The White House

Executive Offices and Staff

The president resides in the White House and conducts much of his business from the Oval Office. However, the main executive offices are housed in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, located next door to the White House. The offices are run by officials who are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. They help the president develop policy and manage the nation's affairs.

The three main offices in the Eisenhower building include the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the National Security Council, and the Council of Economic Advisors. The OMB helps the president draft his proposed budget for Congress by reviewing legislation, regulations, and proposed budgets from various areas of the government. The Eisenhower building also houses the office of the United States Trade Representative, who helps negotiate trade with foreign powers and creates and implements trade policies.

The National Security Advisor heads the National Security Council, which also includes the president, vice president, and secretaries of state and defense, among others. This Council was created in response to intelligence lapses during World War II as an effort to better coordinate intelligence gathering. It oversees American foreign policy and security issues, helps the president manage crises, and makes sure national security policies are implemented.

The Council of Economic Advisors helps the president develop an economic plan for the nation. Every year, this Council creates the Economic Report of the President. This report highlights trends and projects future economic conditions, such as inflation and unemployment. The president uses the data from this report to guide policy on issues like taxes and entitlements.

The president's staff is located in the West Wing of the White House, and members of the staff run the day-to-day affairs of the White House. The president appoints staff members, and unlike the heads of executive offices, they do not require congressional confirmation. Often, these people are close personal advisors and friends of the president.

The Chief of Staff is the highest-ranking member of the White House staff. Depending on the administration, the Chief may be very powerful and firmly control the White House, or he may be just one of the president's advisors and have a less powerful role. Examples of powerful Chiefs of Staff include Sherman Adams, who worked under President Eisenhower and John Sununu, who worked under the first President Bush. The Chiefs of Staff for the Kennedy, Carter, and Clinton administrations all had less prominent roles.

The White House staff is divided into a number of specific functions that help the president organize and manage the executive branch. For example, one part includes the political advisors, such as speechwriters, the press secretary, counselors, and congressional liaisons. These people may be personal friends of the president or may have worked closely with his campaign. They typically have daily contact with the president and can be highly influential in policy and decision-making.

Another part of the White House staff includes the policy offices, which represent advisors to the presidents for specific policy issues. The policy offices include the National Security Council and
Council of Economic Advisors. Members of the policy offices are appointed by the president and do not need Senate confirmation. These people are usually trusted confidants of the president and have the "ear of the Executive" more often than members of formal positions, such as Cabinet members and members of the executive office.

A third area of the White House staff is that of support services, which includes the secretarial staff, kitchen personnel, appointment personnel, maintenance technicians, and visitor guides. These people keep the White House operating every day and do not have the "ear" of the president.

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