# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Press secretary, white house

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Position Type | Presidential appointment (PA) |
| Agency Mission | The White House Office of the Press Secretary is responsible for gathering and disseminating information to the president, the White House staff and the media. |
| Position Overview | The press secretary is the chief spokesperson for the president and the administration. He or she advises the president on press strategy and press relations; briefs the press daily; and coordinates with press offices in other agencies. |
| Compensation | $176,461 in 2016[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Reports through the White House chief of staff to the president |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The press secretary is the head of an office that spans two buildings and, in many administrations, included approximately 30 people.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as information conduit, including:   + Providing presidential information to reporters on a regular basis in both formal and informal settings[[3]](#endnote-3)   + Briefing the president on media issues and preparing the president and White House officials for media interviews[[4]](#endnote-4) * Represents constituents (refers to the role the press secretary plays representing their three constituents to one another), including scheduling administration officials for media interviews[[5]](#endnote-5) * Plays role in administration of the Office of the Press Secretary, including managing arrangements for traveling press corps * Plays role in communications planning, including developing messaging in coordination with White House communications director, White House policy councils and White House chief of staff office[[6]](#endnote-6) * Plays a role in persuasion in some cases[[7]](#endnote-7) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Experience in executive branch agencies and working for members of Congress is typical, and provides a sense of where information is and how to get it[[8]](#endnote-8) * Deep knowledge of the president’s positions on a wide range of issues as well as understanding of policy and how the executive and legislative branches work * Expert in media relations * Close relationship with the president * Articulate and effective spokesperson on all forms of media (TV, new media, print media, etc.) * Understanding of new media and how to use it effectively to achieve strategic goals |
| Competencies | * Ability to “play reporter” in getting facts to respond to media inquiries * Respected by the media * Ability to work in a high-pressure environment |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Josh Earnest (2014 to 2017) - Principal Deputy White House Press Secretary and Chief of Staff to the Press Secretary; White House Deputy Press Secretary; Iowa Communications Director for Senator Obama’s Presidential Campaign[[9]](#endnote-9) | |
| Jay Carney (2011 to 2014) - Director of Communications to Vice President Biden; Washington Bureau Chief Time magazine[[10]](#endnote-10) | |
| Robert Gibbs, (2009 to 2011); Communications Chief for Obama Presidential Campaign; Press Secretary for Senator Obama; Press Secretary for Kerry Presidential Campaign[[11]](#endnote-11) | |

# 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. https://www.whitehouse.gov/21stcenturygov/tools/salaries [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.whitehousetransitionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/WHTP-2009-31-Press-Secretary.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.whitehousetransitionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/WHTP-2009-31-Press-Secretary.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.whitehousetransitionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/WHTP-2009-31-Press-Secretary.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <http://www.whitehousetransitionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/WHTP-2009-31-Press-Secretary.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.whitehousetransitionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/WHTP-2009-31-Press-Secretary.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. <http://www.whitehousetransitionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/WHTP-2009-31-Press-Secretary.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. https://ballotpedia.org/Josh\_Earnest [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-11)