

README for “Counties 1996-Present” dataset.

U.S. Department of Commerce (USDOC), U.S. Census Bureau (USCB); U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS)[distributor]
2021-03-12

LINKS TO DATASET

A. Dataset archive link:

<https://doi.org/10.21949/1520800>

SUMMARY OF DATASET

The Counties 1996-Present dataset is from the U.S. Census Bureau. The TIGER/Line shapefiles and related database files (.dbf) are an extract of selected geographic and cartographic information from the U.S. Census Bureau's Master Address File / Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (MAF/TIGER) Database (MTDB). The MTDB represents a seamless national file with no overlaps or gaps between parts, however, each TIGER/Line shapefile is designed to stand alone as an independent data set, or they can be combined to cover the entire nation. The primary legal divisions of most states are termed counties. In Louisiana, these divisions are known as parishes. In Alaska, which has no counties, the equivalent entities are the organized boroughs, city and boroughs, municipalities, and for the unorganized area, census areas. The latter are delineated cooperatively for statistical purposes by the State of Alaska and the Census Bureau. In four states (Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, and Virginia), there are one or more incorporated places that are independent of any county organization and thus constitute primary divisions of their states. These incorporated places are known as independent cities and are treated as equivalent entities for purposes of data presentation. The District of Columbia and Guam have no primary divisions, and each area is considered an equivalent entity for purposes of data presentation. The Census Bureau treats the following entities as equivalents of counties for purposes of data presentation: Municipios in Puerto Rico, Districts and Islands in American Samoa, Municipalities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Islands in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The entire area of the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas is covered by counties or equivalent entities. The boundaries for counties and equivalent entities are as of January 1, 2019, primarily as reported through the Census Bureau's Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. General Information
- B. Sharing/Access & Policies Information
- C. Data and Related File Overview
- D. Methodological Information
- E. Data-Specific Information for: Counties 1996-Present [datasets]
- F. Update Log

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

0. Title of Dataset:

Counties 1996-Present [dataset]

1. Description of Dataset:

The Counties 1996-Present dataset is from the U.S. Census Bureau. The TIGER/Line shapefiles and related database files (.dbf) are an extract of selected geographic and cartographic information from the U.S. Census Bureau's Master Address File / Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (MAF/TIGER) Database (MTDB). The MTDB represents a seamless national file with no overlaps or gaps between parts, however, each TIGER/Line shapefile is designed to stand alone as an independent data set, or they can be combined to cover the entire nation. The primary legal divisions of most states are termed counties. In Louisiana, these divisions are known as parishes. In Alaska, which has no counties, the equivalent entities are the organized boroughs, city and boroughs, municipalities, and for the unorganized area, census areas. The latter are delineated cooperatively for statistical purposes by the State of Alaska and the Census Bureau. In four states (Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, and Virginia), there are one or more incorporated places that are independent of any county organization and thus constitute primary divisions of their states. These incorporated places are known as independent cities and are treated as equivalent entities for purposes of data presentation. The District of Columbia and Guam have no primary divisions, and each area is considered an equivalent entity for purposes of data presentation. The Census Bureau treats the following entities as equivalents of counties for purposes of data presentation: Municipios in Puerto Rico, Districts and Islands in American Samoa, Municipalities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Islands in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The entire area of the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas is covered by counties or equivalent entities. The boundaries for counties and equivalent entities are as of January 1, 2019, primarily as reported through the Census Bureau's Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS).

2. Dataset archive link:

<https://doi.org/10.21949/1520800>

3. Authorship Information:

Principal Data Creator or Data Manager Contact Information

Institution: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau

Address: 4600 Silver Hill Rd., Washington D.C. 20233

Email: geo.bas@census.gov

Data Distributor Contact Information

Name: National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD)

Institution: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), The Office of Spatial Analysis and Visualization (OSAV)

Address: 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, Washington D.C. 20590

Email: ntad@dot.gov

4. Date of data collection and update interval:

Annually

5. Geographic location of data collection:

The entire area of the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas is covered by counties or equivalent entities.

6. Information about funding sources that supported the collection of the data:

U.S. Department of Commerce (USDOC), U.S. Census Bureau (USCB)

B. SHARING/ACCESS & POLICIES INFORMATION

0. Recommended citation for the data:

U.S. Department of Commerce (USDOC), U.S. Census Bureau (USCB); Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) [distributor]. (2020). Counties 1996-Present [datasets]. <https://doi.org/10.21949/1520800>

1. Licenses/restrictions placed on the data:

These data are in the Public Domain.

2. Was data derived from another source?:

No.

3. This dataset and its documentation was created and shared to meet the requirements enumerated in the U.S. Federally-Funded Scientific Research" Version 1.1 << <https://doi.org/10.21949/1520559> >> and guidelines suggested by the DOT Public Access website << <https://doi.org/10.21949/1503647> >>, in effect and current as of December 03, 2020.

C. DATA & RELATED FILE OVERVIEW

1. File List for the bts_NTAD_Counties_Data_Package.zip collection

A1. Filename:

county_XXXX.zip

Short description:

Compressed file folders containing the geospatial data for Counties with Integrated Shoreline 1996-Present dataset.

A2. Filename:

county_pol_XXXX.zip

Short description:

Compressed file folders containing the geospatial data for County Political Boundaries 1996-Present dataset.

B. Filename:

bts_Counties_DMP_20210216.pdf

Short description:

A PDF file containing the Data Management Plan that was created for current and future management of the data and associated files.

C. Filename:

bts_Counties_20210216_README.txt

Short description:

The README.txt file that includes human-readable information about the data, variable definitions, contact information, and other contextual information. The file you are reading now.

2. File List for the counties_XXXX.zip collection

A. Filename:

counties.shp

Short description:

A shapefile containing the geospatial data for Counties with Integrated Shoreline 1996-Present dataset. This includes associated files with extensions. .prj, .dbf, .sbn, .sbx, .shx.

B. Filename:

counties.txt

Short description:

A text file containing key metadata and documentation information such as methodology, procedures, data dictionary, etc.

D. METHODOLOGICAL INFORMATION

1. Description of methods used for collection/generation of data:

TIGER/Line Shapefiles are extracted from the Census MAF/TIGER database by nation, state, county, and entity. Census MAF/TIGER data for all of the aforementioned geographic entities are then distributed among the shapefiles each containing attributes for line, polygon, or landmark geographic data.

2. Instrument- or software-specific information needed to interpret the data:

The data and documentation files can be opened with Esri ArcMap and any GIS software package.

E. DATA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

1. XXXXXX data table

Data is updated annually when applicable. Dataset Manager is contacted to verify changes to data resulting in NTAD update. The metadata is updated in the same manner. For the most recent data, please visit the NTAD catalog at <https://data-usdot.opendata.arcgis.com/>

A. Number of variables (columns):

The data dictionary found in (.txt documentation) provides definitions for the variables

B. Data Dictionary/Variable List:

Because of the large number of variables, please refer to the Data Dictionary found within the file counties.txt for names, definitions, and formats of variables.

C. Missing data codes:

None

F. UPDATE LOG

This bts_Counties_20210312_README.txt file was originally created on 2021-03-12 by Dominic Menegus, Geographer, dominic.menegus@dot.gov

[Note changes or update to the readme.txt file, e.g.:]

2021-03-12: Original file created