

04/01/2021

Dear Official Recipients of the 2020 Census P.L. 94-171 Redistricting Data,

The Census Bureau announced on February 12, through a [blog](#) and a [press release](#), a revised timeline for producing and delivering high-quality redistricting data products to the states. Establishing a date against which states could rely on to receive their redistricting data required the Census Bureau to identify exactly which activities need to be completed and in what sequence, as well as setting the time and resources needed for each of these steps. Based on this review, we determined it will take until September 30, 2021, for us to complete and deliver the full set of planned redistricting data products.

We also recognize that delivery in September may cause hardship for states with earlier deadlines. Accordingly, we continued to evaluate our planned data processing, looking for ways to provide data for states that need redistricting data earlier. Through this reevaluation, we announced on [March 15, 2021](#), that we will provide the states with our legacy format summary files in mid-to-late August, currently scheduling for the third week of August. While we had intended to provide the legacy format summary files with the final 2020 Census redistricting data, we determined that many states will be able to use these legacy files in August without waiting for the September delivery. The legacy format files will have identical data to the files that we will deliver in September. They will have been fully reviewed and subject to the same exacting quality assurance processes. The only drawback to using the legacy format summary files is that they will require additional handling and software to make the data easily accessible. We expect that many states will elect to use the August delivery because they have used similar products in the past.

Legacy Format Summary Files:

- Published to the web in mid-to-late August.
- Available to the states and the public.
- Identical data to the materials and tools provided in the September delivery.
- Fully reviewed and subject to the same exacting quality assurance processes.

In September, we will provide states the remainder of the planned data products/tools. DVDs and flash drives will be provided to official state recipients, those required by law. The states and the public will also receive access to the data through our data.census.gov Data Explorer platform.

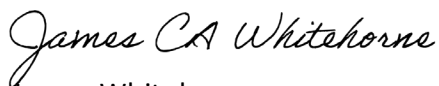
- The DVDs and flash drives contain an integrated software browsing tool that allows intuitive browsing of the data. They also contain a simple custom extraction menu that allows for the extraction of large datasets from the device. Those extractions can then be imported easily into a Geographic Information System or database.
- The Data Explorer web tool at data.census.gov is our online data browsing tool for both the official recipients and the public. Users of the Data Explorer platform can access many different census datasets, including the redistricting data. The Data Explorer has

custom filters that allow the user to filter on those geographic and characteristic data for which they are interested. For example, a state could filter the data and easily identify the number of voting-age residents by race or ethnicity in each and every block within a census tract, county, or even for the entire state. They can then view, map, and download these datasets once they have set the filters with their choices.

This dual release of data, in August and September, has made for one additional alteration to our data release plan. Our original plan had all three of these methods available simultaneously in late September. As part of that plan, we built in an ability for you, as an official recipient, to access our data.census.gov platform a day before the public through a data embargo. Now, with the release of the summary file data a month in advance, this provision no longer makes sense and so has been removed.

To assist states with the August delivery, we recently posted a [legacy format summary file of the prototype redistricting data tabulations](#) released from the 2018 End-to-End Census Test in Providence County, RI. These files are in the format that states can expect when they receive the 2020 redistricting data. We also posted the 2020 technical documentation that will accompany the 2020 redistricting data. We are also continuing to identify support documentation and tools that may assist some data user in the use of these files. They will be added to the website as they are developed. I encourage you, your staff, or your legislative support team to review the prototype in preparation for the August publication of the 2020 Census P.L. 94-171 Legacy Format Summary Files.

Sincerely,



James Whitehorne

Chief, Census Redistricting & Voting Rights Data Office