

Embassy of Brazil

Washington, D.C.

Government



Electoral System

Elections in Brazil are conducted under a system of universal suffrage and secret ballot. Electoral enrolment and voting are mandatory for all literate citizens between the ages of 18 and 70, but voluntary for the illiterate and those aged 16-17 and over 70.

Any person wishing to run for public office in Brazil must belong to a political party. Parties have to be formally registered with the Superior Electoral Court. They are guaranteed the freedom to define their own internal structure, organisation and operation, including rules regarding party loyalty and discipline.

Votes are registered electronically, even in the most remote parts of the country, thereby reducing potential for fraud and decreasing the time taken for results to be declared.

Executive

Executive power is exercised by
the President of the Republic
, assisted by
Ministers of State

. The President and Vice-President are elected for four-year terms. In accordance with specific provisions in the Constitution, the President may be removed from office (impeached) by Congress.

If the office of the President were to become vacant for any reason, it would be filled by the Vice-President for the remainder of the original term. If he or she were unable to carry out this function, next in the line of succession would be the President of the Chamber of Deputies, then the President of the Senate, and the President of the Federal Supreme Court.

The President appoints the Ministers of State, who are directly responsible to him and whom he may dismiss at any time. A Minister of State may be summoned to appear before the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate or any of its committees.

Judiciary



Federal Supreme Court

Judicial powers are vested in the Federal Supreme Court, Superior Court of Justice, regional courts, and the specific courts for electoral, labour, military, and other matters. Judges in all courts, at both federal and state level, are appointed for life.

The Federal Supreme Court is at the apex of the judicial system. It has its seat in Brasília but holds jurisdiction throughout the country. It is composed of eleven judges, appointed by the President of the Republic after their nominations have been approved by an absolute majority in the Senate.

Legislative

Legislative power is exercised by the National Congress, which consists of two houses: the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) and the Federal Senate (upper house).



National Congress

The Chamber of Deputies is composed of 513 federal deputies. The number of deputies by which a state is represented is proportional to its population. Deputies serve four-year terms and are elected by direct secret ballot under universal suffrage.

The Senate is composed of 81 senators - three for each of the 26 States (and another three for Federal District). Senators are elected for eight-year terms, but the elections are staggered so as to take place every four years, coinciding with those for the Chamber of Deputies.

Federal deputies and senators are entitled to stand for re-election without restriction.

Related links

- [Brazilian Government portal](#)
(in Portuguese)
- [Presidency of the Federative Republic of Brazil](#)
(in English/Portuguese)
- [Vice-Presidency of the Federative Republic of Brazil](#)
(in Portuguese)
- [Attorney General of the Republic](#)
(in Portuguese)
- [Federal Supreme Court](#)
(in Portuguese)
- [Superior Electoral Court](#)
(in Portuguese)
- [Chamber of Deputies](#)
(in Portuguese)
- [Federal Senate](#)
(in Portuguese)