From Census to Redistricting

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What is the Census?
A count taken every 10 years of every person living in the United States.

Why is the Census taken?

**Apportionment:** ARTICLE I, SECTION 2 of the Constitution requires this count for purposes of reapportioning the 435 seats of the U.S. House of Representatives.

**Redistricting:** Redrawing political district maps at all levels of government.

**Resources for Communities:** Distributing $1.5 trillion of government funding annually to states for important services, like schools, roads, and hospitals.

**Planning and Policy needs:** Assisting with identification of, and solutions to, needs and concerns for policy makers, businesses, nonprofits, and other census stakeholders.
Chaos of 2020 Census: Operational Delays

• In March 2020
  – Concern about the COVID-19 pandemic began to publicly intensify in the United States & many states issued stay-at-home orders
  – Census Bureau **suspended its field activities and closed field offices**

• In April 2020, the Bureau adjusted its operational schedule
  – **Extends its census data collection into the Fall** (thru Oct. 31, 2020)

• July 2020-Fall 2020, political interference by the Trump Administration resulted in the truncation of census operations and uncertainty in data processing and delivery
  – Presidential Memorandum re: Undocumented Persons and Apportionment
  – Truncation of Field Operations/Non-Response Follow-Up
  – Truncation of Data Processing
2010 Apportionment

We will know by April 30, 2021 how the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives will be distributed to the states.
Redistricting: What Is It?

• Process used by governments to redraw political district boundaries.
• Applies to all levels of government where district elections are held, including
  – U.S. House of Representatives
  – state legislatures
  – city councils
  – school boards
  – county boards
  – Judicial
  – water districts
  – and more
Redistricting: Why Is It Important?

• How district lines are drawn influences who runs for public office and *who is elected*.

• Who lives in a district can influence whether elected officials are *responsive to a community’s needs* regarding important issues like ensuring safe schools to adopting immigration policies.
Redistricting Data

Redistricting Data: P.L. 94-171 file

• Public Law 94-171, enacted in 1975, directs the Census Bureau to make special preparations to provide redistricting data needed by the 50 states.
• The PL 94-171 file will population data on
  • Race
  • Latino origin
  • those 18 years and older
• Data will be provided down to the census block – the smallest geographic unit
Census Blocks

• Statistical areas bounded by visible features such as roads, streams, and railroad tracks, and by nonvisible boundaries such as property lines, city, township, school district, county limits and short line-of-sight extensions of roads.

• Serve as building blocks for all geographic boundaries the Census Bureau tabulates data for, such as tracts, places, and American Indian Reservations.

• For 2010, across the 50 states plus D.C.
  – Total # of Census Blocks = 11,078,297
  – Total # of Census blocks with no Population = 4,871,268
  – In remaining 56% of the census blocks (6,207,029), the range of populated blocks was 1 to 19,279
Redistricting: How’s It Done?

Drawing New Maps

- Mappers will take these census blocks and combine them together to create districts that match the number of units (or seats) for that level of government (e.g., 36 Congressional Seats = 36 districts)
  - Equal Population Requirement
  - Compliance with the Voting Rights Act
Redistricting: Why Does the Community Need to be Involved?

• Redistricting can either be used for bad (to exclude our communities from political power) or for good (to ensure our communities get our fair share of political power).

• Our communities need to fully participate in, and monitor, the upcoming redistricting process to ensure our communities are heard and represented.
Redistricting: Timing and Impact of Delays

Delayed Delivery of Redistricting Data
• Will be provided by September 30, 2021
• The delay to September 30 compresses the timeline for redistricting in every state, making redistricting even more difficult this go around.
• In some states, this delay will make it impossible to meet deadlines established in state constitutions or statutes.

What States May Do In Response
• States with constitutional deadlines filing a lawsuit for relief
• Setting a new deadline where state statutory deadlines exist
• Moving either the primary date or the filing data where this delay would make it difficult to complete redistricting before candidate filing deadlines for the state primary; and
• Where permitted, a special session for redistricting could be held.

Potential Problem with Delay
• This time crunch may be used as an excuse by some jurisdictions to minimize the opportunity for public participation and engagement in the redistricting process.
Redistricting: How Can Community Get Involved?

Learn the Rules
• Make sure to understand how redistricting will happen where you live

Organize your Community
• Get together with interested neighbors or organizations to work together
• Potentially draft maps that best represent your community’s interest

Testify at Hearings
• About proposed maps or your community
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