

## COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST (COI)

---

### **Definition of Communities of Interest:**

California law states that a community of interest is “*a contiguous population which shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation.*”

In other words, a COI is a group of people in the same area that shares a common bond or interest. The definition is broad, leaving communities a lot of discretion in determining which issues are important to them and bring them together.

California law requires that when possible, district lines should maintain communities of interest (“COI”). The primary goal of redistricting is to adjust the boundaries to ensure equal population in each of the five districts.

### **How do I tell the CCCD - Boundary Review Committee about my COI?**

#### **1. Explain the nature of the bond or common interest that informs the community:**

Your oral or written testimony will describe the social and economic interests that the community shares. Establish as clearly as possible what the common interests are and why or how they are important to the community. For example:

\* Testimony about a common interest in a community center will include the name and location of the center and a description of the community’s involvement in it, or why it is important, e.g., the community accesses a variety of educational and recreational opportunities for children, adults and senior citizens at the community center.

\* Testimony about a shared culture or heritage should identify the heritage and indicate why it is a common bond, e.g., common history, language, culture, etc.

#### **2. Explain why the COI should be kept together in a district:**

In addition, testimony would explain why the COI should be kept together in a district to allow for its fair representation. This includes why the COI’s interests would be best represented together and why splitting the COI would be problematic. For example:

\* Testimony about an economic interest, such as advocacy to improve economic opportunities, might note that redevelopment and job creation activities are most effective when voters can elect responsive representatives or that splitting the COI would complicate efforts to obtain government support by requiring coordination with multiple representatives.

#### **3. Explain the geographical location of the community of interest:**

Finally, testimony will establish the geographic location of the COI so line drawers know where it is. This includes at least a description of the COI’s exterior boundaries, such as streets, bodies of water, railroad tracks, or shopping areas that delineate the outside border of the community, as well as legal or geographic boundaries, such as city or county lines that indicate a COI’s geography.

A map showing the location of the COI, along with oral or written testimony will allow Boundary Review Committee Members to locate the COI. A map showing the COI on a larger city or county map can be particularly helpful in locating the COI.

A form has been created for you to describe your COI, or to simply contact the Boundary Review Committee member representing your current District. An interactive mapping tool is also available [online](#) so that you may submit your COI.