



Local Redistricting in California

Who is responsible for local redistricting and what is the process?

What is local redistricting? What impact does it have on me?

All local governments that *elect by district* must, every ten years, redraw their district lines to assure that all districts have nearly equal population.

Local redistricting involves any county, city, school district, community college district or special district that is divided into districts or divisions. These local government agencies are required to review their current district boundaries with new population figures from the 2010 census and engage in a redistricting process right along with the state.*

If districts are drawn that keep communities intact, people are better able to elect representatives who will further their interests. Frequently, local redistricting draws little attention. But it is no less important for citizens to be represented and have fair districts drawn at the local level than it is at the state and federal level.

**Some charter cities use the mid-decade federal census or an official city census as specified in their charters.*

Who is responsible for local redistricting?

The [California Elections Code, Division 21](#) provides the statutory basis for redrawing the districts for county supervisors, city council members, and the governing boards of special districts. The [California Education Code](#) provides for redistricting in school and community college districts that elect by trustee areas.

The local governing body (board of supervisors, city council, school board, etc.) is generally responsible for adopting the new district lines. There may be an advisory committee, and for counties there is provision for a commission of elected county officials to do the redistricting if the Board of Supervisors fails to do it by November 1 of the year following the census. Charter cities and counties may set up their own process, such as a separate commission or task force.

Note: The provisions of Propositions 11 and 20 that govern the selection and functioning of the Citizens Redistricting Commission apply only to redistricting of the state Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization and California's Congressional districts.

Do many local agencies elect their governing boards by districts?

The boards of supervisors of almost all 58 counties are elected by district. Charter and general law cities may elect their city councils by districts; approximately 30 do so. The governing boards of many school districts and some special districts are elected by divisions such as trustee areas or wards.

Cities and Counties: Is your city/county a charter government or general law?

Charter government

In addition to the statutory requirements in the state [Elections Code](#) for charter cities and counties, your city or county charter will also have statutory requirements for the redistricting process. Read the charter carefully to find out WHO is responsible for redistricting and HOW the process is conducted. A few cities have appointed commissions. Many city and county district lines are redrawn by the sitting government body (just as the state and federal districts in California were redrawn by the legislature prior to 2011).

General law cities

The process is outlined in the state [Elections Code, 21600-21606](#).

What is the process?

The important thing to remember is that the redistricting criteria and open meeting notifications mandated for the state redistricting commission do not necessarily apply at the local level. The Brown Act governs meetings of local legislative bodies. Determine exactly **what the rules are** for meeting notices and **how much notice** is mandated for your local government bodies that are involved in redistricting.

Find out ***who did the redistricting after the 2000 census*** and contact them to learn more about *how the process worked in 2001*. Deadlines for redistricting and other criteria may be determined by local governing documents. Others, as required by state law, have to finish by November 1, 2011 (or March 1, 2012 for school and community college districts). Many are starting soon and some have already begun.

How can I participate in local redistricting?

Find out **who is drawing the maps** for districts and what information besides the census they are using to make their determinations about where lines should be drawn. Ask your county registrar and county superintendent of schools. In addition, you can consult your county counsel, city clerk, city attorney, special district managers or legal departments for information about local redistricting.

Regardless of what the rules and notice requirements are, local Leagues can use most of the LWVC redistricting position. You can advocate for an open, transparent process; extensive public input; and the strong standards listed in the LWVC position, including respect for communities of interest.

1/2011