

What is Redistricting?

The state is divided into legislative districts for the election of members to the Colorado General Assembly or to the United States Congress. Redistricting is the process of redrawing these legislative district boundaries to reflect growth patterns and population shifts within the state. This process occurs once every ten years after new census information is available and uses the same population data to redraw both state legislative and congressional districts.

Colorado General Assembly.

Redistricting affects the 100 members (65 representatives and 35 senators) of the Colorado General Assembly. The total number of representatives and senators does not change. However, depending on the population change, the geographical areas of the state that legislators represent may change. The Colorado Constitution charges the Colorado Reapportionment Commission with redrawing the state House and Senate districts.

Congressional redistricting. Based on the 2010 census, Colorado will continue to have seven elected representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives. However, the boundaries of the congressional districts need to be redrawn to reflect population changes. The Colorado Constitution charges the Colorado General Assembly, not the Colorado Reapportionment Commission, with redrawing the seven Congressional districts

How are the Boundaries for the Colorado General Assembly Drawn?

Colorado Reapportionment Commission.

The Colorado Reapportionment Commission convenes once every 10 years after the decennial federal census. The job of the commission is to redraw the boundaries of legislative districts for the state Senate and House of Representatives in compliance with the “one person, one vote” principle. The commission’s composition, schedule, and legal criteria that must be applied are found in article V, sections 46 through 48 of the Colorado Constitution.

Commission Members

Mario Carrera, Chair	Wellington Webb, Vice Chair
Dolores Atencio	Mario Nicolais
Gayle Berry	Arnold Salazar
Morgan Carroll	Steve Tool
Matt Jones	Rob Witwer
Robert Loevy	

Creation of a plan. The commission will meet throughout the summer and, with public input, develop a preliminary plan depicting the proposed legislative districts. The commission will then hold public hearings around the state before finalizing the plan. The plan is then submitted to the Colorado Supreme Court to determine if all federal and state laws have been followed. The court may either approve the plan or require the commission to change part or all of the plan.

Criteria used. When creating the plan, the commission must follow federal and state laws. These laws include the following:

- ⇒ the variation in population between the largest and the smallest district cannot be more than 5 percent—an ideal Senate district will have 143,691 citizens and an ideal House district will have 77,372 citizens;
- ⇒ cities and counties are not to be divided except to balance the population within each district;
- ⇒ districts are to be drawn such that minority groups are able to elect representatives of their choice;
- ⇒ the area within a district must be contiguous and as compact as possible; and
- ⇒ communities of interest, such as economic, ethnic, or geographic areas, are to be preserved whenever possible.