

Coordinated Cross Agency Partnerships for Election Day Resilience



Maricopa County accounts for more than 60 percent of Arizona’s voting population with over 2.6 million registered voters. Under the vote center model, the County operated more than 240 vote centers during the 2024 Presidential Election. Given this scale, strong security and law enforcement partnerships are essential to protecting voters, election staff, and voting operations.

Between 2022 and 2025, Maricopa County Elections (MCE) leveraged its designation as a critical infrastructure to formalize and expand key partnerships.

These include the Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center (ACTIC), the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO), Maricopa County Emergency Management (MCEM), the Arizona Secretary of State’s Office, the F.B.I., local fire departments, County IT (Enterprise Technology and Innovation), and the non-partisan Election Protection organization.. The program’s innovation lies in integrating these agencies into a single, coordinated Election Day response structure rather than relying on separate, siloed communication channels. These coordinated relationships support safe, reliable, secure, accessible, and transparent elections

Partnerships, Roles, Planning, and Teamwork

Building this coordinated structure required deliberate planning, clearly defined roles, and sustained relationships management across agencies. As a designated critical infrastructure, MCE recognized the need to align resources, establish shared expectations, and create consistent communication pathways to support secure Election Day operations. Prior to implementing this model, coordination occurred across agencies but was not centralized in a single, real-time operational environment.

From the outset, the department focused on establishing operational best practices grounded in centralized monitoring, structured communication, and clearly defined escalation procedures. This required designing the Command Center framework, identifying agency points of contact, clarifying responsibilities in advance of Election Day, and maintaining ongoing collaboration throughout the year. The result is a coordinated response structure built not only on partnership, but on preparation and shared mission.

Partnerships

Through clearly identified partnerships and defined roles, MCE established a unified mission to ensure consistent security and operational continuity across the County during elections up to Election Day. Each partner plays a specific and coordinated role in supporting safe and secure elections. Key partners include:

- ACTIC – Arizona Counter Intelligence Information Center
- MCSO – Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office
- MECM – Maricopa County Emergency Management
- AZSOS – Arizona Secretary of State’s Office
- FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Local fire departments
- Maricopa County ETI – Enterprise Technology and Innovation
- Election Protection – a Non-partisan election protection organizations

Roles



ACTIC – Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center

One of Maricopa County Elections critical partnerships is with the Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center (ACTIC). ACTIC provides access to advanced intelligence and security resources, including multi-agency tip lines, Terrorism Liaison Officers (TLOs), field intelligence teams, social media monitoring units, drone support, and direct connections to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. While ACTIC supports the entire state, its partnership with Maricopa County Elections ensures dedicated situational awareness and rapid threat assessment during elections.

On Election Day, ACTIC embeds into MCE’s operational structure by participating in the 24-hour, real-time “Bridge” Microsoft Teams chat alongside Elections leadership and the County Information Security Officer. This continuous coordination enables immediate intelligence sharing, threat evaluation, and response planning. In the event of a security concern, information is escalated quickly, allowing for proactive mitigation rather than reactive response.

In April 2025, Maricopa County Elections implemented a mobile field management system that provides live GPS tracking and real-time visibility into vote center conditions. When combined with ACTIC’s intelligence monitoring and continuous communication on the Bridge, this integrated approach strengthens response times, improves operational accuracy, and helps ensure that voting can continue safely and without disruption.



MCSO – Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office

The Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) shares Maricopa County Elections commitment to ensuring that every vote center provides a safe, secure, and non-intimidating environment for voters and election staff. To maintain alignment and



readiness, MCE leadership meets with MCSO every 45 to 60 days to review operational logistics, security protocols, and emerging challenges. These meetings also include technical coordination related to wireless connectivity, communications systems, phone service, and election equipment to ensure infrastructure readiness before Election Day.

As part of its contingency posture, MCSO activates its Election Day operations **48 hours prior to Election Day** with dedicated personnel from the Counter Terrorism Division assigned to support Elections. The team assembles the evening before Election Day to begin monitoring social media platforms and dark web chatter for potential threats, misinformation, or coordinated disruption efforts.

On Election Day, MCSO dedicates two sergeants and two deputies specifically to MCE operations within the Elections Command Center. In total, six MCSO personnel are embedded on Election Day, allowing for immediate coordination and response. In the morning, the team reconvenes for a formal briefing and continues real-time monitoring throughout the day. Analysts assess the validity of online posts and determine whether they pose a credible security concern. Verified information is communicated immediately to Maricopa County Elections leadership and the Communications Team to ensure timely and accurate public messaging. During the 2024 Presidential Election, for example, a false social media post claimed that an armed voter had entered a vote center. MCSO analysts quickly investigated, determined the claim was unfounded, and coordinated public clarification—preventing unnecessary concern and disruption.

MCSO also deploys external teams across the County focused on vote center security, with field officers positioned strategically and prepared to respond as needed. Deputies communicate with local police agencies and coordinate across jurisdictions to ensure comprehensive coverage.

When necessary, MCSO deputies assist polling location personnel in managing non-compliant individuals, but only after election staff have made multiple attempts to resolve the situation independently. In addition, MCSO provides uniformed and marked escorts for the secure transportation of election-related materials.

Prior to each election, MCE provides MCSO with a detailed file listing all vote center locations, addresses, and service dates. For larger elections, MCSO organizes vote centers into geographic quadrants, assigning squads of deputies in plain clothes and unmarked vehicles to monitor and support each area. This structured approach ensures rapid response capability and enhances voter confidence while maintaining operational continuity.



Maricopa County Vote Center Locations - 2024 November General
 Locations and hours of operations are subject to change. Check Locations.Maricopa.Vote for the most up-to-date
 Ballot drop off locations are listed below the vote centers. Report created on 2/10/2026 1:47:57 PM.

Facility Name	Street Address	Start Date	10/9/2024	11/4/2024	11/5/2024
Vote Center Locations (in-person voting with drop boxes) *This location is open as a drop box only site on these days. See drop box hours in the section below. **Non-Electioneering Site					
ASU A.E. ENGLAND (PARKING ON CENTRAL AND FILMORE)	424 N CENTRAL AVE, PHOENIX, AZ 85004	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
ASU POLYTECHNIC CAMPUS	5999 S BACKUS MALL, MESA, AZ 85212	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
ASU SUN DEVIL FITNESS CENTER (FREE PARKING)	400 E APACHE BLVD, TEMPE, AZ 85281	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
ASU WEST CAMPUS	4701 W THUNDERBIRD RD, GLENDALE, AZ 85306	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
AVONDALE CITY HALL	11465 W CIVIC CENTER DR 200, AVONDALE, AZ 85323	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
BUCKEYE CITY HALL	530 E MONROE AVE, BUCKEYE, AZ 85326	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
EL MIRAGE CITY HALL	10000 N EL MIRAGE RD, EL MIRAGE, AZ 85335	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
FLORENCE ELY NELSON DESERT PARK REC CTR	8950 E PINNACLE PEAK RD, SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85255	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
GILBERT PUBLIC WORKS NORTH AREA SERVICE CENTER	900 E JUNIPER AVE, GILBERT, AZ 85234	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
INDIAN BEND WASH VISITOR CENTER	4201 N HAYDEN RD, SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85251	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
SURPRISE CITY HALL	16000 N CIVIC CENTER PLZ, SURPRISE, AZ 85374	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
TOLLESON CIVIC CENTER	9055 W VAN BUREN ST, TOLLESON, AZ 85353	10/9/2024	9:00A-5:00P	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
ALHAMBRA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICE	4510 N 37TH AVE, PHOENIX, AZ 85019	10/25/2024	CLOSED	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
BICENTENNIAL NORTH SCHOOL	7237 W MISSOURI AVE, GLENDALE, AZ 85303	10/25/2024	CLOSED	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
BUCKEYE FIRE STATION 704	27360 W WAGNER COMPLEX DR, BUCKEYE, AZ 85396	10/25/2024	CLOSED	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
CAREFREE TOWN COUNCIL CENTER	33 EASY ST, CAREFREE, AZ 85377	10/25/2024	CLOSED	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
CAVE CREEK TOWN HALL	37622 N CAVE CREEK RD, CAVE CREEK, AZ 85331	10/25/2024	DROP BOX ONLY*	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P
CHANDLER/GILBERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE	2626 E PECOS RD, CHANDLER, AZ 85225	10/25/2024	DROP BOX ONLY*	9:00A-5:00P	6:00A-7:00P

Maricopa County Emergency Management

Maricopa County Emergency Management assigns a dedicated on-site point of contact with full deployment authority to support Maricopa County Election Day operations. Their primary focus is disaster response, hazard mitigation, and life safety. Additional Emergency Management personnel remain available for rapid deployment from their command center in Gilbert, ensuring immediate support when needed.

Their role proved critical during a flash flood that impacted a vote center location in the 2022 Primary Election. Emergency Management assisted in safely relocating vote center equipment and secured ballots to an alternate site. No ballots were damaged or compromised, and voting resumed within one hour at a nearby location. The relocation was coordinated through the Elections Command Center, with timely communication provided to the Communications Team and disseminated to voters via the County website and social media channels.



Arizona Secretary of State (AZSOS)

While not embedded full-time within the Command Center, this partner maintains a strong interest in monitoring Maricopa County's Election Day communications. They assign dedicated personnel who monitor communications at the statewide, national, and global levels. Maricopa County Elections participates in their monthly virtual meetings to maintain situational awareness and strengthen coordination. They are also a valuable resource, providing social media training that helps our team identify and address issues that may arise online during the election cycle.



FBI

MCE maintains ongoing coordination with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) through established monthly briefing calls focused on election security and threat awareness. As part of this partnership, a Special Agent in Charge is assigned specifically to Maricopa County to serve as a direct point of contact for election-related matters. This dedicated liaison strengthens information-sharing, ensures timely communication regarding potential threats, and enhances coordination between federal law enforcement and local election officials. The partnership provides an additional layer of situational awareness and preparedness, reinforcing the County's ability to respond quickly and effectively to emerging security concerns.

Election Protection

This non-partisan national organization works year-round to advance and protect the right to vote. Through a variety of tools and monitoring efforts, the group supports election integrity and voter access. During elections, it maintains a dedicated email channel used by election observers, attorneys, political party representatives, city clerks, and other stakeholders to report concerns or potential issues in real time.

The Arizona Secretary of State's Office distributes these communications to the Director of Maricopa County Elections and relevant subject matter experts for review and response. The shared inbox provides a transparent and centralized reporting mechanism, ensuring that questions or concerns are evaluated promptly and addressed appropriately.

Maricopa County Enterprise Technology & Innovation

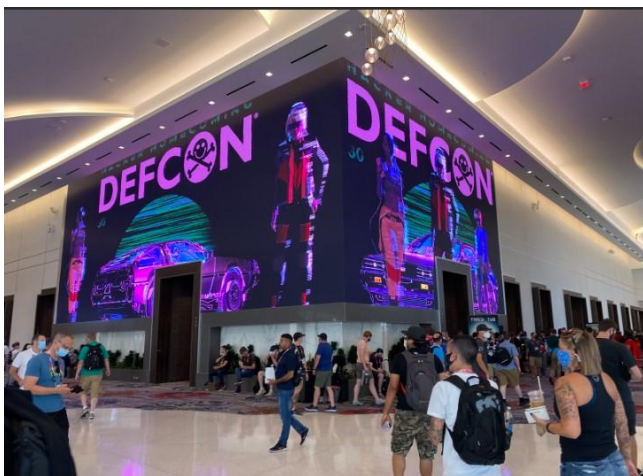
Maricopa County Enterprise Technology & Innovation (ETI) serves as the County's centralized technology department and is responsible for cybersecurity monitoring, threat detection, and incident response. ETI actively monitors systems and network activity throughout Election Day to identify and mitigate potential risks. The team oversees logical security controls and operates a specialized command function that utilizes multiple communication and monitoring tools to detect direct cyber threats, including activity on the dark web that could impact Maricopa County Elections. This continuous monitoring strengthens system resilience and supports uninterrupted election operations.

Planning

Contingency Planning – is an ongoing operation that begins well in advance of each election. Prior to every election, Maricopa County Elections conducts an in-person threat assessment meeting with the Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center (ACTIC). State election officials and a dedicated Maricopa County Information Security Officer also participate. During this meeting, vote center locations, transportation routes, and potential risk factors are reviewed. Leadership, core operational staff, and subject matter experts assigned to the Command Center are identified to ensure clarity of roles and rapid response capability.

Team Communication Structure – To support real-time coordination, a shared Election Day email inbox is maintained, with key stakeholders identified in advance by the County’s Enterprise Technology & Innovation (ETI) manager. On Election Day, a Microsoft Teams channel known as “The Bridge” is activated. This channel remains visible within the Command Center throughout the day, allowing Elections leadership to monitor communications in real time. Issues are logged, assessed, and immediately directed to the appropriate teams for resolution, ensuring timely response and continuous situational awareness.

Ongoing Security Engagement and Training – Maricopa County’s technical subject matter experts actively engage in national security forums and conventions, including DEFCON, the annual cybersecurity conference held in Las Vegas. These events provide exposure to emerging threats across multiple sectors, including telecommunications, web security, and infrastructure systems. County experts participate in simulation environments, including voting-related “villages,” where potential vulnerabilities are tested in controlled settings. Participation in these forums strengthens the County’s ability to anticipate evolving cyber risks and apply proactive security measures to protect election systems.



Teamwork: Maricopa County Elections Command Center

The safety and continuity of Election Day operations are the direct result of the relationships built, the preplanning conducted, and the communication systems established well in advance. Through ongoing coordination, defined roles, and structured preparation, MCE ensures that every partner understands their responsibilities before Election Day begins.

On Election Day, these preparations come together within the Command Center, where subject matter experts coordinate directly with agency points of contact in real time. Communication flows through established



channels, including the Microsoft Teams “Bridge,” allowing leadership to monitor activity, assess issues, and deploy resources without delay.

At the vote center level, poll workers first contact their assigned technical support (T-Tech) team when issues arise. If the issue cannot be resolved on site, poll workers and T-Tech staff can escalate through a dedicated Command Center hotline. Using the GoDeskless mobile field management system, Command Center staff immediately dispatch the appropriate personnel, track response status, and maintain visibility into resolution progress.

This layered structure—built on trust, defined escalation paths, and real-time communication—ensures that technical, operational, or security concerns are addressed quickly and consistently. The result is a secure, responsive, and well-coordinated Election Day environment that protects voters, election staff, and ballot integrity.

Innovation

This program is innovative because it embeds law enforcement, intelligence, and operational partners directly into Election Day command structure rather than relying on traditional external support models. The Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office dedicates and dispatches six personnel to support Elections operations for up to 48 hours surrounding Election Day—an uncommon practice in most jurisdictions. By removing layers of bureaucracy and routing dispatches directly to Election Day incidents, response times are significantly reduced, and issues are addressed before they escalate.

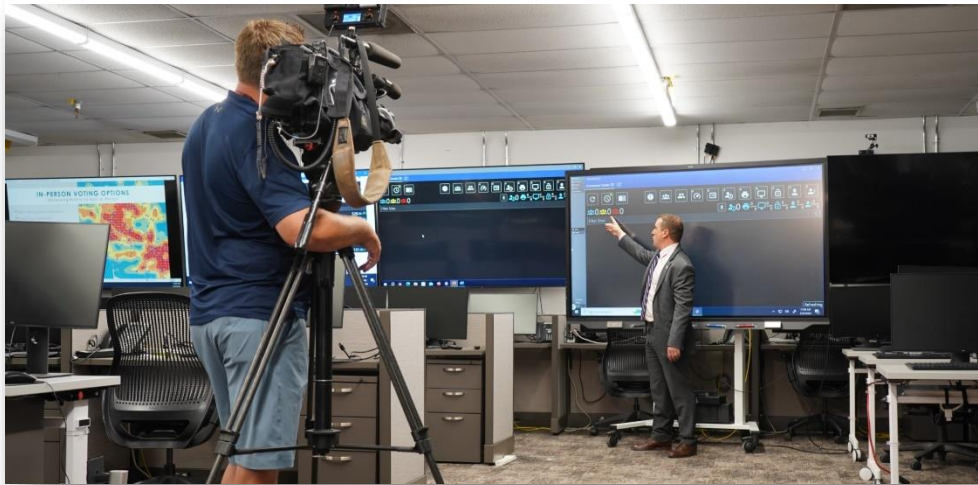
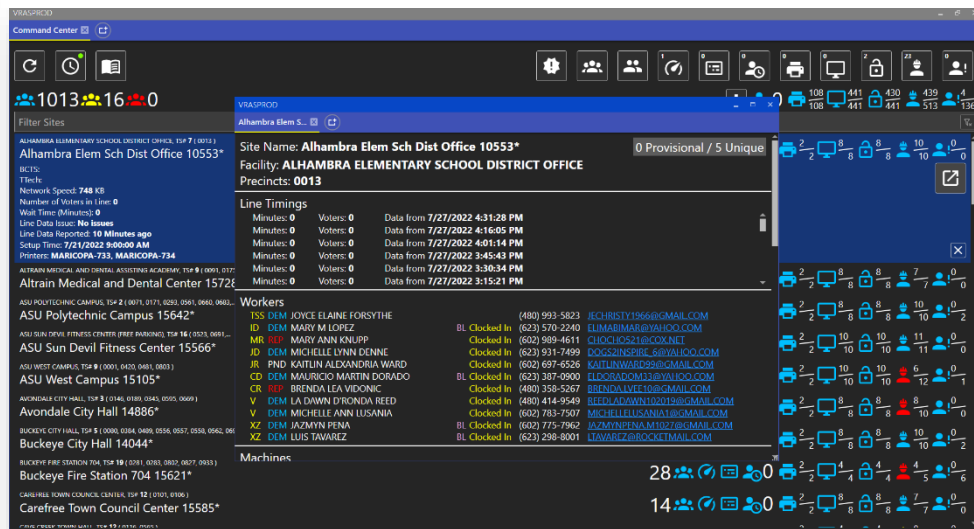
A key innovative element is the use of a continuous, real-time Microsoft Teams channel known as the “Bridge.” Activated prior to Election Day and maintained throughout the day and night, the Bridge includes Elections leadership, IT, GIS, County Enterprise Technology & Innovation, and external partners. Issues are shared immediately within a unified communication stream, enabling rapid assessment, decision-making, and deployment. Complementing this system is a shared Election Day email inbox used by election observers, legal organizations, advocacy groups, party representatives, city clerks, and state officials. This transparent reporting mechanism strengthens situational awareness and ensures concerns are evaluated and addressed in real time.

Cost Effective

Importantly, this model is highly cost-effective. Aside from standard staff time and relationship-building efforts, there are no additional costs associated with the partnerships, the Bridge communication channel, or the shared reporting inbox. The infrastructure leverages existing county technology platforms and established agency relationships. Because the program relies on coordination, defined roles, and proactive planning rather than specialized equipment or new funding streams, it can be readily replicated by other jurisdictions. Counties seeking to implement a similar model need only establish and cultivate partnerships within their own communities and formalize communication structures that support unified response and rapid escalation.

Conclusion

Maricopa County Elections coordinated cross-agency partnership model exemplifies contingency planning in action. Through advance preparation, embedded law enforcement and emergency management support, real-time intelligence monitoring, and a centralized Command Center structure, the County ensures that voting continues safely and without interruption—even in the face of security threats, natural disasters, misinformation campaigns, or technical disruptions. This layered, proactive, and cost-effective approach demonstrates not only readiness, but resilience. By combining structured planning with real-time operational integration, Maricopa County Elections has established a replicable model of emergency preparedness that protects voters, preserves ballot integrity, and upholds public confidence—making it a strong candidate for an award in the category of **Contingency Planning: Exemplary Contingency Planning and Emergency Response Efforts**.

Command Center

1013 16 0

Filter Sites

- ALHAMBRA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICE, TSP 7 (0013)
 - Alhambra Elem Sch Dist Office 10553*
 - Site Name: **Alhambra Elem Sch Dist Office 10553***
 - Facility: **ALHAMBRA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICE**
 - Precincts: **0013**
 - 0 Provisional / 5 Unique

Line Timings

Minutes	Voters	Data from
0	0	7/27/2022 4:31:28 PM
0	0	7/27/2022 4:16:05 PM
0	0	7/27/2022 4:01:14 PM
0	0	7/27/2022 3:45:43 PM
0	0	7/27/2022 3:30:34 PM
0	0	7/27/2022 3:15:21 PM

Workers

ID	Party	Name	Phone	Email	Status
TSS	DEM	JOYCE ELAINE FORSYTHE	(480) 993-5823	RECHRISTY1966@GMAIL.COM	
BL	DEM	MARY M LOPEZ	(623) 570-2240	LUMABIMAR@VALCO.COM	Clocked In
MR	REP	MARY ANN KNIPP	(602) 989-4511	QUICKI@SCL@COX.NE	Clocked In
JD	DEM	MICHELLE LYNN DENNE	(623) 931-7499	DOCS2@NSP@VALCO.COM	Clocked In
JR	PND	KAITLIN ALEXANDRIA WARD	(602) 697-6526	KAITLINWARD09@GMAIL.COM	Clocked In
CD	DEM	MAURICIO MARTIN DORADO	(623) 387-0900	ELCORADOM33@VALCO.COM	Clocked In
CR	REP	BRENDA LEA VEDONIC	(480) 358-5297	BRENDAL@VALCO.COM	Clocked In
V	DEM	LA DWYN PRIONDA REED	(480) 414-9549	REEDLADWYN10201@GMAIL.COM	Clocked In
V	DEM	MICHELLE ANNI LUSANIA	(602) 783-7507	MICHELLELUSANIA1@GMAIL.COM	Clocked In
XZ	DEM	JAZMYN PENA	(602) 775-7962	JAZMYNPENA1827@GMAIL.COM	Clocked In
XZ	DEM	LUIS TAVAREZ	(623) 298-8001	LTAVAREZ@ROCKETMAIL.COM	Clocked In

Machines

Count	Icon	Count	Icon	Count	Icon
28	🖥️	0	🔒	0	🔒
14	🖥️	0	🔒	0	🔒