

What do they do?

Qualifications and responsibilities for federal offices

Each office has different qualifications and varying responsibilities. One common qualification for all these elected offices is that a candidate must be a registered voter. Candidates for federal offices must also meet specific age and citizenship requirements above and beyond the qualifications for voter registration.

President / Vice President

The President must be at least 35 years of age and a natural-born U.S. citizen. The President is indirectly elected by voters through the Electoral College to a four-year term and cannot serve more than two consecutive elected terms.

The chief duty of the President is to ensure that the laws of the United States are faithfully executed. This duty is largely performed through appointments of thousands of federal positions, including secretaries of cabinet agencies and all judges of the federal judiciary. These nominees are subject to confirmation by the U.S. Senate. The President is commander in chief of the U.S. armed forces. The President has the power to make treaties with foreign governments, which must be approved by the Senate. The President has the power to veto (reject) laws passed by Congress.

The Vice President shall become President in the event the Office of the President becomes vacant. The Vice President also serves as the presiding officer of the Senate.

Congress

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have equal responsibility for declaring war, maintaining the armed forces, assessing taxes, borrowing money, minting currency, regulating commerce, and making all laws necessary for the operation of government.

U.S. Senator

U.S. Senators must be at least 30 years of age, have been a citizen of the United States for nine years, and be a registered voter of the state from which he or she is elected. The Senate is made up of 100 members, two from each state, and each Senator's term is six years.

The Senate has several exclusive powers, including consenting to treaties and confirming federal appointments made by the President, and trying federal officials impeached by the House.

U.S. Representative

U.S. Representatives must be at least 25 years of age, have been a citizen of the United States for seven years, and be a registered voter of the state from which he or she is elected. The House of Representatives is made up of 435 members; each state is allocated a different number of members based on population. A Representative's term is two years. The total membership of the House is up for election in even-numbered years.