



Each **citizen** in the United States has certain **obligations** and **responsibilities**. Both the government and citizens are responsible for 1) protecting the rights of individuals and 2) promoting the **common good**.

When citizens meet their obligations to the government, they are making the United States a safer and better place to live. By following the law and not committing crimes, communities are less dangerous places. By paying taxes, citizens ensure that the government can afford to provide services that benefit the general public. By defending the nation if asked to do so, citizens are ensuring that those living in the United States are protected from enemies who may hurt us. By serving on juries, citizens are making sure that the right to a trial by jury is protected.

All of these examples demonstrate how citizens, by living up to their obligations, and can protect and promote the common good**.** See the chart below for more examples:

| **Citizen Obligations** | **How the Obligation Relates to the Common Good** |
| --- | --- |
| Obeying the laws | Obeying laws keeps order so that people are safe. |
| Paying taxes | Taxes pay for large programs that benefit everyone (roads, schools, and libraries, among others). |
| Jury duty | By participating in jury duty, citizens are protecting the constitutional right of trial by jury. |
| Defending the nation | Defending the nation benefits the entire country and protects the nation from those who might wish to harm us. |

| **Citizen Responsibilities** | **How the Responsibility Relates to the Common Good** |
| --- | --- |
| Voting | Voting relates to the common good because it is one way forcitizens to be heard by the leaders who represent them. |
| Attending civic meetings | By attending civic meetings, a citizen can be heard by publicofficials (for example, attending a city council meeting or neighborhood watch group). |
| Petitioning the government | Petitioning the government allows citizens to share their opinions with the government and ask for help solving problems. |
| Community service | Community service helps the common good. It benefits everyone when a citizen sees a need in his or her communityand takes that extra step to find the solution. |

