



## Overview

The U.S. federal government consists of over 450 different agencies — in total, employing 9 million people and spending over \$4.5 trillion per year. While the Constitution authorizes the President to lead the Executive Branch, the sheer size of this task requires him to delegate his oversight authority. The White House Office of Management & Budget (OMB) sits atop a complex bureaucracy, overseeing all federal government operations and implementing the President's agenda government wide. From monitoring day-to-day agency activities to crafting the President's budget proposals, OMB operates as the ultimate enforcer of the White House's priorities and vision.

## What is OMB?

Established in 1921, OMB's predecessor — called the U.S. Bureau of the Budget — allowed Presidents to oversee the complex Agency budgeting process. Brought under direct White House administration in 1939, the Bureau was significantly expanded and reformed in 1970. In an independent action, President Nixon replaced the old Bureau with the OMB, promoting stability and expertise in the management of federal programs while at the same time improving the White House's capacity to centralize Executive Branch decision making. As government activities have expanded over the past four decades, each Administration has reshaped OMB to ensure government actions and messages remain in alignment with the President.

## What does OMB do?

OMB shapes every significant legislative and regulatory discussion in Washington. The organization's work begins with the President's budget proposal to Congress. OMB takes federal agency input and finalizes a comprehensive proposal that makes specific spending and policy recommendations for programs across the government. OMB also reviews and analyzes Congressional actions, making recommendations on every bill passed by Congress, and drafting Statements of Administrative Policy (SAPs) which communicate the White House's opinion on pending legislation. OMB professionals also make policy, identifying novel policy options to Administration staff and adjusting major regulatory actions proposed by federal agencies. OMB also reviews Executive Branch officials' testimony, speeches, and other statements to ensure formal statements line up with the Administration's priorities.

## What role does OMB have in solving our big issues?

OMB collects information from across the Executive Branch and coordinates the policy proposals that often guide negotiations with Congress on budget issues, as well as hot button policy issues like immigration and health care. OMB will have a crucial role in outlining the White House's priorities and working with

## Center Forward Basics

Center Forward brings together members of Congress, not-for-profits, academic experts, trade associations, corporations and unions to find common ground. Our mission: to give centrist allies the information they need to craft common sense solutions, and provide those allies the support they need to turn those ideas into results.

In order to meet our challenges we need to put aside the partisan bickering that has gridlocked Washington and come together to find common sense solutions.

For more information, please visit [www.center-forward.org](http://www.center-forward.org)

## Key Facts

- Number of OMB Staff: **fewer than 500**
- OMB Leadership Positions:
  - **OMB Director:** Cabinet-level Presidential appointee, confirmed by Senate
  - **Deputy Director/ Administrator:** Presidential appointees, confirmed by Senate (5 positions)
  - **Program Associate Director (PAD):** Political appointees (5 positions)
  - **Deputy Associate Director (DAD):** civil service employees (several positions)
- Recent OMB Directors:
  - 2019-present: **Russell Vought**
  - 2017-2020: **Mick Mulvaney**
  - 2017-2017: **Mark Sandy**
  - 2014-2017: **Shaun Donovan**
  - 2014-2014: **Brian Deese**

Administration officials to argue the President's position and help develop solutions both sides can support.

- 2013-2014: **Sylvia Mathews Burwell**

## Links to Other Resources

- American Political Institutions & Public Policy — [Inside OMB: Politics & Process in the President's Budget Office](#)
- American Presidency Project — [President Nixon Message Proposing Reorganization of Executive Branch](#)
- Congressional Research Service — [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\): An Overview](#)
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities — [Policy Basics: Where do our Federal Tax Dollars Go?](#)
- Office of Management & Budget — [The Office of Management & Budget](#)
- Washington Post — [How big is the federal workforce? Much bigger than you think.](#)