

5. Instructions for Downloading the TIGER/Line Shapefiles

5.1 Getting Started

There are four methods for downloading TIGER/Line Shapefiles from the U.S. Census Bureau:

- Website Interface
- Direct from FTP Site
- Connect via FTP Client
- Direct from Data.gov

To download the shapefiles you need an Internet Browser or an FTP client, as well as a utility that can unzip files. The files downloaded are zipped to save space and ensure you download all of the necessary files. Most systems have an unzipping utility built-in to the operation system. However, there are several free or low cost unzipping utilities such as WinZIP.

The examples below are from the 2013 version of the TIGER/Line Shapefiles but apply to all recent TIGER/Line Shapefile versions.

5.2 Website Interface

The website interface download method requires the least amount of technical knowledge. Start at the U.S. Census Bureau's TIGER website:

<https://www.census.gov/geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/tiger-line-file.html> Select the tab for the version of TIGER/Line Shapefiles (e.g. 2018).

- Under download, below 2018 TIGER/Line Shapefiles, select Web Interface.
- Choose Web interface. (see Figure 8 below)

The screenshot shows the Census Bureau's website for TIGER/Line Shapefiles. The page is titled "Geographies" and "TIGER/Line Shapefiles". It features a navigation menu at the top with options like "BROWSE BY TOPIC", "EXPLORE DATA", "LIBRARY", "SURVEYS/ PROGRAMS", "INFORMATION FOR...", "FIND A CODE", and "ABOUT US". A search bar is also present. The main content area includes a "Format:" section with bullet points: "Shapefile - 2007 to Present", "TIGER/Line ASCII format - 2006 and earlier", and "Census 2000 available in both formats". Below this is a paragraph explaining that the core files do not include demographic data but contain GEOIDs. A year selector at the bottom of the main content area shows years from 2018 to 2011, with "2018" selected. Underneath, there is a section for "2018" with a title "2020 Redistricting Data Prototype (P.L. 94-171) Shapefiles: 2018 End-to-End Census Test" and a "Download" button. The "Download" button has a "Web Interface" option highlighted in a red box.

Figure 8: Select the tab for the desired year and then click on web interface. (See inside the rectangular box.)

- Select the geographic entity from the drop down menu you would like to download (e.g. census tracts) and click Submit. (see Figure 9 below)
- Choose the state and click Download. (see Figure 9 below) For a county-based file, you also need to choose the county on the following screen.
- Save the file to your computer or open the zip file.
- Repeat as necessary.

TIGER/Line® Shapefiles

Select the year and layer you are interested in from the dropdown menus below and click "Submit" for a list of the available geographic areas.

Select year

Select a layer type

Source: US Census Bureau, Geography Division

Figure 9: An example of the menus available in the web interface

5.3. Direct from FTP Site

Another option is to go directly to the Census Bureau's FTP site through a web browser. The address for the TIGER/Line Shapefiles is:

<ftp://ftp2.census.gov/geo/tiger/> or <https://www2.census.gov/geo/tiger/>

- Navigate to the version of the TIGER/Line Shapefiles to download (e.g. TIGER2013).
- Navigate to the geographic entity to download (e.g. TRACT). (see Figure 10 below) Refer to Table 7 for the shapefile naming convention.

<u>Up to higher level directory</u>			
08/21/2013	12:00AM	228,662	2013-FolderNames-Defined.pdf
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	ADDR
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	ADDRFEAT
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	ADDRFN
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	AIANNH
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	AITS
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	ANRC
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	AREALM
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	AREAWATER
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	BG
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	CBSA
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	CD
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	CNECTA
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	COAST
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	CONCITY
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	COUNTY
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	COUSUB
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	CSA
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	EDGES
08/16/2013	12:00AM	Directory	ELSD

<u>Up to higher level directory</u>			
08/16/2013	12:00AM	399,459	tl_2013_01001_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	1,758,860	tl_2013_01003_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	76,706	tl_2013_01005_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	360,168	tl_2013_01007_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	171,116	tl_2013_01009_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	362,782	tl_2013_01011_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	24,374	tl_2013_01013_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	447,254	tl_2013_01015_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	101,218	tl_2013_01017_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	132,365	tl_2013_01019_areawater.zip
08/16/2013	12:00AM	358,821	tl_2013_01021_areawater.zip

Figure 10: An example of the directory structure within the FTP site.

- Click on the shapefile name to download.
- If prompted, use “anonymous” for the user name and password.

Table 6: 2019 TIGER/Line Shapefile file name definitions

File Name	Shapefile/Relationship File
ADDR	Address Range Relationship File
ADDRFEAT	Address Range Feature
ADDRFN	Address Range-Feature Name Relationship
AIANNH	American Indian / Alaska Native / Native Hawaiian Areas
AITSN	American Indian Tribal Subdivision National
ANRC	Alaska Native Regional Corporation
AREALM	Area Landmark
AREAWATER	Area Hydrography
BG	Block Group
CBSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area / Micropolitan Statistical Area
CD	Congressional District
CNECTA	Combined New England City and Town Area
COASTLINE	Coastline
CONCITY	Consolidated City
COUNTY	County
COUSUB	County Subdivision
CSA	Combined Statistical Area
EDGES	All Lines
ELSD	Elementary School District
ESTATE	Estate
FACES	Topological Faces (Polygons with All Geocodes)
FACESAH	Topological Faces-Area Hydrography Relationship File
FACESAL	Topological Faces-Area Landmark Relationship File
FACESMIL	Topological Faces-Military Installation Relationship File
FEATNAMES	Feature Names Relationship File
LINEARWATER	Linear Hydrography
METDIV	Metropolitan Division
MIL	Military Installation
NECTA	New England City and Town Area
NECTADIV	New England City and Town Area Division
PLACE	Place
POINTLM	Point Landmark
PRIMARYROADS	Primary Roads
PRISECROADS	Primary and Secondary Roads
PUMA	Public Use Microdata Area
RAILS	Rails
ROADS	All Roads
SCSD	Secondary School Districts
SLDL	State Legislative District – Lower Chamber
SLDU	State Legislative District – Upper Chamber
STATE	State and Equivalent

File Name	Shapefile/Relationship File
SUBBARRIO	SubMinor Civil Division (Subbarrios in Puerto Rico)
TABBLOCK	Tabulation (Census) Block
TBG	Tribal Block Group
TRACT	Census Tract
TTRACT	Tribal Census Tract
UAC	Urban Area/Urban Cluster
UNSD	Unified School District
ZCTA5	5-Digit ZIP Code Tabulation Area

The files are named tl_2019_<geographic area>_<filename>.zip. For national files, the geographic area is “us.” For state and county-based files, the geographic area is the state or county Federal Information Processing Series (FIPS) code. The state codes are 2-character number and the county codes are 5-character numbers that include the 2-character state code and a 3-character county code. Lists of state and county FIPS codes can be found here:

<https://www.census.gov/library/reference/code-lists/ansi.html>.

Web browsers also have the option to display FTP pages in a “windows explorer” type format. This allows a user to copy entire directories (folders) at one time using copy and paste or drag and drop.

5.4 Connect via FTP Client

To access a large number of files the best option is to use an FTP client software to connect to the Census Bureau’s FTP site. There are many free FTP clients. The host name must be the Census Bureau’s main FTP site:

<ftp2.census.gov>.

Use “anonymous” for the user name and password. Then, navigate to the GEO, then TIGER folders.

5.5 Data.gov

The TIGER/Line Shapefiles are also available through the following website:

<https://www.data.gov>

- Search by keyword and/or agency to find the individual shapefiles.

New TIGER/Line Shapefiles are added to Data.gov as they become available. Refer to Table 7 for the shapefile naming conventions.