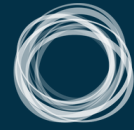


CONVERSATION SPARKS

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH BRIEF



THE POLICY
CIRCLE

Year of Convening
AMERICA 250



What is the executive branch, why does it matter, and how does it shape public policy? **The Executive Branch Brief** answers these questions by explaining the structure, roles, and responsibilities of the president, vice president, Cabinet, and federal agencies.



Why has executive power expanded over time, and what are the implications of that expansion for democracy and the separation of powers?

Should executive orders play a major role in shaping public policy, or does reliance on them weaken Congress's legislative authority?

In what ways has the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches shifted in recent decades, and how does that affect policy outcomes?

How do independent agencies and regulatory bodies both support and limit presidential power?

What role do presidential commissions and task forces play in shaping national policy, and should community members have a greater voice in them?

How can individuals and community groups effectively influence federal agency rulemaking and regulatory decisions?

When is it appropriate for a president to take extraordinary executive action during a crisis, and when should Congress or the courts intervene?

How do federal policies get implemented at the state and local level, and what opportunities exist for communities to shape that implementation?

What mechanisms best ensure transparency and accountability within the executive branch?

What are practical and meaningful ways citizens, including young people, can engage with and influence the work of the executive branch?

After discussing the Executive Branch Brief, consider how you (individually or as a Circle) might turn insight into action.

FROM DISCUSSION TO ACTION: WAYS TO GET MORE ENGAGED

Ideas for Local Engagement

- **Participate in rulemaking** by submitting public comments on proposed federal regulations through [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).
- **Engage with advisory committees or task forces** related to issues you care about (many posts open to public nomination).
- **Monitor agency actions** through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests or public reports.
- **Connect with your local offices** for federal agencies (e.g., HUD, EPA regional offices) to discuss how national policy is implemented locally.
- **Form or join community research groups** that track executive branch decisions and their local impact.