# **FIPS County Code Changes**

David Dorn

May 2007, last updated September 2021

The territory of the United States is subdivided into about 3,000 counties (called boroughs in Alaska and parishes in Louisiana). The geographic subdivision of Alaska was frequently adjusted during recent decades. The set of counties in the 48 mainland states instead has remained nearly unchanged.

To map county data of the 48 mainland states to 1990 Commuting Zones, one needs to correct for the rare cases when counties split, merge, or change their FIPS code due to a name change. I list below the county code changes since 1980, and propose strategies to map the affected counties to 1990 CZs.

## County code changes in the 1980s

- New Mexico, 1981: Cibola county (FIPS 35006) is created out of parts of Valencia county (FIPS 35061).
  - Action: no adjustment of the source data required since Cibola and Valencia both map to the same CZ 34901.
- Arizona, 1983: La Paz county (FIPS 4012) is created out of parts of Yuma county (FIPS 4027).
  - Action: since the La Paz and Yuma counties map into different Commuting Zones, attribute the 1980 population of pre-split Yuma county partly to CZ 38100 (Yuma) and partly to CZ 38300 (La Paz), using a split proportional to population size in 1990 (Yuma 106,895 vs. La Paz 13,844).

South Dakota, 1983: Washabaugh county (FIPS 46131) merges into
Jackson county (FIPS 46071). [The Census Bureau states that this
change was effective as of 1979, but there are datasets that still use this
county code in the early 1980s].

Action: assign Washabaugh county to CZ 27603 which comprises Jackson county.

### County code changes in the 1990s

Virginia, 1995: The independent city of South Boston (FIPS 51780)
merges into Halifax county (FIPS 51083).

Action: no adjustment of the source data required since South Boston and Halifax both map to the same CZ 2200.

- Montana, 1997: Yellowstone National Park territory (FIPS 30113) is merged into Gallatin (FIPS 30031) and Park (FIPS 30067) counties.
   Action: no adjustment of the source data required since all three territories map to the same CZ 34402.
- Florida, 1997: Dade county (FIPS 12025) is renamed as Miami-Dade county (FIPS 12086).

Action: replace FIPS code 12086 with the old code 12025.

#### County code changes in the 2000s

 Virginia, 2001: The independent city of Clifton Forge (FIPS 51560) merges into Alleghany county (FIPS 51005).

Action: no adjustment of the source data required since Clifton Forge and Alleghany both map to the same CZ 17300.

Colorado, 2001: Broomfield county (FIPS 8014) is created out of parts of Adams, Boulder, Jefferson, and Weld counties. The Census Bureau estimates that the resulting population loss was 21,512 for Boulder, 15,870 for Adams, 1,726 for Jefferson, and 69 for Weld county.
 Action: assign FIPS code 8014 to CZ 28900 which comprises the three counties Adams, Boulder and Jefferson.

## County code changes in the 2010s:

- Virginia, 2013: The independent city of Bedford (FIPS 51515) merges into Bedford County (FIPS 51019).
  - Action: no adjustment needed since Bedford City and Bedford County map into the same CZ 2300.
- South Dakota, 2015: Shannon County (FIPS 46113) is renamed to Oglala Lakota County (FIPS 46102).

Action: replace FIPS code 46102 with the old code 46113.

#### Other notes

- Some data sources aggregate information for certain sets of counties, and
  use a three-digit county code starting with 9 for these combined statistical
  areas. In particular, the FIPS codes 519xx refer to combinations of
  independent cities and surrounding counties in the state of Virginia.
- Some data sources report the FIPS code for the single county of the District of Columbia as 11999 instead of 11001.
- Some data sources continue to use legacy FIPS codes even a few years after the code changes indicated in this document have gone into effect.