



India Abroad Center for Political Awareness

Political Appointments and Public Service Opportunities in the Bush Administration February 2001

A fact sheet for the Indian American community on applying for a political
appointment

For more information, please visit our website at www.iacfpa.org

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FACT SHEET ON POLITICAL APPOINTMENT/PUBLIC SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

February 2001

The following material was prepared solely by the India Abroad Center for Political Awareness (IACPA) as an educational tool for the Indian American community. This material has not been reviewed, endorsed, nor approved by any member of the Bush-Cheney Transition team, the Bush-Cheney Presidential Transition Foundation, Inc., or anyone else affiliated with the new administration.

What is a political or presidential appointment?

A political appointment can be an honor and a privilege, but it is unlike a career position, and is not for everyone. Generally, an administration seeks to fill appointed positions with those who helped its political party win the White House. Thus, to be successful, a candidate must have substantial political experience such as having worked on or contributed to campaigns, ran for elective office, and/or maintain personal ties with influential elected officials or party leaders. A candidate should also be able to count on the support from important constituencies, such as trade or industry associations and community organizations, as well as elected officials.

The process of obtaining a “plum job” can be very lengthy and demanding, and candidates should be aware that there is much public and/or press scrutiny and extensive FBI background checks involved. Every aspect of a candidate’s personal, medical, financial, and other histories will be reviewed and possibly become public. Additionally, applicants will need to be aware of possible conflicts of interest concerns during and after employment as most appointees’ dealings with the federal government will be restricted for a period of time both during and after their Federal employment.

What types of positions are available?

The *United States Government Policy and Supporting Positions* (better known as the “Plum Book”) is issued by Congress every four years and lists thousands of civil service leadership and support positions in the legislative and executive branches of the federal government that may be filled by noncompetitive appointments. As of September 2000, there were 7,403 such positions. These appointments generally fall under four categories:

1. Presidential Appointment requiring Senate confirmation (“PAS”)
2. Presidential Appointment without Senate approval (“PA”)
3. Non-career Senior Executive Service (“SES”)
4. Schedule C positions for entry to mid-level assistants (“Schedule C”)

Candidates for appointments are encouraged to obtain the latest Plum Book to determine which positions and which agencies may be of interest. The Plum Book also contains other helpful information such as type and terms of appointment, salary, name of

incumbents, etc. The books are available for purchase at U.S. Government Printing Office stores across the nation and on the Internet at:

http://www.senate.gov/~gov_affairs/transitions/pta_index.htm

How long will it take to get a position?

There are no hard and fast rules on how long the process takes as there are too many variables involved. However, as a general guideline, candidates should expect the process to take at a minimum of four to six months from the time the application is submitted for a lower level position to a year or more for positions requiring Senate confirmation. Of course, the more prominent the appointment, the longer it could take, and possibly become controversial.

Another factor to consider is the level where the desired position is situated, i.e., generally, administrations will fill their cabinet and sub-cabinet positions first before attempting to fill support positions for those posts. This is because senior members of the administration will generally have a say on the individuals they wish to recruit as their deputies and assistants.

The search for members to serve on commissions and boards, or director positions in independent agencies can begin even later, and will continue throughout the duration of the administration as terms for these position often have specific beginning and ending dates.

How do I apply for an appointment?

Interested Indian Americans should visit the official Bush-Cheney Transition website at www.bushcheneytransition.com to learn the specific steps required by the administration in applying for a position. The website has both hard copy and online versions of the application form that must be submitted to begin the process.

IACPA encourages Indian American candidates to send their application and supporting materials to IACPA as soon as possible. IACPA will send materials of qualified applicants to the White House. However, IACPA also encourages you to send materials directly to the White House as soon as possible, as well. The applications should be mailed to Clay Johnson, Director, Office of Presidential Personnel, The White House, Washington, DC 20500.

Where can I get more information about appointments?

The following is a listing of related information available on the Internet that may be of interest to candidates (please note that IACPA is not affiliated with the following organizations, and we neither endorse nor support the accuracy of any information contained on these websites):

- Presidential Transition Directory at: <http://www.presidentialtransitiondirectory.gov/>
- American Enterprise Institute's "Transition to Governing Project" at: www.aei.org/governing
- Brookings Institution's "Presidential Appointee Initiative" at: www.appointee.brookings.org
- Council for Excellence in Government's "The 2000 Prune Book: How to succeed in Washington's top jobs" at: www.excelgov.org
- Heritage Foundation's "Mandate for Leadership" at: www.heritage.org/mandate

All those interested in a political appointment, please send a cover letter and resume, to IACPA, after reviewing all the information above.

SENDING YOUR INFORMATION TO IACPA DOES NOT GUARANTEE AN APPOINTMENT. IACPA WILL FORWARD ALL QUALIFIED RESUMES TO THE WHITE HOUSE.