

Why Redistricting Matters

Understanding State and Local Level Efforts

The redistricting process draws new U.S. congressional and state legislative district lines. It occurs every ten years, after the completion of the Census count.¹ Over a ten-year span, a state's population changes may warrant more or less representation, and/or a district's demography may change. In any case, there is then a need to re-examine district lines and remap districts so that they have the roughly equal numbers of residents and are generally representative of the voting public.² Since many elected officials – including members of Congress, state legislators, and county and municipal officers – are elected by voters from these defined districts, this process has significant and lasting impacts.

Vitalyst and Redistricting

Civic health is foundational to community health and well-being. The ways and processes through which communities are empowered to advocate for and respond to policies that reflect their values matter a great deal. In a democratic system, it all starts with fair representation and inclusive voice that are essential to the robust function of governmental systems. Representation and voice are at the heart of redistricting, which is implemented by many cities after the Decennial Census. Vitalyst holds civic health as a key goal and supports many Census-related efforts, so that:

- Arizonans have a fair share of representation and resources;
- There is adequate and equitable funding for programs like SNAP and Medicaid;
- The voices of communities that have traditionally been marginalized are heard.

Vitalyst promotes efforts with local organizations to empower residents and ensure that their voices are heard, counted, and accounted for – because that is one way to help democracy stay healthy.



Setting the Map for Redistricting



AIRC'S GOAL IS TO PROTECT THE CONCEPT OF "ONE-PERSON, ONE-VOTE" TO ACHIEVE EQUAL POPULATIONS ACROSS ELECTION DISTRICTS.

Each state decides how its specific process will take place. Most state legislatures have the power to draw lines for legislative and congressional districts, but Arizona is one of eight states that uses an independent commission. The Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission (AIRC) is the product of a citizens' initiative that amended the Arizona Constitution after the 2000 election.³ The stated purpose of the AIRC is to redraw the state's congressional and legislative districts to mirror the results of the most recent Census,³ with the goal of protecting the concept of "one-person, one-vote" to achieve equal populations across election districts, according to the Arizona Constitution.⁴

The AIRC is reconstituted with five new members each decade and must be established by February 28th of each year ending in a "one" (for example, 2021). A total of 25 finalists are vetted and then narrowed down to two members from each political party, with one member standing as Independent to avert partisan sway. The Arizona Constitution states that the process of drawing congressional and legislative districts must be done in a "grid-like" manner across the whole state,⁴ while also striving to achieve:²

- Equal population
- Compactness and contiguousness*
- Compliance with the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act
- Respect for communities of interest and visible geographic features

* Compactness refers to the principle that constituents residing within an electoral district should live as near to one another as possible. Compactness can be measured as a ratio of the circumference of a district and its total area.⁶ Contiguousness refers to the rule that electoral districts in a state should be physically adjacent.⁷

Spotlight: City of Peoria



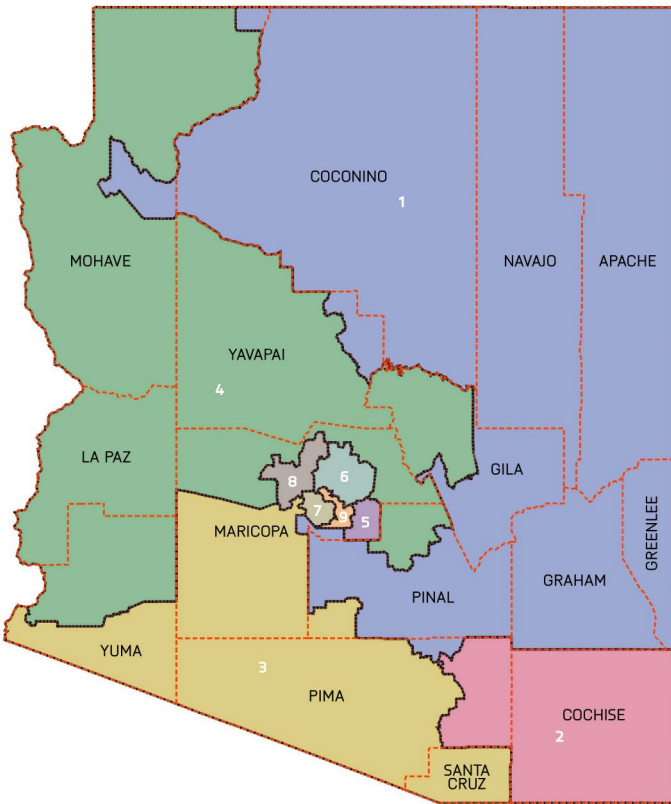
The City of Peoria is one of the eight charter cities that conducts its own local redistricting process. The city hires a consultant to analyze the data from the Census count, aid in public outreach, and supply a tool kit that will allow its residents to propose their own district lines. The process is managed through an internal committee made up of the City Clerk, the Office of the Communications Director, the Planning and Community Development Director, the City Manager's Office representative, the City Attorney's Office, and the IT Director. There is extensive community outreach involved, including educational events in each district before the process starts and then again after the proposed maps are drawn. For the redistricting process following the 2020 Census, online mapping tools are utilized for community engagement, and the city will accept resident submissions for consideration by the Council. The public is welcome to comment on the redistricting items on the agenda during Council meetings.

After the AIRC draws congressional and legislative districts, it opens a comment period for up to 30 days, allowing for public feedback. Comments are taken under consideration, and both bodies of the legislature can make recommen-

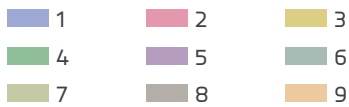
dations to the AIRC “by memorial or by minority report.”⁴ Once this period is completed, the AIRC establishes final district lines and certifies to the Secretary of State the newly formed congressional and legislative districts.⁴

Congressional and Legislative Districts Approved by the AIRC in 2012

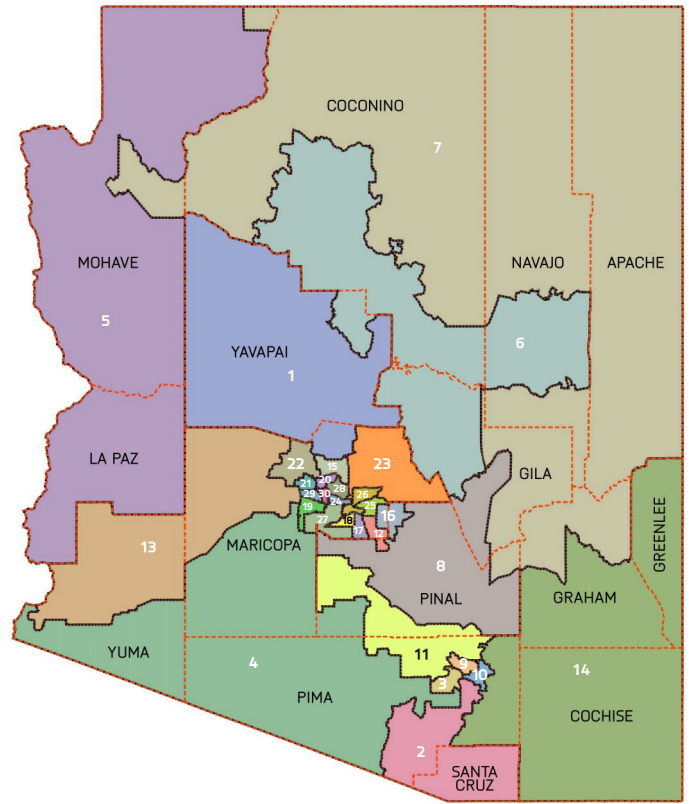
FINAL CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS
Approved 1/17/2012



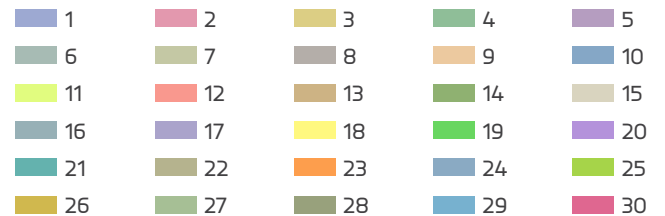
Districts



FINAL LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS
Approved 1/17/2012



Districts



City Level Redistricting

REDISTRICTING FOR ARIZONA
WILL BEGIN ONCE CITIES RECEIVE
THE POPULATION REPORT FROM
THE CENSUS BUREAU.

Redistricting at the state level is not the only activity of its kind in Arizona. The state has 19 charter cities,⁵ and eight of them conduct their own local redistricting process. Charter cities follow many of the state processes in combination with their own city guidelines, which are outlined in each city charter. While the charter is the governing law of that city, it must be consistent with state laws and the Arizona Constitution.³ Non-charter, general law cities follow laws outlined in the Arizona Constitution or in statute. The table below summarizes the process that the eight charter cities take in their local redistricting efforts (as compiled from the cities' official website or online charter, as well as interviews with city officials such as the City Clerk or City Manager).

Arizona Charter Cities that Conduct Redistricting

City	City Charter/ Law Ordinance	Who Manages the Redistricting Process?	What is the Timeline?	How the Redistricting Process is Implemented	Public Engagement
Bisbee	City of Bisbee Zoning Code book - found in Article 4.2.	The City Council, with aid from the Administrative Team and City Attorney.	Bisbee's city redistricting is done in concordance with the Census. The process begins in the Spring following Census completion and ends in December of that same year.	The City Attorney oversees the City Charter to ensure boundaries align with its governance and state laws.	Public hearings are held to gather feedback from community members. www.bisbeeaz.gov
Buckeye	City Ordinance 217.	The City Manager and City Council.	Buckeye's city redistricting process occurs following every Census year. The process begins in the Spring/Summer after Census completion and ends in January the following year.	Buckeye accepts open bids from consultants within the City; the City Council, along with the City Attorney, Manager, and Planner review these bids.	Mapping bids are submitted. There is a "Call to the Public," which includes engagement with community members to stay informed and provide feedback on the redistricting bids. www.buckeyeaz.gov
Douglas	City Ordinance Sec. 5.16.	The City Attorney, City Planner, City Clerk, and administrative team.	Douglas' city redistricting process begins in the Spring following Census completion and ends in December of that same year.	The City Clerk, Attorney, and Manager, along with administrative staff, manage the redistricting process; once there is a final draft, it will be submitted for approval by the Mayor and Council.	Requires three readings of the ordinance to the public for educational purposes and releases publications through newspaper. www.douglasaz.gov
Glendale	City Charter Article 3, Sec. 15-2.	Glendale's City Council and the City Attorney oversee the City of Glendale Redistricting Commission.	Glendale's city redistricting process starts in the Spring/Summer following Census completion and ends in December of that same year.	When the population count is received from the Census, the internal redistricting commission starts drafting maps, which are governed by the City Charter and the State Constitution.	Public hearings are held virtually along with social media campaigns to obtain citizens involvement. www.glendaleaz.com

Arizona Charter Cities that Conduct Redistricting (Continued)

City	City Charter/ Law Ordinance	Who Manages the Redistricting Process?	What is the Timeline?	How the Redistricting Process is Implemented	Public Engagement:
Mesa	City Charter Article 11, Sec. 201A and City Code of Ordinance, 11-3-1/2.	The City of Mesa has an ad-hoc committee, comprised of elected council members from the city districts, along with an administrative team.	Mesa’s redistricting process starts in the Spring/Summer after Census completion and ends in December of that same year.	The ad-hoc committee, along with a hired consultant, oversees the drafting of maps to ensure the maps comply with the City Charter and state law.	During the 2011 process, public feedback was garnered through community campaigns, education outreach, and community meetings. Similar engagements are in place. www.mesaaz.gov
Peoria	City Charter Article 1, Sec. 2.C.	The City of Peoria has an internal committee made up of the City Clerk, Office of Communications Director, Planning and Community Development Director, City Manager’s Office representative (Deputy City Manager), the City Attorney’s Office and the IT Director.	Peoria’s city redistricting process occurs after every Census year. It is expected to start the process in Spring/Summer the year after the Census and adopt new district boundaries by December of that year.	The redistricting internal committee starts drafting district maps. A hired consultant analyzes the data from the Census, aids with public outreach, and provides a tool kit. The City Attorney is also involved to ensuring compliance with the City Charter.	Extensive community outreach, including educational events in each district, takes place before maps are drawn and then again after proposed maps are presented. There is also an online mapping tool to engage the public. www.peoriaaz.gov
Phoenix	City Charter Article 11, Sec. 2 and Phoenix City Code Article VIII, Sec. 12-1602.	The City of Phoenix has a process that includes the City Council, City staff that is comprised of the City Clerk’s Department, City Manager’s Department, and the Office of the Mayor. The process also includes a contract with a redistricting consultant.	The City of Phoenix redraws its district line every 10 years to reflect population changes on the most recent federal Census.	The City Council, City staff, and a redistricting consultant look at the Census report and have a meeting with all the district representatives to discuss how the process will proceed. The City of Phoenix also involves the public through hearings and interactive meetings. The final map is evaluated to ensure it follows the city charter and the Arizona Constitution, and it is then voted on by the City Council.	In the 2012, there were public meetings for education, as well as a technical forum for an interactive web-based mapping tool so residents could get involved in and provide information on communities of interest. Two rounds of public meetings were held in both English and Spanish that allowed public to attend and comment on the draft maps. All written materials and web postings were available in both English and Spanish, and video presentations were available on the city website. www.phoenix.gov
Tucson	City Code Chapter 1, Sec. 1.	The City Council, along with the assistance of the City Clerk and City Attorney.	Tucson’s city redistricting process starts once receiving the Census count. It is expected to begin the process in the Spring two years after the Census.	The City Council initiates the redistricting process. The ward (district) boundaries are reviewed every four years to determine if adjustments are necessary to equalize the population.	Public hearings are held, updates are added to Tucson’s city website; and social media campaigns are also held. www.tucsonaz.gov



Spotlight: City of Glendale

The City of Glendale conducts its process through an internal redistricting commission by the City Council. The City of Glendale starts the process in the Spring or Summer following the Census, after population numbers are received. Completion is projected by the end of that same year to ensure the city's primary election will take place. Sometimes cities hire outside consultants to aid them in the redistricting process, but Glendale does the process all "in-house," with oversight from the City of Glendale Council. The City of Glendale involves their community through public hearings held by a City of Glendale citizen's committee. This group, comprised of volunteer community members with oversight from a city official, holds social media campaigns to get community members involved in the process (e.g. using Facebook Live).

Case Study: Public Engagement for Redistricting in the City of Peoria

The Challenge

Creating an intentional process to involve community members in learning, responding, and acting in the City of Peoria's local redistricting process.

Result

The Peoria City Council decided to create a redistricting mapping tool that residents could use to submit their own maps for consideration to be vetted for the final district maps.

"Peoria is a citizen-centric community, and as we approached our last redistricting, our energy was focused on ensuring an open and transparent process. With multiple ways for our residents to participate, we received valuable community feedback, and we were pleased to support a map that reflected direct and profound citizen involvement."

— Peoria Mayor Cathy Carlat, reflecting on the importance of involving resident voices in the 2015 redistricting process

Introduction

Charter cities prepare to receive their population counts from the Census so they may run their own local redistricting process, which involves guidance from the local governing body. In 2015, the City of Peoria completed a mid-decade redistricting process of its City Council districts to equalize the population based on their city code following the 2015 Special Census. The purpose of the Special Census is to allow a recount of populations, housing units, and transitory locations conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. This occurs when local city officials believe that there has been a noticeable population change in their city, resulting in a special census count to improve population estimate.⁹ In that year, the Mayor and Council voted to adopt a resident's district draft map.

About City of Peoria

The City of Peoria is one of the eight Arizona charter cities in that undertakes local redistricting and, through their process, incorporates a critical component: community engagement and participation. The city has an internal committee composed of the City Clerk, Office of Communications Director, Planning and Community Development Director, Deputy City Manager, and the IT Director. They, along with the assistance of an outside consultant, analyze the data from the Census and engage in public outreach. This intentional component of redistricting makes all the difference in empowering community members to be part of the solution.

Strategy and Goal

The City Council was determined to involve Peoria's residents in the redistricting process beyond holding public hearing meetings, particularly wanting to get map submissions from residents throughout Peoria. With the help of an outside consulting firm, the city agreed to provide Peoria residents access to a free online resident redistricting application. Residents were encouraged to participate by registering with their email address to submit a proposed draft map. To get started, study sessions were held to inform residents on requirements to draw the maps, including information on what it means to have equal populations as well as compact and contiguous districts that abide with the Voting Right Acts.

The City of Peoria also provided an assortment of information about redistricting for residents to access on the city website. This page included terminology frequently associated with redistricting, articles, social media outlets (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), as well as updates from the City Council. Additionally, to keep every Peoria resident informed, the content was available in English and Spanish.

Peoria residents had a 45-day timeframe to complete and submit a proposed redistricting map for consideration. Subsequently, the City Council and the consultant scored each map according to required criteria; to respect anonymity, only the lead consultant knew the identity of the individual who submitted the map. There were 39 plans submitted, and more than half of those were from Peoria residents. When the first round of scoring was completed, there were five maps that had the best representation with the set criteria. These final five maps were placed on the city's website for public comment.

After compiling the feedback received via the website, the Peoria City Council conducted its adoption hearing. During the hearing, the City Attorney broke down the rules according to the city ordinance, which required a majority vote on one of the final five submitted maps. At the end, two of the maps remained, and with a 5-to-2 vote, a map was chosen. The map selected happened to be a submission from a Peoria resident.

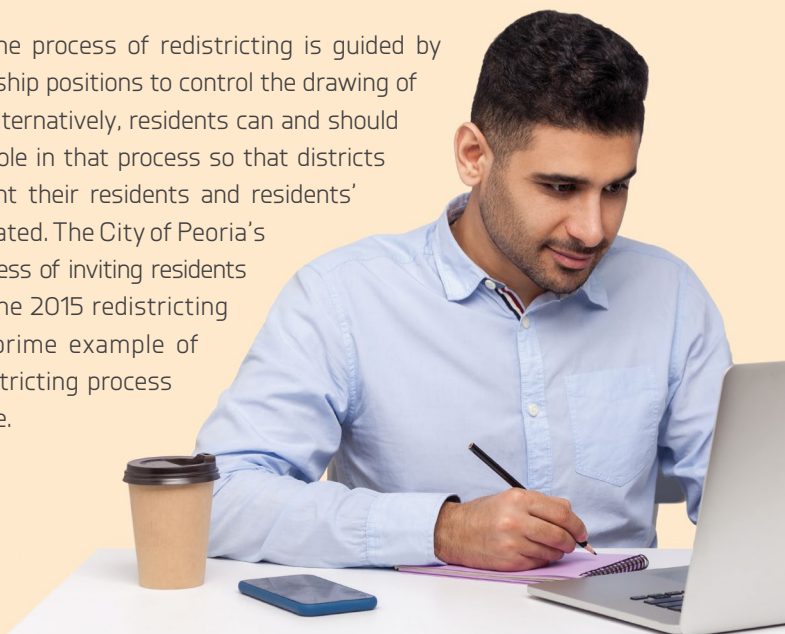
Conclusion

Many times, the process of redistricting is guided by those in leadership positions to control the drawing of district lines. Alternatively, residents can and should play a critical role in that process so that districts better represent their residents and residents' voices are elevated. The City of Peoria's intentional process of inviting residents to be part of the 2015 redistricting process is a prime example of what the redistricting process should look like.



Spotlight: City of Douglas

The City of Douglas also waits to receive its population count from the Census Bureau before beginning the redistricting process. Douglas has seven wards, or city districts, each with its own elected representative; the mayor is elected at-large. This process, guided by Sec. 15-9 in the city charter, manages the drawing process in concordance with the Arizona Constitution and is overseen by the City Clerk, City Manager, City Attorney and an administrative team. The process is managed similarly to the state, with the release of final map lines at the end of a 12-month timeline; completion is projected for December in the year following the Census. The City of Douglas involves community members by holding three public hearings to obtain feedback and conducting communication campaigns sent via the newspaper and social media.



Why Engagement on Redistricting Matters

WHEN CITIES ROLL OUT THEIR REDISTRICTING EFFORTS, STAY UP TO DATE ON YOUR CITY'S PROCESS. LOOK TO YOUR CITY WEBSITE AND/OR THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA TO STAY CONNECTED. EACH CITY HAS ITS OWN WAY TO INVOLVE ITS COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

Redistricting is an important civic process, identifying districts from which congressional members, state representatives, county boards of supervisors and, often, city council members are selected. Public awareness and engagement in the redistricting process is invaluable. Elected officials impact the community in numerous ways. For more information on the state process, the AIRC has a website that lists past district maps along with Q&A's: <https://irc.az.gov/>. It will also list any updates that occur during redistricting processes. Residents in Arizona are invited to supply feedback and comment on the state's draft maps once released for comment, which presents a valuable opportunity to hear the voices of the community.

There are many ways to stay informed about this decennial process at both state and local levels. When cities roll out their redistricting efforts, information on respective cities' processes will be available on the city website and its social media. Each city has its own way to involve community members, whether it be through social media updates, newspaper articles, public comment on map drafts, allowing submission of electronic maps to the City (as was done in Peoria and other jurisdictions), or through other educational events.

- 1 Kathy B, B. (2020). National Conference of State Legislatures. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/redistricting/redistricting-systems-a-50-state-overview.aspx>
- 2 7 Things to Know About Redistricting. (2017). Brennan Center for Justice. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/7-things-know-about-redistricting>
- 3 Forst, B. (n.d.). Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission. <https://azredistricting.org/default.asp>
- 4 AZ League. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2020, from <https://www.azleg.gov/const/4/1.p2.htm>
- 5 League of Arizona Cities and Towns. (2015). Charter government provisions in Arizona cities. <https://www.azleague.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/250.pdf>
- 6 Compactness. (2019). Retrieved from <https://ballotpedia.org/Compactness>
- 7 Contiguity. (2019). Retrieved from <https://ballotpedia.org/Contiguity>
- 8 Bureau, U. (2018, May 10). Special Census Inclusion. Retrieved December 08, 2020, from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/about/special-census.html>

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Thank you to the City of Peoria, Glendale, Douglas, Buckeye, and Mesa for providing time to speak with us about your local city redistricting.

IN MEMORIAM *In memoriam of R. Anthony "Tony" Sissons, a dedicated public servant who managed redistricting processes throughout Arizona and advocated fiercely for resident engagement.*