

New Urban and Rural Criteria for Census 2000

The U.S. Census Bureau released new criteria for defining the nation's urban and rural territories based on the results of Census 2000. These criteria replace the 1990 census criteria for defining urban and rural territories.

The Census Bureau identifies and tabulates data for urban and rural populations and their associated areas solely for the presentation and comparison of census statistical data. It does not take into account or attempt to anticipate any non-statistical uses that may be made of these areas. The Census Bureau does, however, recognize that some federal and state agencies are required by law to use Census Bureau defined urban and rural classifications for allocating program funds, and therefore urges all agencies to consider making adjustments to the urban and rural criteria specifically for their program but to clearly note this change to avoid confusion with the Census Bureau official classifications.

Census 2000 Urban and Rural Classifications

The Census Bureau classifies "Urban" as all territory, population, and housing units located within an urbanized area (UA) or urban cluster (UC). It delineates UA and UC boundaries to encompass densely settled territory, which consists of:

- Core census block groups or blocks that have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile; and
- Surrounding census blocks that have an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile.

However, under certain conditions, territories that are less densely populated may constitute a part of each UA or UC.

All territories, populations and housing units located outside of the urbanized areas and urban clusters are defined as "Rural." Rural areas can be both place and non-place territories. It is important to note that geographic entities such as census tracts, counties, metropolitan areas, and the area outside metropolitan areas, often contain both urban and rural territory population and housing units.

Census 2000 Urbanized Areas and Urban Cluster Definitions

Urbanized Areas. For Census 2000, an Urbanized Area (UA) consists of contiguous, densely settled census block groups and census blocks that meet population requirements, along with adjacent densely settled census blocks that together encompass a population of at least 50,000 people.

Urban Clusters. An Urban Cluster (UC) consists of contiguous, densely settled census block groups and blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent densely settled census blocks that together encompass a population with at least 2,500 people, but fewer than 50,000.

Delineating Urban Territory

Delineation of urbanized areas and urban clusters is now based strictly on aggregations of block groups and census blocks. It no longer considers the boundaries of previously existing legal and statistical entities. Furthermore, Census 2000 now labels partly rural geographical entities as extended places instead of the previously used term extended cities, since a census designated place (as well as any incorporated place) can now be partly urban and partly rural.

The Census Bureau follows a regimented process in determining urban territory. A detailed discussion on the entire delineating process can be obtained from the Federal Registry Vol.67, No. 51 (pp. 11663-11670). Very briefly, this process consists of the sequential addition of non-contiguous qualified territory to an identified initial core. The initial core is comprised of contiguous census block groups that fulfill a certain population density and land area criteria. Additional non-contiguous qualifying areas are added to this core through two special geographic concepts – the 'hop' and 'jump'. A hop is a road connection of no more than 0.5 miles, made up of one or more non-qualifying census blocks that fulfill specific population density and land area criteria. Jump connections are also used to add more discontinuous qualified territory to the core and are no more than 2.5 miles in length.

In addition, the Census Bureau uses two other geographic concepts, enclaves and indentations, that add more qualifying territory to the core. Once all the qualifying territory have been added in the sequential manner outlined by the Bureau, the geography is finally designated as either an urbanized area or an urbanized cluster, based on the final population size.

Differences Between 1990 and 2000 Census UA Criteria

The Census Bureau has made a number of significant changes to the 1990 Census criteria for determining urban territories under the new classification system. This has resulted in a considerably different urban landscape from that of 1990. The most important differences in the UA criteria between the two censuses are as follows:

- Census 2000 does not automatically recognize previously existing UA territory. All previously qualified UA territory have been reevaluated in order to determine their eligibility under the new classification system. This has been done in order to bring the UA criteria back to a single set of rules that will ensure consistency and the elimination of any subjectivity in these delineations.
- Census 2000 uses UCs (Urbanized Clusters) rather than Places to determine the total urban population outside of UAs. Under the new system, previously established place boundaries are 'invisible' and therefore not taken into consideration when creating and classifying the cores of densely settled population agglomerations.
- Technological advancement in the field of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will allow Census 2000 to automate the mapping of the entire urban and rural delineation for the first time in census history.
- The criteria for 'extended city or place' has significantly changed. Previously, sparsely settled areas were examined using population density and area measurements in order to determine whether or not they were excluded from the UA. Furthermore, the previous use of 'Place' introduced a bias that depended on a state's annexation and incorporation laws. Under the new system, extended places will be determined solely on the basis of the population density of census block groups and census blocks, thereby resulting in a more objective and equitable process of delineating urban entities.

New Urban and Rural Criteria for Census 2000

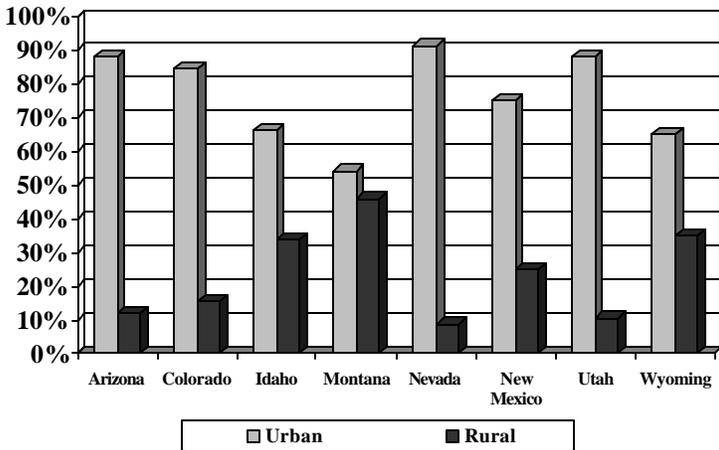
- The UA central place and title criteria will no longer follow standards predefined by other federal agencies. In the past, many UA central places and titles were based on MA (Metropolitan Area) central city definitions established by the Office of Management and Budget. In Census 2000, the new MA criteria will be applied later than the UA criteria.

Boundaries for the newly classified UAs and UCs will be available on the Census Bureau website when the full Summary File 3 is released later this summer.

Additional Information

For more information on urban and rural criteria for Census 2000, visit the Census Bureau's web site at <http://www.census.gov>, or contact the State Data Center at (801) 538-1036.

Percent of Population that is Urban/Rural Mountain States: 2000



The Urban population was determined by adding the populations of the urbanized areas and urban clusters within each of these states, as determined by Census 2000.

Urban and Rural Profile of Mountain States

The mountain states region was the fastest growing region in the United States during the 1990-2000 decade. The region averaged a 2.9% annual population growth over this period. Data from the Census 2000 New Classification System show that the majority of the region's population is concentrated in urban territories. Among the mountain states, Nevada took the lead in the proportion of the state's population that was urban (91.5%), followed by Utah (88.2%), Arizona (88.2%), and Colorado (84.5%). Montana had the lowest proportion of urban population at 54.1%, followed by Wyoming (65.1%) and Idaho (66.2%).

Utah's Urban Population (Census 2000 New Classification)¹

According to the recently released Census 2000 New Classification, Utah's total urban population constitutes 88% of the state's total population. This population resides in Utah's five Urbanized Areas and 26 Urban Clusters, as identified by this new classification. In 1990, based on the previous classification, Utah's urban population was 87%. Utah's Urbanized Areas (UAs) under the new classification system include Salt Lake City (887,916), Ogden-Layton (417,787), Provo-Orem (303,865), St. George (62,654), and Logan (76,141).

The new system has resulted in three important changes in the urban profile of Utah. These are: 1) the inclusion of St. George as a new Urbanized Area; 2) the transformation of Ogden UA to Ogden-Layton UA; and 3) the alteration of the boundaries of Salt Lake City from the 1990 census. Ogden-Layton now contains a part of the 1990-defined Salt Lake City UA.

Note: ¹Population values for Urban Areas and Urban Clusters have been revised. All values shown in this publication reflect revised numbers.

Utah's Urban Population: 2000

Census 2000 New Classification System

Urbanized Areas	Population
Salt Lake City	887,916
Ogden-Layton	417,787
Provo-Orem	303,865
St. George	62,654
Logan	76,141

Urbanized Clusters

Blanding, UT	2,981
Brigham City, UT	20,764
Cedar City, UT	22,253
Colorado City AZ-UT	1,604 (PT)
Delta, UT	3,146
Ephraim, UT	4,209
Grantsville, UT	4,522
Gunnison, UT	3,041
Heber, UT	9,705
Hurricane, UT	8,292
Kanab, UT	2,782
Manti, UT	3,013
Moab, UT	6,537
Nephi, UT	4,575
Park City, UT	8,508
Price, UT	12,433
Richfield, UT	6,864
Roosevelt, UT	4,016
Santaquin, UT	5,277
Spanish Fork, UT	37,456
Stansbury Park, UT	2,957
Summit Park, UT	5,486
Tooele, UT	22,007
Tremonton, UT	7,219
Vernal, UT	11,515
West Wendover, UT-NV	1,410 (PT)

Total Urban Population 1,970,935

Note: Population values for all areas except Manti, UT reflect revised numbers.