

# POPULATION AND GEOGRAPHIC CENTERS

## INTRODUCTION

For the 1990 census, the Census Bureau has calculated the mean and median centers of population, as well as the geographic center of area, for the United States. These three centers are measures of the central tendency or average location of spatial distributions in much the same manner as a mean or median provides an average value of a univariate distribution of a population's age, or years of school completed.

The mean center of population, traditionally referred to as the center of population, is provided for the 1990 census and each census since 1790. The median center of population is provided for the 1990 census and each census since 1880. The geographic center of area is provided for the 1990 census. Details of the techniques for deriving each of these centers may be obtained from the Chief,

Geography Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233-7400.

## MEAN CENTER OF POPULATION

The mean center of population is the point at which an imaginary, flat, weightless, and rigid map of the United States would balance if weights of identical value were placed on it so that each weight represented the location of one person on April 1, 1990.

The mean center of population based on the 1990 census results is located at latitude 37 degrees, 52 minutes, and 20 seconds North (37° 52' 20"N) and longitude 91 degrees, 12 minutes, and 55 seconds West (91° 12' 55"W), in Crawford County, Missouri. A commemorative marker is located in Steelville, the Crawford County seat, 9.7 miles northwest of the true center. See table A and the maps on pages IV-9 and IV-10.

Table A. Mean Center of Population of the United States: 1790 to 1990

Census year	North latitude	West longitude	Approximate location
<b>United States:</b>			
1990.....	37° 52' 20"	91° 12' 55"	In Crawford County, MO, 10 miles southeast of Steelville.
1980.....	38° 08' 13"	90° 34' 26"	In Jefferson County, MO, 1/4 mile west of DeSoto.
1970.....	38° 27' 47"	89° 42' 22"	In St. Clair County, IL, 5 miles east-southeast of Mascoutah.
1960.....	38° 35' 58"	89° 12' 35"	In Clinton County, IL, 6-1/2 miles northwest of Centralia.
1950.....	38° 48' 15"	88° 22' 08"	In Clay County, IL, 3 miles northeast of Louisville.
<b>Conterminous United States:<sup>1</sup></b>			
1950.....	38° 50' 21"	88° 09' 33"	In Richland County, IL, 8 miles north-northwest of Olney.
1940.....	38° 56' 54"	87° 22' 35"	In Sullivan County, IN, 2 miles southeast by east of Carlisle.
1930.....	39° 03' 45"	87° 08' 06"	In Greene County, IN, 3 miles northeast of Linton.
1920.....	39° 10' 21"	86° 43' 15"	In Owen County, IN, 8 miles south-southeast of Spencer.
1910.....	39° 10' 12"	86° 32' 20"	In Monroe County, IN, in the city of Bloomington, IN.
1900.....	39° 09' 36"	85° 48' 54"	In Bartholomew County, IN, 6 miles southeast of Columbus, IN.
1890.....	39° 11' 56"	85° 32' 53"	In Decatur County, IN, 20 miles east of Columbus, IN.
1880.....	39° 04' 08"	84° 39' 40"	In Boone County, KY, 8 miles west by south of Cincinnati, OH.
1870.....	39° 12' 00"	83° 35' 42"	In Highland County, OH, 48 miles east by north of Cincinnati.
1860.....	39° 00' 24"	82° 48' 48"	In Pike County, OH, 20 miles south by east of Chillicothe.
1850.....	38° 59' 00"	81° 19' 00"	In Wirt County, WV, 23 miles southeast of Parkersburg. <sup>2</sup>
1840.....	39° 02' 00"	80° 18' 00"	In Upshur County, WV, 16 miles south of Clarksburg, WV. Upshur County was formed from parts of Barbour, Lewis, and Randolph Counties in 1851. <sup>2</sup>
1830.....	38° 57' 54"	79° 16' 54"	In Grant County, WV, 19 miles west-southwest of Moorefield. Grant County was formed from part of Hardy County in 1866.
1820.....	39° 05' 42"	78° 33' 00"	In Hardy County, WV, 16 miles east of Moorefield, WV. <sup>2</sup>
1810.....	39° 11' 30"	77° 37' 12"	In Loudoun County, VA, 40 miles northwest by west of Washington, DC.
1800.....	39° 16' 06"	76° 56' 30"	In Howard County, MD, 18 miles west of Baltimore, MD. Howard County was formed from part of Anne Arundel County, MD, in 1851.
1790.....	39° 16' 30"	76° 11' 12"	In Kent County, MD, 23 miles east of Baltimore, MD.

<sup>1</sup>Conterminous United States excludes Alaska and Hawaii.

<sup>2</sup>West Virginia was set off from Virginia, Dec. 31, 1862, and admitted as a State June 19, 1863.

## MEDIAN CENTER OF POPULATION

The median center is located at the intersection of two median lines, a north-south line (a meridian of longitude) constructed so that half of the Nation's population lives east and half lives west of it, and an east-west line (a parallel of latitude) selected so that half of the Nation's population lives north and half lives south of it.

The 1990 census median center of population is located at latitude 38 degrees, 57 minutes, and 55 seconds North (38° 57' 55" N), and longitude 86 degrees, 31 minutes, and 53 seconds West (86° 31' 53" W), in Marshall township, Lawrence County, Indiana, about 14 miles south of Bloomington. See table B and maps on pages IV-9 and IV-11.

## GEOGRAPHIC CENTER OF AREA

The geographic center of area is the point at which the surface of the United States would balance if it were a plane of uniform weight per unit of area. That point is located in Butte County, South Dakota, as it has been since the 1960 census, after Alaska and Hawaii became States. The geographic center of the conterminous United States (48 States and the District of Columbia) is located in Smith County, Kansas. See map on page IV-9.

**Table B. Median Center of Population of the United States: 1880 to 1990**

Census year	North latitude	West longitude
United States:		
1990 .....	38° 57' 55"	86° 31' 53"
1980 .....	39° 18' 60"	86° 08' 15"
1970 .....	39° 47' 43"	85° 31' 43"
1960 .....	39° 56' 25"	85° 16' 60"
1950 .....	40° 00' 12"	85° 02' 21"
Conterminous United States:		
1950 .....	40° 00' 12"	84° 56' 51"
1940 .....	40° 04' 18"	84° 40' 11"
1930 .....	40° 11' 52"	84° 36' 35"
1920 .....	40° 11' 52"	84° 43' 60"
1910 .....	40° 07' 33"	85° 02' 00"
1900 .....	40° 03' 32"	84° 49' 01"
1890 .....	40° 02' 51"	84° 40' 01"
1880 .....	39° 57' 00"	84° 07' 12"