



REDISTRICTING 101

BACKGROUND

In 2018, Michigan voters took fate into their own hands and drastically shifted the redistricting process by adopting Proposal 18-2. Instead of legislators drawing lines for their best interests, citizens would draw lines that represent their best interests and respect their historical, cultural, or economic perspectives.

For the first time in Michigan's history, the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) will lead the redistricting process to draw fair and independent maps. The MICRC has the exclusive authority to redistrict the state under Article IV, Section 6 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963.

Who is the MICRC?

The MICRC is responsible for drawing the district lines for the Michigan Congressional, House, and Senate. The MICRC is the only entity in the state that is authorized to draw and adopt redistricting plans for the state of Michigan.

Randomly selected from over 9,000 applicants, the MICRC is comprised of 13 citizens from across the state of Michigan. They include four people who affiliate with the Democratic party, five Independents who do not affiliate with either major party, and four who affiliate with the Republican party.

The members of the inaugural MICRC are:

Commissioner Douglas Clark, Retired Operations and Development manager

Commissioner Juanita Curry, Retired Specialized Foster Care worker

Commissioner Anthony Eid, Medical student

Commissioner Rhonda Lange, Real Estate broker

Commissioner Steven Lett, Semi-retired lawyer

Commissioner Brittni Kellom, Entrepreneur and Trauma practitioner

Commissioner Cynthia Orton, College student

Commissioner M.C. Rothhorn, Financial cooperator



Commissioner Rebecca Szetela, Lawyer
Commissioner Janice Vallette, Retired banker
Commissioner Erin Wagner, Household engineer
Commissioner Richard Weiss, Retired auto worker and handyman
Commissioner Dustin Witjes, Payroll specialist

The inaugural MICRC staff includes Executive Director Suann Hammersmith, General Counsel Julianne Pastula, and Communications and Outreach Director Edward Woods III.

What are the constitutional responsibilities of the MICRC?

Before drawing any lines, the MICRC is required to hold at least 10 public hearings. Per the Michigan Constitution, the purposes for the public hearings are to:

1. Inform the public about the redistricting process.
2. Share the purpose and responsibilities of the commission.
3. Solicit information from the public about potential redistricting plans for the Michigan Congressional, House, and Senate districts.

The Michigan Constitution outlines the specific criteria and procedures the MICRC must utilize when proposing and adopting a redistricting plan. The constitutional criteria are listed below in order of priority:

(a) Districts shall be of equal population as mandated by the United States constitution and shall comply with the voting rights act and other federal laws.

(b) Districts shall be geographically contiguous. Island areas are contiguous by land to the county of which they are a part.

(c) Districts shall reflect the state's diverse population and communities of interest. Communities of interest may include, but shall not be limited to, populations that share cultural or historical characteristics or economic interests. Communities of interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.



(d) Districts shall not provide a disproportionate advantage to any political party. A disproportionate advantage to a political party shall be determined using accepted measures of partisan fairness.

(e) Districts shall not favor or disfavor an incumbent elected official or a candidate.

(f) Districts shall reflect consideration of county, city, and township boundaries.

(g) Districts shall be reasonably compact.

After developing at least one plan for each type of district, there will be a second round of public hearings. The MICRC is required to hold at least five public hearings throughout the state for the purpose of soliciting comment from the public about the proposed plans being considered for redistricting the Michigan Congressional, House, and Senate districts.

The Constitution also requires that before the MICRC votes on any redistricting plan it must publish the plans and provide a minimum of 45 days for public comment on the proposed plan or plans. To adopt a final redistricting plan, it needs a majority vote of the MICRC that includes at least two commissioners who affiliate with each major party and two commissioners who do not affiliate with either major party. If this is unattainable, the Commission will follow the procedures outlined in the Constitution to adopt the final maps.

Where are the meetings and public hearings?

The MICRC meets weekly on Thursdays. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings take place virtually. Once in-person meetings are restored, the MICRC will meet across the state of Michigan. Please visit www.michigan.gov/MICRC to find out meeting locations and times.

The first round of public hearings is scheduled for the following dates and locations at 6:00 p.m. In addition to the public hearings on Thursdays, the MICRC will also conduct its weekly meeting (5:00 p.m.) as well.

TUESDAYS

Jackson
May 11

Marquette
May 18

Midland
May 25

Flint
June 1

Novi
June 8

Detroit
June 15

Port Huron
June 22

Muskegon
June 29

THURSDAYS

Kalamazoo
May 13

Gaylord
May 20

Lansing
May 27

Dearborn
June 3

Pontiac
June 10

Detroit
June 17

Warren
June 24

Grand Rapids
July 1

The second round of public hearings will be held in Detroit, Flint, Gaylord, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Marquette, Novi, and Warren in either November or December. Please stay tuned for more information on specific dates and times.

Please note that these dates and/or locations are subject to change.

When is the MICRC expected to finish its work?

The deadline in the Constitution is November 1. However, due to the delayed release of the 2020 Census data, it is unknown at this time when the MICRC will complete its redistricting work. Under federal law the



Census data should be provided to the states by April 1, however according to the U.S. Census Bureau, it is scheduled to be released September 30.

The Constitution states that the MICRC must publish the proposed redistricting plans and provide a minimum of 45 days for public comment. Under the current November 1 deadline, this would occur on or before September 17. During the 45 days, the MICRC will be conducting its second round of public hearings. Considering the Census data will not be released until September 30, it would be impossible to begin the 45-day public comment period on September 17 and complete this process by November 1.

To address the timing issue created by the delayed Census data, the MICRC recently voted to petition the Michigan Supreme Court for relief in the form of modified deadlines to complete its critical work. Please stay tuned for more information.

Why should I care about redistricting?

For authentic representative democracy, please consider the following three reasons why you should care about redistricting.

1. Instead of elected officials choosing the voters to maintain their partisan advantage, the MICRC ensures that citizens can vote for the elected officials that best represent their interests.
2. The new redistricting process ensures that redistricting occurs in an open and transparent manner with opportunity for statewide public participation.
3. Communities of interest have voices to prevent gerrymandering and dividing of neighborhoods for partisan gain, which can harm these communities.

How can I connect with the MICRC?

- Website: www.michigan.gov/MICRC
- Social Media Channels: Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram
- View meetings live or as recorded on YouTube
- Email: Redistricting@michigan.gov

- Mail: MICRC/P.O. Box 30318/Lansing, MI 48909
- Comments: Provide public comments during the MICRC weekly meetings on Thursdays and the upcoming Public Hearings
- Forums: Attend the Town Hall Forums

What can organizations do to help the MICRC?

Organizations can assist the MICRC in the following ways:

1. Refer your members to learn more about Michigan's new redistricting process to the website, www.michigan.gov/MICRC.
2. Promote and attend/watch the MICRC meetings and/or public hearings across the state of Michigan.
3. Submit public comments and/or proposed redistricting maps for Michigan Congressional, Senate, and House districts to the MICRC.
4. Collaborate and host a Town Hall Forum to provide information about the redistricting process with local community organizations.

For more information about redistricting or to sign-up and receive alerts, please visit www.michigan.gov/MICRC.