



County Technical Assistance Service

Published on e-Li (<http://eli.ctas.tennessee.edu>)

June 25, 2019

Reapportionment Process

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS electronic library known as e-Li. This online library is maintained daily by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other e-Li material.

Sincerely,

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Reapportionment Process

Reference Number: CTAS-883

The first step a county legislative body should take when it prepares to develop a redistricting plan is to appoint a reapportionment committee. Although this committee is not a statutory requirement, most counties find that it greatly facilitates the process. In selecting the committee the legislative body will wish to achieve broad representation of the county, but a committee that is too large can prove cumbersome. Membership in the county legislative body is not required to serve on the reapportionment committee, and the inclusion of others is often helpful. After the committee has formed and the official county population from the latest federal census is known, the committee should determine the population in each voting precinct and then group these into "reasonably compact and contiguous" districts with substantially equal population and representation.

Districts cannot overlap one another, and no voting precinct may be split into different districts, except that in counties with 20 or more county legislative body districts, the election commission may establish a precinct that encompasses two or more districts with written approval from the coordinator of elections. T.C.A. § 5-1-111. Although the new voting districts need not conform to the boundaries of the original civil districts, these latter areas are to be preserved as they existed at the time of the first apportionment, for record-keeping purposes. T.C.A. § 5-1-112.

Before the new reapportionment plan takes effect, it must be put into writing and adopted by a majority of the county legislative body. Finally, the county legislative body must commission a map or maps showing the new voting districts as well as the original civil districts. Legal descriptions may be prepared if the map is not of sufficient detail to delineate the boundaries of the county districts. Copies must be filed with the county clerk, comptroller and the secretary of state; revised maps must be filed within 90 days of any revision. T.C.A. § 5-1-110.

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