

# **PRESIDENTIAL PERSONNEL OFFICE FILES, (1953-73) 1974-77**

## **Collection Type**

White House Office Files

## **Extent**

273 linear feet (ca. 500,000 pages)

## **Record Type**

Textual

## **Access**

Some series are open, others are closed. Many files in the open series are available as review on request. Researchers should consult with an archivist prior to their visit in order to request that specific folders be added to the Library's review-for-access queue. The closed series and some documents in the open series are temporarily restricted under terms of the donor's deed of gift, a copy of which is available on request, or under National Archives and Records Administration general restrictions (36 CFR 1256). Researchers may contact the Library for information about how to appeal the access restriction decision of individual documents.

## **Copyright**

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## **Processed by**

Jeremy Schmidt, February 2015

## **Biography**

Biographical information for the PPO staff is available for [download](#) in a separate document (PDF).

## **Scope and Content Note**

### Overview of the Office

The mission of the Presidential Personnel Office (PPO) was to provide the President with outstanding candidates for appointment for all Presidentially-appointed positions in the Federal Government. Also, from time to time, the Office provided the President with recommended policy guidance for his use in instructing Federal department and agency heads on conduct of personnel activities in their organizations.

PPO responsibilities included the following:

- identify, recruit, select top choices, and obtain political and professional clearance for policy positions below the Cabinet level and for positions on the various boards and commissions,
- handle the processing of recommendations from Congressman, political figures, and other special groups,
- follow-up on the protocol and processing details of individuals selected for appointment, and
- maintain a record of upcoming vacancies.

The PPO managed the Presidential appointment process and undertook several steps in this process. This process included: executive search, screening interviews, candidate evaluation, ensuring completion by Counsel's office of security clearance, conflict of interest clearance, special prosecutor clearance, and forwarding analytical recommendations to the President. Finally, the Office

communicated the President's appointment decisions to the relevant appointing authority.

Additionally, the PPO:

- answered, as appropriate, all employment inquiries directed to the President and White House staff by the Congress or any individual,
- maintained a talent bank of candidates who are qualified for Presidential appointments,
- monitored the Federal departments' and agencies' appointment of personnel to supergrade positions in their respective agency,
- recommended appointment criteria and changes therein to the President as appropriate,
- communicated the President's personnel appointment policies to the departments and agencies, and
- recommended qualified candidates to the departments and agencies for consideration for appropriate vacancies.

#### Appointment Types Handled by the Office

The PPO was responsible for managing 5,682 non-career positions, including 540 executive-level Presidential appointments, 1,175 positions as judges, ambassadors, U.S. Marshals and U.S. Attorneys, and 2,240 part time positions. In general, the PPO did not have responsibility for initiating judicial or ambassadorial appointments, which are begun at Justice and State departments, respectively.

The number of appointments also includes 1,727 non-Presidential appointments to positions excepted from the Civil Service regulations. This category was added in 1969, in order for the Nixon administration to gain greater control over the Federal bureaucracy. However, in 1974, President Ford changed the name of the White House Personnel Office to PPO, and began restructuring the office to focus more on Presidential appointments, relying more on department heads to secure non-Presidential appointments in their departments.

The following appointment types were administered by the PPO:

- PAS - Presidential appointment by and with the advise and consent of the Senate,

- PA – Presidential appointment,
- AP – appointment made with the approval of the President,
- NEA – Non-career Executive Assignment, positions at the GS-16, 17, and 18 level,
- LEA – Limited Executive Assignment, positions excepted by regulation and / or statute,
- Schedule C – positions of a confidential or policy determining character which are excepted from the competitive service to which appointments may be made without examination by the Civil Service Commission,
- Consultant / Expert – appointees whose duties are equivalent to an NEA or Schedule C appointment, and
- members of boards and commission, when the appointment authority is vested in the President

### Structure of the PPO

The PPO was headed by a Director, who reported to the Assistant to the President for White House Operations (“Chief of Staff”). In his immediate office were a deputy director and a special assistant. Four associate directors were responsible for considering candidates for appointment to the various departments, independent agencies, boards, and commissions. Each had a responsibility for one of these areas:

- Human Resources, including such departments as Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Transportation, and such agencies as ACTION, Office of Economic Opportunity, the Smithsonian Institution, Veterans Affairs and the Equal Opportunity Commission,
- Natural Resources, including such departments as Agriculture and Interior, and such agencies as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Federal Energy Administration,
- National Security, including the Justice, Defense, and State Departments and the CIA, and
- Economics, including Labor, Treasury, and Commerce departments, as well as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Wage and Price Stability Board.

Each associate director had a staff assistant. Assisting the associate directors on a task basis was an Associate Director for Recruitment. An assistant director held responsibilities for appointments to boards and commissions. Occasionally, consultants also assisted the Director on a special assignment basis.

The PPO Operations Office, headed by an assistant director, was responsible for managing the talent bank and executive inventories, clearance office, special projects and processing operations, including computer functions, mail room, the preparation of documents for Presidential signature, and the handling of public and form mail.

The Operations Office performed all the central and standardizable functions possible, freeing up the time of the Director, Deputy Director, and Associate Directors for their unique functions of analysis, negotiations, evaluation, and decision. The Office served the entire PPO staff by managing a computerized central information and action-status system. The system tracked the appointment process, including the various clearances. It also maintained a talent bank of approximately 6,000 names stored in computer and paper files.

Before President Ford ordered the reorganization of the PPO in late 1974, it was organized by function (recruiting, agency liaison, correspondence, talent bank, and clearances).

#### Presidential Appointment Work Flow

The office was organized to keep in close contact with departments and agencies outside the White House so that its recruiting responsibilities were responsive to their personnel needs. It maintained contact through the associate directors and it recruited through experienced recruiters.

The PPO staff arrived at their recommendations after analyzing the nature of the position, reviewing files on recruited individuals, examining records in the talent bank, reviewing recommendations, and seeking the opinions of appropriate people on the White House Staff and occasionally Members of Congress or Republic Party officials.

When a candidate had been identified for a particular vacancy, a decision memorandum was prepared that outlined the nature and requirements of the

position, listed the alternate candidates, and recommended to the President the best candidate in the context of the given situation. Options were given when available, known political support was outlined, and an evaluation of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses included. Highly sensitive political situations or extenuating circumstances were outlined where necessary and appropriate. A cover memorandum was included that summarized input provided by the White House staff and others.

### Scope and Content

The PPO files document the White House's role in the process of appointing individuals to Presidential appointee positions within Federal departments, independent agencies, boards, and commissions. The vast majority of this collection consists of materials related to specific appointments filed by job or agency and by name in the PPO Central File. Another large portion of the collection contains files on individuals seeking appointments. Often these files consist of the Federal Government's Personnel Qualifications Statement form (SF-171), or a resume, as well as supporting correspondence. These are found in the PPO Operations Files, and the Economic and Labor, Human Resources, Natural Resources, and Security and Justice staff area files.

Presidential Decision Memoranda prepared by the PPO staff outlining their appointment recommendation to the President are found in the PPO Central Files. The staff area files include working papers illustrating the appointment process related to the analysis and selection of candidates. Also, often the staff area files include name files with resume material, chronological files with correspondence with prospective appointees, and subject files. The subject files often contain vacancy reports, lists of appointees, procedure manuals, and reference materials. The separate Director's and Deputy Director's Subject File series are particularly rich in materials related to the operation of the PPO and information about minorities and women in the Nixon and Ford administrations. The Boards and Commission sub-collection consists of appointment materials, a talent bank, and subject files related to boards, commission, and foreign delegations. Board and commission appointment files are also found in the staff area files.

### **Related Materials** (March 2015)

Materials on Presidential appointments to positions in the administration appear

throughout the Library's holdings. The collection with the largest amount of related materials is the White House Central Files Subject File. The information is located under the appropriate number for each agency in the category FG. Additional correspondence often appears in the White House Central Files Name File under the names of specific candidates for appointments.

## **Series List**

Click the office name to view finding aids for each office. They are available for download in separate documents (PDF).

### [Director's Office Files](#)

A1-A11: Subject File

A11-A19: Presidential Appointments File

A20: Name File

A21-A37: Presidential Decision Memoranda

A38: Staffing Memoranda

A39-A42: White House Staff Memoranda (Jones/Wimer)

A43-A48: Chronological File

A49-A50: Recruiters Working File

A51: Oversized

### [Deputy Director's Office Files](#)

B1-B8: Subject File

### [PPO Central Files](#)

C1-C32: Job Files (Departments)

C33-C60: Job Files (Agencies, Boards, and Commissions)

C61-C199: Name File

C200-C219: Presidential Memoranda

C220-C252: Congressional Correspondence

### [PPO Operations Office Files](#)

D1-D5: Subject File

D5-D7: Congressional and National Committeemen Requests

D7-D11: Executive Orientation Program File

D12-D14: Computer File – Subject File  
D15-D16: Computer File – Agency File  
D17-D18: Executive Inventory - Card File  
D19: Executive Inventory - Attorneys File  
D19-D20: Executive Inventory - High, Medium, Low File  
D20-D31: Executive Inventory - File #1  
D31-D32: Executive Inventory - File #2  
D33-D38: Executive Inventory - File #3  
D39-D40: Executive Inventory - File #4  
D40-D41: Executive Inventory - File #5  
D41-D43: Junior Executive Inventory - File #1  
D43-D46: Junior Executive Inventory - File #2  
D46-D47: Executive Inventory - Incomplete File  
D48: Fee - Off Top 300 Project File

#### [Economic and Labor Staff Files](#)

E1-E31: Presidential Appointments File  
E31-E33: Chronological File  
E34-E46: Schedule C Clearances File

#### [Human Resources Staff Files](#)

F1-F49: Presidential Appointments File  
F50-F51: Subject File  
F52-F55: Name File  
F56-F58: Vacancy Reports  
F59-F62: Chronological File  
F63-F65: Presidential Appointments Index

#### [Natural Resources Staff Files](#)

G1-G19: Presidential Appointments File  
G20-G45: Name File  
G46-G52: Subject File  
G53-G54: Memos and Letters Chronological File

#### [Security and Justice Staff Files](#)

H1-H15: Presidential Appointments Files (Departments)



H15-H22: Presidential Appointments Files (Boards and Commissions)

H22-H25: Ambassadorial Candidates

H25-H26: Hispanic Candidates

H27-H31: Name File

[Boards and Commissions Staff Files](#)

I1-I45: Presidential Appointments File

I46-I52: General File

I53-I54: Name File

I54-I60: Talent Bank File

I60-I64: Departmental Boards and Commissions, and Delegations File

**Last Modified Date**

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