

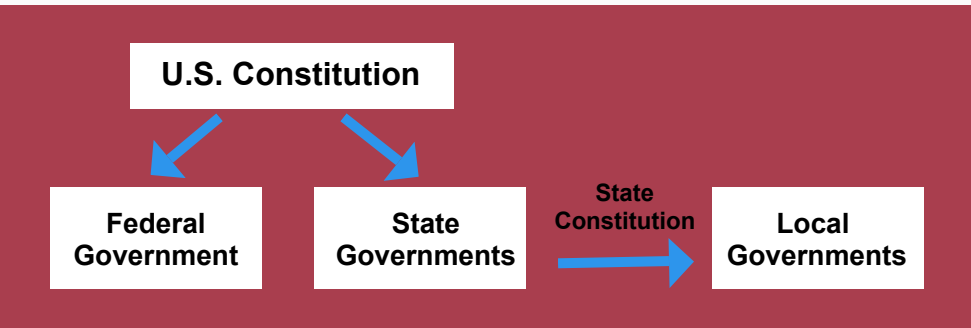


CIVICS IN REAL LIFE

Federalism in Action

Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how “We the People” interact with the government and each other. Let’s help each other expand our civic literacy.

Federalism is the idea that power is shared between the national (federal) government and state governments. The Founding Fathers built federalism directly into the United States Constitution’s Bill of Rights in **Amendment Ten**, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” The principle of federalism allows **states** to do what is necessary for their citizens without impacting the country as a whole. **Local governments** get their power from state constitutions.



Because the U.S. Constitution is the **supreme law of the land**, when a crisis emerges, the national and state governments each exercise their constitutional powers to support the people they serve.

For example, as of April 5, 2020, the federal government had issued **advisory recommendations**, rather than requirements, on social distancing, self-quarantining, and traveling for the nation as a whole to address the COVID-19/Novel Coronavirus. The federal government has relied on **state and local governments** to decide what will work best for the people who live there.



The states have the right to determine what is most appropriate for them, and the **Supreme Court** “...has distinctly recognized the authority of a State to enact quarantine laws” and “health laws of every description...which do not, by their necessary operation, affect the people of other States.”

To Do and To Think: Look up the COVID-19/Novel Coronavirus recommendations from the **federal government** and your **state and local governments**.

How do the actions of the three levels of government compare?

Learn MORE about the concept of federalism. Free registration may be required.

- [Federalism](#), from Civics360
- [Federalism](#), from CrashCourse
- [The Federalist Papers](#), by the Center for the Study of Federalism



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