

Redistricting in California

What is redistricting?

Redistricting is the process where district lines are redrawn within a state. This includes drawing districts for Congress, State Board of Equalization, State Senate, State Assembly, county boards of supervisors, city councils, school boards, and special district boards.

When do we redistrict?

Every ten years, the census count gives us a snapshot of how many people live in the United States and where we live. Once we know how many people live in California, we redistrict. That is, we draw new lines in order to put the same number of people in each electoral district.

Redistricting ensures that every person has equal representation by drawing districts with an equal number of people. The districts are based on total residents, not on voters.

Why is redistricting important to you and me?

It is essential that elected officials listen to constituents; this is a cornerstone of our democracy. Fair, representative redistricting plans help ensure that elected officials will be responsive to the voters in their communities.

Public participation in map-drawing is critical to ensuring that communities have the strongest voice possible in expressing their preferences. When voters with similar interests are drawn into a district together, their combined voices give them a greater opportunity to express their views, to be heard, to elect candidates of their choice, and to hold their leaders accountable.

Voters are empowered when districts are drawn to give communities a recognizable voice.

Who draws the lines in California?

The California Citizens Redistricting Commission, made up of 14 California citizens, draws the new lines for Congress, the State Board of Equalization, State Senate, and State Assembly. Local redistricting – county boards of supervisors, city councils, school boards, community college district boards, and special district boards – follows a variety of rules. Some counties and cities have independent commissions to draw the lines; others have an advisory commission which makes a recommendation to the elected board; for the others, the elected officials draw the lines themselves.

What is the timeline?

The release of the census data starts the process of drawing lines. This usually occurs by the end of March in a year following a census. This year, however, the census deadline was extended, which may lead to a delay in the release of the census data. The deadlines for final maps vary by type of jurisdiction. Most jurisdictions will be doing their line drawing in the late summer and fall of 2021.

The body responsible for drawing the lines can – and probably should – begin gathering public input **before** the census data is released. The census data is not required to hear from the public about neighborhoods and natural boundaries.

How can I participate in California redistricting?

Meet with elected officials, attend the public meetings, organize your neighbors to work together, use social media to encourage others to participate, encourage the use of [redistricting best practices](#), collaborate with others in your community. For more information and ideas, refer to [LWVCEF Fair Maps Local Redistricting Toolkit](#).

For more information:

LWV California website: lwvc.org

State redistricting: WeDrawTheLines.ca.gov

Local redistricting: LocalRedistricting.org

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