

# Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission Plan Proposals Submission Guidelines

## Introduction

Drawing new boundaries for Maryland's congressional and state legislative districts is not an activity reserved for the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) alone. You can do it too!

The Commission accepts and welcomes input and recommendations from the public via public hearings and has posted tools on its website that will allow anyone with a computer to recommend what new districts should look like.

Congressional and state legislative district boundary plans proposed by the public are referred to as Plan proposals. This guidebook provides information to prepare a Plan proposal to submit to the Commission for consideration.

The foundation of Maryland's online tool is a software platform made by Caliper called **MORe** (Maptitude Online for Redistricting). This platform is an established and proven mapping tool. The application provides features and functionality for plan management, visualization, editing, and community collaboration. For this reason, citizens are strongly encouraged to use the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission's online tool to submit Plan proposals. However, plans submitted utilizing other mapping software will be accepted.

All redistricting plan proposals must be received by the Commission by close of business on **September 24, 2021**. If you want to provide live testimony with your submitted plan during Round 2 of the public meetings, your map(s) must be submitted by **September 17, 2021 at noon**.

Additional submissions based on the maps drawn by the Commission during Round 2 will be accepted during Round 3 in October. More information will be provided regarding future submissions once Round 3 plans are finalized.

# Maryland Redistricting Requirements

For the purposes of redistricting, the No Representation Without Population Act of 2010 (the Act) requires persons incarcerated in state or federal correctional facilities to be counted as residents of their last known address before incarceration. The Act also requires the exclusion of non-state resident inmates from the count to determine congressional and legislative districts. The 2020 Census of Population (P. L. 94-171) updated to comply with the Act is referred to as “**Adjusted Data**” in this document.

All Plan proposals must be based on the 2020 Census of Population (P. L. 94-171) with population counts for Maryland adjusted data in accordance with the Act. *This adjusted data is available on the Redistricting website [Data](#) page (the “Adjusted 2020 Census Data”) and should not be confused with the base Census data (P. L. 94-171) released on August 12, 2021. Redistricting submissions that are not based on the Adjusted 2020 Census Data might not meet acceptable parameters and potentially could be rejected by the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission).*

## Congressional Districts

Congress has given state legislatures authority to redistrict congressional seats. Congressional districts are required by federal law to be single member districts with equal population. The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act (Section 2) also apply to congressional redistricting.

## Legislative Districts

Article III, Sections 2, 3, and 4 of Maryland’s Constitution frames the requirements for state legislative districts, which are divided into districts for the Senate and House of Delegates. Each district contains one senator and three delegates. The Maryland Senate has 47 members, and each Senate district is a single member district. The Maryland House of Delegates has 141 members where each district may have multi-member districts or single member and multi-member districts.

Section 4 states legislative districts must:

- Be compact in form
- Have substantially equal population
- Have due regard for natural and political boundaries

Section 5 of the Maryland Constitution requires the Governor to prepare a state legislative districting plan following the decennial census. The Governor must present the plan to the President of the Maryland Senate and the Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates. The presiding officers must have the plan introduced as a joint resolution on the first day of the regular session in the second year following the decennial census (In this case that will be January 12, 2022). If the General Assembly has not adopted another redistricting plan by the 45th day of the session, the Governor's plan, as presented, becomes law.

The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act (Section 2) also apply to legislative redistricting.

Governor Larry Hogan's executive order of January 12, 2021 creating the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission provides that state legislative districts proposed by the Commission shall, in addition to the above, be:

- As nearly equal in population as is feasible given due regard for natural boundaries and the boundaries of political subdivisions;
- To the extent possible and consistent with the Commission's other duties and responsibilities, subdivided into single-member delegate districts;
- Numbered consecutively commencing at the northwestern boundary of the state and ending at the southeastern boundary of the state

# Submission Guidelines

There are three ways for citizens to submit their plans to the Commission:

- The map drawing software, Maptitude Online Redistricting Software (**MORe**) will be used by the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) – ***This is the preferred method for Plan submissions.*** Citizens use the same software tool as the Commission. Citizens will have access to all the same data the Commission uses to make plans, including the adjusted U.S. Census population, and geographic and political boundaries. The MORe tool can be accessed at this [link](#).

This is an all-inclusive method that packages data, district creation software, geo-processing tools, and statistical tests used to assure district contiguity and compactness. Plans submitted using this online tool are considered complete and are automatically shared with the Commission.

- Other Electronic Tools – Citizens may use private, commercial, or open-source software to submit plans. The citizen must assemble the specified data (including the Adjusted 2020 Census Data and political and statistical boundary files), and create a submission package that includes:
  - a proposal
  - data files
  - a PDF file containing an image of the proposed map
  - requisite documentation according to specified guidelines and
  - electronically transmit this package to the Commission.

Electronic submission packages must be zipped and emailed to [Redistricting.SubmitPlan@Maryland.gov](mailto:Redistricting.SubmitPlan@Maryland.gov). Plan submissions received by close of business on September 24, 2021 will be available to the Commission for their consideration. Anyone wishing to submit proposals for which they want to provide live testimony at a Round 2 public meeting, should submit their map(s) no later than noon on September 17, 2021.

- Hard copy - Citizens may also assemble the specified data (including the Adjusted 2020 Census Data and political and statistical boundary files) on paper, create a submission package that includes the proposal, data files, an image of the proposed map, and requisite documentation according to guidelines specified herein, and send the package to the Commission. Plan submissions received by close of business on September 24, 2021 will be available to the Commission for their consideration. Anyone wishing to submit proposals for which they want to provide live testimony at a Round 2 public meeting, should ensure their submission is received by the Commission no later than noon on September 17, 2021.
- Proposals should be emailed to [Redistricting.SubmitPlan@Maryland.gov](mailto:Redistricting.SubmitPlan@Maryland.gov) or mailed to:

**Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission**  
**Maryland Department of Planning**  
**301 W. Preston St., Suite 1101**  
**Baltimore, MD 21201**

For questions regarding these guidelines, please contact [Redistricting.Commission@Maryland.gov](mailto:Redistricting.Commission@Maryland.gov).

# Preparation Guidelines for Plans Submitted Via Other Electronic Tools or as Hard Copy

Plan proposal packages should contain a data file linking individual 2020 Census blocks to proposed congressional or state legislative districts. This file is called a Census block assignment file. Additional Plan components may include maps, written boundary descriptions, population summaries, and narratives explaining the rationale for the specified proposals.

Listed below are Plan prerequisites and preferred and acceptable formats.

**All Plan proposals must be based on the Adjusted 2020 Census Data, which is [2020 Census](#) of Population (P. L. 94-171) adjusted in accordance with the “No Representation Without Population Act” of 2010.**

All Plan proposals must be based on the [2020 Census](#) of Population (P. L. 94-171) with population counts for Maryland adjusted according to the “No Representation Without Population Act” of 2010. *This adjusted data will be made available on the redistricting/State Data Center website by the first week of September 2021 and should not be confused with the base Census data (P. L. 94-171) released by the U.S. Census Bureau on August 12, 2021. Any redistricting submissions based on the unadjusted data (P. L. 94-171) may not meet the parameters of an acceptable district and could potentially be rejected by the Commission.*

## Proposals Submitted via Other Electronic Tools

1. Proposal packages and all materials must include the name of the person or organization submitting the plan and contact information, including address, phone, and email address. All maps related to a specific plan proposal must be clearly labeled, including the name of the person or organization submitting the plan.
2. Plan proposals must include a 2020 Census block assignment file and may include a summary of the adjusted 2020 Census total population counts for each proposed district.
  - a. Preferred formats: Excel or dBase format
  - b. Acceptable Format: Text, comma delimited
3. The use of maps displaying proposed congressional or legislative district boundaries is required.
  - a. Preferred format: Shapefile or geodatabase *and* PDF map
4. Plan proposals may include a written description of the proposed district boundaries, or a narrative explaining the rationale for boundary proposals.
  - a. Preferred format: PDF
  - b. Acceptable Formats: Microsoft Word or text file

## Proposals Submitted via Hard Copy

1. Proposal packages and all materials must include the name of the person or organization submitting the plan and contact information including address, phone, and email address.
2. Plan proposals must include a map with sufficient detail for an accurate review by the Commission. Preferred maps are available from the following sources:
  - a. [Maryland Department of Planning's County VTD \(precinct\) maps](#) OR U.S. Census Bureau Voting District maps (also called TIGER/Line maps).
  - b. Both map series are available electronically from the Maryland Department of Planning in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) file format.  
Preferred format: Paper or PDF only

**NOTE:** Maps other than those recommended above may not display sufficient geographic detail.

3. Plan proposals may include a written description of the proposed district boundaries, or a narrative explaining the rationale for boundary proposals.
  - a. Preferred format: Paper or PDF
  - b. Acceptable Formats: Microsoft Word or Text file

# Submission Procedures

## Submission Date

Plan submissions received by close of business on September 24, 2021 will be available to the Commission for their consideration. Anyone wishing to submit proposals for which they want to provide live testimony at a Round 2 public meeting, should submit their map(s) no later than noon on September 17, 2021.

**All Plan proposals received by the Commission become part of the public record.** Plan proposals will be available for public inspection and can be viewed online at <https://redistricting.maryland.gov/Pages/submitlog.aspx>

Plan proposals must be based on one of two geographies:

1. 2020 Census blocks
2. 2020 Census VTDs (Maryland Election Precincts)

Plans based on the assignment of 2020 Census blocks should include a **Block Assignment File**. This is a data file assigning each Census block to a specified congressional or state legislative district.

Plans based on the assignment of 2020 precincts to congressional or state legislative districts must include a **VTD Assignment File**. This is a data file assigning each VTD to a specified district. Each geography must be assigned in their entirety to the proposed district. If a Plan requires that a precinct is split, and the specified precinct parts are assigned to different proposed districts, a **Block Assignment File** must be used to prepare the Plan. The data is available as an Excel spreadsheet, comma separated text (CSV), shapefile, or geodatabase format.

1. **Block Assignment Files**– **Figure 1**, below, shows the Block Assignment file. At a minimum, the following two fields must appear in the file:
  - Column 1 represents the unique statewide code for the Census block (BLOCK);
  - Column 2 represents the district to which the block is assigned in the Plan (DISTRICTID).

**Figure 1. Block Assignment File**

| BLOCK           | DISTRICTID |
|-----------------|------------|
| 240479512002067 | 2401       |
| 240479512002062 | 2401       |
| 240479512002058 | 2401       |
| 240479512002061 | 2401       |
| 240479512002060 | 2401       |
| 240479514002131 | 2401       |

2. ***VTD Assignment Files*** – **Figure 2**, below, shows the ***VTD Assignment File*** used to prepare a precinct level Plan submission. At a minimum, the following two (2) fields must appear in the file:
- Column 1 represents the unique Maryland precinct code (VTD);
  - Column 2 represents the legislative district to which the precinct is assigned in the submitted Plan (District).

**Figure 2. VTD Assignment File**

| VTD         | DISTRICTID |
|-------------|------------|
| 2403902-001 | 38A        |
| 2403905-001 | 38A        |
| 2403903-001 | 38A        |
| 2403913-003 | 38A        |
| 2403913-002 | 38A        |
| 2403913-001 | 38A        |

**A Block Assignment File or VTD Assignment File plan proposal must be submitted as an electronic file.**

**[Block and VTD data files and instructions are available for download here.](#)**

Within five business days after receiving the Plan proposal via email or mail, an acknowledgement of receipt including plan identifier, will be sent.

## Acknowledgement

By submitting a plan you acknowledge that the submission is complete and in compliance with the aforementioned guidelines and includes all required files and supporting documentation. The Commission will not undertake the task of identifying and merging a Plan that is provided over multiple submissions or with missing or incomplete information.

## Disclaimer

**In formulating and making recommendations to the Governor, the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission is under no obligation to comment on or make use of any submitted Plan proposals. The Commission may as it deems appropriate use a submitted Plan proposal in its entirety, use a portion of a submitted Plan proposal, or make no use of a submitted Plan proposal.**



## Contacts and Other Useful Information

Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission web address

[Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission](#)

Contact the Commission

Email: [Redistricting.Commission@maryland.gov](mailto:Redistricting.Commission@maryland.gov)

Phone: 410-697-9359

**MORe** Application

To access MORe click [here](#).

The instruction link for Maptitude can be found [here](#).

Adjusted 2020 Data

Redistricting website [Data](#) page.

Plan submittal email address

[Redistricting.SubmitPlan@Maryland.gov](mailto:Redistricting.SubmitPlan@Maryland.gov)

Plan submittal mail address

Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission  
Maryland Department of Planning  
301 W. Preston St., Suite 1101  
Baltimore, MD 21201