon. Carl Slater, Delegate
25th Navajo Nation Council



Hon. Brenda Jesus, Delegate
25th Navajo Nation Council



Hon. Curtis Yanito, Delegate
25th Navajo Nation Council

cc: Megan Hill, Elections Director, Apache County
Larry Noble, Recorder, Apache County
Velena Tsosie, General Manager, NTUAW
Robert Silva, Corporate Attorney & Board Secretary, NTUA
Katherine Belzowski, Assistant Attorney General, Navajo Nation Department of Justice
Frances Sjoberg, Principal Attorney, Navajo Nation Department of Justice

Poll Worker Pay Increase

The last time poll worker pay was approved by the Board of Supervisors was 2019. At that time minimum wage was substantially less than the current rate of \$15.15. Our poll workers are required to work at least 14 hours on election day. I'm proposing we increase the minimum payment for an election day poll worker to \$210 to adjust for the increase in minimum wage. Our hope is this increase will make it easier to recruit quality poll workers.

| APACHE COUNTY POLL WORKER RATES | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Position | Current Rate | Proposed Rate |
| Inspector | \$140 | \$240 |
| Judge/Clerk/Marshall | \$120 | \$210 |
| Translator | \$130 | \$210 |
| Election Day Technician | \$140 | \$210 |
| Ballot Transporter | \$140 | Staff* |
| Equipment Loading | \$120 | Staff |
| Equipment Transportation | \$140 | Staff |
| Training | \$50 | \$50 |

*Mileage paid if necessary

| APACHE COUNTY ELECTION BOARD RATES | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Board | Current Rate | Proposed Rate |
| Election Night | \$120 | \$210 |
| Early | \$15/hour | \$18/hour |
| Write In | \$120 | \$18/hour |
| Provisional | \$120 | \$18/hour |
| Duplication | \$120 | \$18/hour |
| Hand Count | No set rate | \$20 |

Hourly rate paid in 15 minute increments

OTHER COUNTY POLL WORKER RATES (including training)

| Cocconino Co | Navajo Co | Gila Co | Santa Cruz Co |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| \$295 | \$200 | \$256 | \$300 |
| \$240 | \$180 | \$230 | \$275 |
| \$215 | \$190 | \$230 | \$275 |
| \$290 | \$100 | \$230 | Staff no stipend |
| \$18/hour | \$95* | Minimum wage | Staff no stipend |
| Staff no stipend | Staff no stipend | Staff no stipend | Staff no stipend |
| Staff no stipend | Staff no stipend | Staff no stipend | Staff no stipend |

OTHER COUNTY ELECTION BOARD RATES

| Cocconino | Navajo | Gila | Santa Cruz |
|--------------|----------|--------------|--|
| Minimum Wage | \$85/day | Minimum wage | \$87.50 for shifts under 4.5 hours \$175 for over 4.5 hours |
| Minimum Wage | \$85/day | Minimum wage | \$87.50 for shifts under 4.5 hours \$175 for over 4.5 hours |
| Minimum Wage | \$85/day | Minimum wage | Included in the Early Board |
| Minimum Wage | \$85/day | Minimum wage | Included in the Early Board |
| Minimum Wage | \$85/day | Minimum wage | Included in the Early Board |
| Minimum Wage | No pay | No pay | Included in the Early Board |

Increased cost based on 2024 poll worker numbers

| Primary Election | | | General Election | | |
|------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| | # in 2024 | Increase | | # in 2024 | Increase |
| Inspectors | 43 | \$4,300 | Inspectors | 43 | \$4,300 |
| Poll workers | 205 | \$18,450 | Poll workers | 218 | \$19,620 |
| EDTs | 28 | \$1,960 | EDTs | 25 | \$1,750 |
| Total | | \$24,710 | Total | | \$25,670 |
| | | Proposed increase | | | \$50,380 |

2024 Primary Election

2024 General Election

| | | | |
|---|---------|----------|-----------------|
| Savings from staff assisting with elections | \$9,090 | \$8,520 | \$17,610 |
| Savings from new election board pay rates | \$9,582 | \$16,978 | \$26,560 |
| Savings from no longer having to rent trucks to deliver and pick up equipment | | | \$15,500 |
| Total savings | | | \$59,670 |

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Total Savings | \$59,670 |
| Proposed Increase | \$50,380 |
| Decrease in spending | \$9,290 |



Apache County Elections

ELECTION BOARD WORKER PAY SCHEDULE

Effective 2019

POLL WORKERS:

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Inspectors | \$140.00 / day |
| Marshals | \$120.00 / day |
| Judges | \$120.00 / day |
| Clerks | \$120.00 / day |
| Translators | \$130.00 / day |

ELECTION DAY WORKERS

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Election Day Technician (EDT) | \$140.00 / day |
|-------------------------------|----------------|

EQUIPMENT / SUPPLY DELIVERY / PICKUP

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Equipment Management (EM) | \$140.00 / day |
| Truck Pick-Up/Return | \$120.00 / day |

ELECTION BOARDS:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Write-In Board | Paid at above Poll Worker Pay Rate |
| Provisional Board | Paid at above Poll Worker Pay Rate |
| Tally Board | Paid at above Poll Worker Pay Rate |
| Receiving Board | Paid at above Poll Worker Pay Rate |
| Special Board | Paid at above Poll Worker Pay Rate |
| Duplication Board | Paid at above Poll Worker Pay Rate |
| Early Board | \$15.00 per hour |
| *All Mail Elections | \$15.00 per hour |

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

Paid at current reimbursement rate

TRAINING CLASSES

\$50.00 per class

Spanish on Printed Ballots

According to the 2025 State of Arizona Elections Procedure Manual Apache County is not required to provide election materials in Spanish. In 2024 the standard ballots for the General Election did not include Spanish. However, a Spanish translation was available on the Express Vote machines. This was done to keep the ballot on a single page instead of 2 pages. There are multiple reasons for this, a few are:

- Voters are accustomed to a single page ballot and might not realize they should vote the second page
- Additional pages increase the time it takes voters in the voting booths which can increase wait times
- Voters return the wrong pages (2 first pages in one envelope from voters in the same household)
- Tabulation of a single page ballot is faster than a 2 page ballot
- A single page ballot saves on paper and postage expenses
- Tracking single page ballots is more accurate than 2 page ballots

I would like to permanently continue with the Spanish translation available on the Express Vote Machines and not on printed ballots.