



August 12, 2024

Presidential Transitions: Facilities and Related Services Provided by the General Services Administration

In order to “minimize disruptions that might be occasioned by ... transitions in the office of President,” the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 (PTA; P.L. 82-277), as amended, authorizes the General Services Administration (GSA) to assist in the transfer of executive power prior to and following presidential elections. Consistent with its function as the government’s central property management agency, GSA provides office space and related services (i.e., telephones, information technology, furniture) to its presidential transition customers, primarily:

- the eligible presidential candidates,
- the Presidential Transition Team (PTT),
- the Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC), and
- the outgoing President and Vice President.

GSA has appointed a federal transition coordinator (FTC) to oversee its efforts and facilitate communication with its customers. The FTC begins working with GSA’s customers prior to the election and may continue to offer assistance beyond the inauguration depending on the customers’ needs and circumstances. GSA also co-chairs the Agency Transition Directors Council (ATDC), which coordinates and directs transition efforts government-wide, and establishes a Presidential Transition Directory (PTD) to assist candidates with accessing transition resources. The PTA requires GSA to enter into memoranda of understanding with eligible candidates prior to the election with regard to the provision of services and support authorized by the act.

Eligible Presidential Candidates

According to GSA’s May 2024 report on its presidential transition activities—which is required by the PTA—GSA will begin working with eligible candidates three business days after their respective national conventions. Eligible candidates, as defined by the Pre-Election Presidential Transition Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-283), include the nominees of each “major party” for President and Vice President as well as any other candidates that the GSA administrator determines is “among the principle contenders” in a general election for those offices.

GSA received \$10.4 million for its pre-election activities in its FY2024 appropriation, which will be used to support an estimated 100-120 members of each eligible candidate’s pre-election team. The teams will be located in space at GSA’s headquarters in Washington, D.C., and will be furnished to the extent possible with excess property. GSA is working with the Federal Protective Service (FPS), a

component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to ensure that building security requirements are met. GSA estimates that the space will be available for occupancy by August 27, 2024. Services are scheduled to end on Election Day, November 5, 2024.

President-Elect and Vice-President Elect

Following the election, GSA will support the PTT and PIC. According to GSA, services will become available

immediately after the election to a non-incumbent candidate if all but that candidate has conceded, or beginning five days after the election for a non-incumbent candidate that has not conceded the election and is still among the multiple possible apparent successful candidates. Once [GSA] determines that a candidate is no longer among the multiple possible apparent successful candidates (or that a different candidate should be treated as the sole apparent successful candidate), GSA will discontinue services to that unsuccessful candidate.

GSA has requested \$11.2 million for post-election activities in its FY2025 budget justification. Of that amount, \$7.2 million would be used to support a new, incoming Administration. Post-election funds would be managed by GSA on behalf of the President-elect and Vice President-elect for statutorily specified PTT and PIC activities, including the compensation of transition staff, costs associated with travel and communications services, and printing and postage costs associated with the transition.

The Senate’s FY2025 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill includes \$19.4 million for GSA’s presidential transition activities, including \$14.4 million to support a new, incoming Administration.

Presidential Transition Team

GSA plans to locate PTT staff and volunteers—which GSA estimates could range from 500 to 700 people—in its headquarters building. The U.S. Secret Service (USSS), a component of DHS, will work with GSA to ensure that appropriate credentialing and monitoring procedures are in place before the PTT occupies the building. GSA notes that space configuration and IT installation at the PTT site should be complete by October 1, 2024, and the construction required to meet USSS standards should be finished by October 31, 2024. The earliest PTT could occupy the building is the day after the election: November 6, 2024. GSA may provide services to the PTT for no longer than 60 days after the date of the inauguration. Prior to the Presidential Transition Enhancement Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-121), GSA could support the PTT for up to 180

days after Inauguration Day, but the bill reduced this time frame in an effort to decrease GSA's administrative costs.

The PTA specifies that GSA shall provide orientation activities for "key prospective Presidential appointees" who are making the transition from campaign or other activities to positions of governance, such as department heads. The PTA noted that GSA may consider coordinating with experts from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Government Accountability Office, agency inspectors general, and individuals who held similar leadership roles in previous Administrations. GSA's FY2025 budget request included \$1.0 million for orientation activities.

Presidential Inaugural Committee

The PIC plans and coordinates all presidential inaugural activities. In doing so, it works closely with federal and local stakeholders, primarily the:

- Joint Forces Headquarters-National Capital Region (JFHQ-NCR), a Department of Defense component with counter-terrorism responsibilities;
- FPS;
- National Park Service (NPS), which maintains several properties used during inauguration activities, including National Mall, the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site, and Lafayette Park; and
- District of Columbia's Presidential Inaugural Committee (DC-PIC), which oversees the District's plans for law enforcement, construction of viewing stands, and hazardous materials protection, among other things.

The PIC is the largest of GSA's customers, with an estimated 700-900 staff, including volunteers. GSA plans to provide the PIC with 43,000 square feet of office space at a GSA-owned building in Washington, D.C. Parking will be offered on a reimbursable basis.

According to GSA's timeline, FPS is scheduled to move into the PIC facility on August 24, 2024, followed by JFHQ-NCR on September 1, 2024. The timeline did not indicate that staff from NPS or DC-PIC would be located in the facility. GSA is working with FPS to ensure that building access and credentialing procedures are in place prior to staff arrival.

Outgoing President and Vice-President

As part of the presidential transition, GSA provides services to the outgoing President and Vice President beginning 30 days before to six months after the expiration of their term.

In addition to office space, technology, and furnishings, GSA may provide these customers with payroll, human resources services, and travel support. GSA also works with the National Archives and Record Administration as necessary to support the former Presidents and begin the establishment and maintenance of their libraries.

Agency Transition Directors Council

Mandated by the PTA, the ATDC plays a significant role in presidential transitions. The ATDC is composed of the transition directors of 22 federal agencies, including OMB and GSA, which co-chair the group. The ATDC is responsible for ensuring that the federal government has an integrated strategy for addressing interagency challenges and responsibilities around presidential transitions. To accomplish this, the ATDC:

- coordinates transition activities among federal agencies, the Executive Office of the President, and the transition teams of eligible candidates/apparent successful candidates;
- provides guidance to agencies in gathering briefing materials and other information that eligible candidates/apparent successful candidates may request;
- draws on guidance provided by the White House Transition Coordinating Council and lessons learned from previous presidential transitions;
- consults with the President's Management Council;
- assists the FTC; and
- ensures that agencies prepare career employees who are designated to fill non-career positions during a presidential transition.

Presidential Transition Directory

The PTA requires GSA, in consultation with the National Archives and Records Administration, to provide a compilation of materials that candidates may access to help them prepare for a possible transition. These materials, collectively referred to as the PTD, include information on the structures and functions of federal agencies, records management requirements, ethics guidelines, and other transition resources. GSA established an online version of the PTD on November 1, 2023.

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