



Engaged Citizens: SS.7.CG.2.10 Public Policy Problem Solving VIDEO SCRIPT



1. Did you know that when problems in the community come up, citizens are able to get help in solving them? It is not only the responsibility of citizens to solve problems, we also have the ability to turn to the government for help when those problems are related to a public policy issue. Public policy refers to government actions in the form of laws, rules, or regulations.

2. In this video we will explore how our government can help us solve problems. After watching this video, you will be able to:

- identify the appropriate level of government to resolve specific problems.
- identify appropriate government agencies to address local or state problems.
- analyze public policy alternatives to resolve local and state problems.

Let's get started!

3. Government at all levels (local, state, federal) has a responsibility to protect and provide for its citizens. Public policies are rules or laws that are created usually as a response to an issue that some citizens might see as a problem. But it's important that citizens go to the right level of government to get the help they need.

How do we determine what each level of government is responsible for?

4. This all depends on who the problem impacts! This will determine which level of government and **governmental agency** (organization in government) may be responsible for addressing the problem.

5. Local government is responsible for helping to solve problems within a municipality (city) or county. Local governments in Florida provide many services directly to the people in their community and so they are responsible for many of the public policy issues a citizen may face on a daily basis. Some of the services local government provides include: **building public schools**, creating **local law enforcement** (such as city police officers and county sheriff's deputies), providing **utilities** such as water, garbage services and electricity, maintaining **parks**, and maintaining **local roads**.

6. State government is responsible for helping to solve problems that impact all citizens living in the state. The state government provides services related to public safety, law enforcement, health services and education. Some of the responsibilities of the Florida state government include: making **laws for Florida residents**, creating a **department of education** that oversees all public education in Florida, creating a **state law enforcement agency** such as Florida State Troopers, and maintaining **state roads**.

7. Federal government is responsible for helping to solve problems that impact all citizens in the country. The U.S. government provides services related to national safety, national defense and the general welfare of the country. Some of the responsibilities of the U.S. government include:

providing a **military**, helping the poor and elderly get **health care**, providing **housing** for the poor and elderly, and providing economic support after natural disasters.

8. **Let's check in. Try to answer the following in your own words.**

9. Can you explain what each level of government is responsible for?

10. ANSWER TO QUESTION

11. If a problem is related to public policy, lawmakers often look at several possible solutions (alternatives) before choosing the one that will solve a local or state problem. Some lawmakers might even contact other local or state governments that have similar public policies to decide which solution is best.

12. Here is an example of how this might look:

13. Tobacco use is on the rise in a school district's middle schools. The school board wants to create a policy that will get rid of tobacco use in schools.

14. The superintendent, school board, principals, teachers, parents, and students are all concerned citizens that have an interest in solving this problem. The superintendent, acting as the "government" for the schools in the county, decides to hold a meeting and invite interested citizens to suggest solutions.

15. Several solutions are presented

1. Create a "**zero-tolerance**" **policy** in the student code of conduct
2. **Educate the students** about the effects of using tobacco
3. **Hire security guards** to patrol the campus and bathrooms, where smokers are found
4. **Test the students** for drugs, alcohol, and tobacco usage

16. Ultimately the local government will work to create a public policy that best addresses the problem while having as much support from citizens as possible.

17. **Let's check in. Try to answer the following in your own words.**

18. Why do lawmakers look at several possible solutions before choosing the one that will solve a problem?

19. ANSWER TO QUESTION

Let's take a look at what public agencies can do for citizens in helping to solve public problems.

20. In the United States, the federal, state, and local governments agree that creating public policy helps them fulfill their responsibilities, such as protecting the rights of individuals and promoting the well-being of all people, as promised by the Preamble to our US Constitution.
21. Some public policies become laws passed in legislatures. Other policies can be found in rules and regulations created by the executive branches of government, which are responsible for carrying out and enforcing laws. In the United States, the federal, state, and local governments agree that creating public policy helps them fulfill their responsibilities, such as protecting the rights of individuals and promoting the well-being of all people.
22. Sometimes lawmakers when looking at several possible solutions will have public agencies, which are organizations that are responsible for a specific area in society, help to create the solution for the problem.
23. There are many different public agencies that represent citizen's interests. Let's look at a few examples of the relationship between a problem and a government agency.
24. Problem Example 1 - Two boats run into each other on the St. Johns River. To help prevent more boats from crashing into each other, the sister of one of the boat drivers writes to the state legislature asking that boaters be required to take a class on boat safety. If the state legislature passes a law requiring this, the state agency that would be responsible for implementing the law would be the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. This agency is responsible for managing fish, wildlife, boating and hunting issues for the entire state.
25. Let's look at another. A group of families in Levy County, Florida live down a dirt road. It gets really nasty on that road when it rains. They want to get the road paved to make it easier for school buses and emergency vehicles to travel. What agency and level of government would they work with? The level would be the Levy County Commission, which is the local government, and the agency would be the Levy County Roads Department that they would work with to help solve the road problem in their community.
26. Ultimately, when it comes to public policy problem solving, citizens have a responsibility to know the level of government to address a problem. And the government has a responsibility to help We the People determine how to fix a problem and what agency would do it!