

Procedures for Updating 2020 Voting Precincts and Magisterial Districts

Update the **Voting Precincts** (or Voting Districts - VTDs) and **Magisterial Districts** (minor civil divisions - MCDs) according to WV State Code [§1-2-2b](#) and [§3-1-5](#). Create magisterial districts from voting precincts.

- 1) **Precinct Mapping or Reapportioning.** Adhere to the voting precinct boundary alignment rules with other geographic entities
 - a) *State Legislative Districts:* **Voting precincts** or voting districts (VTD) must align with state senatorial and delegate districts. See State Code [§1-2-2b](#).
 - b) *Incorporated Places:* In order to facilitate the conduct of local and special elections and the use of election registration records therein, **precinct boundaries** shall be established to coincide with the boundaries of any municipality of the county and with the wards or other geographical districts of the municipality except in instances where found by the county commission to be wholly impracticable so to do. [§3-1-5\(b\)](#) Governing bodies submit **place** and MCD changes through [BAS](#).
 - c) *Census Blocks:* **Precinct boundaries** shall be comprised of intersecting geographic physical features or municipal boundaries [incorporated places] recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau. For purposes of this subsection, geographic physical features include streets, roads, streams, creeks, rivers, railroad tracks and mountain ridge lines. [§3-1-5\(c\)](#). Current voting precinct boundaries should match the 2020 Census blocks for those counties that participated in the [2020 Census Redistricting Data Program](#) – Phase 2 Voting District Project. See [county verification](#) status graphic.

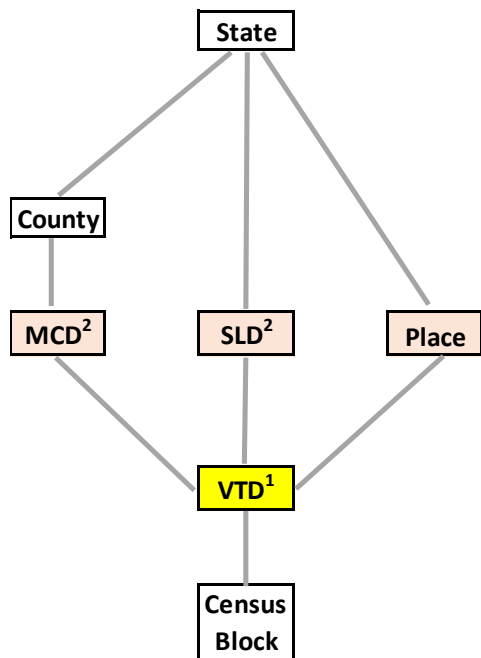
- 2) **Apportion Voting Precincts by Registered Voters.** Apportion voting precincts to voter registration size requirements in accordance with [WV Code §3-1-5](#) (note exceptions).
 - a) *Urban Precincts:* 300-1500 registered voters.
 - b) *Rural Precincts:* 200-700 registered voters.
 - c) Other Considerations.
 - i) Geocode or address match voter registration files to aid apportionment of **registered voters**.
 - (1) GIS Software. GIS or redistricting software can expedite the reapportioning process.
 - (2) Census Block Population. Census estimates of voting age **Population Age 18 Years and Older** may be helpful as a guide if difficult to geocode registered voters.
 - ii) Non-Contiguous Voting Precincts. Voting precincts do not have to be contiguous. For municipalities that have “doughnut holes” in which unincorporated areas are surrounded by incorporated areas, non-contiguous voting districts are an option. See examples:
 - (1) [Laramie County](#), Wyoming. Doughnut hole non-contiguous voting districts
 - (2) [Putnam County](#). Shoestring or pipe stem annexations

- 3) **Realign Magisterial Districts (Minor Civil Divisions - MCDs) by Population**
 - a) Assign voting precincts to proposed magisterial districts.
 - b) Magisterial districts are apportioned by equal population (Census population counts). GIS redistricting software can expedite the apportionment of magisterial districts. Example: Putnam County’s [Population Summary Report](#).

- 4) **County commissioners approve county subdivisions**
 - a) Execute Redistricting Order. [Putnam County](#) example.
 - b) Submit county subdivision changes to the State.
 - c) Create new election district maps (e.g., state legislative, magisterial, voting precincts).
 - i) [Putnam County](#)
 - ii) [Jefferson County](#)
 - d) County clerk offices notify registered voters of voting precinct changes.

Hierarchy of Census Geographic Entities

- Block – **VTD** – **MCD** – County – State (Minor Civil Divisions/Magisterial Districts)
- Block – **VTD** – **SLD** – State (State Legislative Districts)
- Block – **VTD** – **Place** – State (Incorporated Places)
- Block – Block Group – Tract** – County – State (Census Nongovernmental Statistical Entities)



Census Block = Smallest nongovernmental statistical entity
MCD = Minor Civil Division or Magisterial District
Place = Incorporated Place or Municipality
SLD = State Legislative District (Senate or Delegate)
VTD = **Voting District of Precinct**

¹ Apportioned by registered voters
² Apportioned by decennial census population

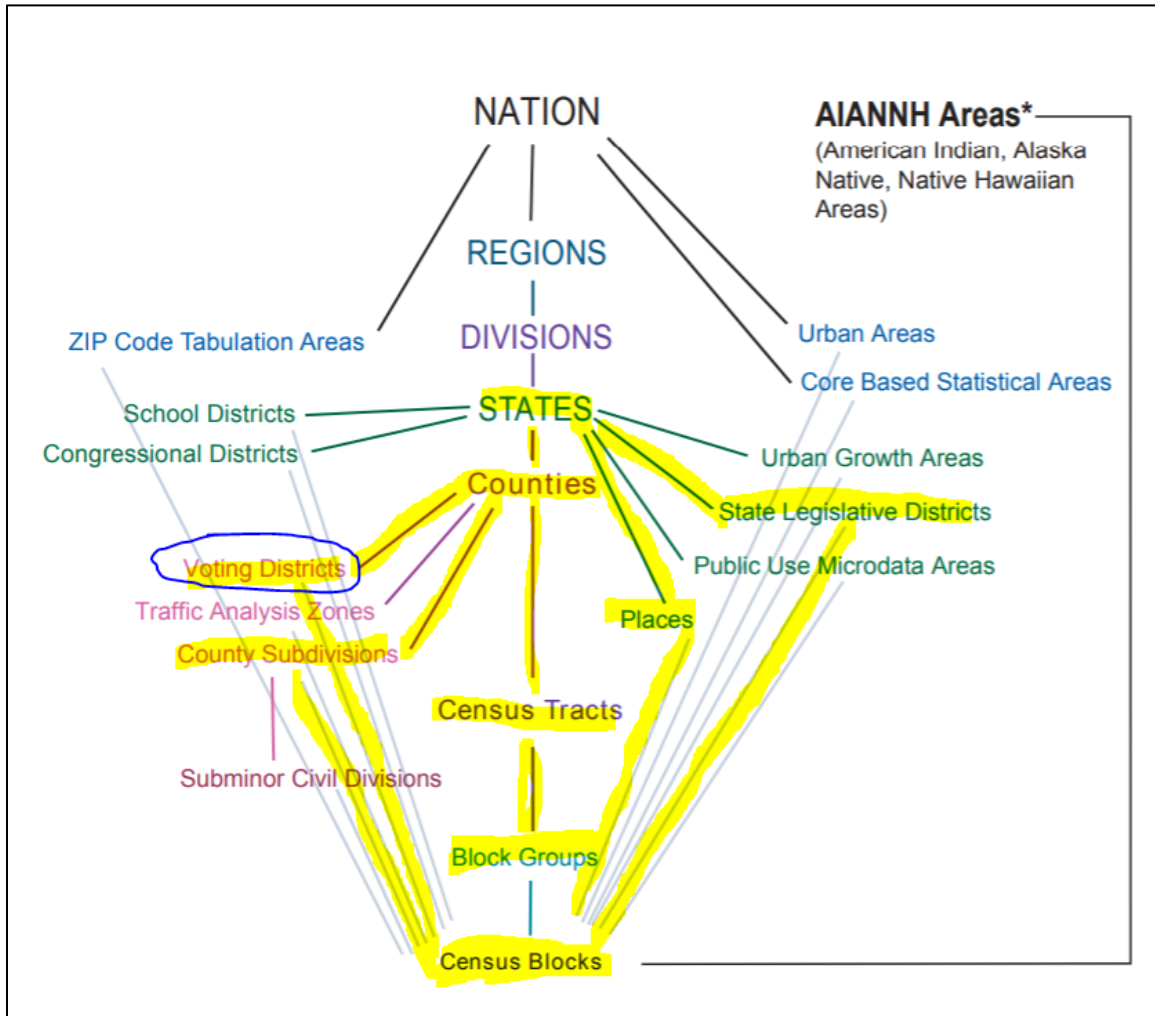
Notes:

[WV State Code](#) rules applicable to creating county subdivisions

In West Virginia, **Voting Districts** (VTDs) or Voting Precincts conform to county subdivision **Magisterial Districts**, also known as Minor Civil Divisions (MCDs).

State and county boundaries always are census tract boundaries in the standard census geographic hierarchy. Refer to documentation on [Census Geographic Relationships](#).

Hierarchy of Census Geographic Entities



Resources:

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/hierarchy.html>

<https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/reference/geodiagram.pdf>

Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) Program

Voting precincts should align with incorporated place boundaries. Incorporated place, minor civil division, and county boundary changes are submitted annually through the U.S. Census Bureau's [Boundary and Annexation Survey](#) (BAS) program.

The following Excel spreadsheet link lists the West Virginia communities that submitted [BAS updates](#) during the last decade.

Compiled by Kurt Donaldson (WVGISTC) 10/20/2021