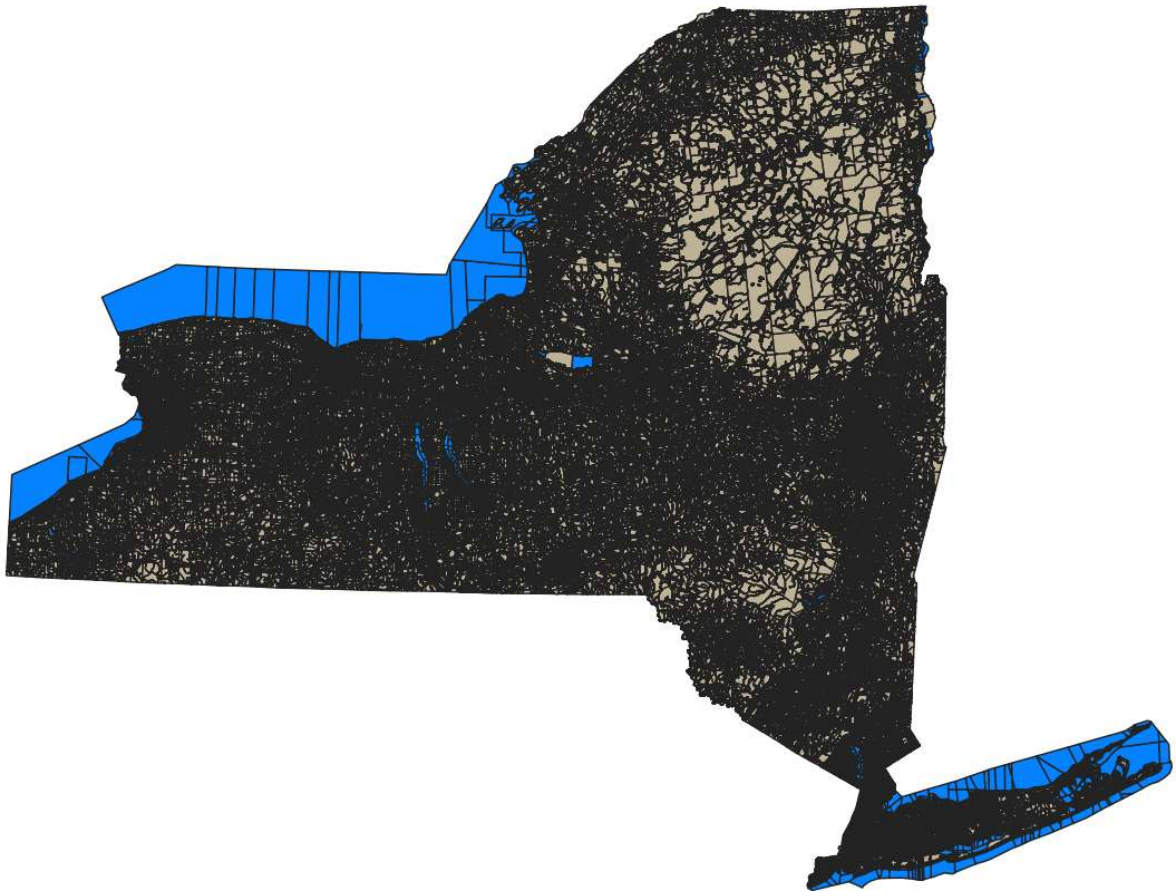
D: Geographic entities used by the Census

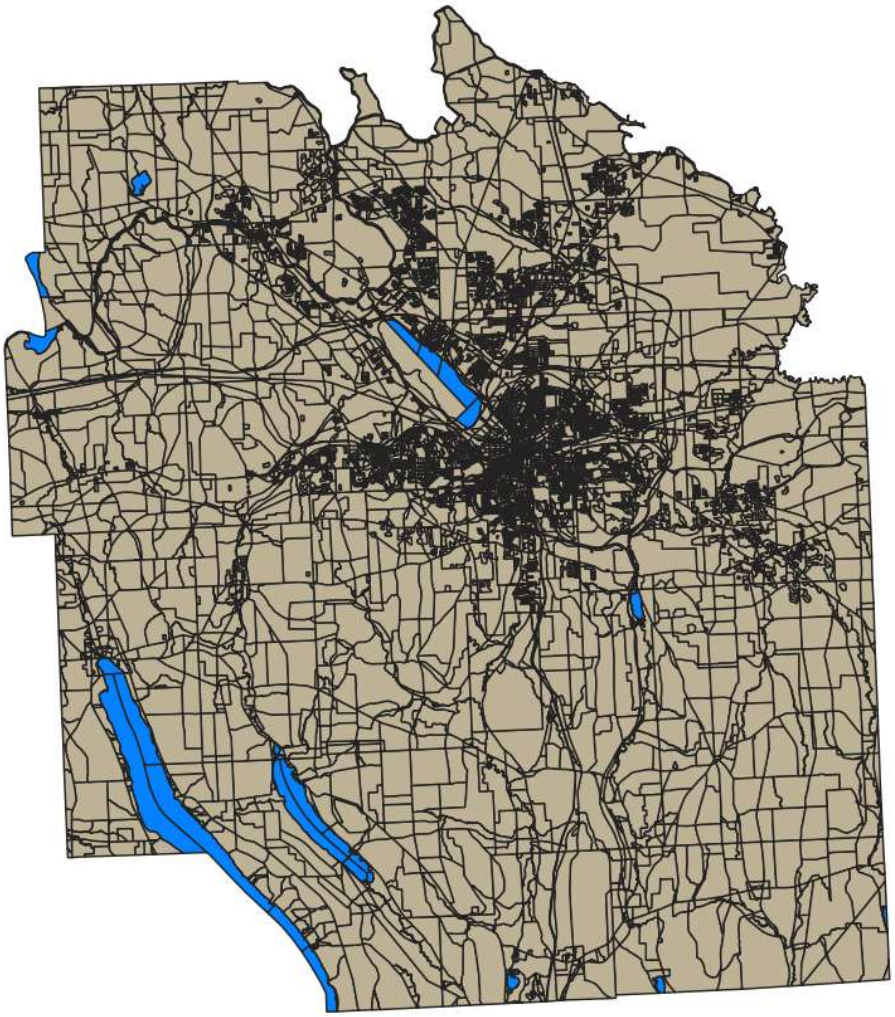
Census blocks

- **Smallest** geographic unit
- Cover **all** US territory, including water
- Defined by physical and administrative boundaries, not population

New York State 36
288,819 blocks



Zooming in:
Onondaga County 36067
5 digit FIPS code: state=36, county=067
8,287 blocks

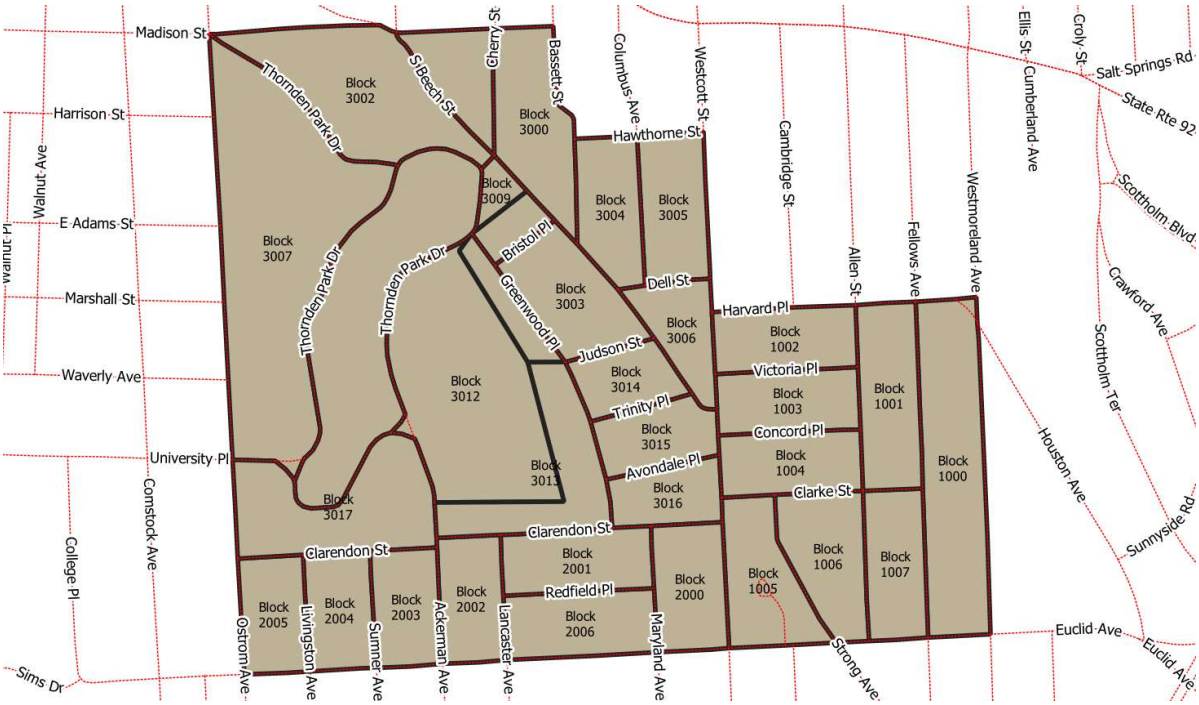


Zooming in:

Census tract 36067004500

11 digit FIPS code: state=36, county=067, tract=004500

33 blocks



Zooming in:

Block group 360670045002

12 digit FIPS code: tract=36067004500, block group=2

7 blocks

FIPS codes all the way to the block:

Geoid for block 2000 at Euclid and Westcott:

15 digit FIPS code: tract=360670045002000

State	County	Tract	Block
36	067	004500	2000

Geoid for its block group:

36 067 004500 2 (first digit of block)

State	County	Tract	Block group

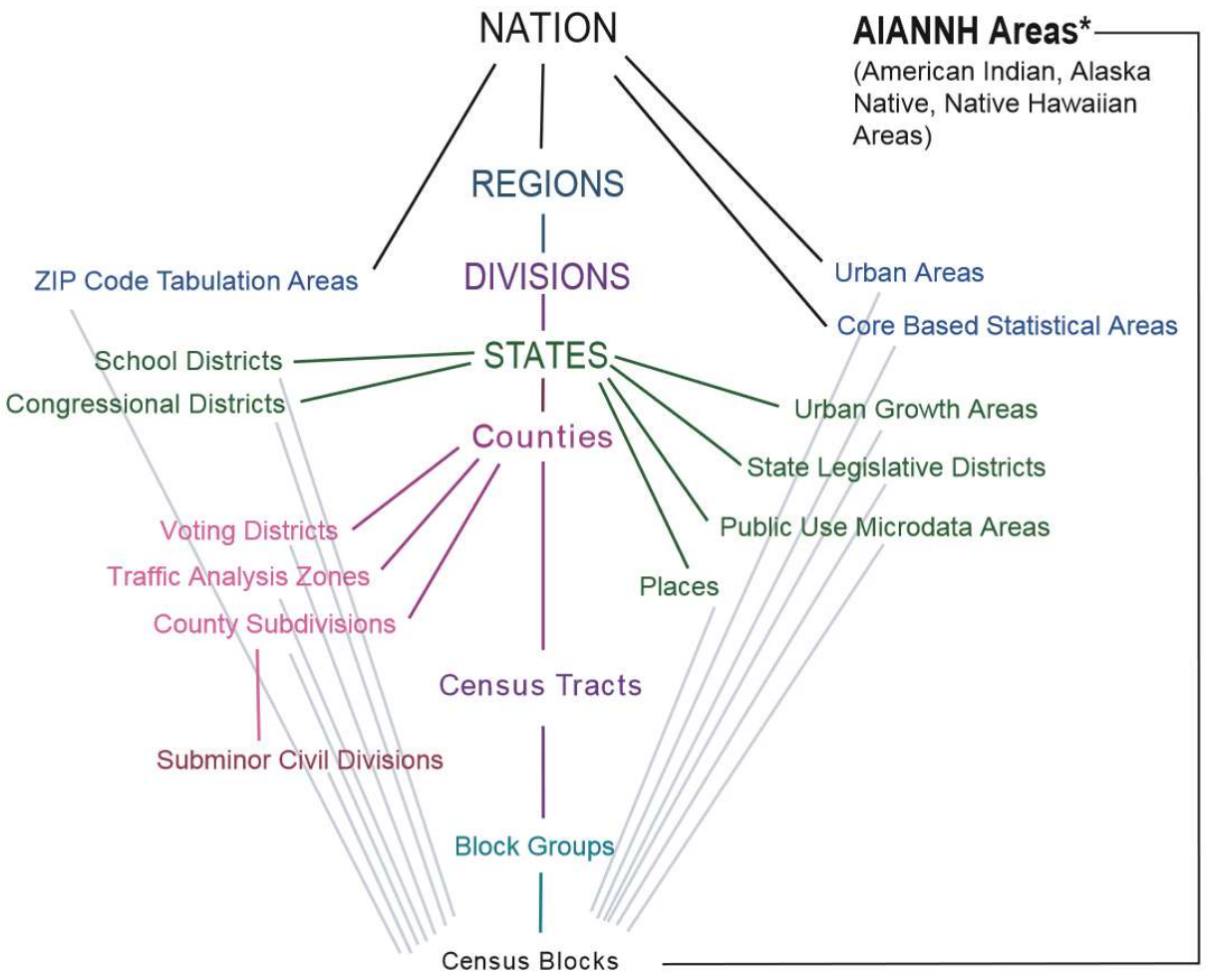
36	067	004500	2

Typical populations of fine-scale entities:

Entity	Population range
Tracts:	1,200 to 8,000
Block groups:	600 to 3,000
Blocks:	Varies and may be 0

Relating blocks to larger areas:

Standard Hierarchy of Census Geographic Entities



* Refer to the "Hierarchy of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Areas" on page 2.

US Census Bureau
Last Updated October 27, 2010
http://www.census.gov/geo/www

Key source of Census data:

American Community Survey (ACS)

- Finest resolution is **block groups**
- Some variables only available for **tracts** or larger areas