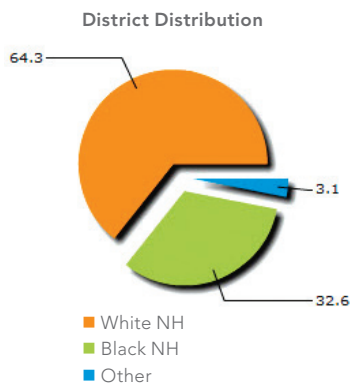


# OPENING UP THE PROCESS

## WEB-BASED APPLICATION ENCOURAGES CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT



A new online platform developed by Esri lets citizens become more engaged in the redistricting process.



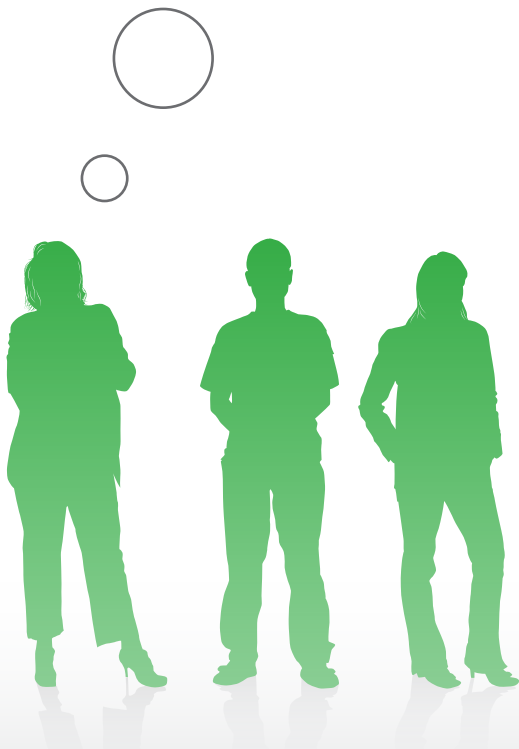
By combining geographic data and tools in an online application, Esri Redistricting gives state and local governments, the public, and advocacy groups unprecedented access to the redistricting process. In the United States, political representation is based on population and location. Ideally, political boundaries are drawn to equally allocate population among the districts in a state so that all citizens obtain fair representation.

Because people are born, retire, die, relocate, or for other reasons move, the population shifts. To account for these changes, the US Constitution mandates a decennial census. Based on the data collected, district boundaries are redrawn to account for these changes. Over time, states gain or lose congressional seats, and individual districts in those states change shape. How these districts are redrawn has a very real impact on representation for the intervening five congressional cycles. In late March 2011, the Census Bureau supplied data from the 2010 Census to states so they could begin the process of evaluating and modifying districts. The 435 seats in the US House of Representatives are assigned based on a formula that first assigns one seat to each state then uses each state's resident population (plus any overseas military personnel and civilian federal workers and their dependents) to allocate the remaining 385 seats.

Mapping has always been central to the process of redistricting. GIS is the perfect technology for creating redistricting maps and understanding the effects of boundary changes on associated populations. It's not surprising that GIS was applied to both census and redistricting activities as soon as it became commercially available in the 1980s.

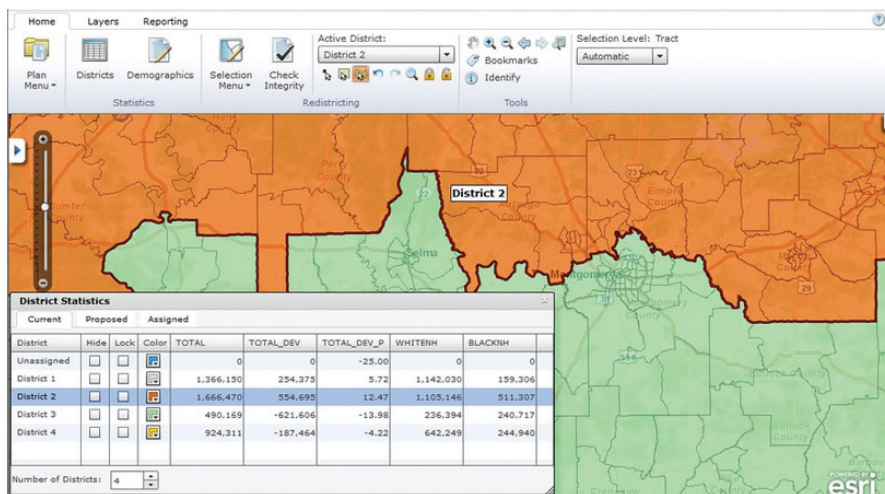
Over the past three decades, Esri business partners built solutions that lowered the cost and increased the efficiency of the redistricting process. In the 1990s, GIS-based redistricting solutions could model as many as 100 scenarios when considering a redistricting plan. The number of potential scenarios that could practically be considered grew to 1,000 for GIS redistricting applications used with the 2000 Census data.

Legislators, commissioners, and others involved in creating redistricting plans need to share those plans, solicit feedback, consider alternative plans, and incorporate edits before submitting final plans. However, despite improvements in the tools used by government officials, involvement by citizens and advocacy groups in the process was limited.



Esri recognized this need by developing a web-centric solution that invites larger participation in a process that was previously much more exclusive. Esri Redistricting provides a common view of current and proposed districts for state and local government officials, advocacy groups, and citizens. While few public users may pursue their own redistricting plans, this application enables citizen engagement on a more basic level by letting the public interact with proposed districts to help preserve communities and ensure representation that reflects community needs.

To provide flexibility in meeting the needs of organizations of different sizes, Esri Redistricting is available as Software as a Service (SaaS) on a subscription basis or as a configured offering that can be hosted and managed by Esri or deployed on premises. With either deployment choice, users can create, edit, publish, review, and collaborate on plans through a web browser. Boundaries can be developed that take into consideration race, existing communities, voting age population, and other variables. Esri Redistricting includes basemaps (street, imagery, and topographic), census data from 2000 and 2010, and Public Law 94-171 data. Data from previous censuses, proprietary information, and existing legislative boundaries can be added.



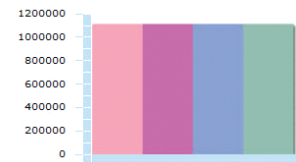
User roles controlling access and functionality can be established. Undo and redo options for editing tools and the ability to add comments and map notes aid collaboration. Integrity checks validate contiguity, dual assignments, district counts, null assignments, and population summaries. Esri Redistricting also helps create documentation to verify compliance with Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits its discriminatory redistricting practices.

Alabama was one of the first states to adopt this platform and has brought its entire redistricting process online. The Alabama legislature chose Esri Redistricting because it could securely incorporate input from many locations without requiring the state to purchase, install, and maintain desktop software. Plans can be developed, shared, and evaluated before being submitted to the Reapportionment Office for final review.

The combination of Internet access and smartphones is creating a new and qualitatively different connection between government and citizens. The Internet has become the primary entry point for citizen involvement in government processes. This has led to different expectations of the transparency and responsiveness of government.

By removing the barriers of technology cost, data availability, and accessibility for the public and advocacy groups, Esri Redistricting has the potential to make the redistricting process following the 2010 Census one of the most open yet seen. To learn more, visit [esri.com/redistricting](http://esri.com/redistricting). A free 30-day trial is available.

District Statistics



Fracturing/Packing

