



The States of Our Union

Working with State and Local Partners to
Achieve Change

Federal coordination to implement national policies begins during the presidential transition

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CENTER FOR
PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION®

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The Partnership for Public Service's Center for Presidential Transition is the nation's premier nonpartisan source of information and resources designed to help presidential candidates and their teams lay the groundwork for a new administration or for a president's second term.

About the Partnership

The Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to revitalize the federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works. The Partnership teams up with federal agencies and other stakeholders to make our government more effective and efficient.

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Introduction

“State legislatures are not your average stakeholder. We are partners in the implementation of programs that are critical to our nation.”

—Molly Ramsdell, vice president, state-federal affairs, National Conference of State Legislatures

Modern presidents come into office promising national change in areas such as education, health care, immigration and infrastructure. To execute their agenda, their administration must coordinate across all levels of government. While a candidate may win an election based on promises, and assemble a team that can execute them, an administration must prioritize building and renewing relationships to generate support for its agenda, whether preparing for a new or second term.

Given the importance of intergovernmental coordination and transition preparation for an administration’s ability to govern, the Partnership for Public Service’s Center for Presidential Transition® and Deloitte¹ created this resource to identify the practices that lead to effective collaboration, including how transition planning can help establish successful intergovernmental relationships. We spoke with officials from the current and past three presidential administrations, as well as with individuals from associations representing state and local interests.

In America’s federal system, few relationships are more important to the federal government than those with state, local, tribal and territorial governments.² Each government has its own laws, regulations, budget processes and political priorities. Many of these aspects shape the detail of federal policies and programs and, in turn, are impacted by the policies and programs the federal government implements. Insights from state, local, tribal and territorial partners can help a presidential transition team, or an administration planning for a second term, address the many important policy issues facing the country, build support for its proposals to Congress and identify ways to improve the local impact of presidential initiatives.

How an administration recognizes and responds to local priorities affects its success, so it is important to establish constructive relationships early, beginning during presidential transition planning, prior to Election Day. Relationships are critical not only for implementing campaign

¹ As used in this document, Deloitte means Deloitte & Touche LLP and Deloitte Consulting LLP, which are subsidiaries of Deloitte LLP. Please see www.deloitte.com/us/about for a detailed description of our legal structure. Certain services may not be available to attest clients under the rules and regulations of public accounting.

² Timothy Conlan and Paul Posner, “Intergovernmental Management for the 21st Century,” 2008. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3MS2xts>

promises, but also for responding to crises, which can make or break a presidency. When natural disasters such as hurricanes, oil spills or wildfires hit local communities, federal agencies might spend months or years partnering with state, local, tribal and territorial representatives on recovery and rebuilding efforts.

New presidents also have been confronted with security, economic and health emergencies, such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the 2008-09 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only do such events require close organization with officials at every government level across the country, but the success of a response impacts a president's legacy.

This resource is intended to help a presidential team preparing for a new term—or an administration repositioning itself for a second term—build and strengthen successful relationships with state, local, tribal and territorial partners. Three major themes emerged from our research:

- 1) The presidential transition planning phase before the inauguration should be used to initiate relationships with state, local, tribal and territorial partners, and put in place systems for coordination.
- 2) Personnel selected for White House and executive branch roles must bring expertise, diversity of experience and energy to build intergovernmental relationships.
- 3) White House structures, staffing and communication channels—including the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs—should foster outreach and coordination to achieve the president's priorities and understand their local impact.

Theme 1: The presidential transition planning phase before the inauguration should be used to initiate relationships with state, local, tribal and territorial partners and put in place systems for coordination.

In the spring of an election year, a candidate’s transition team begins to develop detailed plans to lay out how a president’s vision will be implemented, and the processes and people needed to realize it if the candidate becomes president. Policy teams develop formal plans for the first 100-200 days and are focused on the complex executive, legislative and regulatory actions needed for implementation. Other transition personnel are focused on the political environment, and the state, local, tribal and territorial relationships needed to build support for key initiatives. Having a transition team structure that integrates these different perspectives will enhance an administration’s ability to execute with urgency once in office. Pre-election, much of this work is done under the radar so as not to distract from the campaign or be perceived as assuming the outcome of an election.

Given that a transition team is not in contact with federal agencies or local officials prior to an election, the influx of attention and information begins once the election outcome is known. This may include calls from governors, county executives, mayors, tribal and territorial leaders, and state and local organizations. An incoming administration can use this time to develop relationships with officials—beyond with those who were involved in the campaign—and identify support and concerns related to its priorities. For example, transition teams typically name a White House director for the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs in the post-election period to lead engagement with other levels of government.

First Term White House Intergovernmental Affairs Directors Announced Post-election

Biden-Harris transition	Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Nov. 17, 2020
Trump-Pence transition	Justin Clark, Jan. 19, 2017
Obama-Biden transition	Cecilia Muñoz, Nov. 26, 2008
Bush-Cheney administration	Ruben Barrales, Feb. 20, 2001 (<i>early year one</i>)
Clinton-Gore transition	Regina Montoya, Jan. 15, 1993
Bush-Quayle administration	Debra Rae Anderson, Feb. 28, 1989 (<i>early year one</i>)

Prepare plans to handle immediate challenges and coordinate disaster responses across the Cabinet.

Presidents-elect can anticipate some crises they will confront on Inauguration Day—and during their first year—and prepare to address the impact of these challenges on communities across the country. Such groundwork includes working with Cabinet departments and agencies that have roles in disaster response, recovery, and security and emergency preparedness, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, its parent agency, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. These agencies need direct lines of communication with state, local, tribal and territorial representatives and this intergovernmental coordination is important regardless of party lines. In addition, exercises to prepare to respond to crises are an important part of presidential transition planning and are required by law.³

As President Joe Biden prepared to take office in 2021, he understood the importance of a comprehensive approach to the COVID-19 pandemic—beginning with the continued effort for an effective vaccine rollout and the disbursement of relief funds. Just days after the election, then President-elect Biden announced a bipartisan coronavirus taskforce made up of public health experts and former officials from both Republican and Democratic administrations.⁴ The taskforce was well-resourced, with a team made up of senior and support staff, and used a regionally targeted outreach approach, recognizing the need to work with state, local, tribal and territorial officials across the country. They held regular calls with governors in each region to share information and listen to what states needed. Because of planning during the transition and early in the administration, the White House COVID-19 response team could work with these officials to coordinate responses from day one and early in the first year.

When large-scale crises occur after day one, the effectiveness of coordination across agencies and every level of government is tested with increased urgency. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, President George W. Bush’s White House set up a “war room” to coordinate the federal response. Response preparation included taking both the short- and long-term views of how FEMA, HUD and other federal agencies would use funding to provide assistance. One official who served at Bush’s side on 9/11 recalled the coordinated effort: “There’s a million moving parts and it would not have been successful without state and local governments.”

³ Edward ‘Ted’ Kaufman and Michael Leavitt, “Presidential Transitions Improvements Act of 2015.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/449vBTX>.

⁴ Yasmeen Abutaleb and Laurie McGinley, “President-elect Biden announces coronavirus task force made up of physicians and health experts.” Nov. 9, 2020. Retrieved from <https://wapo.st/44jhah8>.

Draw on the expertise and relationships of state and local associations.

“Through our different committees and feedback loops, we have a pretty good pulse on what's happening across the country. We're typically a great barometer of what's happening. We want to have conversations about practical issues with our federal partners.”

— *Matthew Chase, chief executive officer and executive director, National Association of Counties*

Stakeholders bring extensive knowledge and relationships that can help a transition team or new administration understand how major initiatives align or conflict with state and local priorities. The top seven organizations representing state and local leaders, known as the “Big 7,” along with other organizations representing state and local interests, can help convene meetings, share key contacts and make connections early in a new term. They can also refresh relationships with federal agencies and the White House for a second term, and work with transition team members as they prepare a president-elect to take office.

For example, the National Governors Association winter meeting occurs annually in February. In the first—or fifth—year of a presidential administration, this meeting is an opportunity for the president and senior staff to meet directly with the nation’s governors and hear about their top priorities for the term. Pre-inauguration, organizations such as the National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Association of Counties prepare briefing materials and resources on top-line issues which are intended to inform a presidential transition team about circumstances in states and counties that could affect how an administration implements certain policies and programs once in office.

The “Big 7”: State and Local Organizations

The “Big 7” is the group of nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations made up of state and local government officials and includes the National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, the International City/County Management Association, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The resources and insights from these organizations can be valuable to a new administration seeking to capitalize on the momentum that is strongest during a president's first 100—200 days, or to reset for a second term, and help it respond to major events that arise.

Don't underestimate the value of contact lists and tracking systems.

When it comes to the complexities involved in preparing to govern, it can be easy to discount the value of practical tools that help build connections and manage incoming requests. Nearly every current and former federal official interviewed said they wished they had a better database, with contact information for state and local officials, during the transition phase and after inauguration. A new administration—and new personnel—can use this information to establish communication and outreach mechanisms early on to keep track of how they work with state, local, tribal and territorial officials, and in preparing to coordinate disaster response efforts. While acknowledging the value of these lists and systems, one former IGA official highlighted the importance of transition team personnel consulting with lawyers well before the election to understand how this information can be handled in order to have continued access once in office.

In the crush of daily business, new White House officials might rely on informal methods to track the substance of their conversations. These conversations will range from feedback about their priority initiatives, to requests on new topics to communicate to federal departments and agencies. Instead of recording these interactions informally, such as through emails, some officials recommended using a database to track incoming requests and feedback. The benefits of recording the names, dates, topics and resolution of calls in one database are manifold: It ensures that important requests are remembered and resolved; it improves communication and relationships, thereby building trust; and it allows for data and trend analysis to inform future decisions.

Refresh and reset for a second term.

Winning a second term presents a new opening for a president to refresh priorities and relationships. While momentum for change can be lower in year five compared with year one,⁵ it can be a distinct opportunity to renew and reprioritize in a new political environment, revitalize Cabinet and other leadership positions, and consider new priorities for state, local, tribal and territorial relationships. This is especially true considering the level of turnover for administrations early in a second term. For example, for the last three reelected presidents, an

⁵ Stefanie Georgakis Abbott, Balthazar Merrin, Paul Hitlin, and Alexander Tippet, "Breaking the Fifth-Year Curse." Oct. 25, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/44woo17>.

average of 46% of secretaries, deputy secretaries and undersecretaries serving the incumbent president on Election Day resigned from their positions within six months into the second term.⁶

President George W. Bush's administration started its first term in 2001 with a focus on national education standards, tax cuts, and Medicare and social security reforms.⁷ By 2005, the country was involved in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and responses to national disasters.⁸ The shift to a second term can involve rethinking personnel and skills needed for key positions or promoting star performers from the first term. The team around President Barack Obama made a deliberate shift in the second term. One official described the first term intergovernmental affairs team as focused on achievements in Congress, while the second term team focused on building support for the administration's priorities with state and local governments. That official credited senior administration staff for selecting personnel who would help build these relationships and understand how local priorities might align with the administration's agenda for its second term.

Second-term planning is more than a continuation of a first-term agenda; it is also a chance to accomplish new priorities, and assess the relationships and resources needed to achieve them, so the administration can serve the public effectively.

Recommended Actions for Presidential Transition Planning

Pre-election planning for a first term

- ⇒ Identify a White House intergovernmental affairs director to name post-election.
- ⇒ Prepare to triage a high volume of incoming information on policy recommendations, stakeholder calls and outreach from governors, county executives, mayors, tribal and territorial leaders, and state and local organizations.
- ⇒ Consult with lawyers about how information such as contact lists and tracking systems should be handled, in order to have continued access once in office.
- ⇒ Identify the major initiatives that will impact state, local, tribal and territorial governments, and prepare to work with these leaders on implementation.
- ⇒ Structure the transition team in a way that integrates policy development and the intergovernmental relationships needed to support execution.

⁶ Sasha Blachman, Marissa Brophy, Paul Hitlin and Mia Imparato, "Presidential Transitions are a Perilous Moment for National Security," Aug. 16, 2023. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3YASMoZ>.

⁷ UVA's Miller Center, "George W. Bush: Domestic Affairs." Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/47P5YLo>.

⁸ Ibid.

Post-election planning for a first term

- ⇒ Begin engagement with state, local, tribal and territorial stakeholders via the White House intergovernmental affairs director, using existing forums and associations such as the “Big 7”. Speak with former intergovernmental affairs leaders to inform this approach.
- ⇒ Develop knowledge- and relationship-management tools to build state, local, tribal and territorial contacts, and track requests, both during the transition and once in office.
- ⇒ If applicable, ask the outgoing White House intergovernmental affairs director (or team) for key contacts, particularly for disaster response readiness.
- ⇒ If not already familiar, request a briefing on the presidential disaster declaration process and understand how this process flows through multiple White House offices.

Second term planning

- ⇒ Consider new priorities for state, local, tribal and territorial relationships and align these to the administration’s agenda for a second term.
 - ⇒ Select personnel for the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs who can best accomplish the new priorities of the office, and build support for them with state, local, tribal and territorial representatives.
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Theme 2: Personnel selected for White House and executive branch roles must bring expertise, diversity of experience, and energy to build intergovernmental relationships.

In selecting the 4,000 appointees to staff a presidential administration, personnel officials balance the need for expertise, diversity of experience, energy, and other factors. This task is especially challenging at the start of a new administration, given the number of critical positions that must be filled and the need to form new relationships quickly.

When asked about the qualities that help build meaningful intergovernmental relationships, current and former officials highlighted the importance of having background in the intricacies of the different levels of government, the ability to nurture personal relationships and connections, communicate in detail about programs and funding, and speak with the imprimatur of the president. As one official shared, President George W. Bush had the advantage of becoming president eight years after his father left the office and could then hire from a pool of experienced officials from his father's administration. This included Andrew Card, who served as transportation secretary under President H.W. Bush and later became chief of staff for President George W. Bush from 2001 to 2006. In addition, senior officials including Karl Rove, senior advisor to the president and deputy chief of staff for policy, and Karen Hughes, counselor to the president and communications director, both served as trusted advisors to President Bush during his time as the governor of Texas. These staff members brought their commitment, discipline and expertise to support a new president navigating the complex nature of intergovernmental policy and relationships.

The White House intergovernmental affairs office should include staff with diverse skills, perspectives and experience.

Each of the current and past three administrations selected intergovernmental affairs leaders and staff with state and local experience because these officials had insight into budget processes, laws and political environments at each level, giving them an advantage for intergovernmental relationships.

Since the White House intergovernmental affairs team speaks with people across the country, whether to coordinate a response to a crisis or implement a major initiative, diversity—in every sense of the word—helps the office understand where and how to respond to local needs and interests. One former official described the value in having a diverse team, in terms of their personal experiences: “We’re able to bring the federal, state, local and rural perspectives together, which I think has been really helpful.”

President Barack Obama’s director for intergovernmental affairs, David Agnew, pointed to the importance of having different perspectives when building and leading this White House office.

“The diversity of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs team is critical because it allows you to have different regional knowledge and to understand the [entire] country. If you’re going to be an effective relationship builder and manager, having background in the type of government you’re trying to relate to and represent is important.”

—David Agnew, director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (2012-14)

Select senior leaders who are prepared to roll up their sleeves and use existing relationships in their roles.

A new administration often places leaders such as former mayors, governors and trusted senior advisors in charge of external-facing White House offices, both for their knowledge and the gravitas their experience brings. The intergovernmental affairs office, in particular, is described as serving to “engage State, local, and Tribal governments, in addition to elected officials across Puerto Rico and our island communities, to address the most pressing issues impacting our country and communities.”⁹ Its leader must be adept at balancing their influence and visibility to advance the president’s priorities, while managing a small team and heavy workload.

Beyond the intergovernmental affairs office, senior White House staff members bring knowledge and relationships that do not always correspond with their place in the West Wing organizational chart. However, they add significant value to discussions and approaches to stakeholder management, and program and policy implementation. For example, when an administration hires former members of Congress for senior roles, those officials can become an informal conduit for feedback from their former district and state—regardless of their formal White House role. “It all comes down to relationships and trust,” said Cedric Richmond, former congressman and director of the White House Office of Public Engagement.

The ability of the White House to organize according to formal structures, while also drawing on the stature, relationships and expertise of senior staff, enhances an administration’s ability to build the right intergovernmental relationships.

⁹ The White House, “Office of Intergovernmental Affairs”. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/iga/>.

Recognize the value of an agency's intergovernmental affairs team.

“There's not a day that goes by when a governor doesn't need to get in touch with a federal agency—whether it's the Cabinet secretary or somebody else in that agency—about a specific issue in their state.”

— *Tiffany Waddell, director, government relations, National Governors Association*

Akin to the White House intergovernmental affairs team, an agency's intergovernmental affairs office serves as the primary liaison between the department and state, local, tribal and territorial governments, yet these small teams often are not in place early in a new term. “I'm not just a connector in the department, I'm an intel gatherer,” said one agency intergovernmental affairs official. “The job is about how you advance the secretary's priorities and the president's agenda.”

This same official described several initiatives put in place early in the Biden administration to establish and maintain a regular rhythm of engagement with state and local partners. These included monthly calls to address policy and program questions and understand what issues the agencies' stakeholders were facing. In addition, the intergovernmental affairs office set up regular meetings with the “Big 7” state and local associations and held biweekly office hours, providing a more informal avenue for connections between federal, state and local officials.

Given the importance of agency intergovernmental affairs officials to fostering effective partnerships, filling these roles should be a priority for a new or second term administration. If a political appointee is not there on day one, an acting career official in the role is an effective interim step for making meaningful connections with state, local, tribal and territorial officials.

Recommended Actions for the White House

- ⇒ Identify candidates for White House intergovernmental affairs director who have diverse experience and can bring state, local, tribal and territorial knowledge to the role. A sample position description is available [here](#).¹⁰
- ⇒ Build a diverse White House intergovernmental affairs team by selecting individuals who understand how federal agencies work and can supplement the knowledge of team members with state, local, tribal and territorial experience.

¹⁰ Center for Presidential Transition, “Federal position descriptions.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/45iBqQx>.

- ⇒ Use the knowledge and relationships of senior staff members beyond the White House intergovernmental affairs office to engage state, local, tribal and territorial constituencies.
 - ⇒ Identify candidates who can fill vacant intergovernmental affairs roles in agencies and prioritize getting these agency teams staffed up quickly, using the presidential transition planning period to get a head start.
 - ⇒ Host regular meetings once in office to discuss shared priorities and upcoming activities, so agency intergovernmental affairs officials continue to be empowered to advocate for the president's priorities. These meetings should be set up by the White House intergovernmental affairs team.
 - ⇒ Identify an acting career official to manage communication with state, local, tribal and territorial officials if an agency intergovernmental affairs leader is not in place.
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Theme 3: White House structures, staffing and communication channels—including the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs—should foster outreach and coordination to accomplish the president’s priorities and understand their local impact.

While the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs is the main point of contact for state, local, tribal and territorial governments, it is part of a constellation of offices focused on developing relationships outside the White House that includes the offices for public engagement, faith-based and neighborhood partnerships, legislative affairs, Cabinet affairs and communications.¹¹ These offices must stay closely connected. In addition, a president or president-elect may establish committees, councils and task forces for major response efforts that require coordination across the federal government, and with local officials, to aid implementation and understand the impact of these responses.

Structure White House offices for coordinated and authoritative messaging.

Offices that can demonstrate direct access to the president speak with the greatest authority. While each White House is shaped by the president’s agenda and leadership style, presidents of both parties have employed senior advisors to coordinate stakeholder relationships. After its first year, the George W. Bush administration aligned the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs with several other offices, under the leadership of Karl Rove. Similarly, in the Obama White House, Valerie Jarrett, senior advisor to the president, oversaw a coordinated structure comprising the offices of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs.¹² Both Rove and Jarrett were understood to be trusted senior advisors who spoke on behalf of the president.

While it is critical that the director of a White House intergovernmental affairs office is seen as someone with close ties to the president, it is also important for that leader to work with White House peers and offices to represent a unifying, supportive tone, especially when trying to build consensus and support for the administration’s agenda.

¹¹ Martha Kumar, “White House Staff and Organization: Ten Observations,” October 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3P2nQLz>

¹² Ibid.

Use structures to support White House relationships with state, local, tribal and territorial communities, understand their needs, and plan for impact.

Organizations representing state and local leaders understand the importance of engaging with the communities affected by federal policy decisions early in the policymaking process. In 2008, these organizations sought commitments from then-presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama to strengthen federal, state and local partnerships and make the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs “an active part of his policy process.”¹³ Their belief was that a strong office “would form the cornerstone of federal-state-local communications necessary to make our partnership effective.”¹⁴

President Donald Trump’s director for intergovernmental affairs, Doug Hoelscher, described his office as a focal point to enable local officials to get answers directly from the federal government.

“Intergovernmental affairs serves the president, vice president, Cabinet secretaries, other senior White House staff, and the 500,000 state, local and tribal officials across the country. You are not talking to everyone every day, but you do talk with some stakeholders, like governors and their teams, very regularly. It is important to understand that it’s easier to be partners with some stakeholders than others but strive to be a fair broker to everyone. Put yourself in other people’s shoes even if you haven’t worn them before and be transparent about how things work and how people can get their foot in the door. And, finally, be open and willing to listen to local leaders. It matters that the top leadership believes and lives these concepts.”

—Doug Hoelscher, director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (2018-21)

There are clear benefits to enabling state, local, tribal and territorial officials to shape federal policy and program decisions and giving them access to federal agencies and officials. The federal government then can understand better these governments’ needs and perspectives. Early coordination on policy development saves time during implementation, can provide timely insights on what communities need, and helps federal officials tailor information and resources to address these needs. When the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 allocated \$65.1 billion of emergency funds directly to counties, members of the Biden administration charged with writing regulations and guidance met with the National Association of Counties and its members to learn

¹³ Tina Trenkner, “Office of Intergovernmental Affairs: More Influential Than Ever,” September 2011. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3C8dodU>

¹⁴ Ibid

about county government operations. By studying the complexities and listening to feedback upfront, federal officials could build in the flexibility local officials needed to use the funds to meet the needs of their communities and sustain their economic recovery.¹⁵

When the federal government was creating stakeholder-specific guidance for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, communication among White House officials who managed relationships with different communities led to timely insights about what those communities needed. One former White House official shared that the perspectives and input from colleagues who worked with different sets of local officials led to the development of a tribal playbook, which outlined all the infrastructure programs and funding that tribes were eligible for.

And finally, don't forget the power of symbolic gestures and fostering personal connections.

Presidents demonstrate their partnerships with governors, mayors, other local officials and members of Congress through their joint participation in travel and events across the country. Brian Montgomery, who led the Office of Presidential Advance at the beginning of the George W. Bush administration and later served in a variety of senior administration roles, recalled the complex decision-making involved in selecting locations for the president's travel. One of many considerations about determining which states and cities to visit was the potential benefit of supporting an existing or potential local partner.

Many officials also fondly remembered the White House invitations to connect with the president and administration, including during travel and at well-recognized events. Invitations to special occasions such as the White House Easter Egg Roll, Marine One landings, state dinners and ceremonies for sports teams, are catalysts for building relationships, demonstrating goodwill and cultivating connections with state and local partners.

Recommended Actions for White House Outreach and Coordination

- ⇒ Plan to use the White House intergovernmental affairs office as a focal point—but not the only point—to connect with state, local, tribal and territorial officials, especially when communicating about key initiatives.
- ⇒ Arrange to meet with state, local, tribal and territorial representatives to understand the local context for implementing federal policies and programs.

¹⁵ Charlie Ban, “ARP stewards: Tell the true story of county use, recovery,” February 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.naco.org/articles/arp-stewards-tell-true-story-county-use-recovery>.

- ⇒ Consider practical forums and tools for meaningful engagement, such as White House meetings specifically designed for dialogue with local officials, invitations to well-recognized events, and joint visits to states, cities, tribes and territories.

Where to next?

How an administration organizes and invests in relationships with officials at every level across the country and across party lines, during a transition and throughout a term, will affect its ability to make progress.

Building critical relationships with state, local, tribal and territorial representatives early on will enable a transition team to develop the right plans and networks to realize a candidate's vision. Maintaining and reinvesting in those relationships will support a White House's ability to refresh priorities for a president's second term. In every case, these relationships will help an administration understand local constraints to implementation and put its policies and programs in place.

As the country moves closer to the next presidential election, all candidates will make their case for change. Meanwhile, the executive branch will keep working with state, local, tribal and territorial partners to advance major initiatives, coordinate disaster response efforts and help ensure that government continues to function through a time of transition. When done right, these connections will help prepare a president to lead from day one, in service to the American people.

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