



ADVISORY 2017-03

April 4, 2017

To: All County Boards of Elections
Directors, Deputy Directors, and Board Members

Re: Preparations for 2021 Redistricting

BACKGROUND

The Ohio Legislative Service Commission (LSC) is charged with the development of a Common and Unified Redistricting Database (URD) for the purpose of redistricting in the State of Ohio after the 2020 United States Census. The URD combines population and elections data with geographic data containing census political boundaries and block boundaries as well as voting precincts. The URD provides all interested parties with the geographic and tabular data they need to propose, discuss, and create new Congressional and Ohio General Assembly districts. An accurate, current, and comprehensive computer-based mapping database is required. The work necessary to create this mapping database is extensive and must start well in advance of the 2021 redistricting process.

In preparation for redistricting across the nation, the U.S. Census Bureau requires that states choosing to participate in its 2020 Redistricting Data Program provide data on the boundaries of election districts, namely voting precincts across the state. Data on the state's precinct boundaries is required in order for the Census Bureau to produce census data by block and voting precinct in early 2021. Ohio has declared its intention to participate in the Census Bureau's Redistricting Data Program.

LSC has selected Ohio University as the technical consultant that will participate in the Redistricting Data Program on behalf of Ohio to build the URD. Dr. Jason Jolley at the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs has been appointed by the state as the liaison to the U.S. Census Bureau for purpose of the Redistricting Data Program.

INSTRUCTIONS

In order for this work to be successful, Ohio University must ask for and rely upon the assistance of each county board of elections to provide it with the precinct maps and voter data necessary to complete its work. To that end, you must provide to the Ohio University project team the following:

- Up-to-date voter registration lists, including district and political subdivision designations;

- Exports of any street /block range tables from your county voter registration system; and
- Precinct maps.

Precinct maps must be provided in a computer mapping (GIS) format if available. Ohio University may also request the most recent and accurate precinct maps and other maps showing recent municipal boundaries changes and annexations. Ohio University will use your data sources and maps to suggest changes to the Census block boundaries so that the block boundaries may match better with your precincts and political subdivision boundaries.

Please provide the resources above, if possible, by April 14, 2017 to:

- Robert Barber-Delach
delach@ohio.edu
(740) 597-2510

If the files you are sending to Ohio University are exceptionally large, please contact Mr. Delach to arrange for another method of electronic transmission.

As a reminder, state law requires county boards of elections to establish voting precinct boundaries “using geographical units (i.e., census blocks)” used by the U.S. Census Bureau.¹ Waivers from this requirement may be granted by the Secretary of State when the board applies under a narrow set of exceptional circumstances.² Additionally, whenever a board of elections changes, divides, or combines any precinct or relocates a polling place, it shall notify the Secretary of State of the change.³

Sincerely,



Jon Husted

¹ R.C. 3501.18(B)(1).

² R.C. 3501.18(B)(2) and (3).

³ R.C. 3501.21; [Directive 2015-24, Chapter 2 of the Election Official Manual.](#)