






**Arkansas Advocates
for Children and Families**

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Dates to Remember

Preferential Primary Election Early Voting:

February 19-March 4, 2024



Preferential Primary Election Day:

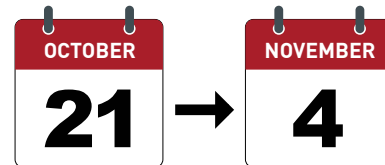
March 5, 2024



General Election Early Voting:

October 21-November 4, 2024

Early voting is available between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Early voting ends at 5 p.m. on the Monday prior to the election.



General Election Day:

November 5, 2024



Resources for Voters

Go to Arkansas VoterView to see your voter registration info, your voting location(s), and a sample ballot:

voterview.ar-nova.org

These groups can help you if you face issues when trying to exercise your right to vote:

American Civil Liberties Union:
877-523-2792

Disability Rights Arkansas:
800-482-1174

Election Protection Coalition
Helpline:
866-687-8683

Para Español (In Spanish),
Arkansas Unidos:
479-763-2822

Voters' Guide

2024



**ARKANSAS
ADVOCATES**

Whether you have children or not, **the well-being of our state's kids is critical to everyone's future.** As advocates, it's up to us to make sure voters and candidates are aware of the issues that matter most. Election years are an excellent time to call attention to the ways we can make Arkansas a better state to be and raise a child. **By asking candidates their thoughts on important issues, you can prompt thoughtful dialogue.** We hope our Voters' Guide is a helpful tool for you. Children can't vote, and they don't make campaign donations. But they're the ones most affected by the decisions made by elected officials. **Using this guide, you have the opportunity to be a voice for them.**

Child Welfare

Children in the foster care system:

The Issue: The number of Arkansas children in foster care is 3,844 as of October 2023. The number of foster homes is 1,482 as of September 2023, which is below the goal of 1,800.

What to Ask Candidates:

? What role should state government play in helping children in foster care?

Keeping children safely in their homes or placed with relatives:

The Issue: Removing a child from their family and home can be traumatic. The number of children involved with in-home protective services cases is 4,897 as of June 2023. The percentage of children placed with relatives continues to be steady around 36%, which is below the goal of 40% as of October 2023.

What to Ask Candidates:

? How can the state government help keep children safely with their families?

Education

Early Childhood Education:

The Issue: Children who go to high-quality preschool are more likely to succeed in K-12 and adulthood. But families are struggling to find high-quality care for their young children. And the early childhood education workforce is struggling to make ends meet and keep good workers.

What to Ask Candidates:

? What level of investment do you think the state government should make in early childhood care and education?

? Are there things that you believe that the state government should do to address challenges facing our early childhood education workforce?

Strong Public Schools:

The Issue: The LEARNS Act overhauls Arkansas's K-12 education system. Many of the law's long-term effects, like the financial impact, are still unknown. LEARNS also promotes the shift of public education tax dollars toward private schools.

What to Ask Candidates:

? What do you think should be the state's priorities for the public education system?

Equity

The Issue: Arkansas already has the lowest voter turnout and registration rates in the country. Over the past several years, there have been multiple changes to our voting system that will make it harder for many to take part in our democracy. These new laws limit access to the state's voting system and ballot measure

process. Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color will be more affected than White voters. These laws also will make it harder for elderly, disabled, and LGBTQIA+ voters, along with many frontline workers to vote. And everyday Arkansans will have a harder time passing ballot measures.

What to Ask Candidates:

? What changes, if any, do you support regarding Arkansas's voting and ballot measure processes?

Family Economic & Food Security

The Issue: Around one in five Arkansas children live in poverty. These children face challenges in school, have poorer health, and live in low-quality housing. And about 20% of Arkansas's children also experience hunger. That's 134,690 kids going for entire days without eating due to lack of money, access to food, or other resources. Severe food insecurity can cause delayed development, chronic illnesses, and behavioral problems.

What to Ask Candidates:

? What role, if any, do you think the state government should play in addressing our high child poverty rate?

? What state programs, if any, do you think best help families that live in poverty?

Health Care

The Issue: Arkansas has the highest maternal mortality of any state in the country. And we have the second-highest infant mortality rate. For several years, Arkansas reduced the number of children without health insurance. But our numbers are now going in the wrong direction.

What to Ask Candidates:

? What do you think needs to change to address the state of maternal and child health in Arkansas?

? What programs and policies would you support to make Arkansas safer to give birth and have better postpartum health outcomes?

Investing in Kids

The Issue: Our state's budget is a reflection of our values. What we invest public dollars in and how we raise public dollars shows what the state legislature's priorities are.

What to Ask Candidates:

? Are there state programs for children and families you think should get more funding? Or less funding?

? What do you think the state's tax system should look like?

Juvenile Justice

The Issue: By law, our juvenile justice system must give young people the resources they need to rejoin and thrive in their communities. Holding youth in juvenile lockups, especially for long periods, is bad for their well-being. And it increases the odds they will reoffend and re-enter the correctional system as adults.

What to Ask Candidates:

? What do you think should be done to effectively rehabilitate and care for children in the juvenile justice system?

? What do you think is the best way to fund the juvenile justice system?