BASIC INFORMATION

Massachusetts

2010 Census Population: 6,547,629 (14th)
Land Area: 7,800.1 square miles (45th)
Density: 839.4 persons per square mile (3rd)
Capital: Boston
Became a State: February 6, 1788 (6th)

Bordering States: Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont
Abbreviation: MA
ANSI/FIPS Code: 25

HISTORY

The area of Massachusetts was part of the original territory of the United States. It was originally included in the Charter of New England in 1620; the Charter of Massachusetts Bay, which became the Constitution of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1629; and a charter that united the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies in 1691. In 1785, it ceded area to the United States that became part of the Northwest Territory in 1787. Massachusetts ratified the U.S. Constitution on February 6, 1788; it was the sixth of the original 13 states to join the Union. At the time of statehood, the area of Maine was a district in Massachusetts. In 1819, it agreed to allow its district of Maine to petition for statehood, and Maine was admitted to the Union as a separate state on March 15, 1820. There were changes to the boundary between Connecticut and Massachusetts in 1804 and between Rhode Island and Massachusetts in 1862, and a resurvey of the latter boundary in 1897, resulting in generally the same boundary as the present state. Massachusetts is one of four states that are legally described as a commonwealth.

Census data for Massachusetts are available beginning with the 1790 census. The population data for 1790, 1800, and 1810 do not include the area of Maine.

AMERICAN INDIAN AREAS

Massachusetts has one state recognized American Indian reservation and one federally recognized trust land.

METROPOLITAN AND MICROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS AND RELATED STATISTICAL AREAS

There are six metropolitan statistical areas, three metropolitan divisions, one combined statistical area, eight metropolitan New England city and town areas, four micropolitan NECTAs, nine NECTA divisions, and four combined NECTAs.

COUNTIES

There are 14 counties in Massachusetts. Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Norfolk, and Plymouth counties have active county governments, each governed by a board of county commissioners. Nantucket County and Nantucket town are governmentally consolidated and have a single set of officials. Suffolk County and Boston city are governmentally consolidated and have a single set of officials. Berkshire, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, and Worcester counties are no longer legal governmental units.

COUNTY SUBDIVISIONS

There are 357 county subdivisions in Massachusetts known as minor civil divisions (MCDs). There are 298 towns with functioning, but not necessarily active, governments.

PLACES

Massachusetts has 244 places; 53 incorporated places and 191 census designated places (CDPs). The incorporated places are all cities. All of the incorporated places are cities that are each independent of any other county subdivision and serve as county subdivisions.