



U.S. Census Bureau's Boundary Validation Program

January 13, 2020

As the 2020 Census draws closer the need for information increases. The Boundary Validation Program (BVP), which encompasses the Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS), is currently underway. This is a yearly data collection process conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau to collect information about selected legally defined geographic areas. Through the Boundary Validation Program the Census Bureau seeks to ensure that the 2020 Census tabulated data reflect the correct legal boundaries, names, and standings of local governments.

The BVP and BAS allows Tribal Chairs (TCs) and Highest Elected Officials (HEOs) the opportunity to report legal boundary changes, such as incorporations, disincorporations, annexations, and deannexations. Governments can also update boundaries, features, and landmarks for:

- Cities, towns, boroughs, and villages (incorporated places)
- Townships and towns (minor civil divisions)
- Counties (or county equivalents)
- Consolidated cities
- Roads and other applicable features

Participating in these efforts will help tribal, state, and local governments to have the most accurate boundary data available for the tabulation of the 2020 Census housing and population counts. These data are the basis for ongoing programs such as the American Community Survey and the Population Estimates Program. Government agencies and other groups use this tabulated data to allocate \$675 billion of government funds to communities across the country. Legal boundary data are also made publicly available and are used by federal agencies, researchers, and the public.

The BVP is conducted in two phases, Initial BVP and Final BVP. During each of these phases, TCs and HEOs are instructed to work with their BAS contact to review and update their government's boundary, name, and status information. TCs and HEOs do not need to register to participate in BVP. The materials will be provided automatically.

Initial BVP

Please visit the Census Bureau's "How to Get Started" webpage:

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/bas/information/get-started.html>

The Initial BVP materials include an Initial BVP letter, form, and paper maps or a CD/DVD containing PDF maps. The maps should reflect the legal boundary for the government effective January 1, 2020. TCs and HEOs are instructed to review the Census Bureau's depiction of the legal boundary for accuracy and to return the completed Initial BVP form by **March 1, 2020**.

If the information is correct, no further action is required.

If any information is incorrect, TCs and HEOs should work with their BAS contact to submit corrections through the 2020 BAS. If boundary updates are submitted to the BAS by March 1, 2020, TCs and HEOs will have an additional opportunity to verify their government's boundary prior to final data tabulation for the 2020 Census. Changes received after March 1, 2020 will be used to correct the boundary, but there will not be sufficient time to send updated maps before final data tabulations for the 2020 Census.

Final BVP

The Final BVP provides an opportunity for TCs and HEOs to review recent boundary updates provided through the 2020 BAS. Only governments that reported corrections to the 2020 BAS on or before March 1, 2020, will receive Final BVP materials. The Final BVP materials include a Final BVP letter, form, and a paper map or map index sheet. The maps should reflect the legal boundary for the government effective January 1, 2020. TCs and HEOs are instructed to review the Census Bureau's depiction of the legal boundary for accuracy and to return the completed Final BVP within five (5) business days.

If the boundary is correct, no further action is required.

If any information is incorrect, TCs and HEOs should work with their BAS contact (State Data Center of Mississippi) to submit corrections, within five (5) business days of receipt of materials.

To participate in this program the Census Bureau offers multiple free, user-friendly methods for the BAS contact to report boundary corrections through participation in BAS.

1. **Paper option:** Participants can request free paper maps and annotation materials from the BAS web site.
2. **Basic digital option:** The Geographic Update Partnership Software (GUPS) is a free, customized Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tool. It was specifically developed for people who do not have geographic training or are not experienced GIS users. Please note that the GUPS option will not be available to report boundary updates during the Final BVP phase.
3. **Advanced digital option:** Experienced GIS users have the opportunity to download shapefiles from the BAS Web site and make updates using their own GIS software (e.g., ArcGIS).

The Census Bureau has created YouTube tutorials to walk you through the process. These are available at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/bas/library/videos.html. To see the existing boundaries that the Census Bureau has on file for your community, visit their online map application https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerwebmain/TIGERweb_main.html.

Additionally, the State Data Center of Mississippi is available to lend assistance should the need arise. Please feel free to contact Dr. Jamiko Deleveaux at jydeleve@olemiss.edu or (662) 915-6677.