

Iowa

State website:
2010-cycle districts:
2000-cycle districts:
Primary governing law:

www.legis.iowa.gov/Resources/Redist/redistricting.aspx
Congress, State Senate, State House « NEW
Congress, State Senate, State House
Iowa Const. art. III, §§ 34-39; Iowa Code §§ 42.1-42.6

The Latest

On March 31, 2011, the Legislative Services Agency proposed draft state legislative and congressional maps. In HF 682, the legislature approved the proposals, and on April 19, they were signed into law.

Institution

Redistricting political control:

	Governor	State Senate	State House
Congressional lines	R	26 D, 24 R	40 D, 60 R
State legislative lines	R	26 D, 24 R	40 D, 60 R
2000 cong. lines	D	20 D, 30 R	44 D, 56 R
2000 state lines	D	20 D, 30 R	44 D, 56 R

Iowa's congressional and state legislative lines are drawn by the state legislature, as a regular statute, subject to gubernatorial veto, but with substantial input from a nonpartisan advisory body and a bipartisan advisory committee, both maintained by statute.

This advisory body is the Legislative Services Agency (LSA), a body of civil servants committed to nonpartisanship and otherwise charged with tasks like legal and fiscal analysis of state legislation and state government oversight. The LSA prepares draft redistricting plans under criteria set almost entirely by statute.

Where the statutory criteria leave discretionary latitude, the LSA looks for guidance to a five-person independent commission; each of the four legislative leaders (majority and minority leader in each legislative house) select one commissioner, and those four select a fifth. None of the commissioners may hold partisan public office or an office in a political party, and none may be a relative or employee of a federal or state legislator (or the legislature as a whole). The members of this independent commission are listed here. [Iowa Code §§ 42.5-42.6].

The LSA works with this independent commission to draw a bill containing both congressional and state legislative plans. When this first set of plans is presented, the legislature may accept or reject it without modification; if it is rejected, the LSA will prepare another set using the legislature's feedback. That set of plans may also be accepted or rejected without modification; if it is rejected, the LSA will prepare a third and final set of plans, which may be modified at the legislature's discretion. [Iowa Code § 42.3]

Although the Iowa legislature has the ability to reject three LSA plans and then entirely substitute its own, it has not chosen to do so since the procedure's inception in 1980. Furthermore, the entire procedure above is statutory and subject to repeal or revision by the legislature at any time.

The Iowa Supreme Court has original jurisdiction to hear legal challenges in state court to redistricting plans. [Iowa Const. art. III, § 36]

Timing

Census data were delivered to Iowa on February 10, 2011.

Under Iowa statute, the LSA must deliver its first set of congressional and state legislative plans to the legislature by April 1, 2011; if the plans are rejected, the LSA must deliver its second set of

plans within 35 days of that rejection. If the second set of plans is rejected, the LSA must deliver its third and final set of plans within 35 days of that rejection. [[Iowa Code § 42.3](#)]

The Iowa constitution provides that the legislature must enact state legislative plans by September 1, 2011, and gives the Iowa Supreme Court authority to take over if the legislature has not done so by September 15, 2011. No similar provision exists for congressional districts. [[Iowa Const. art. III, § 35](#)] Candidates must file for congressional and state legislative primary elections by March 16, 2012. [[Iowa Code § 43.11\(2\)](#)]

Iowa law ties the drawing of state legislative lines to the Census, and might therefore be construed to prohibit redrawing lines mid-decade. There is no similar provision pertaining to congressional lines. [[Iowa Const. art. III, § 35](#)]

Public input

After the LSA delivers its first set of plans to the legislature, it must make public a copy of the plan and associated data. The advisory independent commission must then conduct at least three public hearings in different regions of the state, and summarize feedback from the hearings for the legislature. [[Iowa Code §§ 42.2, 42.6](#)]

The advisory independent commission's report is [here](#). Archives of the public hearings and comments submitted at those hearings can be found [here](#).

Criteria

Like all states, Iowa must comply with constitutional [equal population requirements](#). In addition, Iowa statutes require state legislative districts to be as nearly equal as practicable except where necessary to comply with other requirements, and in no event may the overall average deviation exceed 1%, or the deviation for any one district exceed 5%. [[Iowa Code § 42.4\(1\)](#)]

Iowa must also, like all states, abide by [section 2 of the Voting Rights Act](#). Iowa law further provides that districts may not be drawn for the purpose of augmenting or diluting the voting strength of a language or racial minority group; that language has not yet been construed by a court. [[Iowa Code § 42.4\(5\)](#)]

Iowa law also requires that districts be convenient and contiguous, preserve the integrity of political subdivisions like counties and cities, and to the extent consistent with other requirements, reasonably compact -- defined in terms of regular polygons, comparison of length and width, and overall boundary perimeter. [[Iowa Const. art. III, §§ 34, 37](#); [Iowa Code § 42.4](#); [In re Legislative Districting of General Assembly](#), 193 N.W.2d 784 (Iowa 1972)] Where possible, and where not in conflict with the criteria above, state House districts must be nested within state Senate districts, and both should be nested where possible within congressional districts. [[Iowa Code § 42.4\(6\)](#)]

In drawing maps, neither the commission nor the legislature may consider incumbent residences, political data, or demographic information other than where required by federal law. Districts may not be drawn to favor a political party, incumbent, or other person or group. [[Iowa Code § 42.4\(5\)](#)]

2000 cycle

In the 2000 redistricting cycle, Iowa's legislature rejected the LSA's first proposed set of plans, but [enacted](#) the second, on June 22, 2001.

It appears that neither the congressional nor the state legislative plan was challenged in court.

Timing	Timing		Alaska	Iowa	Nevada	Carolina South Dakota
Authority	Authority	Litigation	Arizona	Kansas	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Institution	Institution		Arkansas	Kentucky	New Jersey	Texas
Party control	Party control		California	Louisiana	New Mexico	Utah
Criteria	Criteria	Reform	Colorado	Maine	New York	Vermont
			Connecticut	Maryland	North Carolina	Virginia
			Delaware	Massachusetts	North Dakota	Washington
			Florida	Michigan	Ohio	West Virginia
			Georgia	Minnesota	Oklahoma	Wisconsin
			Hawaii	Mississippi	Oregon	Wyoming
Overview of redistricting		Further resources				
Why it matters	Redistricting criteria	My work	Idaho	Missouri	Pennsylvania	
Public engagement	Preclearance	Tools	Illinois	Montana	Rhode Island	