



Census data for congressional seats still months away

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The numbers used for divvying up U.S. congressional seats among the states won't be ready until the end of April, a Census Bureau official said Wednesday.

The new goal for finishing data processing for the apportionment numbers is now April 30, said Kathleen Styles, a top bureau official.

The deadline for turning in the apportionment numbers has been a moving target since the pandemic upended the Census Bureau's once-a-decade head count of every U.S. resident. The numbers were supposed to be turned in at the end of last year, but the Census Bureau requested until the end of April after the virus outbreak caused the bureau to suspend operations.

The deadline switched back to Dec. 31 after President Donald Trump issued a directive to exclude people in the U.S. illegally from the numbers used for divvying up congressional seats.

President Joe Biden rescinded that order on his first day taking office last week. Government attorneys most recently had said that the numbers wouldn't be ready until early March because the Census Bureau needed to fix data irregularities.

"This April 30 schedule reflects the Census Bureau going back in and producing a realistic schedule," Styles said.

The Census Bureau hasn't decided when it will be finished processing redistricting data used for drawing state and local legislative districts, but it won't happen before the end of July, Styles said.

That could be problematic for states that have deadlines this year for redrawing their districts, particularly for New Jersey and Virginia since they have elections this year.

By — Mike Schneider, Associated Press