



2020 Census Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP) Quick Reference: Block Groups

A block group is a statistical geographic subdivision of a census tract. Local participants are provided an opportunity to review and if necessary, suggest updates to the boundaries and attributes of the block groups in their geographic area through the 2020 Census PSAP. The U.S. Census Bureau uses block groups in the tabulation and presentation of data from the decennial census and the American Community Survey (ACS).

Census Bureau criteria specify that standard block groups must:

- Nest within census tract boundaries.
- Cover the entire land and water area of each census tract.
- Be reasonably compact and contiguous.
- Meet the population and/or housing unit thresholds as specified in Table 1. For counties that have fewer than 1,200 residents, the Census Bureau will define one census tract and one block group that encompasses the entirety of the county.
- Have no more than nine block groups (excluding water blocks) contained within a single census tract.
- Have a unique code, between 0 and 10, within each census tract. To identify each standard block group, a single-digit code is used that will correspond to the first digit in the code of each block encompassed by the block group (e.g., all blocks within block group 3 will be numbered in the 3000 range). A zero is to be used to denote a water-only block group.

Census Bureau guidelines recommend that standard block groups:

- Have boundaries that follow visible features (e.g., roads, rivers) or other acceptable features (e.g., incorporated place, minor civil division, and American Indian reservation boundaries).
- Be delineated as a special use block group if coextensive with a special use census tract, encompassing an employment center, large airport, public park, public forest, or large water body with no (or very little) population or housing units.

Table 1: Block Group Thresholds

Block Group Type	Population Threshold	Housing Unit Threshold	Area Measurement Threshold
Standard Block Groups	Min.: 600	Min.: 240	None
	Max.: 3,000	Max.: 1,200	None
Special Use Block Groups	None (or very little) or within the standard block group thresholds	None (or very little) or within the standard block group thresholds	At least comparable in land area size to surrounding block groups

Refer to the Respondent Guide for complete instructions.