



EXECUTIVE BRANCH: EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

1. The role of the executive branch is to ensure that rules and laws are followed for the safety and security of citizens. The responsibility of enforcing laws is necessary at the local, state and national levels.
2. After watching this video, you will be able to:
 - ◆ Compare and contrast executive authority at the local, state and national levels.
 - ◆ Explain the function of administrative agencies (e.g., advise, make regulations, enforce law and regulations).
3. The head of the executive branch at the national level is the president. The president selects a vice president to serve with them, and the president also appoints the leaders of the executive departments (the Cabinet), who run administrative agencies.
4. Presidents can only serve two four-year terms, while the vice presidents have no limit to how many terms that they may serve in that role, though none has ever served more than two terms as vice president.
5. The president has the authority to sign or veto (reject) a bill passed by Congress that may become a law. The president also has the authority to implement, or enforce, laws passed by Congress and put laws passed by Congress into place through administrative agencies.
6. The national government has many responsibilities to the citizens of the United States, and it is impossible for the executive branch and the other branches of government to handle every issue. To fix this problem, administrative agencies are created.
7. These agencies are usually organized under a cabinet-level department in the executive branch. There are 15 cabinet-level departments headed by a “secretary” who is appointed by the President.
8. Under them, there are 438 different administrative agencies! For example, the Department of Justice, responsible for enforcing federal laws. There are a lot of federal laws, so we have many different law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.
9. Administrative agencies exist at all levels of government, and these agencies have specific functions and powers.
10. In fact, when Congress, a state legislature, or local government gives powers to an agency, it broadly defines the task and responsibility they have been given that “enables” them to perform its functions.

11. Now let's take a look at the state level. The head of the executive branch at the state level is the governor. The governor selects a lieutenant governor to serve with them.
12. In Florida, governors and lieutenant governors may serve for two consecutive 4-year terms. They can sit out one election cycle if they want to run again.
13. The governor's responsibility is to enforce state laws. The governor has certain powers such as the power to use a line-item veto, or reject a certain part of a bill that the state legislature has passed. The governor also appoints people to run state administrative agencies, such as for example the commissioner of education who runs the Florida Department of Education.
14. In Florida, the state executive branch also includes three cabinet level departments. These are also elected as part of the governor's cabinet and the executive branch. They are the state's Chief Financial Officer, the Attorney General, and the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
15. The administrative agencies at the state level function very similarly to how they work at the national level. For example, the state department of education provides guidance and advice and enforces state education regulations.
16. Local governments are structured differently when it comes to how they are run. Local governments include municipalities such as cities, towns, villages, counties, and school districts. The power of the executive branch in local communities may differ based on the community's charter. A charter is permission from the state that allows a local community to create a government.
17. There are three ways a local government can be organized: mayor-council, council-manager, and commission.
18. The mayor-council structure usually works best in very large or very small cities. In this structure, an elected mayor and a city council govern the people.
19. The council-manager structure usually works best in mid-sized cities. In this structure, a city manager governs with an elected council.
20. The commission structure is the least common in the United States. In this structure, there is not a mayor, but instead a board of elected commissioners who govern. Each commissioner represents a specific area of a municipality, county, or school district and may interact with local departments such as law enforcement and fire.
21. No matter the type, local governments also have administrative agencies, such as, for example, animal services. Generally speaking, the local executive branch is responsible for overseeing these agencies, though some may be governed by boards or commissions, such as a school board responsible for local schools.
22. Let's check in- Try to answer the following question.

23. Who is the executive authority at the national, state, and local level of government?

→ ANSWER TO QUESTION

24. What is the role of an administrative agency?

→ ANSWER TO QUESTION

25. Let's recap what we've learned so far. Each level of government has their own elected executive with responsibilities. The president is the executive at the national level tasked with enforcing laws for the country. The governor is the executive at the state level tasked with enforcing laws for the state they represent. Generally, the mayor is the executive at the local level tasked with enforcing laws for cities, towns, or villages. Administrative agencies function under the executive branch to support their responsibilities.

26. That's all the time we have for now. Keep building your civics knowledge by exploring some of our other topic areas on Civics360!