



## Census Bureau County Equivalency Status For Connecticut's Planning Regions Frequently Asked Questions (updated 12/14/2020)

### 1. What is happening and why?

The State of Connecticut has requested, and the U.S. Census Bureau has proposed the addition of Connecticut's Planning Regions to its list of geographic units that are treated as county equivalents for statistical purposes. This will align Census Bureau tabulations with the nine Planning Regions established and used by the State of Connecticut for the Regional Councils of Governments (COGs).

This change is slated to begin in 2023.

Connecticut's request can be found here: <https://arcg.is/09vDDO>

The Census Bureau proposal can be found here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/12/14/2020-27459/change-to-county-equivalents-in-the-state-of-connecticut>

### 2. What are the benefits of this proposal?

The proposal will put Connecticut on a level playing field with other states by:

- a. Aligning data released by the Census Bureau with the Planning Regions used by the state rather than with defunct, historical geographies. This will improve the ability to use census data for planning and decision-making.
- b. Allowing more entities in Connecticut to apply for competitive federal grants. Often federal grant programs are designed for and around counties. The lack of regional geographies recognized as county equivalents by the Census Bureau makes cities and towns in Connecticut ineligible to apply for many federal grants that are limited to counties. Planning Region county equivalency will allow municipalities to more easily collaborate on federal grants submitted through their COGs, eliminating redundant grant administration and potentially leading to more competitive applications.

### 3. Is this a return of county government?

No. Connecticut dissolved county government in 1960. The proposal will not change this nor establish new regional authorities. The proposal does not change federal or state law or change municipalities' existing relationships with their COGs or with the state and federal governments. The proposal clarifies that the Planning Regions are Connecticut's county equivalent for federal statistical purposes.

### 4. Will this affect home rule or local control?

No. This proposal does not affect home rule, local control, or the municipalities' relationships with federal, state, and regional governments. The proposal does not change federal or state law.

### 5. What will the proposal cost Connecticut?

The State of Connecticut has worked with the Census Bureau to avoid costs. Census data products are set to be replaced beginning in 2023. The implementation date of 2023 was selected to coincide with this, so that no additional data transition will be necessary. The proposal has the potential to bring in new revenue to Connecticut over the medium- and long-term by making the state eligible for more federal funds, and by making it more competitive in applying for federal funds.



**6. Is this done anywhere else?**

A county equivalent is a regional geography that the Census Bureau treats as statistically equivalent to a county in an area without traditional county government. The Census Bureau recognizes over 200 county equivalents nationwide.

**7. What are Planning Regions?**

Planning Regions are regional groups of municipalities in Connecticut. Planning Regions were designated by the State of Connecticut after consultation with the state's municipalities.

Each Planning Region is served by a COG. COGs are public agencies that bring together the Planning Regions' Mayors and First Selectmen to discuss and address matters of shared interest. COGs are active in transportation planning and funding, economic development, emergency preparedness and management, information technology, land use planning, and municipal shared services.

COG meetings are open to the public, and public attendance and comment are welcome.

**8. What COG does my city/town/borough belong to?**

A list of COGs, together with their member municipalities, can be found here:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/IGP/RPOs/listingoftownsbyregionxlsx.xlsx>

A map of the COGs is here: <https://portal.ct.gov/lib/opm/igp/org/cogs/rcogs.png>

**9. What do COGs think of this proposal?**

The boards of state's nine COGs, comprising the Mayors, First Selectmen, and Town Managers of their regions, have voted unanimously to support this proposal.

**10. Have the federal and state governments been informed of this proposal?**

Yes. This proposal was developed jointly by the Census Bureau, the Connecticut Office of the Governor, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, the Connecticut Association of Councils of Governments, each Regional Council of Governments, and the CT Data Collaborative, Connecticut's State Data Center.

The proposal has also been shared with the state's Congressional delegation (U.S. Senate and House) and their staffers, leadership and members of Connecticut General Assembly (both chambers), the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, the Connecticut Council of Small Towns, and others.

**11. Will this proposal increase my taxes?**

No. This proposal does not change any statute regarding taxation. Census Bureau recognition of Planning Region county equivalency does not create new authority for taxes at any level of government.

**12. Can I continue to use historic county names and boundaries?**

Yes. The Census Bureau's use of Planning Regions for statistical purposes instead of counties does not erase the historic county boundaries. Individuals, businesses, and organizations will remain free to use the county names and boundaries for as long as they wish.



**13. How will this impact the 2020 Census?**

The proposal will not go into effect until 2023, so 2020 Census data sets will not be impacted. Census products released from 2023 on will use Planning Regions instead of counties. Users of Census Bureau data and products will have years, potentially up to 2032, to transition.

**14. What if I need to use data aggregated by county after 2022?**

The proposal does not limit the right of state/local governments, businesses, organizations, and individuals to use geographic units of their choice in data aggregation.

The proposal will replace counties in Connecticut with Planning Regions in census data products beginning in 2023. Most of these products are aggregated from municipal data and, as such, can be reaggregated to any combination of municipalities (including historic counties).

The COGs and CT Data Collaborative, which serve as Census Bureau partners in Connecticut, are available to assist data users with this transition.

**15. Is there somebody I can talk to about this?**

Yes! The staff of your COG, the CT Data Collaborative, and the CT Office of Policy and Management would be happy to answer any questions you may have. They can be contacted at:

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**16. Will the public get an opportunity to comment on this proposal?**

Yes. The Census Bureau is expected to post Connecticut's county equivalency proposal to the Federal Register on December 14, 2020 for public comment. The 60-day public comment period will run through February 12, 2021 during which anyone or any organization will have the opportunity to submit comments on the proposal.

Please check <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/12/14/2020-27459/change-to-county-equivalents-in-the-state-of-connecticut> under posted by the U.S. Census Bureau on December 14, 2020 for more information.