

1 **REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE REDISTRICTING GUIDELINES**

2 May 5, 2021

3 **I. POPULATION**

4 The total Alabama state population, and the population of defined subunits
5 thereof, as reported by the 2020 Census, shall be the permissible data base used
6 for the development, evaluation, and analysis of proposed redistricting plans. It is
7 the intention of this provision to exclude from use any census data, for the purpose
8 of determining compliance with the one person, one vote requirement, other than
9 that provided by the United States Census Bureau.

10 **II. CRITERIA FOR REDISTRICTING**

11 a. Districts shall comply with the United States Constitution, including the
12 requirement that they equalize total population.

13 b. Congressional districts shall have minimal population deviation.

14 c. Legislative and state board of education districts shall be drawn to achieve
15 substantial equality of population among the districts and shall not exceed an
16 overall population deviation range of $\pm 5\%$.

17 d. A redistricting plan considered by the Reapportionment Committee shall
18 comply with the one person, one vote principle of the Equal Protection Clause of
19 the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

20 e. The Reapportionment Committee shall not approve a redistricting plan that
21 does not comply with these population requirements.

22 f. Districts shall be drawn in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as
23 amended. A redistricting plan shall have neither the purpose nor the effect of
24 diluting minority voting strength, and shall comply with Section 2 of the Voting
25 Rights Act and the United States Constitution.

26 g. No district will be drawn in a manner that subordinates race-neutral
27 districting criteria to considerations of race, color, or membership in a language-
28 minority group, except that race, color, or membership in a language-minority
29 group may predominate over race-neutral districting criteria to comply with
30 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, provided there is a strong basis in evidence in
31 support of such a race-based choice. A strong basis in evidence exists when there
32 is good reason to believe that race must be used in order to satisfy the Voting Rights
33 Act.

- 1 h. Districts will be composed of contiguous and reasonably compact
2 geography.
- 3 i. The following requirements of the Alabama Constitution shall be complied
4 with:
- 5 (i) Sovereignty resides in the people of Alabama, and all districts should be
6 drawn to reflect the democratic will of all the people concerning how their
7 governments should be restructured.
- 8 (ii) Districts shall be drawn on the basis of total population, except that voting
9 age population may be considered, as necessary to comply with Section 2 of the
10 Voting Rights Act or other federal or state law.
- 11 (iii) The number of Alabama Senate districts is set by statute at 35 and, under
12 the Alabama Constitution, may not exceed 35.
- 13 (iv) The number of Alabama Senate districts shall be not less than one-fourth or
14 more than one-third of the number of House districts.
- 15 (v) The number of Alabama House districts is set by statute at 105 and, under
16 the Alabama Constitution, may not exceed 106.
- 17 (vi) The number of Alabama House districts shall not be less than 67.
- 18 (vii) All districts will be single-member districts.
- 19 (viii) Every part of every district shall be contiguous with every other part of the
20 district.
- 21 j. The following redistricting policies are embedded in the political values,
22 traditions, customs, and usages of the State of Alabama and shall be observed to
23 the extent that they do not violate or subordinate the foregoing policies prescribed
24 by the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the State of Alabama:
- 25 (i) Contests between incumbents will be avoided whenever possible.
- 26 (ii) Contiguity by water is allowed, but point-to-point contiguity and long-lasso
27 contiguity is not.
- 28 (iii) Districts shall respect communities of interest, neighborhoods, and political
29 subdivisions to the extent practicable and in compliance with paragraphs a
30 through i. A community of interest is defined as an area with recognized
31 similarities of interests, including but not limited to ethnic, racial, economic, tribal,
32 social, geographic, or historical identities. The term communities of interest may,
33 in certain circumstances, include political subdivisions such as counties, voting

1 precincts, municipalities, tribal lands and reservations, or school districts. The
2 discernment, weighing, and balancing of the varied factors that contribute to
3 communities of interest is an intensely political process best carried out by elected
4 representatives of the people.

5 (iv) The Legislature shall try to minimize the number of counties in each district.

6 (v) The Legislature shall try to preserve the cores of existing districts.

7 (vi) In establishing legislative districts, the Reapportionment Committee shall
8 give due consideration to all the criteria herein. However, priority is to be given to
9 the compelling State interests requiring equality of population among districts and
10 compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, should the
11 requirements of those criteria conflict with any other criteria.

12 g. The criteria identified in paragraphs j(i)-(vi) are not listed in order of
13 precedence, and in each instance where they conflict, the Legislature shall at its
14 discretion determine which takes priority.

15 **III. PLANS PRODUCED BY LEGISLATORS**

16 1. The confidentiality of any Legislator developing plans or portions thereof
17 will be respected. The Reapportionment Office staff will not release any
18 information on any Legislator's work without written permission of the Legislator
19 developing the plan, subject to paragraph two below.

20 2. A proposed redistricting plan will become public information upon its
21 introduction as a bill in the legislative process, or upon presentation for
22 consideration by the Reapportionment Committee.

23 3. Access to the Legislative Reapportionment Office Computer System, census
24 population data, and redistricting work maps will be available to all members of
25 the Legislature upon request. Reapportionment Office staff will provide technical
26 assistance to all Legislators who wish to develop proposals.

27 4. In accordance with Rule 23 of the Joint Rules of the Alabama Legislature
28 “[a]ll amendments or revisions to redistricting plans, following introduction as a
29 bill, shall be drafted by the Reapportionment Office.” Amendments or revisions
30 must be part of a whole plan. Partial plans are not allowed.

31 5. In accordance with Rule 24 of the Joint Rules of the Alabama Legislature,
32 “[d]rafts of all redistricting plans which are for introduction at any session of the
33 Legislature, and which are not prepared by the Reapportionment Office, shall be
34 presented to the Reapportionment Office for review of proper form and for entry
35 into the Legislative Data System at least ten (10) days prior to introduction.”

1 **IV. REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND PUBLIC**
2 **HEARINGS**

3 1. All meetings of the Reapportionment Committee and its sub-committees
4 will be open to the public and all plans presented at committee meetings will be
5 made available to the public.

6 2. Minutes of all Reapportionment Committee meetings shall be taken and
7 maintained as part of the public record. Copies of all minutes shall be made
8 available to the public.

9 3. Transcripts of any public hearings shall be made and maintained as part of
10 the public record, and shall be available to the public.

11 4. All interested persons are encouraged to appear before the
12 Reapportionment Committee and to give their comments and input regarding
13 legislative redistricting. Reasonable opportunity will be given to such persons,
14 consistent with the criteria herein established, to present plans or amendments
15 redistricting plans to the Reapportionment Committee, if desired, unless such
16 plans or amendments fail to meet the minimal criteria herein established.

17 5. Notice of all Reapportionment Committee meetings will be posted on
18 monitors throughout the Alabama State House, the Reapportionment Committee's
19 website, and on the Secretary of State's website. Individual notice of
20 Reapportionment Committee meetings will be sent by email to any citizen or
21 organization who requests individual notice and provides the necessary
22 information to the Reapportionment Committee staff. Persons or organizations
23 who want to receive this information should contact the Reapportionment Office.

24 **V. PUBLIC ACCESS**

25 1. The Reapportionment Committee seeks active and informed public
26 participation in all activities of the Committee and the widest range of public
27 information and citizen input into its deliberations. Public access to the
28 Reapportionment Office computer system is available every Friday from 8:30 a.m.
29 to 4:30 p.m. Please contact the Reapportionment Office to schedule an
30 appointment.

31 2. A redistricting plan may be presented to the Reapportionment Committee
32 by any individual citizen or organization by written presentation at a public
33 meeting or by submission in writing to the Committee. All plans submitted to the
34 Reapportionment Committee will be made part of the public record and made
35 available in the same manner as other public records of the Committee.

1 3. Any proposed redistricting plan drafted into legislation must be offered by a
2 member of the Legislature for introduction into the legislative process.

3 4. A redistricting plan developed outside the Legislature or a redistricting plan
4 developed without Reapportionment Office assistance which is to be presented for
5 consideration by the Reapportionment Committee must:

6 a. Be clearly depicted on maps which follow 2020 Census geographic
7 boundaries;

8 b. Be accompanied by a statistical sheet listing total population for each district
9 and listing the census geography making up each proposed district;

10 c. Stand as a complete statewide plan for redistricting.

11 d. Comply with the guidelines adopted by the Reapportionment Committee.

12 5. Electronic Submissions

13 a. Electronic submissions of redistricting plans will be accepted by the
14 Reapportionment Committee.

15 b. Plans submitted electronically must also be accompanied by the paper
16 materials referenced in this section.

17 c. See the Appendix for the technical documentation for the electronic
18 submission of redistricting plans.

19 6. Census Data and Redistricting Materials

20 a. Census population data and census maps will be made available through the
21 Reapportionment Office at a cost determined by the Permanent Legislative
22 Committee on Reapportionment.

23 b. Summary population data at the precinct level and a statewide work maps
24 will be made available to the public through the Reapportionment Office at a cost
25 determined by the Permanent Legislative Committee on Reapportionment.

26 c. All such fees shall be deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the
27 general fund and shall be used to cover the expenses of the Legislature.

28 **Appendix.**

29 **ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF REDISTRICTING PLANS**

30 **REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE - STATE OF ALABAMA**

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The Legislative Reapportionment Computer System supports the electronic submission of redistricting plans. The electronic submission of these plans must be via email or a flash drive. The software used by the Reapportionment Office is Maptitude.

The electronic file should be in DOJ format (Block, district # or district #, Block). This should be a two column, comma delimited file containing the FIPS code for each block, and the district number. Maptitude has an automated plan import that creates a new plan from the block/district assignment list.

Web services that can be accessed directly with a URL and ArcView Shapefiles can be viewed as overlays. A new plan would have to be built using this overlay as a guide to assign units into a blank Maptitude plan. In order to analyze the plans with our attribute data, edit, and report on, a new plan will have to be built in Maptitude.

In order for plans to be analyzed with our attribute data, to be able to edit, report on, and produce maps in the most efficient, accurate and time saving procedure, electronic submissions are REQUIRED to be in DOJ format.

Example: (DOJ FORMAT BLOCK, DISTRICT #)

SSCCCTTTTTTBBBBDDDD

SS is the 2 digit state FIPS code

CCC is the 3 digit county FIPS code

TTTTTT is the 6 digit census tract code

BBBB is the 4 digit census block code

DDDD is the district number, right adjusted

Contact Information:

Legislative Reapportionment Office

Room 317, State House

11 South Union Street

Montgomery, Alabama 36130

(334) 261-0706

1 For questions relating to reapportionment and redistricting, please contact:

2 Donna Overton Loftin, Supervisor

3 Legislative Reapportionment Office

4 donna.overton@alsenate.gov

5 Please Note: The above e-mail address is to be used only for the purposes of
6 obtaining information regarding redistricting. Political messages, including those
7 relative to specific legislation or other political matters, cannot be answered or
8 disseminated via this email to members of the Legislature. Members of the
9 Permanent Legislative Committee on Reapportionment may be contacted through
10 information contained on their Member pages of the Official Website of the
11 Alabama Legislature, legislature.state.al.us/aliswww/default.aspx.