

(THERE COULD BE)

A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN



★ A VOTER'S GUIDE ★

WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE FOR SHERIFF

Your sheriff has the power to:

- ★ Enforce law in unincorporated areas of the county
- ★ Assist law enforcement efforts in cities and towns
- ★ Hire, train, and discipline officers
- ★ Manage county jails
- ★ Oversee civil proceedings (i.e. serving court documents, like evictions and child support warrants)
- ★ Maintain courthouse security

★ AND WHY YOUR VOTE MATTERS ★

Sheriffs are the only elected law enforcement officials in North Carolina, and they hold one of the most powerful offices in the state. In many regions, especially in the South, sheriffs have wide jurisdiction and primary law enforcement responsibilities within a county. While their roles vary from county to county, sheriffs are largely responsible for managing personnel, overseeing local jails, determining how to enforce the law, and addressing crime as they see fit.



Despite holding great power, sheriffs have very little oversight. Unlike police chiefs, sheriffs do not report to city or county officials and have fewer overall checks on their power. In North Carolina, sheriffs are elected to four year terms with no term limits, and some have remained in office for decades. Potential for abuse is high, and there are many examples of unchecked sheriffs' behavior ranging from misappropriation of funds to exploitation of incarcerated people to the most recent example of a racially discriminatory sheriff in Columbus County.

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE A SHERIFF WHO WILL WISELY USE THEIR AUTHORITY TO UPHOLD COMMUNITY INTERESTS AND TO HOLD ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCOUNTABLE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES. ***YOUR VOTE COUNTS***

SHERIFFS: THEN/NOW

Since America's inception, policing has been deeply intertwined with slavery and negative race relations, particularly with Black communities in the South. In slave states, the slave patrol was the original modern police organization, the first of which were founded in the Carolina colony in the early 1700s. These government-sponsored patrols apprehended and returned escaped slaves, used violence and terror to deter potential revolts, and extra-judicially disciplined slaves through acts of brutal violence.

Prior to sheriffs, community policing was informal and collaborative; volunteers warned of danger and constables took on non-law enforcement duties. Historically, duties of American sheriffs have mirrored their colonial English counterparts, ranging from tax collection to law enforcement to management of jails and workhouses, which were facilities designed to punish minor offenders by using them as laborers.

The first record of a popularly elected Sheriff is in 1651 in Virginia, which then included modern-day North Carolina, thus making it the oldest public office in the state.

Following the end of the Civil War, law enforcement, including sheriffs, denied freed slaves access to equal protection and equal rights, including the enforcement of Jim Crow laws in the South. During the 1960s Civil Rights movements, White Southern sheriffs often restricted Black residents from exercising their right to vote.



WHAT'S AT STAKE

Sheriffs can make decisions about important policies, including whether to implement implicit bias and de-escalation training, enter into partnerships with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), uphold the civil rights of incarcerated people in jails, and interfere in voting and elections. It is important to consider these issues and others facing your community when voting.

A sheriff who prioritizes **implicit bias training and management**, as well as **de-escalation training**, can foster a greater sense of safety for the community, especially Black, Latine, Indigenous, and Asian American and Pacific Islander residents, who are disproportionately affected by law enforcement brutality.

Individual sheriffs can decide whether to **coordinate with ICE**.

Existing law allows the state to incarcerate and prosecute accused offenders, regardless of immigration status. When sheriffs cooperate with ICE, it can lead to dropped local charges and faster deportation for undocumented individuals before due process. The harm caused by at-will deportation — family separation, exposing people to violence, and more — often outweighs any alleged benefits.

Sheriffs **manage local jails**, meaning they have **power over budgeting, staffing, and other resources**, such as medical facilities, necessary to ensure a safe, secure, and humane environment upholding civil rights. When problems such as policy noncompliance or staff misconduct arise, sheriffs decide how to address them.

Sheriffs can also control whether **eligible voters** incarcerated in their jails can cast a ballot. Those voters need certain materials that sheriffs often don't provide. Sheriffs also are the only people who can decide whether organizations like You Can Vote can assist incarcerated voters in accessing their ballot.

THE RACES

Buncombe County:

Buncombe is a major seat in Western North Carolina. Key issues include how candidates plan to make use of \$2.25M in federal grant money for victim assistance, as well as how they plan to improve jail conditions, including reduction of detention center deaths and use of medication-assisted treatment plans and re-entry programs for incarcerated people.



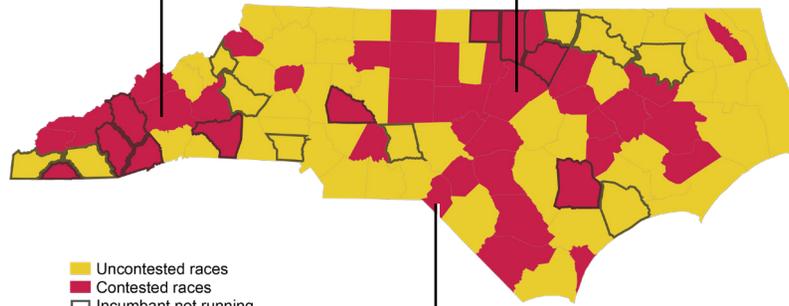
Quentin Miller (Dem.)



Trey McDonald (Rep.)



Tracey DeBruhl (Lib.)



■ Uncontested races
■ Contested races
□ Incumbant not running

Wake County:

Wake County home of the state capital, has one of the largest budgets in the state, and the incumbent is not running for re-election. Key issues include candidates' positions on law enforcement's role in immigration enforcement and the need for oversight measures such as Independent Review Boards.



Donnie Harrison (Rep.)



Willie Rowe (Dem.)

Scotland County:

Scotland County is an example of a rural county where the sheriff has sole law enforcement authority over a large area. Key to this race are candidates' experience and track record with the community.



Sheronica Smith (Dem.)



Ralph Kersey (Rep.)

Contested vs. Uncontested:

A contested race means there is more than one registered candidate vying for the same elected sheriff's seat.

An uncontested race means there is only one registered candidate running for the election of one sheriff's seat.

FOLLOW THE MONEY



Getting to know your local law enforcement budget is one method of holding your sheriff accountable to community priorities. Sheriffs have discretion over how much funding they allocate for the improvement of jail conditions, including whether to invest in jail programming aimed at rehabilitation, re-entry preparation, and recidivism reduction.



Below is a copy of the adopted Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office budget for Fiscal Year 2023.

ADOPTED BUDGET

Sheriff's Office

Service Name	FT	PT	LPT	FY2023 County Funding	FY2023 Total Budget	FY2022 Total Budget
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT (SHF)	3	0	0	303,729	303,729	266,381
CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT (SHF)	6	0	0	20,489	20,489	15,333
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (SHF)	12	0	0	1,200,672	1,200,672	1,212,442
COURT SECURITY (SHF)	102	0	10	8,930,641	8,930,641	9,613,710
DETENTION SERVICES (SHF)	680	0	0	65,332,541	84,002,618	84,291,094
DV ENFORCEMENT & EDUCATION (SHF)	8	0	0	931,287	931,287	853,396
FACILITY MANAGEMENT (SHF)	0	0	0	7,914,066	7,914,066	7,914,066
FIELD OPERATIONS (SHF)	107	0	1	11,271,047	12,855,552	12,327,279
FISCAL ADMINISTRATION (SHF)	17	0	3	1,729,246	1,729,246	1,651,066
HUMAN RESOURCES (SHF)	14	0	0	1,654,341	1,654,341	1,271,766
INMATE FINANCE & SUPPORT (SHF)	34	0	0	2,622,254	2,622,254	2,638,177
INMATE LIBRARY SERVICE (SHF)	3	0	0	243,247	243,247	252,852
IT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (SHF)	12	0	0	2,416,299	2,416,299	2,117,129
JUVENILE JUSTICE (SHF)	9	0	1	5,090,658	7,513,714	13,703,559
LEGAL SERVICES (SHF)	3	0	0	626,690	626,690	600,723
OFFSITE INMATE MEDICAL CARE	0	0	0	2,000,000	2,000,000	1,000,000
PUBLIC INFORMATION (SHF)	2	0	1	272,707	272,707	259,993
REGISTRATION DIVISION (SHF)	18	0	0	1,492,793	1,669,883	1,465,545
REHABILITATION SERVICES (SHF)	19	0	0	1,944,793	1,944,793	1,841,993
RESEARCH & PLANNING (SHF)	2	0	0	209,662	209,662	202,982
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION (SHF)	3	0	0	908,620	938,620	846,764
TRAINING DIVISION - MANDATED (SHF)	11	0	0	1,405,308	1,405,308	1,360,864
TRAINING DIVISION - NONMANDATED (SHF)	0	0	0	136,100	136,100	136,100
Grand Totals:	1,065	0	16	118,657,190	141,541,918	145,843,214
Revenue Totals:					22,884,728	35,069,136

As of 2021, the most funded sheriff's departments in North Carolina were in Mecklenburg, Wake, Cumberland and Forsyth counties.

Most Funded Sheriff's Offices

Below are the most-funded county sheriff's office budgets in North Carolina adopted for Fiscal Year 2023.



***Data from adopted county budgets on each jurisdiction's official websites.

KNOW BEFORE YOU VOTE

Given the history, roles, and power of the sheriff, you have a lot to consider in choosing a candidate that best represents your community's interests. Here are some initial questions you may ask yourself and the candidates before making your choice:

- ★ Does this candidate have an authoritarian policing style or a more restorative, community-oriented approach? Do they prioritize de-escalation, rehabilitation, and management of implicit bias?
- ★ How will the candidate determine what areas have a larger law enforcement presence, and who is patrolling those areas?
- ★ What role does the candidate plan to assume in immigration enforcement?
- ★ What is the candidate's plan to address jail conditions? Will the candidate partner with voting rights organizations to ensure eligible voters in jails are able to exercise their right to cast a ballot?
- ★ What is the candidate's position on their authority to interfere in elections?
- ★ What is the candidate's plan for accountability for the office as a whole, themselves, and their officers?



A VOTING HOW-TO

To register to vote in North Carolina, you must:

- be a U.S. citizen,
- be 18 years or older by the day of the General Election,
- live in the county where you are registering and have resided there for at least 30 days prior to the date of the election,
- Not currently be in jail or prison related to a felony conviction.

Note: due to recent changes in eligibility, you can vote if you have previous felony convictions but have served your time and are not currently incarcerated for a violation of probation or parole related to felony conviction. Misdemeanor convictions do not affect your eligibility to vote regardless of your incarceration status.

1. Verify your current registration using NC's voter registration lookup tool (<https://vt.ncsbe.gov>).

2. If you wish to vote by mail, anyone in NC can currently do so for any reason. Request your absentee ballot by 5pm on Nov. 1 in one of two ways:

- Submit a request online at <https://votebymail.ncsbe.gov>.
- Submit your request by mail using the English or Spanish form at <https://www.ncsbe.gov/>
- Note: you will need the last four digits of your SSN, your driver's license number or DMV issued ID card number that you used to register.

3. Vote in one of three ways:

- Submit your absentee ballot by mail, postmarked by November 8
- OR find your options for one-stop voting sites for early voting at <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/>
- OR find your election day polling place at <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/>



KEY VOTING DATES

<p>Registration and Request Deadlines:</p>	<p>Voting Deadlines:</p>
<p>Online: Oct. 14 By Mail: postmarked by Oct. 14 In person at local election office: Oct. 14</p> <p>*Note: you can still register to vote in person during early voting Oct. 20 - Nov. 5</p>	<p>Early voting, in person: Oct. 20 - Nov. 5</p> <p>Election day, in person: Nov. 8</p>
<p>Absentee ballot requests must be received by Nov. 1 by 5pm</p>	<p>Absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Nov. 8</p> <p>Return your absentee ballot in person: Nov. 8 by 5pm</p>