

# Redistricting: Engage, Plan, Be Heard

## What is Redistricting?

Redistricting is the process of redrawing state, local, and congressional electoral districts in response to new census data, to ensure that the districts have equal numbers of people. States begin the process of reviewing this data the year following the administration of the census, in order to ensure compliance with the constitutional mandate of one-person, one-vote.

## Why is Redistricting Important?

- ◆ Redistricting applies to all electoral boundaries.
- ◆ Redistricting often has a major impact on who wins elections, and so affects all types of legislative decisions; from passing laws to providing funding for projects within your community.
- ◆ Revised district boundaries remain in effect for ten years.
- ◆ Citizen participation in the redistricting process is needed to ensure that the new boundaries provide fair electoral opportunities for all.



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## The Redistricting Process

**Step 1 - Release of New Census Data:** Between mid-February and April 1, 2021, the Census Bureau will release population counts to be used for redistricting.

**Step 2 - Review of New Census Data:** The new Census data will show whether districts need to grow or shrink in order to meet the constitutional requirements of population balance.

**Step 3 - Development of New Plans:** A new set of district boundaries will be developed. This may occur in a public forum, or behind closed doors. There may be an official schedule for the process, or the schedule may be informal. There are often public comment periods and public hearings before redistricting plans are officially adopted, but critical decisions may be made earlier.

**Step 4 - Adoption:** Plans are adopted by either the state legislature or by a designated body, such as a redistricting commission.

**Step 5 - Candidate Qualifying for the Next Election:** When new district boundaries are being used, they must be adopted by the time candidate qualifying begins. Some states will try to redistrict in time for the 2021 elections, but most states will use their new plans for the first time in the 2022 election cycle.

**Step 6 - Litigation:** Redistricting is often followed by lawsuits claiming that the adopting plan violates state or federal law.