



E-Recording & Subscriber Access to the Pima County Recorder

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** This article is based upon a Q&A with Christopher J. Roads, Chief Deputy Recorder/Registrar of Voters, Pima County Recorder's Office.**

Would it help your practice to have access to every document recorded in Pima County since 1984? How about the ability to rapidly record deeds and liens? Not only is it now possible, but it is surprisingly affordable. The Pima County Recorder's Office (the "Recorder") offers internet based access to their database and also accepts electronic recording of almost any document. For a fee, you can immediately access images of recorded documents by subscribing directly with the Recorder. Also, e-recording is offered through select third party service providers. The first document e-recorded in Pima County was received and recorded on April 24, 2012.

There are currently four companies approved for e-recording in Pima County (Data Services, eRecording Partners Network, CSC eRecording Solutions and Simplifile), and the Recorder hopes to allow e-recording through their website within the next few years. The Recorder's website, www.recorder.pima.gov, provides for information regarding each provider. There is no difference for the Recorder among the providers. Each provider has the specification requirements and undergoes a test process to resolve any issues before actual documents are submitted for recording. It is critical for the Recorder to receive high-quality scanned images of each page, thus customers must have scanners that meet certain scanner setting requirements. Each provider is careful to only provide documents to the Recorder that meet the quality requirements. Despite this, the Recorder does see errors from the customers submitting documents, including incomplete documents that are missing pages or missing attachments. Also, documents are regularly received involving property located in another county.

Certain documents are either recommended to be recorded in person or cannot be e-recorded, including documents that are particularly unique, contain a significant number of pages (100+) or contain raised certifications or seals from foreign counties. Also, large plat and street maps cannot currently be e-recorded, but this may be available in the future.

The Recorder has not had any claim of fraud for an e-recorded document. However, the Recorder does receive questionable documents a couple of times a year over the counter and refers those to the County Attorney's Office. The most common questionable document is a lien against property without the property owner's signature. When a document is submitted for recording, each page is examined by a data entry operator to make sure it meets the statutory recording requirements and is complete. The document's information is then entered into the Recorder's database, and the document is assigned a recording sequence number and fees are assessed. A second operator then conducts a full quality control check on the document and the information entered in the system.

The percentage of documents that are e-recorded fluctuates between 55% and 85% on any given day. From January 1, 2016 through September 15, 2016, about 65.9% of all recorded documents were received electronically (86,736 e-recorded documents out of 131,569 total recorded documents).

When a document submitted in paper format has been accepted for recording, the recording information label is printed and affixed to the top of the first page. The document is then scanned electronically and returned to the submitter, which takes 7 to 10 days. When an e-recorded document is accepted, the computer system affixes the recording information label, and the document is returned electroni-

cally as soon as a few hours after submission. All documents are processed for recording in the order they are received, but documents submitted on paper take longer to process and return after recording. This is one area where e-recording results in time savings for the Recorder (and submitting customers) and allows more employees to be available for data entry. Another benefit for customers who subscribe for e-recording is that the provider may allow e-recording in other Arizona counties (and even other states).

Another ongoing project for the Recorder is the digitizing and indexing of all documents recorded in Pima County. All documents have been digitized, but the documents will not be searchable until indexing is completed. Previously, the Recorder's computer system only contained indexes for documents recorded after 1986. Now, all documents recorded on or after November 5, 1984 are available to subscribers on the Recorder's website. This is a long-term project, and the Recorder's website is updated periodically to show any additional dates that are searchable online.

The Recorder has also made recent changes to its subscriber database access, where subscribers can view and download document images. Previously, the Recorder only offered three options for subscribers: (1) get every image of every recorded document every day; (2) get images of every submitted affidavit of value every day; or (3) access to examine any document and pay per document. In May 2016, new services were added to allow subscribers to receive any specified document type each day. See the Subscriber tab of the Recorder's website for more information.