

2020 Census – Additional Information Related to FTA’s Metropolitan Planning Requirements

The 2020 Census has implications for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) under the Title 49, Section 5303 Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP). The following relates to MPOs that previously served an urban area with a population of at least 50,000 but now serve a principal area under 50,000 in population as determined by the 2020 Census:

- MPOs must “remain in effect” until formally redesignated, i.e., dissolved, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5303(d)(5) (and also articulated at 23 CFR 450.310(g)). Until dissolved, the MPOs must continue in the metropolitan planning program, which means that they “shall develop long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs through a performance-driven, outcome-based approach to planning for metropolitan areas of the State,” as required by 49 U.S.C. 5303(c)(1).
- Transit providers serving impacted areas may continue participating in the metropolitan planning process but are no longer required to have representation on the MPO’s policy board.
- The apportionment of MPP funds to States under 5305(d)(1) will change, as the population of the former UZA will no longer be counted as part of the population of the urbanized areas of the State.
- States have discretion in how they [sub]-allocate MPP funds to the designated MPOs under 5305(d)(2)—States can continue allocating 5303 funds to MPOs that no longer represent urbanized areas, so long as the MPO is not redesignated (dissolved), in whatever proportion the State deems “appropriate” under 5305(d)(2). States have the authority to supplement MPP amounts with funds apportioned to the SPRP under 49 U.S.C. 5305(e)(2).

Title 49, Section 5303 Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP) formula implications for new MPOs serving a newly designated urban area with a population of 50,000 or more as identified by the 2020 Census include:

- 49 U.S.C. 5305(d)(2) requires all States to evaluate and revise the formulas they use for allocating Metropolitan Planning Program funds among the MPOs Statewide. A new (or existing) urbanized area (UZA) cannot receive planning funds until its State’s intra-State formula (using 2020 Census population data and reflecting any new MPOs) has been approved by the FTA Regional Office and an MPO has been designated. FTA requests that States and the applicable MPOs either reaffirm the existing formula or agree on a new intra-State formula before the start of the Federal fiscal year when apportionments are distributed. Current and prior-year FTA apportionments of planning funds can be found at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/apportionments>. States should reference this information when reaffirming or revising their intra-State formulas. For additional information, see the Review of State DOT Approaches to Distribute Federal Metropolitan Planning Funds to MPOs at <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/12218>.