

History of Women Governors

Thirty-one women (19D,12R) have served as governors in 23 states. In addition, one woman has served as governor in Puerto Rico. Arizona is the first state where a woman succeeded another woman as governor, and the first state to have had four women governors. Of the 31 women governors, 20 were first elected in their own right; 3 replaced their husbands, and 8 became governor by constitutional succession, two of whom subsequently won a full term. The record number of women serving simultaneously, set in 2004 and 2007, is 9.

Name (Party-State)	Dates served	Special circumstances
Nellie Tayloe Ross (D-WY)	1925-1927	Won special election to replace deceased husband.
Miriam "Ma" Ferguson (D-TX)	1925-1927, 1933-1935	Inaugurated 15 days after Ross; elected as surrogate for husband who could not succeed himself.
Lurleen Wallace (D-AL)	1967-1968	Elected as surrogate for husband who could not succeed himself.
Ella Grasso (D-CT)	1975-1980	First woman elected governor in her own right; resigned for health reasons.
Dixy Lee Ray (D-WA)	1977-1981	
Vesta Roy (R-NH)	1982-1983	Elected to state senate and chosen as senate president; served as governor for seven days when incumbent died.
Martha Layne Collins (D-KY)	1984-1987	
Madeleine Kunin (D-VT)	1985-1991	First woman to serve three terms as governor.
Kay Orr (R-NE)	1987-1991	First Republican woman governor and first woman to defeat another woman in a gubernatorial race.
Rose Mofford (D-AZ)	1988-1991	Elected as secretary of state, succeeded governor who was impeached and convicted.
Joan Finney (D-KS)	1991-1995	First woman to defeat an incumbent governor.
Ann Richards (D-TX)	1991-1995	
Barbara Roberts (D-OR)	1991-1995	
Christine Todd Whitman (R-NJ)	1994-2001	Resigned to take presidential appointment as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.
Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)	1997-2003	
Jane Dee Hull (R-AZ)	1997-2003	Elected as secretary of state, succeeded governor who resigned; later elected to a full term.
Nancy Hollister (R-OH)	1998-1999	Elected lieutenant governor; served as governor for 11 days when predecessor took U.S. Senate seat and successor had not yet been sworn in.
Jane Swift (R-MA)	2001-2003	Elected as lieutenant governor, succeeded governor who resigned for an ambassadorial appointment.
Judy Martz (R-MT)	2001-2005	
<i>Sila Calderon (Popular Democratic Party-PR)</i>	2001-2005	<i>Former mayor of San Juan, first woman governor of Puerto Rico.</i>
Ruth Ann Minner (D-DE)	2001-2009	
Linda Lingle (R-HI)	2002-2010	
Olene Walker (R-UT)	2003-2005	Elected as lieutenant governor, succeeded governor who resigned to take a federal appointment.
Janet Napolitano (D-AZ)	2003-2009	First woman to succeed another woman as governor. Resigned to become U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security.
Kathleen Sebelius (D-KS)	2003-2009	Father was governor of Ohio. Resigned to become U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.
Jennifer M. Granholm (D-MI)	2003-2011	
Kathleen Blanco (D-LA)	2004-2007	
M. Jodi Rell (R-CT)	2004-2011	Elected as lieutenant governor, succeeded governor who resigned.
Christine Gregoire (D-WA)	2004-present	
Sarah Palin (R-AK)	2007-2009	Resigned.
Beverly Perdue (D-NC)	2009-present	
Jan Brewer (R-AZ)	2009-present	Elected as secretary of state, succeeded governor who resigned.
Mary Fallin (R-OK)	2011-present	
Nikki Haley (R-SC)	2011-present	Haley, along with Martinez, became one of the first women of color elected as governor of a state.
Susana Martinez (R-NM)	2011-present	Martinez, along with Haley, became one of the first women of color elected as governor of a state.

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