

2 About the 2013 TIGER/Line Shapefiles

2.1 What is in the 2013 TIGER/Line Shapefiles?

The 2013 TIGER/Line Shapefiles contain 2010 Census geography and current geography for the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Island areas. Current geography is defined as the latest version of the geographic extent of legally defined geographic areas as reported, generally reflecting the boundaries of governmental units in effect as of January 1, 2013, or legal and statistical area boundaries that have been adjusted and/or corrected since the 2010 Census. This vintage enables users to see the most current boundaries of governmental units that match the data from the surveys that use 2013 geography, such as the 2013 Population Estimates and the American Community Survey. The features in this release reflect updates that were made in the MAF/TIGER database through May 2013.

2.2 Geographic Features and Boundaries Available in the 2013 TIGER/Line Shapefiles

The 2013 TIGER/Line Shapefiles contain the geographic extent and boundaries of both *legal* and *statistical* entities. A legal entity is a geographic entity whose boundaries, name, origin, and area description result from charters, laws, treaties, or other administrative or governmental action. A statistical entity is any geographic entity or combination of entities identified and defined solely for the tabulation and presentation of data. Statistical entity boundaries are not legally defined and the entities have no governmental standing.

The legal entities included in these shapefiles are:

- American Indian off-reservation trust lands
- American Indian reservations (both federally and state-recognized)
- American Indian tribal subdivisions (within legal American Indian areas)
- Alaska Native Regional Corporations
- 113th Congressional districts
- Consolidated cities
- Counties and equivalent entities (except census areas in Alaska)
- Estates (U.S. Virgin Islands only)
- Hawaiian home lands
- Incorporated places
- Minor civil divisions (MCDs, such as towns and townships in the Northeast and Midwest)
- School districts (elementary, secondary, and unified)
- States and equivalent entities
- State legislative districts (upper and lower chambers)
- Subbarrios (Subminor civil divisions) (Puerto Rico only)

The statistical entities included in these shapefiles are:

- American Indian/Alaska Native statistical areas
 - Alaska Native village statistical areas
 - Tribal designated statistical areas
 - Oklahoma tribal statistical areas
 - State designated tribal statistical areas
 - American Indian tribal subdivisions (within Oklahoma tribal statistical areas)
- Block groups
- Census areas (statistical county equivalents in Alaska)
- Census blocks
- Census county divisions (CCDs), census subareas (in Alaska), and unorganized territories (statistical county subdivisions)
- Census designated places (CDPs)
- Census tracts
- Metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas and related statistical areas
- Metropolitan divisions
- Combined New England city and town areas

Combined statistical areas
New England city and town areas
New England city and town area divisions
Public use microdata areas (PUMAs)
Urban areas
5-digit ZIP Code tabulation areas (ZCTAs)

2.3 Boundary Changes

The 2013 TIGER/Line Shapefile boundaries for some legal areas represent those that were collected as part of the Census Bureau's 2013 Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS). The boundaries of all federally recognized American Indian Reservations and off-reservation trust lands, tribal subdivisions, states and equivalent entities, all counties and equivalent entities, all minor civil divisions (MCDs), all consolidated cities, and all incorporated places generally are those that were legally in effect as of January 1, 2013. The 2013 TIGER/Line Shapefile boundaries for elementary, secondary, and unified school districts are collected through a survey of state education officials under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and are current as of the 2011-2012 school year.

For more information about the Boundary Annexation Survey (BAS), please visit:
<http://www.census.gov/geo/www/bas/bashome.html>

For all other legal entities, and nearly all statistical areas, the boundaries shown are those in effect at the time of the 2010 Census. Because unorganized territories and census designated places (CDPs) occupy the same level of geography as legal MCDs and incorporated places, updates to the legal boundaries may affect the current boundaries for some of these entities, including the elimination of some of the statistical entities and, less commonly, additions to the inventory and changes to boundaries based on local requests. Current geography may differ from 2010 Census geography due to feature updates that cause boundary shifts. For example, if a street feature that acts as a census tract boundary is moved, then the census tract boundary will move as well.

2.4 Spatial Accuracy of Linear Features

In order to maintain a current geographic database from which to extract the TIGER/Line Shapefiles, the Census Bureau uses various internal and external processes to update the MAF/TIGER database. While it has made a reasonable and systematic attempt to gather the most recent information available about the features this file portrays, the Census Bureau cautions users that the files are no more complete than the source documents used in their compilation, the vintage of those source documents, and the translation of the information on those source documents.

2.5 Sources of Geographic Data

The Census Bureau obtains data from numerous sources to update the MAF/TIGER database. Initially, the Census Bureau used the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 1:100,000-scale Digital Line Graph (DLG), USGS 1:24,000-scale quadrangles, the Census Bureau's 1980 geographic base files (GBF/DIME-Files), and a variety of miscellaneous maps for selected areas outside the contiguous 48 states to create the TIGER database (predecessor to the current MAF/TIGER database).

The Census Bureau makes additions and corrections to its database mainly through partner supplied data (federal, state, local, and private partners), the use of aerial imagery, and fieldwork. The Census Bureau has numerous partner programs where federal, state, and local government partners' supply updates to boundaries, features, and addresses. The Census Bureau underwent a major realignment of the TIGER database in the 2000's to improve the spatial accuracy of the road network. Since this realignment, the Census Bureau has added quality standards for data sources used to update the MAF/TIGER database.

2.6 Coordinates

Coordinates in the TIGER/Line Shapefiles have six decimal places, but the positional accuracy of these coordinates may not be as great as the six decimal places suggest. The spatial accuracy varies with the source materials used. The Census Bureau cannot specify the spatial accuracy of feature changes added by its field staff through local updates or of features derived from the GBF/DIME-Files or other map or digital sources. Thus, the level of spatial accuracy in the TIGER/Line Shapefiles makes them unsuitable for high-precision measurement applications such as engineering problems, property transfers, or other uses that might require highly accurate measurements of the earth's surface. No warranty, expressed or implied, is made with regard to the accuracy of these data, and no liability is assumed by the U.S. Government in general or the Census Bureau specifically, as to the spatial or attributes accuracy of the data.

2.7 Codes for Geographic Entities

The 2013 TIGER/Line Shapefiles include the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) codes to identify both legal and statistical entities. The ANSI codes are a standardized set of numeric or alphabetic codes issued by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to ensure uniform identification of geographic entities through all federal government agencies. The entities covered include: states and statistically equivalent entities, counties and statistically equivalent entities, named populated and related location entities (such as, places and county subdivisions), and American Indian and Alaska Native areas.

The ANSI publications include both the Federal Information Processing Series (FIPS) codes and the United States Geological Survey's Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) codes. The FIPS codes appear in the 2013 TIGER/Line Shapefiles in fields such as "STATEFP", where "FP" indicates that the field contains a FIPS code. The GNIS codes are a permanent numeric identifier of up to eight digits. The GNIS codes appear in fields such as "STATENS", where "NS" (National Standard) indicates that the field contains a GNIS code. The Census Bureau stores the GNIS code as a fixed-width string; the official code is a numeric value without leading zeroes. The GNIS code is available beginning in the 2010 TIGER/Line Shapefiles.

For more information about ANSI codes, please visit:
<http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ansi.html>.