

# REDISTRICTING FACTSHEET:

## ALL ABOUT THE DATA

Now that you have decided to get involved with your redistricting process, you need to figure out what needs to be done in order to potentially draw maps and/or discrete districts. Here's what you need to know to get you started!

### WHAT DATA ARE NEEDED FOR REDISTRICTING AND HOW SHOULD THEY BE USED?

#### DECENNIAL CENSUS P.L. 94-171 REDISTRICTING DATA

Official data from the decennial census that provide demographic characteristics of the nation by state, county, city, all the way down to the census block level for the purpose of redistricting, including:

- Race and ethnicity
- Population 18 years and over
- Occupied and vacant housing units
- People living in group quarters like nursing homes, prisons, military barracks and college dorms



These data are to be used as the official population counts for purposes of drawing maps, including for ensuring equal population in each district.

#### AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS)

ACS is a sample survey by the Census Bureau that gathers information from a sample of over 3 million housing units annually, on a rolling basis, to provide up-to-date information about the social and economic needs of the nation and its people. The Census Bureau uses the ACS to create multi-year estimates about important characteristics of the national population throughout the country, including data on:

- **Social characteristics** (e.g., Ancestry, Citizenship Status, Disability Status, Educational Attainment, Language Spoken at Home, School Enrollment, etc.)
- **Economic characteristics** (e.g., Class of Worker, Employment Status, Health Insurance Coverage, Income and Earnings, Poverty Status, etc.)
- **Housing characteristics** (e.g., Computer and Internet Use, Occupants per Room, Rent, Tenure (Owner/Renter), Value of Home, Vehicles Available, etc.)
- **Demographic Characteristics** (e.g., Age, Sex, Group Quarters Population, Hispanic or Latino Origin, Race, etc.)



## AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (CONTINUED)

Because the ACS is a survey rather than an actual enumeration, ACS data should not be used for purposes of total population to draw districts. However, ACS data can still be helpful in the redistricting process by providing map-drawers, map-drawing groups, or interested citizens with detailed demographic information about America's communities and can be used to illustrate the contours of one's community of interest.

**ACS data can be used when developing districts to make sure they comply with the Voting Rights Act.** For example, in parts of the country where Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act requires advocates to show that a minority group can constitute the majority of citizen voting age population, ACS provides the data to make this showing through its special tabulation on citizen voting-age population. [1]



## OTHER DATA SOURCES

Your state and local governments are also good sources of information. For example, local governments often compile information on:

- School enrollment
- Attrition rates
- Socio-economic disparities
- Neighborhood boundaries
- Areas that receive community development block grants



You can also supplement by gathering information through stakeholder surveys and organizational interviews, as well as information provided at public hearings. Additionally, you can identify issues of particular concern by talking to community activists, politicians, and civic leaders, as well as reviewing local reports and studies.

## WHAT DO I DO WITH THE DATA NOW THAT I'VE GATHERED IT? HOW CAN I DRAW A MAP OF MY COMMUNITY?

Now that you have the data in hand, you will need to choose what mapping tool to use. There are a number of mapping tools available, including some open-source options that are free to use. The Redistricting Data Hub surveyed most of the tools out there and compiled that research into a "[Choose Your Mapping Tool](#)" feature on their website, which enables you to easily find the right tool for your needs. From their research, here are the free mapping tools currently available. [2]



# FREE REDISTRICTING

## MAPPING TOOLS

### DISTRICTR

Districtr is a free, public webtool for districting and community identification. The tool was developed by the MGGG Redistricting Lab to help state legislatures, nonpartisan commissions, and community organizations collect public input throughout the redistricting process. It features a user-friendly mapping interface built on top of vetted electoral and demographic data.

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### DISTRICTBUILDER 2.0

DistrictBuilder is a free, open-source, web-based software developed by the Public Mapping Project and Azavea. The software is designed for creating redistricting plans for state legislatures, Congressional districts, and local jurisdictions. The online tools support drawing districts using counties, census block groups, or census blocks and can be adapted to drawing with voting precincts or other units. Users are provided with district statistics on population, race/ethnicity, election results, contiguity, and compactness. The software supports integration of communities of interest and maps can be shared via social media or exported in a variety of formats.

- [Future plans](#)
  - [Watch DistrictBuilder Demonstration](#)
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### DRA 2020

DRA 2020 is a free web app to create, view, analyze and share redistricting maps for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. DRA 2020 includes demographic data from the 2010 census and 2018 5-Year ACS estimates and extensive election data. Official congressional and legislative district maps are included and can be used to start new maps, or you can create maps from scratch. A comprehensive feature set makes it easy to create and modify maps while keeping them within the accepted parameters. DRA 2020 also includes a rich set of analytics, including measures of proportionality, competitiveness, minority representation, compactness and splitting.

- [Watch Dave's Redistricting Demonstration](#)
  - [YouTube Videos](#)
  - [Medium Articles](#)
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### QGIS REDISTRICTING PLUGIN

Free and open-source desktop redistricting software designed for drawing single districts or statewide district plans through the QGIS open-source GIS software. It is available for download through the [QGIS plugins app](#) or [this website](#). Users must supply their own data, but this means that districts can be drawn at any level, including census blocks and precincts. Users can generate and export reports, including population and deviation statistics for districts. You can also track any number of variables that you import by district. Maps can be exported in any file format allowed by QGIS, including shapefiles and PDF. [Watch QGIS Demonstration](#).

# FREE REDISTRICTING

## MAPPING TOOLS (CONT.)

### DRAW MY CA COMMUNITY

The California Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC) is collecting information about communities all over California and will use this information to help create California's new statewide election districts. The Statewide Database in partnership with the CRC has developed Draw My CA Community to allow you to participate in this process. On this free webtool, users respond to questions about their COI and draw it on a map using census block-level detail. Users submit their COI directly to the California Citizens Redistricting Commission.

### REPRESENTABLE

Representable is a free, open-source Community of Interest mapping platform. Designed to be as easy to use as possible, Representable provides civic organizations, community members, and mapmakers with the ability to quickly gather quality Community of Interest maps from community members, annotated with the various interests that bind said COI together. Maps can also be visualized in aggregate and exported for use with other mapping software. [Watch Representable Demonstration](#).

***Now that you've picked your mapping tool, you can input your community's data and begin to draw your map! Each tool has its own supporting documentation and assistance on how to optimize the use of their tool.***

*If you need additional help thinking through how to participate, or if you are still not sure about your next steps, feel free to contact us. We are here to help, whether it is to help review demographics in your community, engage in strategic planning for local advocacy, or develop redistricting maps.*

***[Fill out this form](#) if you would like to discuss further!***