



Whose Problem is it - Federal, State or Local Government?

The problems faced by all levels of government in modern life can be staggering and even overwhelming. Below are four scenarios that are based on real life situations. Your group's task is to address the problems and decide which level of government or combination thereof, would best handle the problem.

Directions: Read each scenario carefully and address the following:

1. Identify what tasks need to be carried out to address the problem.
2. Identify what level(s) of government, federal, state or local, is responsible and/or best equipped to resolve the problem.
3. Provide clear rationale for each of your choices.

Scenario 1

The Chattahoochee river near Atlanta, Georgia has become polluted from industrial pollution, human waste and debris. The city has so far been unable to effectively clean the river. As a result, the fish are dying, the river is trash infested, water has turned a brownish color, and stench from the river has caused nearby residents to complain. This polluted water has begun to contaminate drinking water in the city. Whose problem is it?

Scenario 2

The District of Columbia's public school buildings are in poor condition. Buildings are old and falling apart, roofs are leaking, air, heat, and sewer systems need repair. The problem is so bad, schools did not open on time. National standardized test scores of DC students are some of the lowest in the country, and many of the District's schools are in non-compliance with No Child Left Behind. Yet because of the building problems, curriculum development and improvement is now last on the priority list for DC public schools. Whose problem is it?

Scenario 3

In many American cities, the AIDS crisis continues with a disproportionate number of new infections greatest among the poor. The African-American community in particular has been hit hard by the AIDS epidemic (41% of all AIDS cases in the U.S.), with Black women emerging as the highest at risk group. AIDS is the second leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 25 and 44. Whose problem is it?

Source: <http://www.mba.wfu.edu/futurefocus/winter2001f9.html>

Scenario 4

A major earthquake has erupted near Los Angeles, California causing widespread damage. Sections of major freeways collapsed, parking structures and office buildings collapsed, numerous apartment buildings suffered irreparable damage, over 1 million people without power and water, with hundreds feared dead or injured. Whose problem is it?