

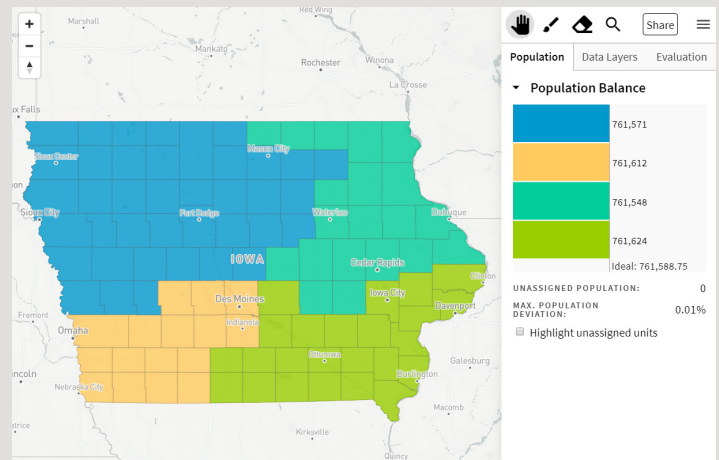
Public Mapping with **Districtr**



A new open-access mapping tool for
redistricting and community identification

[Districtr.org](https://districtr.org) is a new user-friendly web tool designed to let members of the public try their hand at drawing district lines. It features a highly intuitive mapping interface built on top of vetted electoral and demographic data.

The tool was developed by the MGGG Redistricting Lab, a team of researchers at Tisch College of Tufts University, to help state legislatures, nonpartisan commissions, and community organizations collect public input throughout the redistricting process.



Drawing Congressional Districts in Iowa

Public input is on the rise

As states aim to increase transparency and facilitate public participation, Districtr provides a platform to make a complex and divisive mapping task accessible to constituents. It also provides a mechanism for staff of legislatures and commissions to cut out the mapping consultant middleman and experiment with district structure firsthand.

Districtr invites you to draw your own geographical districts on a computer or tablet, working right in a browser so there's no app to download. To get started, you simply select a place and a districting task, and you're ready to start coloring districts on the map with a paint tool. While developing your map, you have the option to view population, demographic, and/or historical election data.

For a deeper dive, you can explore the evaluation tab to see how your map balances population across race, voting age, and past voting patterns. When you're satisfied with your map, you can print a hard copy or post your map online with a unique URL. You also have the option to save the map in a data format that can be read by GIS or industry-standard mapping software like Maptitude. Maps that are saved or submitted can then be aggregated as public input for consideration in official mapmaking processes.

The MGGG Redistricting Lab invites stakeholders in the states to work with our team to develop customized features and modules that feature state-specific mapping criteria.

Communities matter

Districtr can also help identify and collect communities of interest—geographically defined zones in which residents share a social, cultural, or economic identity that creates common representational concerns. In total, twenty-four states call on redistricting authorities to avoid splitting these communities to the extent practicable. However, complying with this rule in practice is uniquely challenging because communities of interest are notoriously hard to locate.

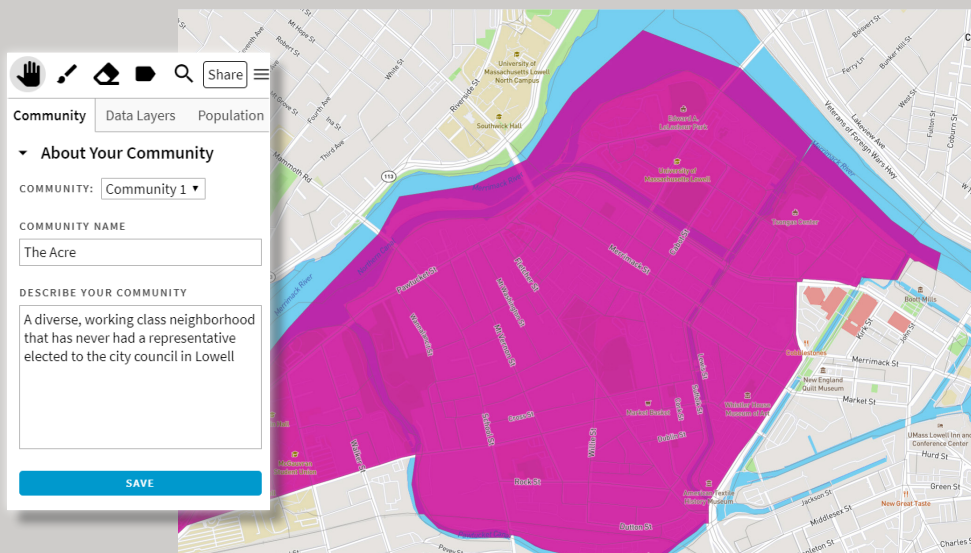
The MGGG Redistricting Lab has developed Districtr features to confront this challenge. With Districtr, you can orient yourself on the map by entering an address, such as your home, public library, or local park. Once you are zoomed in, you can paint a community, name it, and write a short narrative. Similarly, you can identify local landmarks together with a description of their community relevance.

Why is Districtr different?

First and foremost, it's engineered to be **accessible**. You can be up and drawing in seconds. Organizers can go door-to-door with Districtr loaded on tablets, where grandparents and teens can draw districts and communities directly. Maps can go viral on Twitter. We're piloting a Spanish language mode, with more language options to come.

Second, we built a **simple** design that encourages users to pay attention to a few priorities at a time and see how they trade off. Modules present an economy of features rather than an overwhelming array of scores and legal criteria. Districtr is designed for engagement, while other alternatives are optimized for competitions or legal completeness. This is a tool that lets users tell us what's important rather than having the software tell them.

Finally, Districtr is **customizable**. We build around context-specific modules, rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach to what features are important. For your state or city, do you want to build districts out of precincts or census blocks? Should users choose the number of districts, or should that be fixed? Should districts be single member and multi-member? Should the user have access to recent voting patterns, or would you prefer a line-drawing experience free of partisan data?



Drawing Communities of Interest in Lowell, MA



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