

Judicial Branch

Arkansas Supreme Court

Arkansas became the 25th state of the United States in 1836. Under the state's first constitution, the Arkansas Supreme Court was composed of three judges including one Chief Justice. The state's current constitution, ratified in 1874, provided for three Arkansas Supreme Court judges. Subsequent amendments increased the number of the court to seven judges. The jurisdiction and power of the Arkansas Supreme Court is controlled by the Arkansas Constitution. The Arkansas Supreme Court generally has only appellate jurisdiction, meaning it typically hears cases that are appealed from trial courts. The Arkansas Supreme Court also has general superintending control over all inferior courts of law and equity. The Constitution also outlines the qualifications for a judge including age, education, resident status and term limits. The seven Arkansas Supreme Court judges are elected in state-wide non-partisan races, and serve staggered eight-year terms, so that it is unlikely all members of the court would be replaced in one election.

<http://courts.arkansas.gov/index.cfm>

Executive Branch

Governor

The Governor is the head of the executive branch and directs policy initiatives for state agencies. By issuing Executive orders, the Governor can interpret, implement or give administrative effect to a provision of law. With this tool, the Governor can fulfill the duty of ensuring laws are faithfully executed. The Governor also grants executive clemencies, appoints members to boards of state agencies and commissions, and issues proclamations. www.governor.arkansas.gov

Lieutenant Governor

The official duties of Arkansas's Lieutenant Governor as described by the Arkansas Constitution are to preside over the Senate with a tie-breaking vote, to serve as governor when the governor is out of state, and to serve as governor if the governor is impeached, removed from office, dies or is otherwise unable to discharge the office's duties. Lt. Governors serve four-year terms and are term-limited to two terms in office. www.ltgovernor.arkansas.gov

Secretary of State

The Secretary of State serves as the state's Chief Election Officer, caretaker of the capitol building and grounds, custodian of public records, and registrar of all corporations doing business in Arkansas. Office divisions include Building & Grounds, Business and Commercial Services, Communications & Education, Elections, and State Capitol Police.

www.sos.arkansas.gov

Attorney General

As chief law-enforcement officer, McDaniel's responsibility is to represent the people of the state and to be the guardian of their interests. He and his staff are committed to safeguarding consumers, protecting seniors from abuse and neglect, and developing solutions to problems ranging from upholding criminal convictions to protecting children from predators on the Internet. The Attorney General also serves as the state's attorney, representing state agencies in court and civil litigation. Office divisions include the Civil Department, Communications and Media, Community Relations, Constituent Services, Criminal Department, Legislative Affairs, Medicaid Department, Opinions Department, Public Affairs, Public Protection and Scheduling. www.arkansasag.gov

Treasurer

Established by the state Constitution, the Treasurer of State's Office is charged with numerous administrative duties established by the legislature. The Office receives and keeps all state money collected by the administering agency and keeps an account of all money received and disbursed for over 400 fund accounts representing the fund equities of more than 200 state agencies. The Treasurer disburses funds by redeeming warrants drawn on the State Treasury in accordance with state law and reports to the Governor every two years through the Biennial Report the condition of the Treasury and its operations. www.state.ar.us/treasury

Auditor

The Auditor acts as the general accountant for the State, keeping track of all fund and appropriation balances of all state agencies, and writing the warrants (checks) in payment of the liabilities of the State. The Auditor is disbursing officer for certain federal funds, for various state officials and offices. The Auditor is a member of the State Board of Finance and, by statute, is the administrator of the Unclaimed Property Act. He serves as an ex-officio board member of the Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System and the Arkansas Teachers Retirement System. The Auditor serves on the Boards of Continuing Education for County and Circuit Clerks, County Treasurers and County Collectors, and administers their continuing education program. www.arkansas.gov/auditor

Land Commissioner

The primary function of the Commissioner is returning tax delinquent lands to private ownership throughout the 75 counties in the state. The Commissioner of State Lands office is also the repository for the original General Land Office records as well as responsible for the leasing of minerals on state-owned lands. www.cosl.org

Legislative Branch

Arkansas Senate

The Arkansas General Assembly convenes on the second Monday in January. A session lasts for 60 days unless the legislature votes to extend it. The governor can issue a “call” for a special session during the interims between regular sessions. The major issues are funding of public schools, institutions of higher education, highway and bridge construction, health and human services, state prisons, the State Police and state parks. The state Senate has 35 members, each representing a district with about 76,383 people. Members of the Senate serve four-year terms and since 1993, under Amendment 73 to the state’s Constitution, may serve no more than two terms in office. Service in the state legislature is part-time, and most state senators return to full-time jobs when not in session. www.arkansas.gov/senate

President Pro Tempore

At the beginning of every regular session of the General Assembly, the Senate elects a President Pro Tempore from its membership to perform as President of the Senate whenever the Lieutenant Governor is absent. Duties include presiding over the senate and casting tie-breaking votes. The Pro Tempore is also charged with appointing four Assistant President Pro Tempores from each of the current Congressional Districts. The President Pro Tempore can also convene Senators between sessions to address matters that affect the business of the full Senate.

Arkansas House of Representatives

The Arkansas House of Representatives, along with the Arkansas Senate, compose the legislative branch of state government. Combined, the two organizations form the Arkansas General Assembly, which convenes in regular session on the second Monday in January. The House of Representatives consists of 100 members elected from 100 districts, which are apportioned on a one- person, one-vote basis. Each House district has an average population of 26,734, according to the 2000 census. A House member must be at least 21 years old, a resident of Arkansas for two years and a resident of his or her district for one year. Members of the House serve two-year terms and since 1993, under Amendment 73 to the state’s Constitution, may serve no more than three terms in office. The Speaker of the House presides over the body and is elected by the membership every two years. Each Representative serves on two of the ten Standing Committees, and each committee has 20 members. Members of the committees are appointed by the Speaker. www.arkansas.gov/house

Speaker of the House

The Speaker of the House presides over the body and is elected by the membership every two years. His duties include supervising and directing the daily order of business, recognizing members to speak, preserving order in the House, deciding all questions of order, certifying all measures passed, assigning committee leadership, and naming members to select committees.