

persons who will attend the meeting and require the services of a sign language interpreter should contact the Regional Office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the Commission.

Dated at Washington, DC, October 14, 1997.

Carol-Lee Hurley,

Chief, Regional Programs Coordination Unit.
[FR Doc. 97-28449 Filed 10-27-97; 8:45 am]

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COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the West Virginia Advisory Committee

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, that a meeting of the West Virginia Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene at 12:45 p.m. and adjourn at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 19, 1997, at the Raleigh County Public Library, 221 N. Kanawha Street, Beckley, West Virginia 25801. The purpose of the meeting is to plan its project activity for FY '97-'98, and receive information from invited guests on civil rights issues in Beckley, West Virginia.

Persons desiring additional information, or planning a presentation to the Committee, should contact Committee Chairperson Gregory T. Hinton, 304-367-4244, or Ki-Taek Chun, Director of the Eastern Regional Office, 202-376-7533 (TDD 202-376-8116). Hearing-impaired persons who will attend the meeting and require the services of a sign language interpreter should contact the Regional Office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the Commission.

Dated at Washington, DC, October 20, 1997.

Carol-Lee Hurley,

Chief, Regional Programs Coordination Unit.
[FR Doc. 97-28453 Filed 10-27-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of the Census

[Docket No. 961213356-7236-02]

Census Tract Program for Census 2000—Final Criteria

AGENCY: Bureau of the Census, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of final program.

SUMMARY: Census tracts are relatively permanent small-area geographic divisions of a county or statistically equivalent entity¹ defined for the tabulation of decennial census data and selected other statistical programs. The primary goal of the census tract program is to provide a geographic unit that has stable boundaries between decennial censuses. Other goals include the identification of geographic areas that represent meaningful geographic divisions of a county based on economic or social interaction, significant topographic differences within a county, or a certain degree of demographic homogeneity at the time of original delineation. The Census Bureau uses census tracts to tabulate and disseminate a wide variety of data. For Census 2000, census tracts will be established across the entire area of the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas (American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands of the United States).

Census tracts first appeared in the 1910 census when local officials in eight of the larger cities delineated these areas. In the 1910, 1920, and 1930 censuses, the Census Bureau published census tract data as special tabulations; in 1940, the Census Bureau began including census tract data in its standard publications. The number of data subjects and the amount of data, as well as the number of counties containing census tracts, increased in every census through 1990. For the 1990 census, the Census Bureau inaugurated complete nationwide coverage and statistics for census tracts or statistically equivalent entities known as block numbering areas (BNAs). For Census 2000, the Census Bureau will combine the similar programs into a single census tract program.

¹ Includes parishes in Louisiana; boroughs and census areas in Alaska; independent cities in Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, and Virginia; that portion of Yellowstone National Park in Montana; districts/islands in American Samoa, the main islands of the Virgin Islands of the United States; municipalities in the Northern Mariana Islands; municipios in Puerto Rico; the entire area constituting the District of Columbia; and the entire area constituting Guam. This notice will refer to all these entities collectively as "counties."

To determine the boundaries and identification numbers of census tracts, the Census Bureau offers a program to local participants, such as locally identified agencies and American Indian tribal officials, whereby they can review and update the boundaries of the census tracts and BNAs delineated for the 1990 census and suggest revisions according to the criteria developed and promulgated by the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau will then review the resulting Census 2000 census tract plans for conformance to these criteria. The Census Bureau does not take into account or attempt to anticipate any nonstatistical uses that may be made of census tracts, nor will the Census Bureau modify the definition of census tracts to meet the requirements of any nonstatistical program.

The Census Bureau is now publishing final criteria for the delineation of census tracts for Census 2000. These criteria will apply to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Indian and Alaska Native areas, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas. The Census Bureau may modify and, if necessary, reject proposals for census tracts that do not meet the criteria established following this notice.

In addition to these final criteria, this notice includes a description of the changes from the criteria used for the 1990 census and a list of definitions of key terms used in the criteria.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The census tract criteria for Census 2000 become effective November 28, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Joel Morrison, Chief, Geography Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233-7400, telephone (301) 457-1132, or e-mail (joel.morrison@geo.census.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The census tract delineation criteria have evolved over the past nine decades in response to decennial census practices and the preferences of local participants and data users. After each decennial census, the Census Bureau, in consultation with past participants and data users, reviews and revises these criteria. Then, before the next decennial census, the Census Bureau offers state, tribal, and local officials an opportunity to correct, update, and otherwise improve the universe of census tracts.

In July and August 1995, the Census Bureau issued invitations to local groups and agencies to participate in the delineation of statistical geographic areas for Census 2000. These groups and agencies included regional planning agencies, councils of governments, county planning agencies, officials of