

Contractor question about voting age population dataset to use for racial bloc voting analysis

"Regarding the VAP vs. CVAP, we began implementing our process using VAP and found that the Census has only released VAP at the Census Tract level for all non-decennial releases. In order to run an analysis on historical elections, we typically use CVAP released at the Block Group level for that year in order to get a close approximation to the voting population at the time of the election. For example, we use 2016 CVAP for 2016 elections, and so on.

In order to use Tract-level VAP data, we would have to disaggregate from the Tract to the Census Block in order to aggregate population back up to the precinct-level. We would not recommend this process, because Tracts are relatively large compared to Blocks, varying in size from 1k to 8k people, so the Block level approximation of Tract data introduces more error. CVAP, on the other hand, is released at the Block Group level, and disaggregating to Blocks is a standard method used in this process thus has less error. For these reasons, may we use CVAP to perform the analysis, instead of VAP?"

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