

LAYERS OF FEDERALISM

What is federalism?

Federalism is a system of government in which power is divided between several levels or layers. In the United States, governmental power is divided between the federal government, state governments, and local governments. Each level of government has its own duties and responsibilities that the other levels are not allowed to do. Dividing the government into different levels limits its power.



Federal Government Layer

What is it? The federal government is the government for the whole country.

How is its power divided? The federal government is divided into three branches: Congress (legislature), the courts (judicial), and the presidency (executive). These three branches are supposed to be independent of one another, but they must work together to govern the country.

State Government Layer

What is it? Each of the 50 states has its own government for all the people who live in that state.

How is its power divided? Just like the federal government, the state governments have branches: a legislature, a court system, and a chief executive (called a governor). These branches have checks and balances on one another so no one branch grows too powerful.

Local Government Layer

What is it? In New Hampshire, local governments are for towns and cities.

How is its power divided? Most town and city governments are divided between a select board or town council and a school board. The select board or town council takes care of emergency services, town roads, parks and recreation, and the library. The school board runs the town or city's schools.



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