

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND THEIR DUTIES

DEPARTMENT OF STATE (1789)

Top official: Secretary of State
Carries out foreign policy
Supervises US ambassadors & other diplomats abroad
Issues passports to US citizens
Represents US in United Nations

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY (1789)

Top official: Sec. of the Treasury
Collects federal taxes
Borrows money & pays bills for federal govt.
Supervises printing of money & postage stamps
Controls taxes on alcohol, tobacco, & firearms

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (1789)

Top official: Sec. of Defense
Maintains armed forces (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force)
Conducts military intelligence
Builds & maintains forts, bases, naval yards, canals, and harbors
Carries out military research & engineering projects

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (1870)

Top official: Attorney General
Investigates & prosecutes violations of federal laws
Conducts suits on behalf of federal government in courts
Supervises US attorneys & marshals
Supervises federal prisons
Runs the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (1849)

Top official: Sec. of the Interior
Supervises federal land & parks
Finances irrigation projects
Investigates mine accidents
Protects fish, wildlife, and other natural resources
Conducts programs to help Native Americans

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (1849)

Top official: Sec. of Agriculture
Conducts programs to aid farmers
Fights animal & plant diseases & insect pests
Administers food stamp and school lunch programs

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (1903)

Top official: Sec. of Commerce
Promotes business opportunities for US companies here and abroad
Make loans to small businesses
Conducts a population census every 10 years and gathers other statistics
Grants patents for new inventions
Maintains official weights and measures
Operates US Weather Service
Makes surveys of coasts & reports on tides & currents

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (1913)

Top official: Sec. of Labor
Carries out laws on working conditions, minimum wage, & job discrimination
Administers unemployment insurance and compensation for injured workers
Sponsors job-training programs
Keeps track of prices, unemployment levels, and other labor information

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT (1965)

Top official: Sec. of Housing & Urban Development
Supports private housing mortgage loans
Finances housing for the elderly & low income families
Makes grants for improvements to streets, sewers, & parks.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (1966)

Top official: Sec. of Transportation
Finances interstate highways & improvements to railroads, airports, and some waterways
Supports research on mass transit
Sets safety standards for automobiles, truck, buses, planes, & trains

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (1977)

Top official: Sec. of Energy
Promotes conservation and development of energy
Regulates interstate gas and electricity rates
Promotes research on energy

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (1979)

Top official: Sec. of Education
Conducts programs to aid education

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES (1979)

Top official: Sec. of Health & Human Services
Directs Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other social service programs
Administers programs to aid the handicapped
Enforces pure food, drug, and cosmetics laws
Conducts research into causes and treatment of diseases

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS (1989)

Top official: Sec. of Veterans' Affairs
Operates veterans' hospitals
Supervises programs to assist military veterans

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (2002)

Top official: Sec. of Homeland Security
Responsible for combating terrorism
Operates Secret Service & Coast Guard
Enforces customs laws
Runs Citizenship & Immigration Service