# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady, White House

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Position Type | Presidential appointment (PA) |
| Agency Mission | The Office of the First Lady is composed of staff accountable to the first lady of the United States. The office is part of the White House Office in the Executive Office of the President. |
| Position Overview | The chief of staff to the first lady supports the first lady’s efforts to engage in and advance the president’s domestic and global policy initiatives, and supports her traditional duties. |
| Compensation | $176,461 in 2016[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | The First Lady and the White House Chief of Staff |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The chief of staff is responsible for overall management of daily operations that support the first lady. As of 2012, the position has overseen the staff work of six departments: policy and projects; scheduling; advance; correspondence; press; and the social office. The office currently has 25-30 people.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Leads all strategy and operations for the Office of the First Lady
* Acts as liaison for all matters involving both the president and first lady’s joint events and schedule
* Guides the staff’s work, including domestic and international initiatives
* Coordinates with the chief usher the general operations of Camp David, the executive residence, including events, residence personnel and first family matters
* Represents the first lady as a surrogate at functions, and with the media[[3]](#endnote-3)
* Is responsible for establishing a good working relationship with the West Wing within the first couple of years, given that the Office of the First Lady is often seen as a liability at first
* Plays an important role in the reelection campaign
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Firm understanding of policy initiatives and political implications
* Communications and media experience
* Must know Washington community
* Must know how to stage events or have ability to get that expertise
* Confidence of the First Lady and the knowledge of her interests and needs
* Knowledge of and good relationship with the West Wing (a plus)
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| Competencies | * Strong management and administrative skills
* Ability to work closely with West Wing counterparts on all policy matters that advance the president’s agenda
* Ability to pivot from overseeing traditional duties of the first lady (White House ceremonies) as well as direct global and domestic policy initiatives
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Tina Tchen (2011 to 2017) - Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement; Partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Susan Sher (2009 to 2011) - White House Associate Counsel; Vice President at the University of Chicago Medical Center; Corporation Counsel of Chicago[[5]](#endnote-5) |
| Jackie Norris (2008 to 2009) - Senior Adviser and Scheduler for Senator Obama's Iowa campaign; High School Government and History Teacher[[6]](#endnote-6) |

# Endnotes

This position description was created with the help of Martha Kumar from the White House Transition Project, which provides information to a new White House staff about their individual offices thereby streamlining the process of transition from one administration to the next.

1. http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/05/politics/white-house-salary-report/ [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Romney Readiness Project position descriptions [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Romney Readiness Project position descriptions [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/author/tina-tchen> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-susan-sher-bio-box-20150223-story.html [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/04/AR2009060404285.html [↑](#endnote-ref-6)