

# Redistricting Data 101

## What's Being Released and When?

The U.S. Census Bureau provides the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico with population counts to use in their redrawing of congressional and state legislative district boundaries—a process known as “redistricting.”

The Census Bureau will release these data on its public FTP site by August 16, 2021. The Census Bureau will release the same data in easier-to-use formats by September 30, 2021.

While the states are responsible for legislative redistricting, the Census Bureau provides the most accurate population counts possible for the geographic areas the states need.

## A Wealth of Granular Data

These data, officially called the P.L. 94-171 Redistricting Data Summary Files, include housing counts by housing occupancy status, population counts by race and ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino origin) for the total population and voting-age population, and by group quarters type for the group quarters population—all down to the census block level. This information provides a once-a-decade demographic snapshot of our nation's population.

The data have gone through a comprehensive review to ensure they are high quality, protect the confidentiality of the census data reported by or on behalf of individuals, and are fit to use for redistricting.

## Accessing the Data

The first release will be available in August on the Census Bureau's FTP site using the same file format provided to states as part of the

2010 and 2000 Censuses. This format requires some additional software and work to extract the data. The Census Bureau has provided a variety of resources online to assist data users with downloading and extracting the data.

In September, users will be able to access the same statistics at <https://data.census.gov>. This release will make it easier to search for local information and will empower everyone to access and use redistricting data. At that time, these data will also be delivered to official state recipients in a toolkit in the form of DVDs and flash drives.

## Confidentiality Protections

Because the redistricting data have demographic detail for very small levels of geography, it's essential we protect the identity of individuals in the published statistics.

The Census Bureau is using a modern method called differential privacy to protect individual information while letting us share important statistics about communities.

The Census Bureau is carefully adding statistical noise to the block-level data to disguise personal information. Block data are not designed to be used individually. They are meant to be aggregated, or grouped, into contiguous geographic areas. Therefore, instead of looking for precision in an individual block, the Census Bureau encourages data users to aggregate, or group, blocks together. As contiguous blocks are combined, the population counts and demographic characteristics become more reliable.

## Redistricting Press Kit

[www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/2020-census-redistricting.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/2020-census-redistricting.html)