



Contiguous Counties Documentation



Introduction:

We had a request from a client to create a Contiguous Counties file, including counties that were divided by a waterway. It was challenging to find accurate county boundary info which extended over waterway, such as in this example:



San Francisco is connected by land to San Mateo County on its southern border, but by water it's also connected to Marin County to the north (across the Golden Gate Bridge), Alameda County to the west, and even Contra Costa County to the northeast.

Accuracy Matters!

After a lot of work, we were able to create this file and now work to keep it current (counties don't change too often, but if they do, we'll update the data as needed).

We include the following geographies in this product: counties, parishes (found in Louisiana), plus census areas and boroughs (found in Alaska).

File Names:

The file names will be contig-county-full.csv for the **full** version and contig-county-demo.csv for the **demo** version. These files are CSV files which are comma-delimited.

Records (rows): The first record in the file is a header record with field descriptor labels. The remaining records are data records. Note that for each county, there will be one or more records (one for each bordering county).

Data fields (columns): The data fields are in this order:

- State FIPS code (this is a standard number for each state, up to 2-digits. For example, Alabama is 1, Alaska is 2, etc.)
- County FIPS code (this is a standard number for each county within the state and is up to 3-digits.
- State abbreviation. This is the USPS standard 2-character abbreviation.
- The county name.
- For each bordering county it will also have the above 4 fields appended, one per record (row).

Example: Barbour County in Alabama has the following 8 contiguous counties, including 3 counties in Georgia:

Source County				Bordering Counties			
State	FIPS	County	County	State	FIPS	County	County
1	5	AL	Barbour	1	11	AL	Bullock
1	5	AL	Barbour	1	45	AL	Dale
1	5	AL	Barbour	1	67	AL	Henry
1	5	AL	Barbour	1	109	AL	Pike
1	5	AL	Barbour	1	113	AL	Russell
1	5	AL	Barbour	13	61	GA	Clay
1	5	AL	Barbour	13	239	GA	Quitman
1	5	AL	Barbour	13	259	GA	Stewart

... when only **great** data will do!