GLOSSARY

- **Census block**
  The smallest unit of census geography for which population data are counted and reported. Census blocks are delineated by the Census Bureau and are generally bounded by physical features such as roads, creeks, or shorelines, but also may be bounded by nonvisible features such as city, county, school district, or voting precinct boundaries.

- **Community of interest**
  A term sometimes used to describe a grouping of people in a geographical area, such as a specific region or neighborhood, who have common political, social, or economic interests.

- **Compactness**
  Three basic types of compactness measures are used to analyze the area, perimeter, and population of a district. More than 36 different variations on these compactness measures exist. No single measure of compactness is recognized as the "best" measure. The measures presented in RedAppl and on reports have a range from zero to one, with one indicating perfect compactness for the particular scale. The lower the score, the less compact the district.

- **Types of compactness measures:**
  - **Area dispersion:** This measure examines the relative degree to which a district's area is compact when compared with the area of a similar compact figure. It is the ratio of the area of the district to the area of the smallest convex polygon that can enclose the district (imagine a rubber band stretched around the district). A district in the shape of a square would receive a perfect score of one using this measure. This measure penalizes a district that has long "fingers" or extensions, making it less compact because it requires a larger convex polygon to enclose the entire district, yet much of that polygon is empty.
  - **Perimeter:** This measure compares the relative length of the perimeter of a district to its area. It is the ratio of the area of the district to the area of a circle with the same perimeter as the district. A perimeter-to-area measure penalizes a district's compactness score whenever the boundaries are uneven or irregular: the more the boundary zigzags (for example, a river), the less compact the district using this measure.
  - **Population:** This is a population-based compactness measure computed as the ratio of the population of the district to the population of all census blocks contained in the smallest convex polygon enclosing the district. The greater the population within the convex polygon that is not within the district, the less compact the district under this measure.

- **Contiguity**
  Adjacency. For redistricting purposes, a district is considered to be contiguous if all parts of the district touch one another at more than a point, so that the entire district is within a continuous boundary. Legal standards governing redistricting for various governmental bodies often require all of the territory in each district to be contiguous.

- **County election precincts**
  Also called voting precincts. Geographic units established by county commissioners courts for the purpose of election administration. The voters in an election precinct usually vote at a single polling place, so the votes cast in the precinct may be counted separately from other precincts.

- **Ideal district population**
  A measure calculated by dividing the total population of the state or other jurisdiction being redistricted by the number of districts in the legislative body or board being redistricted. For example, in 2010, the City of Austin's census population was 790,390. Dividing this number by 10 would yield an ideal city council district population of 79,039.

- **RedAppl**
  The Texas Legislature's geographic information system (GIS) application developed by the Texas Legislative Council used for redistricting.

- **Voting tabulation district (VTD)**
  The census geographic equivalent of a county election precinct, created for the purpose of relating election data to census data. VTDs can differ from actual election precincts because election

precincts do not always follow census geography. During the approximation process that creates VTDs, county election precinct boundaries that do not follow census geography are assigned to the nearest census block boundary.

- **Census race/ethnicity as reported on Texas Legislative Council reports:**

  - **Anglo**
    Those persons who identified their race on the census form as White only and not Hispanic.

  - **Black**
    Those persons who identified their race on the census form as Black, African American, or Negro only or Black and any other race. Black persons can be either Hispanic or non-Hispanic.

  - **Black + Hispanic**
    A combined population category that includes all persons who identified their race as Black and all persons who identified themselves as Hispanic. The total is adjusted so that those who indicated they were both Black and Hispanic are not counted twice.

  - **Hispanic**
    Those persons who identified themselves on the census form as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. Hispanic persons can be of any race.

  - **Other**
    Those persons who did not identify themselves on the census form as White only, Black, or Hispanic.