

Who's In Charge?

While government plays a large role in all of our lives, it is important to recognize that different levels of government exist and each level has different responsibilities and powers. In order to bring about change on issues that matter to us, we need to know who has power on those issues. The chart below shows some examples of the responsibilities of each level of government. Keep this in mind the next time you want to write to the President about a pothole outside your house.

	Federal	State	Local
Elected Offices	President, Vice President, US Representatives, US Senators	Governor, state officials, State Representatives, State Senators	Mayor (or city manager), city council, city clerks, county officials
Safety and Security	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains and trains the military Secures national borders Prosecutes criminal activity that breaks federal law 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orders state national guard Trains state police force Prosecutes criminal activity that breaks state law 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains and trains local police force Addresses crime within the neighborhoods
Education	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets national education policy Provides some sources of funding to schools 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets state curriculum and state educational policy Distributes money for school districts 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets budget for schools Sets policies for schools within the district Hires teachers and administrators
Environment	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages environmental disasters Regulates environmental standards through the EPA Runs national parks 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages environmental disasters Regulates environmental standards on a state level Runs state parks 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides clean drinking water Runs local parks and recreation sites
Transportation	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains interstate highways Regulates economic activity between 2 or more states 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains state highways Regulates economic activity within the state 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains local streets including filling potholes and picking up trash.
Health	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides Medicare-insurance for the elderly and disabled Approves medication via the FDA 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licenses doctors Administers Medicaid Regulates insurance companies 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Runs county and city hospitals Operates local health clinics