

Take Ownership of Your Census Data

We blame the Census Bureau for never quite being able to get the numbers right, but in the Bureau's defense, is your city or county providing the Bureau with changes to its basic geography?

To calculate how many people live in a city, the Census Bureau needs to know which houses are within the city boundaries. If the Bureau's files show city boundaries that are different than your city boundaries, the tabulation of population will not be accurate. The Census Bureau cannot find the accurate location of a new home if the city or county fails to notify them about the new street upon which an existing or new house was built. This means the Bureau cannot determine whether a new residence is inside or outside the municipal boundary.

The Census Bureau has a program that allows governments to update their geographic lines on a regular basis, ensuring that the Bureau will be using current, accurate information when they do their work. The program is the Geographic Support System, or GSS.

The GSS allows government entities to share address information, jurisdictional boundaries, and road-network centerlines with the Census Bureau on a regular, ongoing basis. Additional information on the GSS can be found at: <https://www.census.gov/geo/gssi/>

Please email geo.gss.initiative@census.gov or call (301) 763-1128 to learn how to upload your local government's geographical information into the GSS.