

Census Law and Terminology Related to Redistricting

Federal law related to use of the Census for redistricting -- Public Law (P.L.)94-171 stipulates that the U.S. Census Bureau work in a nonpartisan manner with the states to identify and provide the small-area population counts necessary for legislative redistricting. The Census Bureau is required to provide these counts within one year of Census Day, to the governor and the officers or public bodies responsible for redistricting in each state. These are the figures that were delayed by the pandemic and administrative difficulties resulting in an anticipated receipt by the states in late summer or early fall 2021.

The Census implements the requirements of P.L. 94-171 through five phases of the Redistricting Data Program (RDP):

- Phase 1: Block Boundary Suggestion Project (BBSP)
- Phase 2: Voting District Project (VTDP)
- Phase 3: Delivery of the 2020 P.L. 94-171 Redistricting Data Files
- Phase 4: Collection of Post-2020 Redistricting Plans
- Phase 5: Review of 2020 Census RDP and Recommendations for Census 2030

Kansas has participated in the Redistricting Data Program since the mid-1980s.

U.S. Census—A complete count or enumeration of the population; the federal census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution in Article 1, section 2.

Census block—The smallest and lowest level of geography defined for decennial census tabulations. Census blocks are formed by streets, roads, railroads, streams and other bodies of water, other visible physical and cultural features, and the legal boundaries shown on Census Bureau maps. The Census Bureau provides redistricting data (population counts and certain characteristics of the population) down to the block level, which is the lowest level of census geography. Blocks can have any population, including no people. Census blocks are not ‘permanent’ features. Census block numbers and the area each encompasses is unique to each census.

Census block group – Block groups are the next level of census geography above blocks in the A block group is a combination of census blocks. Aggregations of block groups comprise census tracts.

Census Tract – Census tracts are relatively permanent small-area geographic divisions of a county or statistically equivalent entity defined for the tabulation and presentation of data from the decennial census and selected other statistical programs. Census tracts are uniquely numbered within each county in the U.S. The primary goal of the census tract is to provide a set of nationally consistent small, statistical geographic units, with stable boundaries, that facilitate

analysis of data across time. (See U.S. Census Bureau, Notice of final Criteria and Program Implementation, *Federal Register*, [83 FR 56277](#))

Census VTD -- A generic term adopted by the Bureau of the Census to include the wide variety of small polling areas, such as election districts, precincts, or wards, that State and local governments create for the purpose of administering elections. Some States, including Kansas, use groupings of VTDs to define congressional and State legislative districts (See statutes linked below).

Kansas Statutes Related to Congressional, Legislative, and State Board of Education Districts established by the U.S. District Court

The 2012 district boundaries, as described in the statutes linked below, were established by the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas in *Essex v. Kobach*, 874 F. Supp. 2d 1069, 1074, 1078 (D. Kan. 2012) case no. 12-4046-KHV-JWL, a 2012 challenge in federal court to the unequal population of 2002 congressional and state legislative districts, based on the legislature's inability to agree on new lines during the 2012 Legislative Session. On June 7, 2012, the Court issued an opinion drawing state legislative, board of education, and congressional districts, in the face of legislative inability to do so.

[Kansas Congressional Districts](#)

[House](#) -- 2012 [Kansas House of Representative Districts](#)

[Senate](#) -- 2012 [Kansas Senate Districts](#)

[State Board of Education](#) -- 2012 [Kansas Board of Education](#)

NOTE about geographic and Census Terminology used in Kansas statutes: In Kansas laws describing 2012 districts, "voting district," "tract," "block group" or "block" means, respectively, a voting district (VTD), tract, block group or block identified on the official United States 2010 decennial census maps. Voting districts, tracts, block groups and blocks are referred to in this section by the alphanumeric code by which they are identified on the official United States 2010 decennial census maps and data lists. The boundaries of counties, voting districts, tracts, block groups and blocks referred to in this section are those boundaries as they exist and are identified on the official United States 2010 decennial census maps.