



JLBC Releases September Budget Report

JLBC gives September 2020 Budget Update

Joint Legislative Budget Council (JLBC) analysts announced that September 2020 general fund revenue was \$1.17 billion, an increase of 0.5% over September 2019. In June, analysts had forecast a severe decline from 2019, but due to strong economic performance and other factors JLBC revised its projections to show \$146.1 million above the June forecast.

Analysts reported that September sales tax collections, which represent August sales activity, grew by 10.3% above September 2019 and were \$57.6 million above the June budget forecast. The state also experienced a high year-to-date revenue percentage growth rate, mostly due to the state's deferral of the income tax filing due date from April 15th to July 15th. JLBC indicated that FY 2021 general fund revenues are 23.7% above the prior year and \$429.5 million above the June budget forecast. Individual income tax withholdings remained flat, while corporate income tax fell by more than 12 percent compared to last September.

All of the state's sales tax categories except for restaurants and bars performed well in September, compared to the previous year. Latest JLBC numbers show that restaurant and bar sales tax declined by 11.3%; retail and remote sales increased 18%; and contracting increased 11.5%.

The state remains on track to achieve a \$421 million surplus for FY2021.

To read the JLBC September report, click [here](#).

AZDHS issues COVID-19 update

Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) officials reported 1,040 new

COVID-19 cases, one of the highest daily counts in a month. Experts remain alarmed that the state could be on the path to exponential growth of COVID-19. Dr. Joshua LaBaer, executive director for Arizona State University's Biodesign Institute, warned that Arizona is now in a COVID-19 surge and that the state is not testing enough. At a press conference, LaBaer stated "we are very close for a seven-day trailing average to crossing the 1,000 new cases a day mark Arizona." Emphasizing the importance of remaining vigilant, LaBaer said that we need to continue to wear masks, communicate, limit gathering sizes and conduct more tests.

AZDHS figures show that 86% of inpatient beds and 84% of ICU beds were in use, which includes people being treated for COVID-19 and other patients. COVID-19 patients were using 9% of all inpatient beds and 10% of ICU beds. Overall, 26% of ventilators were in use. The state's COVID-19 rate of spread (Rt) is above 1 at 1.15 (the average number of people a COVID-positive individual will infect). Of known test results from last week, AZDHS reported that 6% have come back positive. A positivity rate of 5% or less is considered a good indicator that the spread is being controlled.

For more information on free COVID-19 testing sites click [here](#).

Governor Ducey announces support for individuals and families

Governor Ducey announced \$715,000 from the *AZ Coronavirus Relief Fund* has been allocated to 19 organizations across the state that support individuals and families in need.

In March, Governor Ducey established the *AZ Coronavirus Relief Fund* as part of the Arizona Together Initiative, which provides financial support to non-profit organizations working to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and serves Arizonans in need statewide. The fund was created to address a variety of community needs including: funding of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline medical personnel; supporting non-profit organizations that help vulnerable Arizonans through food banks, homeless shelters and domestic violence facilities; and expanding technology access for low-income students to help them transition to online learning. To date, the fund has collected more than \$9.8 million.

The recipients of the allocated funding include:

- **Salvation Army:** offers support services for homelessness, hunger, domestic abuse and more.
- **International Rescue Committee:** focuses on humanitarian aid.
- **Phoenix Children's Hardship Fund:** provides assistance for families in need of money to pay rent or mortgage, food, transportation, clothing and basic needs.
- **Greater Phoenix Urban League:** offers programs related to economic empowerment, education, housing and civic engagement.

- **Homeward Bound:** provides youth and adult services, workforce development and housing assistance.

For more information on Arizona Together, click [here](#).

Early voting shows record surge

Ballots returned during the first week of early voting in Arizona increased nearly 100% in the state's three most-populous counties compared to 2018. Recent numbers suggest that Democrats are outpacing Republicans statewide by more than 10 percent (44% Democrat to 33% Republican). Statewide, about three quarters of the roughly four million registered voters have requested an early ballot.

According to county recorder offices, early voting increased 92% in Pima County from 2018, and 88% in Pinal County. Compared with the 2016 presidential election, early voting in Pima and Pinal counties increased by 56% and 132%, respectively. In Maricopa County, ballots returned in the first week of early voting increased 116% compared with 2018 and 96% compared with 2016. Maricopa County election officials reported that nearly 281,000 Democrats turned in ballots compared to 218,000 from Republicans, and nearly 150,000 from independents and voters not affiliated with a political party.

Maricopa County election officials also reported that 25,000 people have voted in person, compared with only 9,000 in 2016. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people a day are voting at one of the county's seven in-person voting locations. There are now 48 in-person early voting centers throughout Maricopa County. The sites are listed [here](#). (click for link).

For more information on how to check the status of your ballot, click [here](#).

For information on voting this Fall, click [here](#).



ABC15 reports on COVID-19



Arizona Update on the Issues



Click here to find the new
AGA analysis of the 2020
House races

Click here to find the new
AGA analysis of the 2020
Senate races

Legislators' Birthdays



Happy Birthday
Rep. Regina Cobb (R)
Friday, October 30th

Representing LD6, Representative Cobb is Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. Born in San Diego, Cobb moved to Kingman in 1993 after she received her D.D.S. from Case Western Reserve University. A practicing dentist, Cobb was first elected to the House in 2015 and is running unopposed in the upcoming general election. In addition to her Chairmanship, Cobb is a member of the House Education and Ways and Means committees. This session, her top legislative priority was HB2668 which was signed into law by the Governor. This legislation brings more resources into Arizona's healthcare system by increasing Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) provider rates for hospitals, doctors and more. To wish Representative Cobb happy birthday: rcobb@azleg.gov



Happy Birthday
Sen. Victoria Steele (D)
Thursday, November 5th

Representing LD9, Senator Steele was first elected to the House in 2013 and resigned to run for Congress in 2016. She was elected to the Senate in 2018. A native of Pennsylvania, Steele was a radio and TV anchor for 25 years. Before entering the Legislature, Steele was a certified counselor helping women with whom struggle with trauma and addiction. In addition, she created the Native Ways program at The Haven, an award-winning substance-use residential treatment program for Indigenous women. At the Legislature, Steele is a member of the Senate Government and Health and Human Services committees. Last session, her top legislative priority was SB1120 which required all school districts and charter schools to provide sex education instruction that is "medically accurate" and "age-appropriate" (both defined) for students in kindergarten through grade 12. To wish Senator Steele happy birthday: vsteele@azleg.gov

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