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# Board of Supervisors Memorandum

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July 15, 2025

## 2026 Legislative Agenda

### Background

Each year Pima County approves an annual Legislative Agenda, which ensures that the interests of the County are represented with elected and appointed officials in both the State and Federal governments. The Legislative Agenda provides a delineation of the key governmental issues determined by the Board of Supervisors, which allows for the appropriate planning and management of Pima County's response to legislative issues.

### 2026 Federal and State Legislative Agenda

The annual process of developing a Legislative Agenda begins a full seven months prior to the commencement of the actual Legislative session, requiring the initial drafting of proposed statutes, rules or regulations to begin prior to the adjournment of the previous Legislative year. While this may seem premature, the consideration of items at this time enables Pima County to actively participate in the development of a statewide effort on behalf of counties and our constituents. Pima County works closely with the County Supervisors Association (CSA) on legislative issues not only to ensure that our county's goals are reflected in the advocacy work conducted by the CSA, but to enable our voice to be strengthened by the combining of the voices of all counties. The CSA requires counties to submit their ideas for the next legislative session in the first week of August. Approval of the Pima County Legislative Agenda on July 15 will enable Pima County to have our priorities considered at the Legislative Summit, which will take place October 28 - 30, 2025 for which items must be submitted by August 8, 2025. It is at that Summit that a statewide initiative will be adopted, delineating the important issues facing Arizona's counties.

In addition, the Pima County Legislative Agenda for 2026 identifies items that may be unique to Pima County or that are informed by partners other than County Departments, which require an educational and/or advocacy effort by County staff or consultants but may not be included in the CSA agenda.

As always, the legislative process is one that is evolving and dynamic. Additional issues may arise and amendments to the Pima County Legislative Agenda may be required prior to and during each legislative session. Additional items can and will be considered by the Board of Supervisors for educational and/or advocacy efforts at any time.

County elected and appointed officials are in frequent communication with the County's lobbyist and are regularly updated on bills that may impact the people of Pima County. As bills are being introduced, bills that may be of interest to our residents are flagged by members of the Board of Supervisors, our lobbyist, or County personnel. Action by the Board throughout the year may amend this initial document.

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### State Agenda

Earlier this year, County Departments were asked to identify items within their department and budget that are:

- resulting from statutorily mandated procedures that are not beneficial to the public or cost effective;
- costs that have been unjustifiably shifted to the County from the State;
- mandated services for which the State provides no or inadequate funding; and
- existing revenues and authorities from the State that the Departments have reason to believe will be at risk next year.

Proposals received were aligned with the County's continued broad legislative goals, which are again for 2026, as follows:

1. Protect the Pima County Taxpayer;
2. Invest in Pima County's Infrastructure;
3. Maintain or Strengthen Critical Programs;
4. Fortify Public Safety; and
5. Support the County Supervisors Association Adopted Legislative Agenda.

Each and every year, Pima County resolves to consistently oppose any and all proposed legislation or rules that seek to limit the authority of the County or to shift to the County costs that are appropriately borne by the State of Arizona.

Attached please find Resolution No. 2025-\_\_\_\_\_, adopting the County legislative program for 2026 (Attachment).

#### 1. Protect the County Taxpayer

Each year the State of Arizona transfers to Pima County the cost of many programs, some regardless of policy connection.

Currently, these transfers total approximately \$125.9 million and represent almost 26% of the General Fund primary property tax rate and we have little choice other than to accept State cost transfers. It is proposed, therefore, that the County oppose any and all State cost transfers that increase the tax burden of Pima County residents.

For several years, the Procurement Department has submitted proposals that are intended to modernize the process of bid notices, vendor registration and sales of surplus properties. While these proposals may have an impact on how the County does business and might lower the financial impact on Pima County residents, they may also have a negative impact on the printed newspaper industry in Arizona. Pima County proposes to work with the Arizona Media Association while working to modernize and improve public notice practices.

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In accordance with the Pima County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2023-2026, it is recommended that Pima County monitor and advise as appropriate on topics including but not limited to grant opportunities for development and support of job training and workforce development, rural broadband infrastructure, and innovation in technology sectors.

Over the years the County has discussed various means to fund critical programmatic and physical needs. These include the possible creation of districts such as fire districts, health care districts or jail districts. It is recommended that Pima County research and advocate for any legislative modifications necessary to afford the greatest flexibility to the Board of Supervisors should it be determined that the creation of a district is beneficial to the residents of Pima County.

The Pima County Board of Supervisors has acted to oppose the legacy issue of racist Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CCR), which historically disenfranchised people of color and other minoritized communities. Racist covenants are no longer enforceable following the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, but they remain on many home deeds, serving as a reminder of the discrimination. While homeowners may vote to amend the rules, recording the updated CCRs requires a \$30 recording fee per State Statute. In addition, many subdivisions have "perpetuity clauses" stipulating that the racist language is perpetual and not amendable. It is proposed that Pima County work to amend State Statute by make it easier to rescind the racist language, which may include the elimination of the recording when the reason for the amendment is to eliminate racist CCRs.

## 2. Invest in Pima County's Infrastructure

In Arizona today, residents of affordable housing are nearly twice as likely to lack high-speed internet connections as compared to the general population. Pima County's Prosperity Initiative and the commitment by Pima County and the State of Arizona to affordable housing, homeless shelter services, and workforce development are all highly dependent on access to high-speed internet, digital skills training, and fully-capable computer devices for individuals served by these efforts. Dedicated funding to establish grants and incentives can offset the high cost of deployment, thereby removing barriers to access.

It is proposed that Pima County support the State of Arizona's establishment of the Homeless Shelter and Services Fund, which dedicates monies from the State Housing Trust Fund for affordable housing developers statewide and encourages the inclusion of reliable, affordable internet access in affordable housing to support resident stability and wellness.

Transportation financing and funding in the State of Arizona is outdated and inadequate to cover the transportation network needs. Transportation revenue and funding reform is needed at the federal, state and local level.

Arizona's transportation infrastructure system has become significantly outdated as the base tax rate has not been adjusted in over 30 years and the system has not evolved to capture revenues from alternative fuel vehicles. Base funding revenues are barely adequate at this point to maintain the state highway system much less provide for new construction. It is

critical that Arizona update its mechanisms for funding both state and local transportation infrastructure.

Additionally, the injection of State General Fund monies into transportation projects has been done by the Legislature selecting individual projects and not through the State's transportation priority planning process. This undermines the orderly development and prioritization of projects.

It is proposed, therefore, that additional State General Fund revenues provided by the Legislature for transportation projects should be processed through the State Department of Transportation's priority planning process.

Further Pima County supports the adoption of alternative and additional State Revenue sources to support transportation and infrastructure. As new revenue sources are considered and adopted the existing revenue distribution formulas should be reviewed to ensure a more equitable distribution of funds.

### 3. Maintain or Strengthen Critical Programs

A variety of critical programs that serve the people of Pima County are either funded by the State of Arizona or are an integral part of the provision of State services to Pima County residents, which are successful due to continued State support. Advocacy for the continued support of funding is particularly important at a time when there is great uncertainty about the receipt of federal dollars by either the State or Pima County.

The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) provides a critical function as it safeguards compliance with the National and State Historic Preservation Acts and the National Environmental Policy Act. Pima County encourages full funding of SHPO to include the required State match to ensure uninterrupted compliance with federal and state preservation laws and protect Arizona's eligibility for federal infrastructure and preservation funds.

In addition, funding of SHPO provides for the continued administration of the State Historic Property Tax Reclassification (SPT) program, which provides property tax relief to more than 3,800 Pima County homeowners.

Everyday residents of Pima County are impacted by increased activities related to dry and hot weather in our region. Continued funding of the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) is critical to the emergency response to floods and wildfire in Pima and many other counties. It is proposed, therefore, that Pima County advocate for the provision of adequate funding for the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management.

The Pima County Health Department is responsible for a wide range of activities to maintain and promote public health and to prevent and mitigate disease and other health threats. In recent years, legislation has been introduced that would curb the authority of the County's public health agency to respond to local public health emergencies. It is proposed that Pima

County oppose any effort to limit the ability to respond to public health emergencies appropriately.

It is proposed that Pima County support efforts to ensure funding of critical public health programs, including but not limited to immunization clinics, maternal and child health services, disease prevention initiatives, and behavioral health outreach.

Recognizing that current State regulations fund an inadequate 15 days of inpatient substance use disorder treatment, which contributes to high rates of relapse, overdose, and incarceration, it is proposed that Pima County support efforts to increase the minimum standard for inpatient substance use disorder treatment and to expand Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) coverage of this necessary care.

There are efforts underway across the state for which it is proposed that Pima County actively assist and support legislative efforts to regulate or prohibit the use of Kava (*Piper Methysticum*) as a food or beverage additive in retail establishments, and to also provide assistance to ensure continued access to reproductive healthcare, including but not limited to sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, cancer screenings and contraception.

Pima County, through its partnership with the City of Tucson, the Towns of Marana and Oro Valley, school districts and the utilization of private funds to the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona continues to fund scholarships for preschool age children (3 to 5 years old) from income eligible families, at a cost of approximately \$10 million a year through the Pima Early Education Program (PEEPs).

The PEEP program will be much less effective if statewide funding for preschool and childcare decreases dramatically next fiscal year. Ongoing support from the State of Arizona through the Department of Economic Security (DES), provides for childcare subsidy reimbursements to childcare providers for low-income working parents and foster children at rates that continue to meet the cost of providing quality childcare. This funding and financial support to providers is critical to the success of the PEEP program. It is proposed, therefore, that Pima County advocate for appropriate State General Fund allocations to maintain DES childcare subsidy reimbursement rates equal to the cost of providing quality childcare.

#### 4. Fortify Public Safety

Inadequate or unfair insurance policies and practices for homeowners who are potentially at risk of wildfire must be addressed with the imposition of stricter guidelines during the 2026 Legislative Session. It is proposed that Pima County encourage legislation that mandates the use of wildfire risk modeling for properties in smaller cities, towns and communities in wildland-urban interface areas, requiring insurers to offer possible rate reductions reflecting mitigation efforts like Firewise USA designations. Pima County further supports any other amendment to State Statutes regarding fire insurance that modifies the grounds for policy cancellation and nonrenewal, or significant rate increases, by limiting reasons an insurer can refuse to continue coverage.

During the last Legislative Session, grants for Coordinated Reentry from the jails were approved but Maricopa and Pima Counties were excluded from eligibility. These programs are designed to support incarcerated individuals with behavioral health and substance use needs, beginning at the point of booking and continuing through release and reentry. It is proposed that Pima County advocate for the expansion of A.R.S. 11-392 to include Pima County, providing funding that is available to others in the State of Arizona to support a jail reentry program with early screening to reduce recidivism.

While Pima County has historically supported specific legislation, it is proposed that for the 2026 Legislative Session, Pima County promote and support efforts to address alcohol and substance abuse intervention and treatments in coordination with the broad range of statewide stakeholders including but not limited to criminal justice advocates and mental health treatment advocates.

In the past, Pima County proposed an outline to support Severe Threat Orders of Protection, also known as “red flag laws” and “extreme risk orders of protection,” as a way to stop mass shootings and other gun-related tragedies by temporarily intervening to suspend a person’s access to firearms if they show clear warnings. It is proposed that in 2026 Pima County support “red flag laws” and all measures to promote the safe use of firearms and reduce unintentional injuries and suicide due to firearms.

Court costs and salaries of probation officers are one of the fastest growing expenses in the County budget. The County has very limited control over either one of these items, however, we bear significant financial responsibility for both. Legislative funding appropriations have failed to keep pace with the State's responsibility to fund these programs. The County should endeavor to better align the costs and responsibility for the operation of the Courts and the probation systems to limit the impact of County taxpayers. Additionally, the costs, roles, and responsibility of Constables should be better aligned with modern practices of cost control and responsibility. In coordination with the County Supervisors Association, the County should work with the legislature to redefine the respective roles and funding responsibilities in statute.

#### Federal Agenda

While Pima County’s federal lobbying efforts rarely focus on specific legislation, federal actions may negatively impact the County’s access to federal dollars and our ability to make and enforce rules and regulations to support critical infrastructure and local programs. Of particular concern in 2026 are potential cuts to Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). It is proposed that Pima County oppose any cuts that would disenroll individuals, limit covered services or increase administrative barriers to care.

Additional federal programs potentially impacted include but are not limited to additional funding for Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for workforce-development programs, and funding for youth programs, transportation and communications infrastructure.

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Support the County Supervisors Association Adopted Legislative Agenda

The County actively participates in and closely monitors the County Supervisors Association (CSA) and their priorities for the upcoming legislative session. In October, the CSA Legislative Summit will be held at which time statewide priorities and strategies for counties will be developed.

Recommendation

I recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt Resolution No. 2025 - \_\_\_\_\_ adopting Pima County's legislative program for 2026.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan Leshner", with a stylized, cursive script.

Jan Leshner  
County Administrator

JKL/anc – July 3, 2025

Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator  
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator  
Michael Racy, Racy Associates, Inc.

**PIMA COUNTY  
RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN PIMA COUNTY ARIZONA  
ADOPTING A PIMA COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR 2026**

IT IS RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF PIMA COUNTY, ARIZONA,  
AS FOLLOWS:

**Section 1**

That those persons authorized by Pima County to lobby on its behalf and registered as such with the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes §41-1231 et seq. (the "County Lobbyists") are hereby authorized and directed, subject to the continuing supervision of the Pima County Administrator and this Board, to represent and pursue the legislative interests of Pima County by supporting legislation that embodies any of the following basic principles:

- A. Empowers Pima County with sufficient flexibility to address an expanding and changing variety of local needs and conditions.
- B. Provides Pima County with the means to cope with inflationary cost increases, population growth, and escalating service requirements.
- C. Enables Pima County to provide public services in a more responsive, efficient, and cost-effective manner.
- D. Defines appropriate fiscal and administrative responsibilities within various Federal/County, State/County, and City/County joint programs.

Conversely, legislation that is inconsistent with any of these basic principles should be opposed or appropriate amendments pursued.

**Section 2**

That, in addition to those basic principles set forth in Section 1, the County Lobbyists are authorized and directed to pursue the following specific objectives:



A. Protect the County Taxpayer

1. Oppose any State Cost Transfer that would transfer cost to the County.
2. Modernize the process of bid notices, vendor registration, and sales of surplus properties.
3. Monitor and advise on economic and workforce development, including support for rural broadband infrastructure.
4. Research and advocate for modifications to special taxing districts to provide the greatest flexibility to the Board of Supervisors.
5. Advocate for a streamlined process to eliminate racist Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCRs) including the elimination of a recording fee for associated amended deeds.

B. Invest in Pima County's Infrastructure

1. Support dedicated funding to incentivize the deployment of high-speed internet connections to traditionally underserved areas and facilities to remove barriers to access.
2. Advocate for the State of Arizona's establishment of the Homeless Shelter and Services Fund, which dedicates monies from the State Housing Trust Fund to encourage the inclusion of reliable, affordable internet access in affordable housing developments.
3. Advocate for funding and financing for both new roads and maintenance of the existing transportation infrastructure and to address the outdated and inadequate funding and financing of transportation network needs.

C. Maintain or Strengthen Critical Programs

1. Encourage full funding of the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to include the required State match to ensure uninterrupted compliance with federal and state preservation laws and to protect Arizona's eligibility for federal infrastructure and preservation funds.
2. Provide adequate funding for the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management.
3. Protect the public health authority.
4. Advocate for funding of critical public health programs, including but not limited to immunization clinics, maternal and child health services, disease prevention initiatives, and behavioral health outreach.

5. Support efforts to increase the minimum standard for inpatient substance use disorder treatment and to expand Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) coverage of this necessary care.
6. Work to regulate or prohibit the use of Kava (Piper Methysticum) as a food or beverage additive in retail establishments.
7. Promote continued access to reproductive healthcare, including but not limited to sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, cancer screenings, and contraception.
8. Advocate for appropriate State General Fund allocations to maintain Department of Economic Security (DES) childcare subsidy reimbursement rates equal to the cost of providing quality childcare.

#### D. Fortify Public Safety

1. Encourage legislation that mandates the use of wildfire risk modeling for properties in wildland-urban interface areas, requiring insurers to offer possible rate reductions reflecting mitigation efforts like Firewise USA designations.
2. Support efforts to modify the grounds for wildfire insurance policy cancellation and nonrenewal, and to oppose significant rate increases.
3. Advocate for the expansion of the Coordinated Reentry program to include Pima County, providing funding that is available to others in the State of Arizona.
4. Promote efforts to address intervention and treatments for both alcohol and substance abuse.
5. Support severe orders of protection (“red flag laws”) and all measures to promote the safe use of firearms and reduce unintentional injuries and suicide due to firearms.
6. Work to redefine the respective roles and funding responsibilities of Pima County and the Courts related to court costs and salaries of probation officers.
7. Review the costs, roles, and responsibility of the constables and advance concepts for reform of the position.

#### E. Federal Advocacy

County federal lobbyists shall advocate for the County’s access to federal dollars and to make and enforce rules and regulations to support critical infrastructure and local programs and efforts to avoid street release in support of the federal response to the passage of legal asylum seekers through Pima County.

F. Support the County Supervisors Association Adopted Legislative Agenda

Continue to support the County Supervisors Association Adopted Legislative Agenda.

G. Monitor Legislative Efforts of Countywide Elected Officials and Other Associations

Direct County Staff to work with Countywide Elected Officials, Arizona Association of Counties and other statewide organizations to monitor legislation proposed and endorsed by these partners and to report to the Board of Supervisors on any action recommended by the County Administrator or County Lobbyist.

**PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED** by the Board of Supervisors, Pima County, Arizona this 15<sup>th</sup> day of July 2025.

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Rex Scott, Chairman  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

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Melissa Manriquez, Clerk of the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
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Bobby Yu, Deputy County Attorney