Presidential appointees and the members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) sit at the highest levels of federal agencies. In December 2016, the federal government included 1,242 Senate-confirmed, Presidential-appointed positions (PAS positions) and 472 other Presidential-appointed positions (PA positions). The SES included 8,156 individuals in 2016 (7,321 career SES, 737 noncareer SES, and 96 limited term/emergency SES). These leaders help direct a federal workforce of more than two million employees.

The public often learns the identities of cabinet secretaries, heads of other agencies, and a handful of other very high-ranking officials. But the public knows far less about the next layers

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of the executive branch, in part because information can be difficult to locate in a centralized, 

A recent report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office concluded that “there is 
no single source of data on political appointees serving in the executive branch that is publicly 
available, comprehensive, and timely.”\footnote{GAO, Government-Wide Political Appointee Data, supra note 5 (summarizing “What GAO Found”).}

To be sure, various resources, including United States Government Policy and 
Supporting Positions (the so-called “Plum Book”),\footnote{The Plum Book, supra note 2.} the Official Congressional Directory,\footnote{United States Congress, Joint Commission on Printing, Official Congressional Directory: 115th Congress (2017).} and 
high-level agency positions. But these publications do not cover PAS, PA, and SES officials and, 
given turnover, can quickly become out-of-date.\footnote{See GAO, Government-Wide Political Appointee Data, supra note 5, at 13 (“Until the names of political appointees and their position, position type, agency or department name, start and end dates are publicly available at least quarterly, it will be difficult for the public to access comprehensive and reliable information.”); Ochoa, supra note 4, at 18–38.} Likewise, although the Office of Personnel 
Management (OPM) maintains extensive lists of federal employees, those lists are not 
available in any publicly accessible forum.\footnote{Ochoa, supra note 4, at 45–48.} Finally, while some agencies provide current information 
about high-ranking officials on their websites, practices vary significantly.\footnote{Id. at 36–37.} Detailed
information about appointment terms, vacant offices, acting officials, and delegated authority is often even more difficult to find.\textsuperscript{13}

Knowing the identities of those who help lead federal agencies is important for promoting transparency and facilitating public participation in the work of government.\textsuperscript{14} For instance, congressional members and staff, White House officials, officials at other federal and state agencies, the media, academic researchers, and members of the public more generally all have reasons to know this information.\textsuperscript{15}

The Conference has previously addressed related issues. In 1968, the Conference recommended changes to the \textit{U.S. Government Organization Manual}, specifically pointing out deficiencies with the “narrative text submitted” by agencies and encouraging agencies to improve these entries.\textsuperscript{16} This Recommendation goes much further, offering specific recommendations for making agency information publicly available.


\textsuperscript{14} See GAO, GOVERNMENT-WIDE POLITICAL APPOINTEE DATA, supra note 5, at 13; Ochoa, supra note 4, at 3.

\textsuperscript{15} See GAO, GOVERNMENT-WIDE POLITICAL APPOINTEE DATA, supra note 5, at 13.

One of this Recommendation’s purposes is to advance the Conference’s recent efforts to promote greater access to relevant agency information.¹⁷ This is a companion to Recommendation 2019—__, Listing Agency Officials, which ________________.¹⁸

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendations Applicable to Agencies Generally

1. Agencies should prominently display on their webpages updated information about each current and acting PAS, PA, and SES official, including the term of each such individual’s appointment (if applicable). Vacancies should also be prominently displayed.

2. If an agency does not list information about each current and acting PAS, PA, and SES official on its own webpage for all subcomponents, it should make this clear on its website and link to subcomponent websites where the information can be located.

Recommendations Applicable to the Office of Personnel Management

3. OPM should publish comprehensive data about PAS, PA, and SES officials on a monthly basis on a public website and ensure the information is easily accessible.

4. OPM should include the following fields, if applicable, for each listed PAS, PA, and SES officer: Agency; Name (first and last); Job Title; Start Date; End Date (if known or reasonably foreseeable); and Type of Appointment.

5. OPM should create separate lists of current and former officials.
