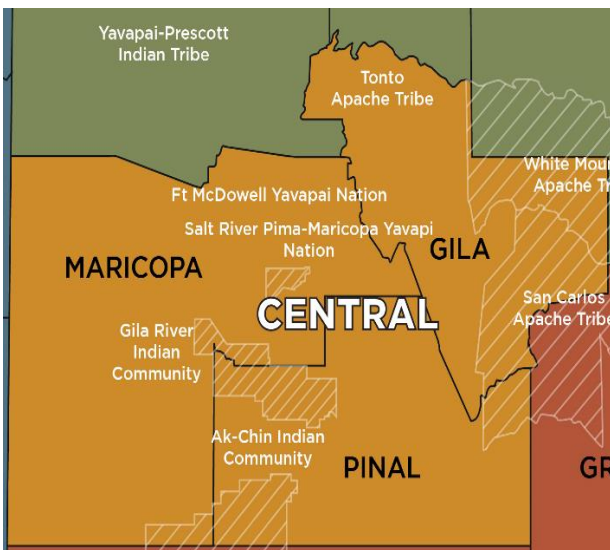




Central Region Vulnerability Profile 2025-2026

The Central Region Vulnerability Profile provides an updated overview of the demographics, healthcare infrastructure, and hazard risks for the Central Region of the Arizona Coalition for Healthcare Emergency Response (AzCHER). The region includes three (3) counties and eight (8) Tribal Nations, which are medically underserved and geographically isolated from other healthcare services. It highlights the population characteristics, healthcare utilization, and regional resources critical for emergency planning and response.



Counties¹:

Gila, Maricopa, Pinal

Tribal Nations¹:

Gila County - San Carlos Apache, Tonto Apache, White Mountain Apache

Maricopa County – Gila River Indian Community, Salt River Pima-Maricopa, Fort McDowell Yavapai, and the Tohono O’odham Nation

Pinal County – Gila River Indian Community, Ak-Chin Indian Community, Tohono O’odham Nation, and San Carlos Apache

Primary Care Areas

Primary Care Areas (PCAs) in Arizona are geographic planning units used to evaluate access to primary healthcare service and to identify communities that may be underserved or at risk for provider shortages. They are a key tool in healthcare planning, workforce analysis, and public-health decision-making, to include emergency preparedness in these communities.

Indian PCAs:

Maricopa County – Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian

Pinal County – Gila River Indian Community

Rural PCAs:

Gila County – Globe, Payson

Maricopa County – North Gateway/Rio Vista Village, Desert View Village, Deer Valley Village, Paradise Valley Village, Scottsdale North, Surprise North & Wickenburg, Surprise South, Peoria North, New River/Cave Creek, Anthem, Fountain Hills/Rio Verde, Sun City West, Glendale North

Pinal County – Saddlebrooke, Coolidge, Eloy

Urban PCAs:

Maricopa County – Ahwatukee Foothills Village, Alhambra Village, Anthem, Apache Junction, Avondale, Buckeye, Camelback East Village, Central City Village, Chandler Central, Chandler North, Chandler South, Deer Valley Village, Desert View Village, El Mirage & Youngtown, Encanto Village, Estrella Village & Tolleson, Fountain Hills/Rio Verde, Gilbert Central, Gilbert North, Gilbert South, Glendale Central, Glendale North, Glendale West, Goodyear & Litchfield Park, Laveen Village, Maryvale Village, Mesa Central, Mesa East, Mesa Gateway, Mesa North, Mesa West, New River/Cave Creek, North Gateway/Rio Vista Village, North Mountain Village, Paradise Valley, Paradise Valley Village, Peoria North, Peoria South, Scottsdale Central, Scottsdale North, Scottsdale South, South Mountain Village & Guadalupe, Sun City, Sun City West, Sun Lakes, Surprise North & Wickenburg, Surprise South, Tempe North, Tempe South, Queen Creek

Pinal County – Apache Junction, Casa Grande, Coolidge, Eloy, Florence, Gold Canyon, Maricopa, Queen Creek, Saddlebrooke, San Tan Valley

Population and Vulnerable Groups

An estimated 5.24 million¹ people currently reside in the region, with significant seasonal population changes. Vulnerable groups include people with disabilities (16.8%), those below 150% federal poverty level (22%), Medicare beneficiaries (60.2%), and a large inmate population (53% of state inmates), with rural counties showing higher poverty and Medicare rates.

Risk Factors	Central Region	Arizona
Persons with Disabilities (%) ²	16.8%	13.6%
AHCCCS (Medicaid) Population ³	1,128,059 (63.2%)	1,786,199
Medicare Beneficiaries ⁴	920,900 (60.2%)	1,529,229
Electricity-Dependent Medicare Beneficiaries ⁵	34,968 (52.8%)	66,172
Medically Uninsured (%) ⁶	23.7%	23.5%
Population below 150% FPL (%) ⁷	22%	20.8%
Correctional Facilities ⁸	9	15
Correctional Facility Inmate Capacity (prisons only) ⁸	18,947 (53%)	35,273

Healthcare Utilization

The Central Region has one outpatient health treatment center per 2,684 residents, accounting for 67% of Arizona’s providers. It also accounts for 67.1% of emergency room visits and 66% of acute care and critical access hospital beds statewide, indicating significant healthcare demand.

Utilization	Central Region	Arizona
Total Outpatient Health Treatment Centers (%) ⁹	1,953 (67%)	2,914
Outpatient Health Treatment Centers (population: provider) ⁹	2,684:1	2,602:1

Total Emergency Room Visits (%) ¹⁰	1,629,746 (67.1%)	2,427,318
Acute Care and Critical Access Hospital Beds/1000 Residents* ⁹	1.8	1.9

*Federal Hospitals are *excluded* from the bed counts, as their data *is not* reported in the Arizona Department of Health Services dashboard.

Healthcare Infrastructure

The region hosts 46 general hospitals (59.7% of state total), 11 Level I trauma centers, 221 assisted living centers, 9,732 nursing home beds, and 149 home health agencies. There are 35 ground ambulance providers statewide, which service cover multi-regional areas.

Healthcare Infrastructure	Central Region	Arizona
Acute Care Hospitals ⁹	46 (59.7%)	77
Critical Access Hospitals ⁹	5 (29.4%)	17
Level I Trauma Centers ¹¹	11	15
Level III Trauma Centers ¹¹	2	9
Level IV Trauma Centers ¹¹	10	28
Behavioral Health Hospitals ⁹	17	23
Long-Term Care Hospitals ⁹	3	6
Assisted Living Centers ⁹	221 (66.4%)	333
Long-Term Care/Nursing Home Beds ⁹	9,732 (62%)	15,698
Home Health Agencies ⁹	149 (66.8%)	223
Ground Ambulance Providers ¹²	39 (30.4%)	127
Air Ambulance Providers ¹³	Varies**	12

* Federal Hospitals are *included* in the hospital counts, as their data *is* reported in the Arizona Department of Health Services dashboard.

**There are twelve (12) air ambulances providers registered to provide care and transport patients within Arizona, most of them helicopters. Air ambulance coverage areas often span large, multi-regional areas, and therefore cannot be broken down by region.

County Hazard Identification

County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans identify key risks including climate change, dam inundation, drought, flooding, hazardous materials incidents, severe wind, transportation accidents, wildfire, winter storms, earthquakes, fissures, levee failure, and subsidence. These plans are updated every five years to evaluate risks to people and key facilities. Hazards are identified through a Threats and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (THIRA), with each county's process shaped by team expertise, risk assessment, history, mitigation options, state plan alignment, and overlapping hazard effects.

Central Region Hazard Lists (Referenced from County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans):

Gila County (2019) ¹⁴	Maricopa (2022) ¹⁵	Pinal (2022) ¹⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change • Dam Inundation • Drought • Flooding/Flash Flooding • Hazardous Materials Incident • Severe Wind • Transportation Accident • Wildfire • Winter Storm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dam Inundation • Drought • Extreme Heat • Fissure • Flood/Flash Flood • Levee Failure • Severe Wind • Subsidence • Wildfire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dam Failure • Drought • Earthquake • Extreme Heat • Fissure • Flood/Flash Flood • Levee Failure • Severe Wind • Subsidence • Wildfire

Special Considerations for Vulnerable Populations

Emergency planning should consider individuals who are elderly, very young, have disabilities, face transportation or language barriers, or have low socioeconomic status. The large inmate population is particularly vulnerable due to communal living and limited healthcare access.

Resources

1. Arizona's Counties, Tribal Nations, and Population. Arizona Disability Data for Arizona - [Arizona-Demographics-Counties by Population Link](#). Published August 7, 2025. Accessed December 20, 2025.
2. Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. Persons with Disabilities [Arizona Development Disabilities Planning Council-Disability Data for Arizona Link](#). Published and accessed December 2025.
3. Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (Medicaid) Population - [AHCCCS Population Statistics Link](#)
4. Medicare Beneficiaries in Arizona. [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Data Link](#). Published September 2025. Accessed December 20, 2025.
5. HHS emPOWER Map Medicare At-Risk Populations by Geography. [HHS emPOWER Map Electricity Dependent Link](#). Published and Accessed December 20, 2025.
6. Arizona Medically Underinsured Areas. [Arizona Medically Underserved Areas Biennial Report Link](#). Published October 2024. Accessed December 20, 2025.
7. Arizona Population below 150% Federal Poverty Level. [National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities Link](#). Published and accessed December 20, 2025.
8. Arizona Department of Corrections Facilities and Correctional Facility Inmate Capacity. [ADC Data/Reports Link](#). Published October 2025. Accessed December 20, 2025.
9. Arizona Department of Public Health Licensing. [Provider & Facility Database Link](#). Published December 1, 2025. Accessed December 20, 2025.
10. Statewide Emergency Room Visits. [Arizona Department of Health Services Population Health and Vital Statistics Link](#). Published 2022. Accessed December 20, 2025.
11. Arizona Department of Public Health Designated Trauma Centers. [Arizona State Designated Trauma Centers Link](#). Published October 21, 2025. Accessed December 20, 2025.
12. Arizona Department of Health and Services Emergency Medical Services & Trauma System. [Bureau of Emergency Medical Services & Trauma System Ground Ambulance Provider Link](#). Published August 7, 2025. Accessed December 20, 2025.
13. Arizona Department of Health Services Bureau of Emergency Health Services & Trauma System. [Bureau of Emergency Medical Services & Trauma System Air Ambulance Provider Link](#). Published April 29, 2025. Accessed December 20, 2025.
14. Gila County Emergency Management Division. [2019 Gila County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) Accessed December 20, 2025.
15. Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management. [2022 Maricopa County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan](#). Accessed December 20, 2025.
16. Pinal County Department of Emergency Management. Pinal County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. [2022 Pinal County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan](#). Accessed December 20, 2025.