

Final Change to County Equivalents in Connecticut

The Census Bureau adopted the State's nine Councils of Governments (which are designated under Section 16a-4a(4) of the Connecticut General Statutes) as the county-equivalent geographic unit for purposes of collecting, tabulating, and disseminating statistical data in 2022. The city- and town-based Councils of Governments (COGs) also serve as Planning Regions.

Why is Connecticut seeking this change?

- The nine COGs/Planning Regions are a more meaningful geographic area for statistical analysis and decision making at the sub-state level than the current counties.
- Connecticut's COGs/Planning Regions have the authority to carry out administrative functions that are typically found among counties in other states. Section 8-31b(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes states that
 "Regional services provided to member municipalities shall be determined by each regional council of governments...and may include, without limitation, the following services: (1) Engineering; (2) inspectional and planning; (3) economic development; (4) public safety; (5) emergency management; (6) animal control; (7) land use management; (8) tourism promotion; (9) social; (10) health; (11) education; (12) data management; (13) regional sewerage; (14) housing; (15) computerized mapping; (16) household hazardous waste collection; (17) recycling; (18) public facility siting; (19) coordination of master planning; (20) vocational training and development; (21) solid waste disposal; (22) fire protection; (23) regional resource protection; (24) regional impact studies; and (25) transportation."
- Connecticut's General Statutes also authorize the COGs/Planning Regions to "accept or participate in any grant, donation or program made available to counties by any other governmental or private entity."
- Adoption of COGs/Planning Regions as county equivalents will make them eligible to apply for federal grant programs open to counties. Federal agencies tend to look to the Census Bureau for the inventory of, and boundaries for, counties and county equivalents.

Why is the Census Bureau implementing this change?

- The Census Bureau strives to provide statistical data for geographic areas that are meaningful and relevant to analysis and decision-making.
- Connecticut's current eight counties ceased to function as governmental and administrative entities in 1960.
- Connecticut's nine COGs/Planning Regions exist to address matters of mutual interest to, and coordinate activities for, their constituent cities and towns, with each city and town represented by its municipal chief elected official, and in that capacity can exercise a variety of responsibilities typically undertaken by counties in other states.
- While COGs/Planning Regions do not have the authority to levy taxes, they are authorized under State law to assess dues on their member municipalities, to accept other sources of public and private assistance for the purpose of providing regional and shared services, and to administer a regional property tax base revenue sharing system if approved by a unanimous vote of its member municipalities.

- As such, the COGs/Planning Regions are more meaningful and relevant areas for tabulation and dissemination of statistical data within Connecticut as well as for regional and national county comparisons, than are the eight counties.

When did this change occur?

- The Census Bureau completed the geographic updates in the spring of 2022. The Census Bureau will release geospatial products in late summer of 2022. Data users can expect to see Population Estimates and American Community Survey Data in late 2023.