



2020 Census Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP) Quick Reference: Tribal Block Groups

A tribal block group¹ is a statistical geographic subdivision of a tribal census tract. Tribal block groups are defined by the Census Bureau in cooperation with tribal officials to provide meaningful, relevant, and reliable data for small geographic areas within the boundaries of federally recognized American Indian reservations (AIRs) and/or off-reservation trust lands (ORTLs) without the imposition of state or county boundaries. The Census Bureau uses tribal block groups in the tabulation and presentation of data from the decennial census and the American Community Survey (ACS).

Census Bureau criteria specify that tribal block groups must:

- Nest within tribal census tract boundaries and by default, nest within the American Indian reservation (AIR) and off-reservation trust land (ORTL) boundaries.
- Cover the entire AIR and/or ORTL. However, defining tribal census tracts and tribal block groups is optional.
- Comprise a reasonably compact and contiguous land area. A non-contiguous tribal block group is permitted if there are physically separate areas that would not meet population or housing unit requirements on their own, in which case the non-contiguous area must be combined with other nearby land area to form the tribal block group.
- Meet the population and/or housing unit thresholds as specified in Table 1. A tribal block group that exceeds thresholds, either above or below, may remain unchanged with justifications. For federally recognized American Indian tribes with AIRs and ORTLs that have fewer than 1,200 residents, the Census Bureau will define one tribal census tract and one tribal block group that encompasses the entirety of the AIR or ORTL.
- Use the letter range A through K (except "I," which could be confused with a number "1") to identify and code the tribal block groups within a tribal census tract. Census blocks will be numbered uniquely within county-based block groups, and thus there will not be a direct relationship between a tribal block group and the census block number.

Census Bureau guidelines recommend that tribal block groups:

- Have boundaries that follow visible features (e.g., roads, rivers) or other acceptable features (e.g., tribal subdivision, incorporated place, and minor civil division boundaries).

¹ Tribal block group was delineated under Tribal Statistical Areas Program (TSAP) in 2010.

Table 1: Block Group Thresholds

| Block Group Type | Population Threshold | Housing Unit Threshold | Area Measurement Threshold |
|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Tribal Block Groups | Min.: 600 | Min.: 240 | None |
| | Max.: 3,000 | Max.: 1,200 | None |

Refer to the Respondent Guide for complete instructions.