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# Our Government

A **government** is a group of citizens who lead a community. Governments lead the nation, the state, or the city. Our government makes sure that citizens are safe. They also create laws to solve problems in a community. Government leaders work to serve the needs of the people. In the United States, we have a federal government that leads our country. We have state governments that lead our individual states. We also have local governments that lead our counties, cities, and towns.



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## Local Government

Local governments serve the people of a town or city. Local communities elect a mayor over their city or town. The mayor oversees the city's departments. The city's departments are: the police station, the fire station, the schools, and community buses and trains.



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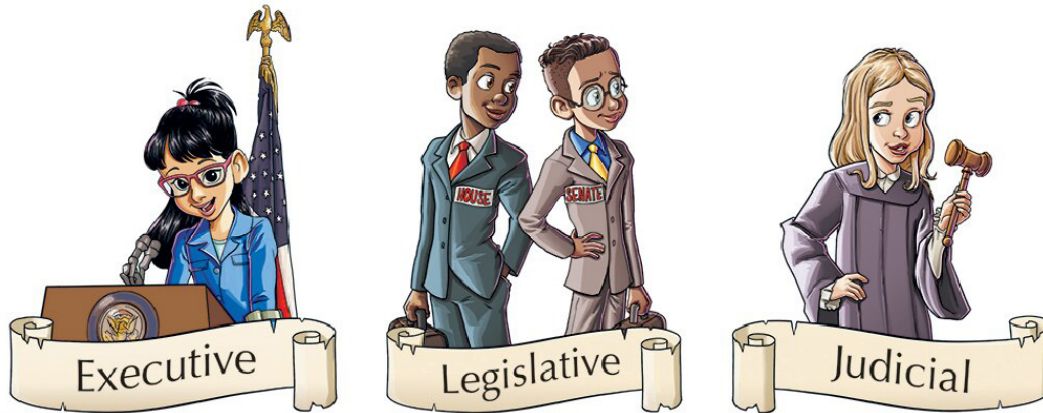
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# Three Branches of Government



Our government has three parts.

**Executive Branch:** This branch makes sure people follow the laws. The President leads this branch. **Legislative Branch:** This branch makes laws for our country. Congress leads this branch. **Judicial Branch:** This branch decides if laws are fair. The Supreme Court leads this branch.

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## State Government



State governments also have elected officials. They also have three branches of government. The leader of the state is the governor. The governor appoints officials and signs or vetoes bills passed by the state legislature. The governor is also the commander-in-chief of the state's military forces.

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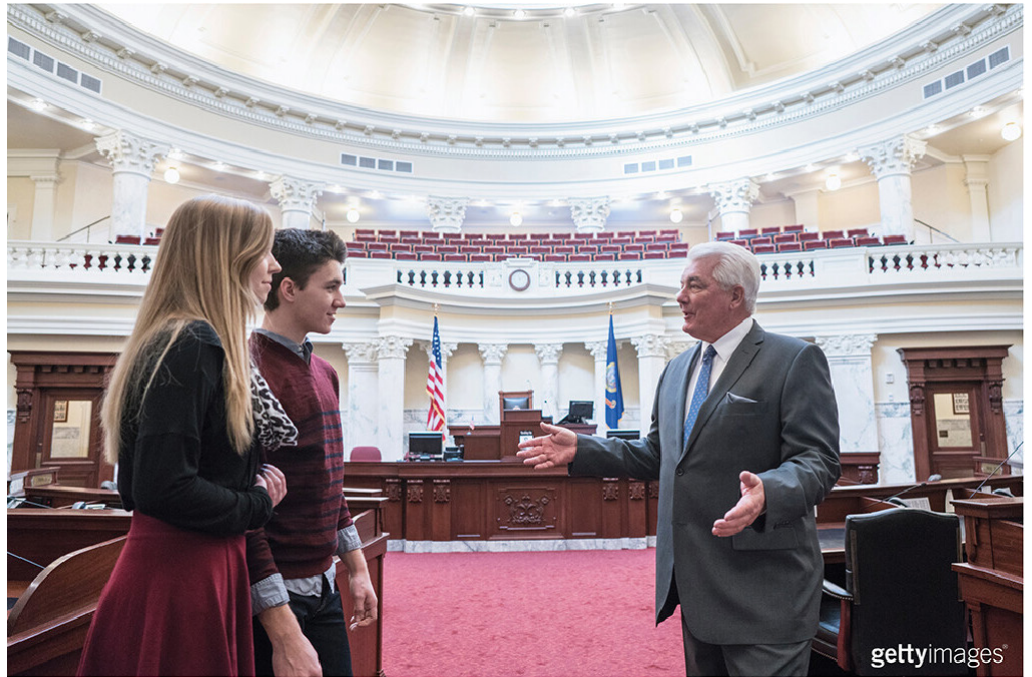
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# Structures of Government

The United States functions as a representative democracy. This means that the people elect officials who represent them



in the government. The Constitution has principles for how these elected officials work together in the structure of our government. The Constitution lists the basic laws of our country. The Constitution identified that there are three branches of government: the executive, legislative, and judicial. These branches of government distribute the power of the government and provide a check and balance.