

CRC SHORT VIDEOS

1—What is a Community of Interest (COI)?

- Every ten years, after the U.S. Census, California must redraw the boundaries of its Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts to reflect the new population data.
- While the California Citizens Redistricting Commission waits to receive census data, it is collecting Communities of Interest information from Californians.
- Communities of Interest are defined as a concentrated population which shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation. Examples include areas in which the people share similar living standards, have similar cultures, use the same transportation systems, have similar work opportunities, belong to the same school district and/or water district, or have access to the same media.
- People can belong to multiple communities of interest, such as a cultural community as well as an economic community of interest.
- Communities of interest may also vary depending on whether they are for state or federal office.
- While there are no hard rules on how to define a community of interest, we've identified ways for you to describe your community.
 - Begin with your county and city or rural community.
 - Mention the street names and significant locations in your neighborhood to help us identify the parameters of your community.
 - What are your shared interests?
 - What brings you together?
 - What is important to your community?
 - Are there nearby areas you want to be in a district with? Why do you want to be grouped with these areas?
 - Are there nearby areas you don't want to be in a district with? Why not?
 - Has your community come together to advocate for important services, better schools, roads, or health centers in your neighborhood?
- Here's an example of a Community of Interest:
I live in a unique area of Farmers Branch called Oak Knoll Valley. The neighborhood is bounded between Highway 9 on the west and Sunnyside River on the east side. It is primarily a residential area with some areas zoned for commercial and mixed use, especially along the river. The languages spoken in Oak Knoll Valley are primarily English and Spanish with some residents speaking Vietnamese and Mandarin. Across the river from Oak Knoll Valley is the community of River Glen, which is similar to our community as it is primarily residential. We are in the same school district, and the high school which Oak Knoll students attend is in River Glen. It would make sense that we would be included in the same legislative and Congressional districts.
- Please keep in mind that a Community of Interest is NOT a district, and a district is NOT a Community of Interest.
- California's state constitution, in Article XXI, Section 2, Subsection d.4, stipulates that "Communities of interest shall not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates."

- Communities of Interest are important building blocks that we will be using to draw the new district lines.
- Following are the various ways you can submit you Community of Interest:
 - At a Community of Interest Public Input Meeting which are taking place throughout the summer. – see WeDrawTheLinesCA.org/Meetings for details
 - Use the Communities of Interest Mapping Tool at DrawMyCACommunity.org
The online tool and tutorials are available in multiple languages.
 - By E-mail at VotersFirstAct@crc.ca.gov
 - By Phone at (916) 323-0323
 - By Mail to California Citizens Redistricting Commission 721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260, Sacramento, CA 95814.
- For more information about the Commission, visit our website at: www.WeDrawTheLinesCA.org.

2—Why Participate?

- Democracy depends on voters having the opportunity to choose their representatives.
- The U.S. Constitution requires that every American receive as close to equal representation as possible in government. As populations of districts change over time, it can leave some people overrepresented, and others underrepresented in government.
- Redistricting evens out the population between districts.
- Census results are used to draw new maps every ten years to account for the ways that populations have changed and moved across the states and districts.
- How the district boundaries are configured can make the difference between empowering and maximizing the voters’ voices or minimizing and muting those voices
- When elected officials redraw the lines of their own districts, they get to choose who their voters are, potentially without regard to the communities, neighborhoods, shared interests, or commonalities of the areas.
- Prior to 2010, legislators in California drew the lines.
- The creation of the Citizens Redistricting Commission was intended to allow every Californian to have a voice in the process of drawing new district lines.
- We can get some of the information we need from California’s counties and cities, but we need Californians to tell us about their neighborhoods and communities of interest.
- We need all Californians to get involved so we have a better idea of the communities of interest throughout California when we redraw the district lines.
- For more information on redistricting, please visit our website at: www.WeDrawTheLinesCA.org.

3—How Will the Commission Use COI Input?

- Once the Commission receives the redistricting data it needs from the Census Bureau, it will begin drawing district maps following a set of criteria outlined in Article XXI of California’s Constitution.
- One of these criteria is to minimize the division of counties, cities, neighborhoods, and communities of interest to the extent possible.

- We can obtain the city and county information from those jurisdictions, but we need the neighborhood and communities of interest information from Californians directly.
- A Community of Interest is not the same as a district, but Communities of Interest are key building blocks that the Commission will use when drawing new districts.
- To understand the communities of interest throughout the state, the Commission seeks from every Californian:
 - Oral Testimony – Personal stories are powerful. Share examples of things members of your community have in common and what makes your community unique.
 - Written Testimony – A written description can be used to tell your community’s story. Describe what connects the people and why it’s important that they be kept together during redistricting.
 - Boundary Maps – Create a map of your neighborhood or area. Mark the street names and significant locations. It doesn’t have to be too detailed, but we do need to be able to understand what the boundaries of the community are.
- You can provide public input to the Commission in several ways, including submitting your input through the online Communities of Interest Mapping Tool (COI Tool) at DrawMyCACommunity.org; there’s also a link from our website, www.WeDrawTheLinesCA.org.
- In addition to English, the online COI Tool is also available in Spanish, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, Armenian, Farsi, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Punjabi, Khmer, Thai, and Hmong.
- We’re also happy to receive input in writing via e-mail to votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov or postal mail to Citizens Redistricting Commission, 721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260, Sacramento, CA 95814.
- Once the Commission begins to draw the lines for each district, it will use the public input received to respect the boundaries of your community to the extent possible.