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these historical entities in order to provide comparable geographic units at the county level of the geographic hierarchy for these states and represents them as nonfunctioning legal entities in data products. Each county or statistically equivalent entity is assigned a three-character numeric Federal Information Processing Series (FIPS) code based on alphabetical sequence that is unique within state, and an eight-digit National Standard (NS) code.

## COUNTY SUBDIVISION

**County Subdivisions** are the primary divisions of counties and equivalent entities. They include census county divisions, census subareas, minor civil divisions, and unorganized territories and can be classified as either legal or statistical. Each county subdivision is assigned a five-character numeric Federal Information Processing Series (FIPS) code based on alphabetical sequence within state, and an eight-digit National Standard (NS) code.

### Legal Entities

*Minor civil divisions (MCDs)* are the primary governmental or administrative divisions of a county in many states (parishes in Louisiana), and of the county equivalents in Puerto Rico and the Island Areas. MCDs in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas represent many different kinds of legal entities with a wide variety of governmental or administrative functions. MCDs include areas variously designated as barrios, barrios-pueblo, boroughs, charter townships, commissioner districts, election districts, election precincts, gores, grants, locations, magisterial districts, parish governing authority districts, plantations, purchases, reservations, supervisor's districts, towns, and townships. The Census Bureau recognizes MCDs in 29 states, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas. The District of Columbia has no primary divisions and is considered equivalent to an MCD for statistical purposes. (It is also considered a state equivalent and a county equivalent.) The 29 states in which MCDs are recognized are:

Arkansas	Michigan	Ohio
Connecticut	Minnesota	Pennsylvania
Illinois	Mississippi	Rhode Island
Indiana	Missouri	South Dakota
Iowa	Nebraska	Tennessee
Kansas	New Hampshire	Vermont
Louisiana	New Jersey	Virginia
Maine	New York	West Virginia
Maryland	North Carolina	Wisconsin
Massachusetts	North Dakota	

In some states, all or some incorporated places are not part of any MCD; these places are termed independent places. Independent places also serve as primary legal subdivisions and have a Federal Information Processing Series (FIPS) county subdivision code and National Standard (NS) code that is the same as the FIPS and NS place code. In nine states—Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Wisconsin—all incorporated places are independent places. In other states, incorporated places are part of, or dependent within, the MCDs in which they are located, or the pattern is mixed—some incorporated places are independent of MCDs and others are included within one or more MCDs.

The MCDs in 12 states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin) also

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serve as general-purpose local governments that can perform the same governmental functions as incorporated places. The Census Bureau presents data for these MCDs in all data products for which place data are provided.

In New York and Maine, American Indian reservations (AIRs) generally exist outside the jurisdiction of any town (MCD) and, thus, also serve as the equivalent of MCDs for purposes of data presentation.

In states with MCDs, the Census Bureau assigns a default FIPS county subdivision code of 00000 and NS code of eight zeros in some coastal, territorial sea, and Great Lakes water where county subdivisions do not legally extend into the Great Lakes or out to the state/territorial limit.

### Statistical Entities

*Census county divisions (CCDs)* are areas delineated by the Census Bureau in cooperation with state, tribal, and local officials for statistical purposes. CCDs have no legal function and are not governmental units. CCD boundaries usually follow visible features and usually coincide with census tract boundaries. The name of each CCD is based on a place, county, or well-known local name that identifies its location. CCDs exist where:

- There are no legally established MCDs.
- The legally established MCDs do not have governmental or administrative purposes.
- The boundaries of the MCDs change frequently.
- The MCDs are not generally known to the public.

CCDs exist within the following 20 states:

Alabama	Hawaii	Oregon
Arizona	Idaho	South Carolina
California	Kentucky	Texas
Colorado	Montana	Utah
Delaware	Nevada	Washington
Florida	New Mexico	Wyoming
Georgia	Oklahoma	

*Census subareas* are statistical subdivisions of boroughs, city and boroughs, municipalities, and census areas, all of which are statistical equivalent entities for counties in Alaska. The State of Alaska and the Census Bureau cooperatively delineate the census subareas to serve as the statistical equivalents of MCDs.

*Unorganized territories (UTs)* are defined by the Census Bureau in nine MCD states where portions of counties or equivalent entities are not included in any legally established MCD or incorporated place. The Census Bureau recognizes such separate pieces of territory as one or more separate county subdivisions for census purposes. It assigns each unorganized territory a descriptive name, followed by the designation “UT” and a county subdivision FIPS and NS code. The following states have unorganized territories:

Arkansas	Maine	North Carolina
Indiana	Minnesota	North Dakota
Iowa	New York	South Dakota

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## GEOGRAPHIC AREA ATTRIBUTES

The Census Bureau collects and maintains information describing selected attributes and characteristics of geographic areas. These attributes are Federal Information Processing Series (FIPS) class code, functional status, legal/statistical area description, internal point, and name of geographic entities.

*FIPS class codes* describe the general characteristics of a geographic area related to its legal or statistical status, governmental status, and in some cases relationship to other geographic entities. Class codes exist for counties; county subdivisions; subminor civil divisions; estates; places; consolidated cities; and all types of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian areas.

**Functional status codes** describes whether a geographic entity is a functioning governmental unit, has an inactive government, is an administrative area without a functioning government, or is a statistical area identified and defined solely for tabulation and presentation of statistical data. Functional status codes are:

- A Active government providing primary general-purpose functions.
- B Active government that is partially consolidated with another government, but with separate officials providing primary general-purpose functions.
- C Active government consolidated with another government with a single set of officials.
- E Active government providing special-purpose functions.
- F Fictitious entity created to fill the Census Bureau's geographic hierarchy.
- G Active government that is subordinate to another unit of government and thus, not considered a functioning government.
- I Inactive governmental unit that has the power to provide primary special-purpose functions.
- N Nonfunctioning legal entity.
- S Statistical entity.

**Internal point**—The Census Bureau calculates an internal point (latitude and longitude coordinates) for each geographic area. For many geographic areas, the internal point is the centroid, the geographic center of the entity. For some irregularly shaped areas (such as those shaped like a crescent), the centroid may be located outside the boundaries of the entity. In such instances, the internal point is identified as a point inside the entity boundaries nearest to the centroid and, if possible, a point that is on land area, not water.

**Legal/statistical area description (LSAD)**—The LSAD describes the particular typology for each geographic entity; that is, whether the entity is a borough, city, county, town, or township, among others. For legal entities, the LSAD reflects the term that appears in legal documentation pertaining to the entity, such as a treaty, charter, legislation, resolution, or ordinance. For statistical entities, the LSAD is the term assigned by the Census Bureau or other agency defining the entity. The LSAD code is a two-character field that corresponds to a description of the legal or statistical type of entity and identifies whether the LSAD term should be capitalized and should precede or follow the name of the geographic entity. Note that the same LSAD code is assigned to entities at different levels of the geographic hierarchy when they share the same LSAD. For example, the Census Bureau assigns the same LSAD

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code (“21”) to boroughs in New York and Connecticut, although they are county subdivisions in the former and incorporated places in the latter.

**Name**—Each geographic entity included in Census Bureau products has a name. For most geographic entities, the name is derived from the official legally recognized name, is assigned by local officials participating in Census Bureau statistical area programs, or is based on component entities and determined according to specified criteria. For legal entities, the name appearing in Census Bureau products may be the more commonly used name rather than the name as it appears in legal documents. For example, “Virginia” instead of “the Commonwealth of Virginia,” “Baltimore” instead of “City of Baltimore.” In some instances, the name for an entity in Census Bureau products reflects the official name as well as a more commonly used name listed parenthetically; i.e., San Buenaventura (Ventura), CA, or Bath (Berkeley Springs), WV. For some types of geographic entities, the name reflected in Census Bureau products may be the geographic entity code assigned by local officials. For example, a census tract’s name is the actual number assigned by local officials, such as 1.01, whereas the census tract code would reflect a full four-digit base code and two-digit suffix (for example, for the preceding tract named 1.01, 000101).

## **GEOGRAPHIC COMPONENT**

A geographic component is a subset of a given type of geographic entity based on a certain geographic or population characteristic.

## **GEOGRAPHIC NAMES INFORMATION SYSTEM**

The Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) is the federal standard for geographic nomenclature. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) developed the GNIS for the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as the official repository of domestic geographic names data; the official vehicle for geographic names used by all departments of the federal government; and the source for applying geographic names to federal electronic and printed products. The GNIS contains information about physical and cultural geographic features of all types in the United States and its territories, current and historical, but not including roads and highways. The database holds the federally recognized name of each feature and defines the feature location by state, county, USGS topographic map, and geographic coordinates. Other attributes include names or spellings other than the official name, feature designations, feature classification, historical and descriptive information, and, for some categories, the geometric boundaries.

## **GEOGRAPHIC NAMES INFORMATION SYSTEM IDENTIFIER**

The Geographic Names Information System Identifier (GNIS ID) is a variable length, permanent, numeric identifier of up to eight digits in length that identifies each entity uniquely within the nation. The GNIS is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) National Standard (NS) code for several entity types. Because each entity’s GNIS ID is permanent, it should not change if the entity changes its name or if creation of a new entity changes the alphabetic sort. (Federal Information Processing Series codes are assigned based on the alphabetic sorting of entity names within a state and occasionally require changing codes to maintain the alphabetic sort.) The GNIS IDs are assigned sequentially and stored in a right-justified, variable-length, numeric field without leading zeros. The GNIS contains more than 2.6 million sequential records, thus no GNIS ID currently exceeds seven digits. The Census Bureau portrays the GNIS ID in its data products as a fixed-width eight-character field with leading zeros.