



**Maricopa County Recorder's Office**

# **QUARTERLY REPORT**

April 1 - June 30, 2021

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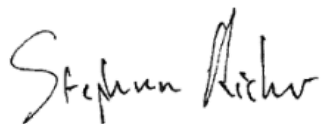
## Letter from the Recorder

Dear Maricopa County:

This hasn't been a sleepy summer. We've been building websites, running elections, onboarding new employees, training poll workers, recording documents for a hot housing market, registering new voters, reforming policies, and preparing for new laws.

I continue to put in long hours at the office, and so too does our hardworking team. It's worth it. We're building a better Recorder's Office and Elections Department to better serve you, our customer.

Thank you for your interest. Thank you for working with us on this grand experiment called democracy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Richer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Stephen  
Maricopa County Recorder

## Mission

I do not see the Recorder's Office as a political office. We won't measure our success by the political outcomes of the processes we administer. Instead, we will measure our success on our ability to competently, lawfully, and fairly execute our statutorily defined responsibilities.

We also aim to build confidence. Build confidence in our elections. Build confidence in our voter registration database. Build confidence in our public records. Build confidence in Maricopa County.

## National Association of Counties (NACo) 2021 Achievement Awards

In my last quarterly report, I discussed the many talented professionals in this Office who serve the voters and customers of Maricopa County. In June, the National Association of Counties (NACo) recognized the Recorder's Office and Elections Department with four NACo Achievement Awards to honor the innovative, effective county government programs this Office developed to strengthen services for residents. Below is a brief summary of each award, with links included to read the full submissions.

Three of the four NACo Achievement Awards recognize programs that provided critical information for Maricopa County voters in 2020:

- The **Maricopa County Elections Department** created the "[BeBallotReady.Vote](#)" and "[TengaBoletaLista.Voto](#)" voter outreach campaign and the corresponding websites in English and Spanish to inform voters about their 2020 voting options and provide voters a one-stop-shop to check their voter registration status, update their information, find voting locations, view their sample ballot, track their early ballot and more. The campaign and corresponding websites received the National Association of Counties award in the [Civic & Public Information Category](#) as an example of using creative marketing and communications tools to reach Maricopa County voters and inform them on how they can #BeBallotReady for #Elections2020.
- The **Maricopa County Recorder's Office** Geographical Information Systems developed a series of [Dot Density Maps](#) based on previous voter activity so that the Elections Department could determine the best locations for 2020 Vote Centers. The project received the award in the Information Technology category as an example of utilizing creative technology to inform data-driven decisions for the election model, keeping County staff and voters safe during the height of COVID-19.
- The **Maricopa County Recorder's Office** [Deputy Registrar Program](#) provided voters with critical voter registration, election, and voter education information. This program, which has grown to more than 700 volunteers received the award in the Volunteers category showcasing how County residents engage and empower their community.

The fourth award is for Recording Services:

- The **Maricopa County Recorder's Office** developed an innovative process that allows all recorded documents to be searchable by name on the Recorder's Office website within 72 hours, drastically reducing the previous turnaround time of several weeks and increasing customer data security by moving the process in-house. The new [Name Indexing Process](#) received the award in the Information Technology Category for making recorded document entry more efficient, cost-effective, and customer friendly.

Read the full press release [here](#).

## Recording Department

Between April 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021, the Office recorded 359,046 documents. This represents an 17.92% increase from the second quarter of 2020 (304,483 documents). The vast majority of documents are now recorded digitally – 93% through this second quarter.

In addition to recording all instruments authorized or required by law to be recorded for the public, the Office is required to create an index of the grantee and grantor names of each document. Currently, the team indexes on average 5,000 documents a day, with a 48-hour turnaround time for those documents to then be searchable by name on the Recorder's Office website. Learn more about the Office's [award-winning](#) data indexing process in the NACo awards section above.

I spoke with AZ Family's Spencer Blake in June to discuss the sellers' market in Maricopa County real estate right now and shared some "seller beware" tips to protect distressed homeowners from low-ball offers. Watch the interview and read [more here](#), and check out the social media [campaign!](#)

For more statistics on recording, please see [Appendix A](#).

## Voter Registration Department

The voter registration department remains busy as large numbers of voters continue to move to Maricopa County and new housing developments are mapped into districts. Between April 1 and June 30, we received 35,744 new voter registrations.

Voters regularly make updates to their voter registration records such as partisan affiliation, addresses, and active early voting list (AEVL) status, some of which require processing by the voter registration team. For example, between April 1 and June 30, we received 28,459 party changes.

The project to update the voter registration database is ongoing. Currently, information technology, database, and voter registration subject matter experts are viewing demonstrations of systems and conducting research to ensure a timely and thorough overhaul.

For more voter registration statistics, see [Appendix B](#).

## Elections Department

### [Just the Facts](#)

The Elections Department debuted a new way to get the facts about elections in Maricopa County. [JustTheFacts.Vote](#) is a repository of accurate information to address questions and misconceptions about the 2020 General Election as well as the processes and procedures that professional, dedicated, and impartial Election Department staff and bi-partisan temporary workers follow every election to ensure the safety, security, and integrity of the vote.

The site is divided into two main sections:

- [The Facts](#) section explains laws and guidelines that inform how the County conducts elections, and the checks and balances in place to ensure accuracy.
- [The Myth Busters](#) section addresses inaccurate claims that have spread about mail-in ballots, voter registration, the security of the County's election system, and more.

The website further demonstrates Maricopa County's commitment to transparency and to educating and empowering voters with timely, accurate information. The Elections Department will continue to update the page with new information as it arises.

Visit [JustTheFacts.Vote](#) and be sure to subscribe to the "[Just the Facts](#)" newsletter.

### Cave Creek Election

On May 18, the Elections Department concluded the Town of Cave Creek Jurisdictional Election. Pursuant to law for all-mail special elections, all eligible voters received a ballot in the mail even if they are not on the Active Early Voting List. Of the 4,385 registered voters eligible for this election, 1,595 ballots were cast, verified as good, and tabulated for a 36.37% turnout. The Town of Cave Creek had one proposition on the ballot: Proposition 461, which was a proposal to the voters for the ratification of the 2021 Town of Cave Creek General Plan. The voters passed Proposition 461.

I am grateful for the excellent partnership of the Town of Cave Creek in conducting this election.

### Tabulation Equipment

Before tabulating ballots in any election, the Department must perform a logic and accuracy test to make sure the tabulation equipment correctly reads the ovals as filled out on the ballots. The test is conducted by voting mock ballots that mirror the format of the actual ballots used. Those test ballots are run through the tabulators to make sure the tabulators match the pre-determined results. For federal elections, the Secretary of State oversees this mandatory process. For local elections, such as the Cave Creek election, the Department oversees this process, and the city or town clerks are invited. The recognized political parties are invited to all logic and accuracy tests.

After consulting with election technology and security experts at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, as well as other security experts, Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs sent a [letter](#) in May informing the County that it should never again use the tabulation equipment subpoenaed by the Senate, which then delivered the equipment to the uncertified contractor Cyber Ninjas. This Office will always run elections according to the law. The law requires that counties use federally and state certified equipment to count ballots. A.R.S. § 16-442 also gives the Arizona Secretary of State the authority to certify equipment for use in Arizona's elections. Because Secretary Hobbs will not certify the subpoenaed tabulation equipment for future elections, and because this Office will only use certified tabulators as required by the law, the County took steps to replace the subpoenaed tabulators for future elections.

## November 2021 Election

25 jurisdictions have notified the Elections Department that they will participate in the November 2021 election. From school district bonds and overrides to city measures, nearly 1.4 million voters will be eligible for this all-mail election. State law allows jurisdictions to hold ballot-by-mail elections, so all eligible voters will receive a ballot in the mail, even if they are not on the Active Early Voting List. Our teams are working with the jurisdictions to prepare the ballot language, find ballot replacement sites, and develop staffing plans and training. See the chart below for the full list of participating jurisdictions and the type of election each is holding. We'll be regularly updating [Calendar.Maricopa.Vote](#) and [BeBallotReady.Vote](#) so be sure to check those for more info!

<b>Cities &amp; Towns</b>	
City of Chandler	<i>Bonds (5)</i>
City of Scottsdale	<i>General Plan</i>
City of Surprise	<i>Franchise</i>
Town of Gilbert	<i>Bond and Franchise</i>
<b>School Districts</b>	
Agua Fria Union High School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Arlington Elementary School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Buckeye Elementary School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Buckeye Union High School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Cave Creek Unified School District	<i>Bond</i>
Chandler Unified School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Fountain Hills Unified School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation &amp; DAA</i>
Gil Bend Unified School District	<i>Join West-MEC</i>
Higley Unified School District	<i>Bond</i>
Isaac Elementary School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Kyrene Elementary School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Liberty Elementary School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Litchfield Elementary School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Littleton Elementary School District	<i>Bond &amp; Join West-MEC</i>
Pendergast Elementary School District	<i>Bond</i>
Phoenix Elementary School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation</i>
Phoenix Union High School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation &amp; DAA</i>
Queen Creek Unified School District	<i>Bond</i>
Riverside Elementary School District	<i>DAA</i>
Roosevelt Elementary School District	<i>M&amp;O Continuation &amp; DAA</i>
Tolleson Union High School District	<i>Bond</i>

M&O = Maintenance and Operations Override  
DAA = District Additional Assistance

## Premium Poll Worker Training

The Elections Department Premium Poll Worker training program has officially launched, and the first class of Premium Inspectors have been certified! This paid two-day (16-hour) training program gives our poll workers tools to be highly skilled Inspectors. The rigorous curriculum covers the technical aspects of their work in addition to team management techniques and insights into the elections process. By the end of the course, attendees are able to lead a team of poll workers to effectively manage a voting location with the highest standards of service to voters and security in operations.

## External Affairs Department

### Deputy Registrar Program

Trainings and certifications for the Recorder's Office [award-winning](#) Deputy Registrar program resumed digitally in April of this quarter. In person training is set to begin in August. The Office had 737 Deputy Registrars through 2020 and since April 26, we have seen this grow by 80 new Deputy Registrars for a total of 817! We greatly appreciate the volunteer efforts of our Deputy Registrars, helping to share accurate information in their communities about voter registration and support elections functions.

### Public Records Requests

During this second quarter, April 1 – June 30, the Office received 107 public records requests. Staff has been working hard to complete these requests and all but 4 of the 107 have been entirely resolved. See the breakdown here:

Extensive Research	47
Voter Data	33
Voter Information	23
Pending Form (to be suspended)	4

### Website & Social Media

The update of the Recorder's Office and Elections Department websites has begun. A working group is currently drafting a Request for Proposal in line with County Procurement policies to move into the next phase of the project.

The team is always looking to improve the customer and voter experience, so we have employed new methods of social media listening and tracking engagement across our channels. Our top performing posts this quarter are reliably the [monthly Voter Registration figures](#) the Office shares. My personal favorite post was our Star Wars themed '[May the Fourth Be With You!](#)' piece encouraging constituents to check the status and update their voter registration.

### Legislative Affairs

During the 2021 legislative session, the Government Relations team tracked over 150 bills related to areas of elections and recording. These bills ranged from simple technical corrections to laws that would fundamentally alter election administration.



Our Government Relations team played an active role in helping policymakers understand how changes in law would impact our office and its constituents. Partnering with the Recorders from the other 14 Arizona counties, the National Association of Counties (NACo), and Arizona Association of Counties (AACo), the team worked with legislators and staff to ensure representation of the constituents of Maricopa County. Below are five of the top legislative changes made to the area of election administration:

1. [SB 1485](#) (early voting list; eligibility). This bill will update the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) to be the Active Early Voting List (AEVL). There was a great deal of media attention given to this bill due to the fear that hundreds of thousands of voters would be removed from the voting lists. The bill is a maintenance update to remove *inactive* voters from the mail-in ballot list. During the next four years (two election cycles), the Recorder's Office will still be sending early ballots to every voter on the early voting list. If a voter does not return a single ballot within that time frame (returning the ballot at a polling location or drop box counts as returning the ballot), then the Recorder's Office will send a postcard asking if the voter would like to remain on the early voting list. If the voter does not return the postcard after 90 days, the voter will no longer receive an early ballot. The voter is *not* removed from the voting rolls.
2. [HB 2307](#) (voting equipment; overvote notice). This bill will improve the voting experience at polling locations on Election Day, as voters will know more about the process of how on-site tabulation machines work. These tabulators are very sophisticated and can help a voter avoid casting a ballot with under or over-votes. There was some confusion in the 2020 election that will now be easier to understand.
3. [SB 1003](#) (early voting; signature required; notice). This law prohibits election officials from counting an early (mail-in) ballot that does not have a signature from the voter after election day. The signature is for an affidavit (legal proclamation) that the voter understands the process. The Recorder's Office uses this signature as a means of validation of the voter's identification. If a voter mails their ballot without the signature, we will make every effort to reach out to correct the mistake. Questionable and mismatched signatures will still be able to be corrected for up to five days after the election. This does not impact operations for the Maricopa County Recorder's Office and Elections Department as the existing standard practice is to consider any ballot envelopes with missing signatures after 7pm on Election Day as 'late' and therefore not counted.
4. [SB 1497](#) (ballot measures; proposition 105; disclosure). This law requires a disclosure regarding proposition 105 (Voter Protection Act of 1998) to be printed on your ballot. This may make it necessary to send two-page ballots to voters during general elections with numerous referendums and initiatives. Two-page ballots have caused issues in the past, as a large percentage of voters did not return page two of the ballot.
5. [HB 2569](#) (elections; private funding; prohibition). This law prohibits election administrators from receiving or expending private monies for the purpose of preparing,

administering, or conducting an election, including voter registration. This bill does not prohibit elections departments from receiving government grants and/or funding. Maricopa County is committed to running free, safe, and secure elections regardless of funding source.

## Office Operations

### Return to Office

As the Office navigates the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, I am proud of the collaborative work done to ensure a safe environment at the Office for team members. We are mitigating risk and embracing some “silver linings” realized by employees during the pandemic by providing resources for many staff members to work at home and in the office on a hybrid basis. Several divisions have staff staggering employees’ days in office. We will continue to closely monitor the situation regarding the pandemic and work with County Public Health officials to ensure the safety and health of staff. Maricopa County offered an employee vaccine program, and provides safety supplies such as masks, cleaning supplies, and sanitizer.

### Internal Communications & Training

In order to help foster a one-team culture and collaboration in the agency, I instituted monthly virtual Town Halls with all 165 staff members to communicate major updates as well as answer questions the team has for leadership. While we may not all be working in the same building at the same time, we are all serving for the benefit of Maricopa County voters and customers, and I believe it is important to keep that mission front and center and ensure staff know they are supported in their work.

Our team also moved to a new performance evaluation platform this quarter. I am grateful to all the managers and staff who provided thoughtful contributions and reviews to continue to develop the professionalism and outstanding service this Office provides to Maricopa County.

### Facilities Updates

As of July, the customer lobby for Recording Services at the downtown Recorder’s Office location at 111 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave in Phoenix is open to the public. I have heard nothing but positive feedback on the excellent customer service provided by the team working the front counter.

The Maricopa County Elections Department (MCTEC) on Lincoln & 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is undergoing some facility updates and staff is available to meet by appointment only. For the next election, we relocated the drive-through ballot dropbox on the MCTEC property to improve traffic flow and ease for voters – the dropbox is now on the driver’s side!

The Mesa Recorder’s Office on Javelina remains closed at this time due to construction.

Looking to the future, all indicators point to the continued growth of Maricopa County. In order to continue to meet the needs of the public, the Recorder’s Office and Elections Department have started a space planning study to ensure our facilities are up to the task of meeting staffing and operations requirements.

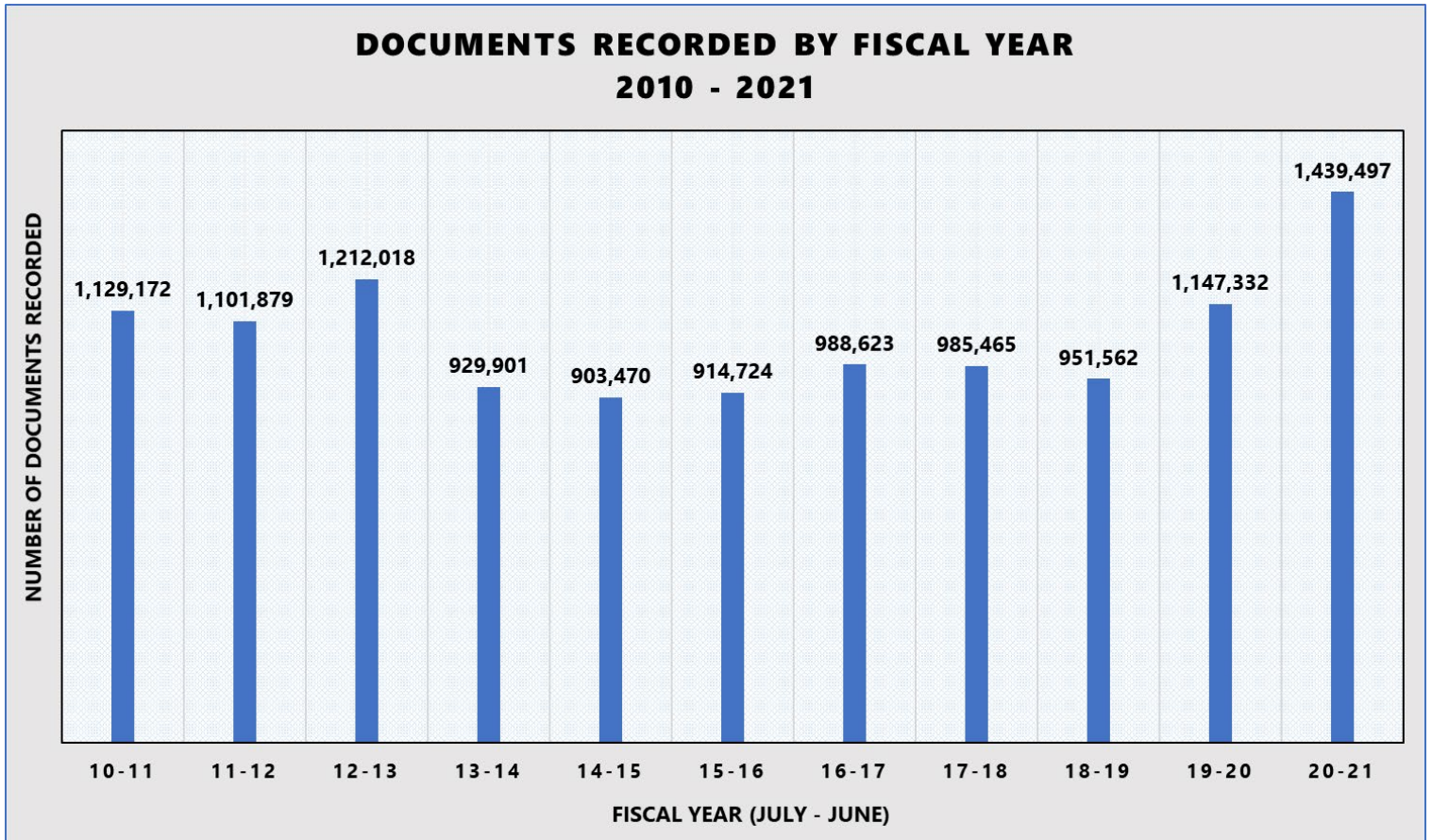
## Contact Us

If you have any questions, please contact the team at [voterinfo@risc.maricopa.gov](mailto:voterinfo@risc.maricopa.gov).

## Appendix A – Recording Services Statistics

### Appendix A – Recording Services Statistics – Infographic

Total documents recorded by Maricopa County Recorder’s Office each fiscal year since 2010.



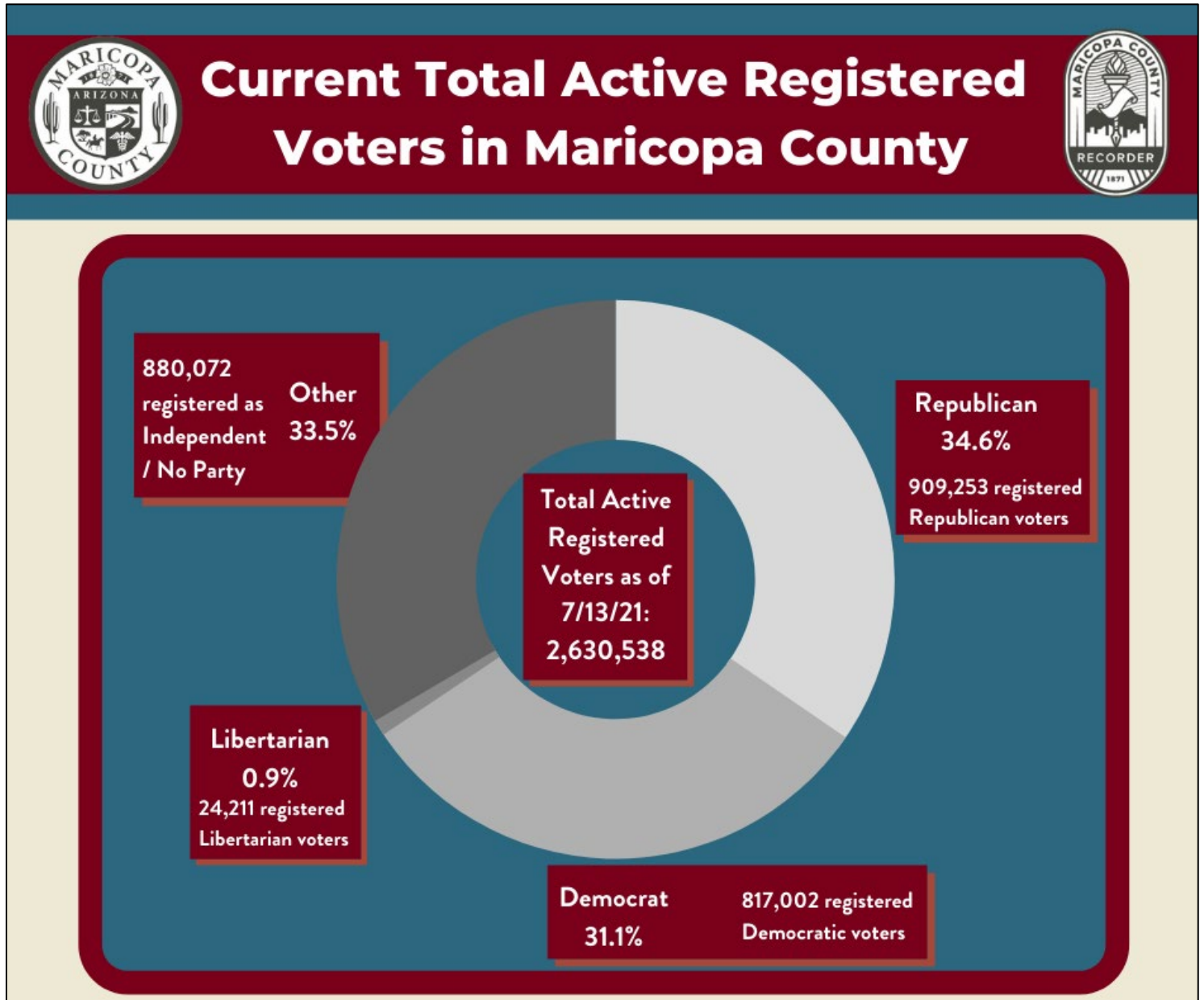
The Recording Services department accepts documents to be made a permanent and public record. These documents are real property related (ex. deeds, titles, liens) and include any encumbrances placed on real property. 93% of all documents recorded are now done digitally through the Office’s online portal, though we also continue to serve customers in-person at our public counter in downtown Phoenix.

## Appendix B – Voter Registration Figures

See Voter Registration totals updated in real time [on our website](#).

### Infographic 1

Totals of active registered voters by party in Maricopa County as of July 13, 2021.

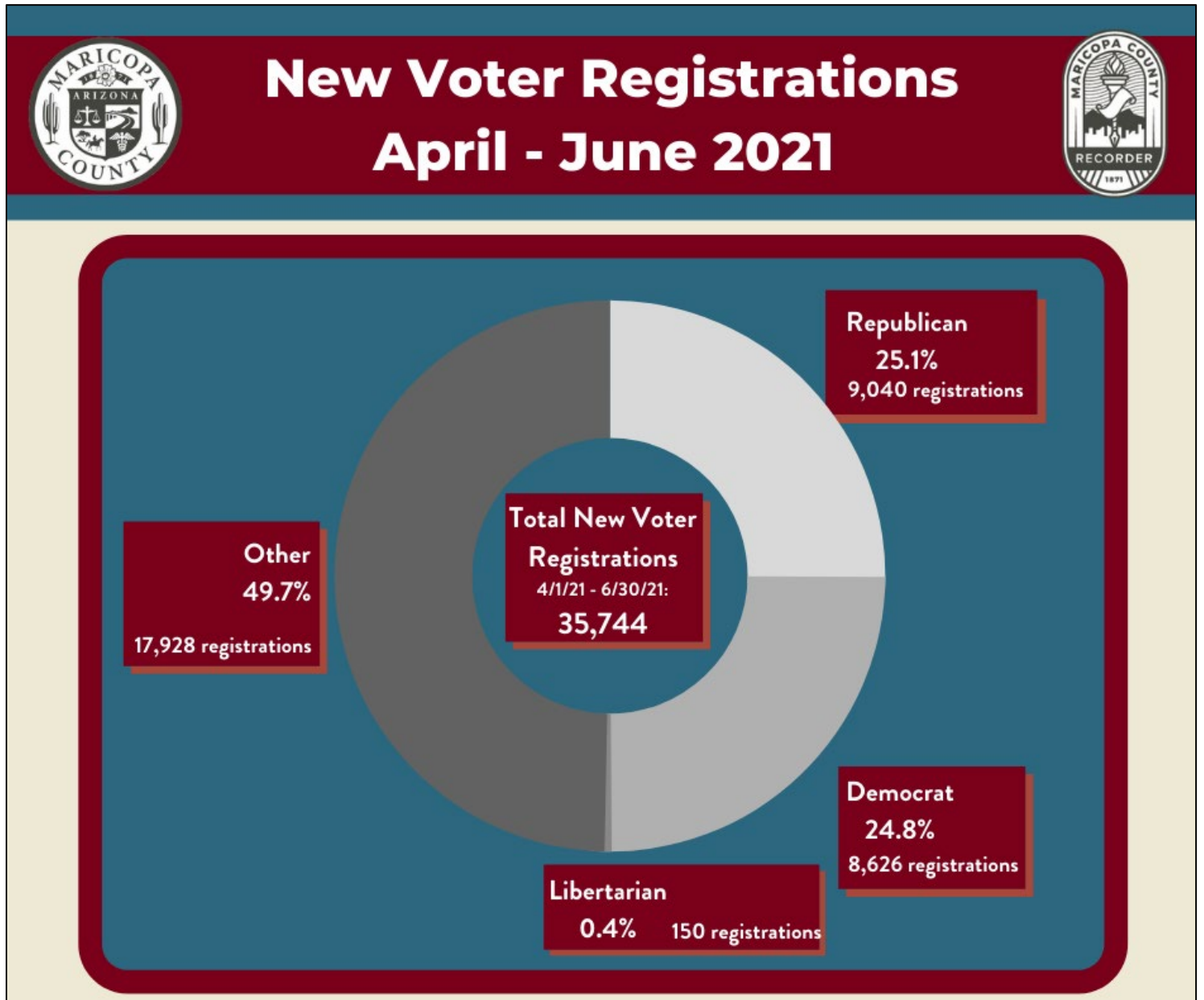


*\*Data retrieved July 13, 2021. Voter registration figures may fluctuate in real time due to ongoing voter list maintenance*

## Appendix B – Voter Registration Figures

### Infographic 2:

Totals of newly registered voters by party in Maricopa County between April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021.



*\*Data retrieved July 13, 2021. Voter registration figures may fluctuate in real time due to ongoing voter list maintenance*

## Appendix B – Voter Registration Figures

### Infographic 3:

Political Party Voter Registration changes in Maricopa County from April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021.



*\*Data retrieved July 13, 2021. Voter registration figures may fluctuate in real time due to ongoing voter list maintenance*