

Public Access Policy

The Mississippi Standing Joint Congressional Redistricting Committee
The Mississippi Standing Joint Committee on Reapportionment & Redistricting

Pursuant to MISS. CODE ANN. Sections 5-3-91 et seq. and Sections 5-3-121 et seq., the Joint Committees shall draw plans to redistrict both congressional districts and state legislative districts. The Joint Committees have adopted the following procedures to afford all interested parties reasonable access to public information.

A. Public Access Generally

1. Members of the general public may obtain public documents from the Joint Committees by submitting a written request to: James F. Booth, Staff Counsel, Mississippi Standing Joint Committee on Reapportionment & Redistricting, P.O. Box 1204, Jackson, MS 39215-1204.
2. The Joint Committees may charge any member of the general public who submits a written request the actual cost of retrieving and copying of the requested documents.
3. Public access for the Joint Committees' computer system for legislative redistricting or congressional redistricting may be booked following a directive from the Chair of the Joint Committees. The staff of the Joint Committees shall post an announcement for public access time on the Joint Committees' website. Public access shall be available for one month thereafter. Members of the public wishing to use the Joint Committees' computer system must be accompanied by a legislative staff member or contractor at all times who shall serve as an operator of the system and must call at least 24 hours in advance of the time when access is sought. Appointments will be made in three (3) hour blocks and will be arranged by calling Ben Collins at 601-359-1226. Extensions may be arranged by the staff if the time is available.
4. All public information will be made available on the Joint Committees' website, msjrc.state.ms.us, or by contacting James F. Booth, at 601-359-1226.
5. Any citizen may submit written comments to the Joint Committees by sending them to ben.collins@peer.ms.gov, or by mailing them to Ben Collins at P.O. Bx 1204, Jackson, MS 39215-1204.

B. Documents Produced by the Public

1. Any citizen of Mississippi may present a proposed plan to the Joint Committees at a public meeting or by submission in writing to the Joint Committee at P.O. Box 1204, Jackson MS, 39215-1204. All plans submitted by citizens shall be made part of the public record and made available in the same manner as other public documents of the Joint Committees.
2. Any proposed redistricting plan drafted for introduction may only be offered by a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives or the Mississippi Senate.
3. Any plan developed by anyone outside of the Legislature shall be:
 - o depicted on a map or maps which follow 2020 census geographic boundaries,
 - o accompanied by a statistical sheet listing population breakdowns for each district and the census geography within such district,
 - o viewed as a complete statewide plan for redistricting or, if a partial plan, be capable of fitting into a plan which is to be modified, and,
 - o in compliance with any other guidelines developed by the Joint Committees.

4. Any citizen may submit a proposed redistricting plan electronically to the Joint Committees by making such plan an attachment to an email directed to ben.collins@peer.ms.gov or by providing a CD-ROM to Ben Collins, P.O. Box 1204, Jackson, MS 39215-1204. Any plans submitted electronically must be accompanied by paper materials meeting the requirements set out in Section B above.

C. Documents Produced by Legislators

1. Any redistricting plan or portion thereof or work product developed by or at the request of any member of the Mississippi House of Representatives or the Mississippi Senate, or the staff of the Legislature or its contractors, shall be confidential, and shall not be released except without written permission of the member subject to the following paragraph.
2. Any proposed redistricting plan will become public information upon its presentation to the Joint Committees or upon its introduction as a bill in the legislative process.
3. All members of the Mississippi House of Representative and the Mississippi Senate shall be allowed access to the Joint Committees' computer system upon request to the staff. The Joint Committees shall make every effort to provide technical assistance to all members upon request subject to availability.
4. Any documents, files, electronic emails, or other communications in possession of the staff, its contractors, or members of the Joint Committees generated in the course and scope of carrying out redistricting activities shall be deemed confidential and not subject to public records release unless made public by this policy or by the Chair of the Joint Committees.

D. Committee Meetings and Public Hearings

1. All meetings of the Joint Committees shall be subject to the Open Meetings Act, (MISS. CODE ANN. Sections 25-41-1 et seq.). Copies of minutes of all public meetings shall be available to the public upon their approval by the Joint Committee.
2. All public hearings shall be open.