

Allowances and Office Staff for Former Presidents, FY2016-FY2018 Appropriations

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Introduction

The Former Presidents Act (FPA), enacted on August 25, 1958 (3 U.S.C. §102 note), "was designed to 'maintain the dignity' of the office of the President by providing former Presidents—and their spouses—a pension and other benefits to help them respond to post-presidency mail and speaking requests, among other informal public duties often required." (See CRS Report RL34631, [Former Presidents: Pensions, Office Allowances, and Other Federal Benefits](#).) The General Services Administration (GSA) administers the law. Five former Presidents receive pensions and benefits under the FPA: Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack H. Obama. According to GSA, "In January 2017, the program began funding the pension for President Obama, and after July 21, 2017 ... [began funding] payroll and benefits of his staff, office space, office furnishings, and other related expenses."

Allowances and Office Staff for Former Presidents

GSA appropriations are included in annual financial services and general government (FSGG) appropriations acts. Within the GSA appropriations, the Allowances and Office Staff for Former Presidents account covers expenditures for personnel compensation, personnel benefits, pension, travel, office space, communications, printing, other services, supplies and materials, and equipment. **Tables 1 through 3**, below, show FY2016 enacted, FY2017 enacted, and FY2018 requested appropriations for allowances and office staff for former Presidents, respectively, disaggregated by expenditure categories. Enacted appropriations totaled \$3,277,000 (FY2016) and \$3,865,000 (FY2017). FY2018 appropriations totaling \$4,754,000 were requested. H.R. 3280, FY2018 FSGG Appropriations Act, as reported on July 18, 2017, would provide this amount.

In the tables below, the Pension category includes the pension and federal health benefits. According to a GSA legal opinion, President Carter did not have the five years of qualifying federal service needed to receive federal health benefits. President G.H.W. Bush qualifies for, but has chosen not to receive, federal health benefits. Presidents Clinton, G.W. Bush, and Obama receive federal health benefits. Communications include telephone, and United Parcel Service/Federal Express charges. Other Services includes security payments to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for lease location, license and support hours for the indefinite quantity (IQ) contract, postage for franked mail,

furniture moves, cable installation, and disposal costs. Supplies and Materials includes office supplies and subscriptions. Equipment includes furniture or information technology hardware or software and related installation costs. Personnel Compensation and Benefits for former President Carter are provided by contract support under Other Services.

The location and square footage for Office Space are as follows: Jimmy Carter – Atlanta, GA, 7,070; G.H.W. Bush – Houston, TX, 5,379; William J. Clinton – New York, NY, 8,300; G.W. Bush – Dallas, TX, 8,237; and Barack H. Obama – Washington, DC, 8,198.

Table 1. Allowances and Office Staff for Former Presidents

FY2016 Enacted Appropriation, Dollars in Thousands

Allowance Type	Jimmy Carter	George H. W. Bush	William J. Clinton	George W. Bush	Totals
Personnel Compensation	\$0	\$96	\$96	\$96	\$288
Personnel Benefits	\$0	\$65	\$119	\$90	\$274
Pension	\$207	\$207	\$221	\$217	\$852
Travel	\$0	\$72	\$0	\$8	\$80
Office Space	\$112	\$205	\$444	\$440	\$1,201
Communications	\$15	\$57	\$13	\$64	\$155 ^a
Printing	\$7	\$8	\$17	\$14	\$46
Other Services	\$94	\$73	\$26	\$43	\$236
Supplies and Materials	\$2	\$13	\$7	\$35	\$57
Equipment	\$0	\$22	\$26	\$40	\$88
Totals	\$437	\$818	\$969	\$1,047	\$3,277

Source: Data provided to CRS by GSA Office of Budget staff by in-person meeting on August 17, 2017.

Notes: FY2016 covers October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016.

a. Mrs. Nancy Reagan died on March 6, 2016. She waived the widow's pension, but received \$6,000 for communications and that amount is included in the overall total for FY2016 communications.

Table 2. Allowances and Office Staff for Former Presidents

FY2017 Enacted Appropriation, Dollars in Thousands

Allowance Type	Jimmy Carter	George H. W. Bush	William J. Clinton	George W. Bush	Barack H. Obama ^a	Totals
Personnel Compensation	\$0	\$96	\$96	\$96	\$29	\$317
Personnel Benefits	\$0	\$82	\$98	\$98	\$38	\$316
Pension	\$210	\$210	\$226	\$220	\$161	\$1,027
Travel	\$0	\$78	\$0	\$18	\$3	\$99
Office Space	\$113	\$254	\$511	\$472	\$84	\$1,434
Communications	\$21	\$50	\$1	\$140	\$11	\$223
Printing	\$7	\$9	\$22	\$40	\$6	\$84
Other Services	\$91	\$67	\$44	\$14	\$20	\$236
Supplies and Materials	\$3	\$4	\$12	\$20	\$3	\$42
Equipment	\$0	\$18	\$35	\$20	\$15	\$88
Totals	\$444	\$868	\$1,045	\$1,138	\$370	\$3,865

Source: Data provided to CRS by GSA Office of Budget staff by electronic mail on June 27, 2017, and telephone consultation on June 28, 2017.

Notes: FY2017 covers October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017.

a. According to GSA: "In January 2017, the program began funding the pension for President Obama, and after July 21, 2017, the program [began funding] payroll and benefits of his staff,

office space, office furnishings, and other related expenses. FY 2018 will therefore be the first fiscal year that the budget will need to cover a full year of operations for five ... former Presidents." (U.S. General Services Administration, [FY2018 Congressional Justification](#), May 23, 2017, p. FP-3) From January 21 through July 21, 2017, office, office staff, and related support for President Obama were funded through appropriations for the Presidential Transition Act (see CRS Report RS22979, [Presidential Transition Act: Provisions and Funding](#), by Henry B. Hogue).

Table 3. Allowances and Office Staff for Former Presidents

FY2018 Budget Request, Dollars in Thousands

Allowance Type	Jimmy Carter	George H. W. Bush	William J. Clinton	George W. Bush	Barack H. Obama	Totals
Personnel Compensation	\$0	\$96	\$96	\$96	\$150	\$438
Personnel Benefits	\$0	\$74	\$119	\$108	\$122	\$423
Pension	\$214	\$214	\$231	\$225	\$236	\$1,120
Travel	\$0	\$68	\$0	\$7	\$10	\$85
Office Space	\$115	\$286	\$518	\$497	\$536	\$1,952
Communications	\$17	\$57	\$14	\$69	\$11	\$168
Printing	\$7	\$11	\$17	\$21	\$20	\$76
Other Services	\$102	\$83	\$35	\$54	\$36	\$310
Supplies and Materials	\$1	\$15	\$7	\$30	\$7	\$60
Equipment	\$0	\$38	\$26	\$33	\$25	\$122
Totals	\$456	\$942	\$1,063	\$1,140	\$1,153	\$4,754

Sources: Data provided to CRS by GSA Office of Budget staff by electronic mail on June 27, 2017. U.S. General Services Administration, [FY2018 Congressional Justification](#), May 23, 2017, p. FP-6.

Notes: FY2018 covers October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018.