



WHITE HOUSE 2001

smoothing the way for governing

BRIEFING MATERIALS

October 1, 1999

Funded by **THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS**

On the web at: WhiteHouse2001.org

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THE WHITE HOUSE 2001 PROJECT
Smoothing the Path to Governing

The White House 2001 Project is a two part program designed to provide new staff members with information associated with a successful start for a new White House team. It is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and associated with the American Enterprise Institute's initiative titled "The Transition to Governing." The White House 2001 Project was created by presidency scholars working with the Presidency Research Group, a section of the American Political Science Association. The first aspect of the program, the White House Interview Program, involves building an institutional memory for selected White House offices. The second part, the Nomination Forms Online Program, is planned to reduce the cumbersome, redundant, and often opaque qualities currently characterizing the presidential appointments process. We will create a software package easing the filling out of forms and an online manual supplying information helpful to an understanding of the vagaries of the appointment process.

The White House Interview Program. The goal of the White House Interview Program is to smooth the path to power by furnishing incoming staff with substantive information about their offices. With information on the operations preceding them, the recently appointed staff members will be able to prepare for what they can anticipate will come their way. Through a private website and with materials on paper, we will give the new people information about the functioning of their offices over a period of six administrations, the organization of their unit, and the roles played by the heads of each office over the course of the last 30 years. The offices under our lens are: Chief of Staff, Staff Secretary, Press Office, Office of Communications, Office of Counsel to the President, Office of Administration, Office of Presidential Personnel. Leading presidency scholars are interviewing present and former staff members, gathering materials from presidential libraries and secondary sources, and writing pieces on the seven White House offices.

The Nomination Forms Online Program. In its final report released in 1996, the Twentieth Century Fund's Task Force on the Presidential Appointment Process described the nomination process faced by presidential appointees as a "maelstrom of complexity." There are "too many questions, too many forms, too many clearances," the group concluded. In order to address this problem, we will prepare a software package that nominees can easily download from our website onto their computers and fill out for return to the several relevant federal agencies seeking information. In addition, we will provide an online manual to explain the software and to answer questions about the process. Through our website, we will provide online information in the following areas: links to sites providing materials for nominees; rules, regulations, orientation materials, and guidance of agencies concerning the appointment process. Through the cooperation of leading political scientists, we will provide on our website analytical information walking appointees through the process. We are creating a website and developing software through the joint efforts of Professor Terry Sullivan in the Department of Political Science and Professor Stephanie Haas in the Information Sciences Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

For information on the project, contact the executive director, Professor Martha Joynt Kumar. She can be reached by phone at 202 518-2241 and by email at Martha_Kumar/FS/KSG@ksg.harvard.edu and mkumar@ibm.net. You can contact her by surface mail at the Washington office of the Shorenstein Center on Press, Politics, and Policy. The address is: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Washington D.C. Office, 1779 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, 20036.

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THE WHITE HOUSE 2001 PROJECT

WHITE HOUSE INTERVIEW PROGRAM
Preparing the White House Staff to Govern

The Need: Establishing an Institutional Memory

* **Institutional Memory.** There is no institutional memory in a White House. Unlike corporations both large and small, a White House begins without a record of what its previous occupants did. Our project will provide incoming staff with information on the functions, organizational schemes, and roles played by the heads of selected White House offices. The White House offices are: the Chief of Staff, the Staff Secretary, the Press Office, the Office of Communications, the Office of Administration, the Office of Counsel to the President, Office of Presidential Personnel.

* **Making Effective Use of Good Will Produced by Victory: Suspension of Partisanship.** There is a recognized sense among the political community as well as the public at large that a President should be provided an opportunity to govern without insistent carping of his enemies. That period early in a President's term is both precious and brief. Our program is aimed at providing information at a time when it can be used most effectively.

The Program: The White House Interview Program

* **Building a Base of Comparable Information Across Administrations.** Beginning with the Nixon White House, we will gather information on selected White House offices in order to develop comparable information across the six administrations. We will interview approximately 75 former officials and supplement our interviews with materials from presidential libraries and from secondary sources.

* **Developing Materials Positioning the Incoming Staff to Govern.** What sets us apart from earlier transition efforts is our interest in preparing and delivering materials based on the information we glean from our interviews that will position the incoming staff to meet their own goals. Rather than tell the new group how they should organize the White House, we will provide them with information on how it has been done in the past and then describe the outcomes.

* **Broad Based Program Implemented by Leading Presidency Scholars.** The presidency scholars associated with the project who are researching and writing about the White House staff and the seven offices are: George Edwards, John Kessel, John Burke, Stephen Wayne, Charles Walcott, Shirley Anne Warshaw, Karen Hult, Kathryn Dunn Tenpas, Nancy Kassop, MaryAnne Borrelli, Peri Arnold, Martha Joynt Kumar, Bradley Patterson, and James Pfiffner. The interview protocol was developed by a board of scholars associated with the Presidency Research Group, a section of the American Political Science Association.

* **Web Site Professionally Engineered and Maintained.** Using a combination of the technical expertise of computer science personnel and the knowledge of the presidency of Professor Terry Sullivan, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is the site where our system will be developed and maintained. Since the Web site can be entered whenever people cleared to use it want to tap into it, the information delivery system is a more flexible system than has previously existed for incoming staff. Paper copies will also be available.

* **A Nonpartisan Project Funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.** Funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, a foundation known for the stature of its projects and the nonpartisan nature of its organization, we have a special objectivity. We are not associated with a particular candidate for President or persons seeking positions with the incoming administration.

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THE WHITE HOUSE 2001 PROJECT

NOMINATION FORMS ONLINE PROGRAM
Smoothing the Nomination Path

The Need: The Nomination Process as Confusing and Opaque

In its final report released in 1996, the Twentieth Century Fund's Task Force on Presidential Appointments described the nomination process faced by presidential appointees as a "maelstrom of complexity." There are "too many questions, too many forms, too many clearances," it concluded. The Nomination Forms Online Program is planned to reduce the cumbersome, redundant, and often opaque qualities currently characterizing the presidential appointments process.

The Program: The Nomination Forms Online Program

Our project will supply nominees with information on the operation of the appointments process as well as provide them a software package designed to reduce the duplication of effort involved in the process of filling out the forms.

* **A Simplified Form.** We will prepare a software package that nominees can easily download from our website onto their computers and fill out for return to the several relevant federal agencies seeking information. We will provide an online manual to explain the software and to answer questions about the process. In an effort to ease the process for appointees, the software package will provide indexing, searching within the manual, and hyperlinks among related topics, or topics addressed in more than one place.

* **Online Information For Appointees.** We will provide online information in the following areas: links to sites providing materials for nominees; rules, regulations, orientation materials, and guidance of agencies concerning the appointment process; and analytical information walking appointees through the process.

* **Links, Rules, and Regulations.** The first will be a series of links to sites important for nominees, such as a link to the site sponsored by the Office of Government Ethics. It includes materials and regulations indicating what practices nominees should follow, including what rules they are governed by once they assume their positions. The site will also contain materials relevant to the nomination and confirmation processes, including all relevant statutes, agency and White House regulations as well as rules governing employment once they take office.

* **Web Site Professionally Engineered and Maintained.** Through a combination of public and private websites, we will provide interested individuals with information about the workings of the appointment process. The software is under development at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill by Professor Stephanie Haas in the School of Information and Library Sciences. The software project is being managed by Professor Terry Sullivan.

* **A Nonpartisan Project Funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts with Support from the James A. Baker II Institute for Public Policy at Rice University.** Funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, a foundation known for the stature of its projects and the nonpartisan nature of its organization, the project has a special objectivity. The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy is providing additional support for the walk-through and development and maintenance of the website.

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