

### SS.7.C.2.2

*Evaluate the obligations citizens have to obey laws, pay taxes, defend the nation, and serve on juries.*

#### Also Assesses

**SS.7.C.2.3** - Experience the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state, or federal levels

**SS.7.C.2.14** - Conduct a service project to further the public good

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**SS.7.C.2.2 Benchmark Clarification 4:** Students will examine the significant contributions of citizens to a democratic society.

A **citizen** is a legal and protected member of a country. In the United States, citizens have both **obligations** and **responsibilities**. In a democracy, the people actively participate in government and make decisions to promote the **common good**. Here are examples of contributions that citizens can make that include both obligations and responsibilities:

Obeying laws (obligation) – there are federal, state, and local laws that everyone has to follow.

Paying taxes (obligation) – there are federal, state, and local taxes that everyone must pay. Taxes pay for different services the government provides.

Jury duty (obligation) – the right to a trial by jury is a guarantee for the people; when called to do so, citizens must serve on juries.

Defending the nation (obligation) – all males between the ages of 18-25 have to register for **selective service**. (This does not mean they immediately join the military; it means that they may be called up in an emergency.)

Voting (responsibility) – voting is important for democracy to work. Voting gives citizens the opportunity to be heard by government leaders and to express their opinions about candidates.

Attending civic meetings (responsibility) – when a citizen attends civic meetings, such as a city council meeting, he or she can become a more informed citizen.

Petitioning the government (responsibility) – petitioning the government is a right listed in the First Amendment to the Constitution. This right means that citizens can tell the government what they believe the government should do about a specific problem.

Running for office (responsibility) – running for office provides citizens an opportunity to become involved in the government and represent their community.

Community service (responsibility) – performing community service provides an opportunity for people to understand problems in their community and help to fix them.

**citizen** - a legal member of a state and/or country

**common good** - beliefs or actions that are seen as a benefit to the community rather than individual interests, also known as the public good

**obligation** - a requirement, something a person has to do

**responsibility** - something a person should do

**selective service** - a system by which men ages 18 through 25 register with the U.S. government for military service



The Florida Joint  
Center for Citizenship  
*A Partnership for Florida's Civic Health*  
<http://floridacitizen.org>