

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

14. What organizations are included in the legislative branch?

In addition to the Congress, the House of Representatives and the Senate, the legislative branch includes the Architect of the Capitol, the Government Printing Office (GPO), the Library of Congress, and the legislative support agencies. The Architect's principal duties involve the construction, maintenance, and renovation of the Capitol Building as well as the congressional office buildings and other structures, such as the Library of Congress buildings, in the Capitol complex. The GPO publishes the Congressional Record, congressional committee hearings and reports, and other congressional documents, as well as a substantial portion of executive branch publications. The Library of Congress, in addition to providing library services, research and analysis to the Congress, is also the national library. It houses the premier national book, map, and manuscript collections in the United States; serves a major role assisting local libraries in book cataloging and sharing; and supervises the implementation of U.S. copyright laws.

Four support agencies are also part of the legislative branch. The Congressional Budget Office, Congressional Research Service in the Library of Congress, General Accounting Office, and the Office of Technology Assessment directly assist Congress in the performance of its duties. On occasion, temporary advisory commissions are established and funded by the legislative branch.

15. What are the functions of the congressional support agencies that are funded in the legislative appropriations acts?

Legislative support agencies funded in the legislative appropriations act include the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Congressional Research Service (CRS) of the Library of Congress, and the General Accounting Office (GAO). OTA issues reports to congressional committees on the impact of science-related issues on public policy. CBO primarily assists the House and Senate budget committees in evaluating the spending and revenue priorities of the Congress and congressional committees in estimating the cost of proposed legislation. CRS provides reference, research, and analytical assistance to committees, Members, and staff of the Congress on current and anticipated policy issues. GAO primarily makes studies of and reports to the Congress on the economy and efficiency of Government programs, operations, and expenditures.