

# Fact Sheet on Reapportionment and Redistricting

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At the beginning of each decade, in the spring of the year ending in zero, the federal government takes the census of the population of the nation. Within a few months of the census taking, the words "reapportionment" and "redistricting" begin to appear. What do these words mean, why do we do this, and when is it going to be over?

## Reapportionment

Reapportionment is the process of determining the number of seats in the 435 member U.S. House of Representatives for each state for the next 10 years. It does not affect the U.S. Senate, which is composed of two senators from each state. The Constitution requires that the number of representatives from each state be reapportioned every 10 years according to the population of each state as counted in the census. For example, Minnesota has eight members of the House of Representatives, while California, a much larger state, has 52. During the 1980s, California had 45 representatives, but because the state population grew faster than the national average, their delegation increased by seven. Minnesota has had eight representatives since 1960. During the 1950s and earlier, Minnesota had a delegation of nine.

The results of the 2000 Census determine the number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives for each state. On Dec. 31, 2000, the secretary of commerce, who supervises the taking of the census, is required to deliver to the President the population of each state from the 2000 Census and the resulting reapportionment of the number of representatives from each state. Each state is guaranteed at least one representative. The remaining 385 seats are reapportioned among the states according to a formula based on population. Minnesota is expected to retain its eight seats.

## State redistricting

Once reapportionment has been determined, the next step is redistricting. Since the earliest days of the nation, the state legislatures have been responsible for redrawing the boundaries of both congressional and legislative districts to reflect population shifts. A series of court actions during the 1960s and 70s reinforced the requirement for redistricting each decade and

established that the size of the districts be based on population.

During March 2001, the Minnesota State Legislature will receive the census data necessary to redraw the state's eight congressional districts and 201 legislative districts. The data will include a count of the total population and population age 18 and older by detailed race and Hispanic ethnicity, by census block, census tract, precinct or voting district, city and township, county, and a number of other specialized geographic entities.

Work is already underway to have computer and technical resources ready for the legislators to draw boundaries for the new districts. Their plans will ultimately take the form of bills for legislative passage. Once the Legislature has passed a redistricting bill, the Governor will have the option of signing it or vetoing it. If he signs the bill, redistricting has been accomplished. If he vetoes the bill, the Legislature might vote to override the veto. If the veto withstands an override attempt, a new bill must be written, passed and sent to the Governor.

## Role of the courts

If the Legislature and the Governor fail to agree on a plan, or if someone who does not like the plan is willing to contest it, the matter will be resolved in the courts, both state and federal. The courts will ensure that a new plan is in place for the 2002 election.

## Local redistricting

The new legislative districts need to be determined in early 2002 to give sufficient time for the election in November 2002. Once the districts have been established, local units of government with districts apportioned by population must also redistrict themselves. When all the districts have been determined, boundaries for election precincts will be set. Voters in each precinct can vote only for the candidates eligible for election from that precinct. All this must happen early enough in 2002 for candidates to file for the November 2002 election, using the new district boundaries.

For more information contact the State Demographer's Office at 651-296-2557 or [www.mnplan.state.mn.us/Demography](http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us/Demography)