



State Transitions: What are Lessons Learned and Best Practices?

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The National Landscape for Change

- Most Governor's elections occur in off-Presidential election even numbered years
 - 34 elections held in 2014
 - Three of those states will have elections (again) in 2016
 - Vermont and New Hampshire elect Governors to two-year terms
 - Oregon special election
- Very few (five) elections occur in odd-numbered years
 - NJ, KY, LA, VA, MS
- 12 states will have elections in 2016
 - DE, IN, MO, MT, NH, NC, ND, UT, VT, WA, WV, OR
 - Five are open seats (MO, NH, ND, VT, WV)

Election Morning Epiphany . . .

'What do we do now?'



“On election night, it feels like a finish line. It feels like you’ve accomplished something. And early the next morning, you realize you haven’t really started.”

Steven Waguespack, Louisiana Governor’s Transition Team

Governor's 'To Do' List

- Shift from one finish line to a new/different one
- Assemble transition team and determine its roles
- Plan/fundraise for inauguration and surrounding events
- Begin learning/crafting state budget
- Select Cabinet officials and Governor's key staff
- Begin work on carrying out campaign promises
- Prepare inaugural, state of the state and budget address
- Establish policy priorities and 'first 100 days' plan
- Develop and execute media and communication plan
- Move family/belongings into Governor's residence
- In many states, figure out how to pay for full-time staff to coordinate and undertake day-to-day activities prior to taking office
- ***Decide who/how to delegate.***

Transition at the State Level

- Unlike the federal government, no two states handle transition (or anything) exactly the same
- In some states, (some) formal structures are in place
- Generally, transition is addressed on a case-by-case basis
- In some states, the structure of key staff (such as in the budget office) make transition more seamless than others
- Other organizations may act as a resource when there otherwise is a void

Formal State Transition Structures

- Often little legislative statutory involvement
 - Illinois: required to provide space for five transitional staff members
 - Iowa: appropriates small transition budget (under \$100,000)
- Outgoing Administrations often prepare some formal record, for example:
 - Briefing books/papers on key issues
 - Formal briefings/sit downs with key outgoing leadership and staff
 - Budget simulations/models that identify key choices
 - Other tools – outgoing Massachusetts Governor Patrick's transition website

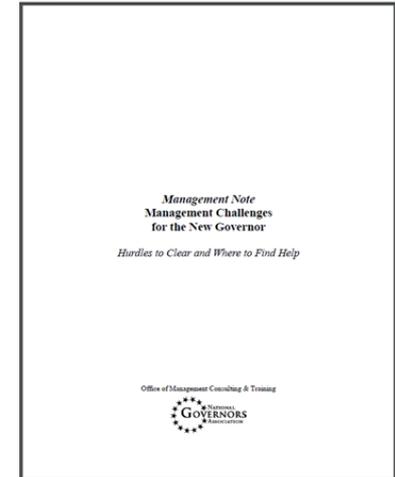
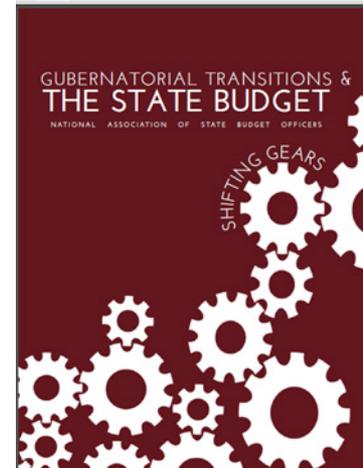
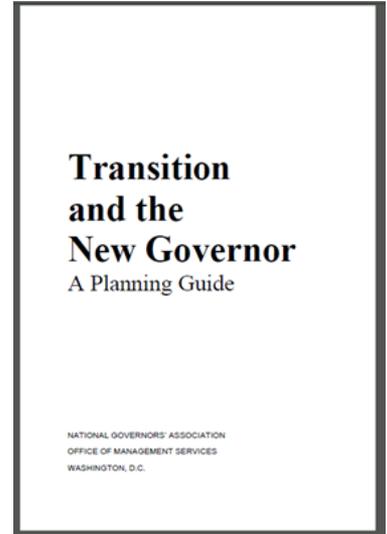


Informal Structures

- Governors create their own transition teams and forms – lots of variation
 - Generally includes a small, close-knit group of advisors for key decisions (particularly Cabinet and Governor's staff)
 - Often has a 'heavy hitter' steering group and multiple committees
 - Often a specialized committee for the inaugural and related activities
- Transition team characteristics
 - Wide variation in size
 - The biggest need: full-time staff who 'know the ropes'
- Some state transitions are easier than others (for example where budget and finance operations are relatively constant even with change in political party control)

Other Transition Resources

- Key non-partisan national organizations provide resources to support
 - National Governor's Association (NGA)
 - National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO)
 - National Association of State Procurement Officers (NASPO)
- Other organizations will assist
 - Democratic and Republican Governors Associations
 - Special interest groups
 - State financial/other advisers



Transition Frontline Challenges

- It will be organized chaos – on a good day
 - Myriad small (but important) details
 - Thousands of people wanting time/attention
- There is a political campaign/policymaking dichotomy
 - Natural tendency to ‘dance with the one who brought you’
 - Political practitioners may not be experienced in state government
- Temptation to view new Administration as entering a vacuum
 - There are ongoing tasks that require continuity (correspondence, casework, etc.)
 - There may be hard feelings/competition between Administrations
- There is no time (or often money) to hire enough/the right staff from day one

Strategies for Auditors' Engagement in Transition

- Organized chaos
 - Staffing or other resource assistance – at least single point of contact
 - Be proactive in 'making connections' before Election Night
 - Accept they will need 'getting to know you' assistance (don't crowd)
- Campaign/policymaking dichotomy
 - Be strategic on shared interests – accountability/transparency can be sold to both political and policymaking groups (if you sell it)
 - Save the 'nuts and bolts' discussions for the government types
- Leadership vacuum
 - Important to reinforce the importance of continuity of operations
 - Early on 'high level' briefing on assessment of risks and ongoing joint efforts between accountability and administration staff
 - Offer later briefings on department or key issue level

Looking Forward/Parting Thoughts

- Accountability/transparency is a good pitch, but the product needs work
 - Government 'checkbook' and similar websites are a mess
 - 'Open government' approaches have a 'drink from a firehose' feel to them – frustrating and overwhelming
 - Siloed or splintered efforts
- We need more dialogue on respective opportunities for 'constructive communication'
 - How can we work together to make the process more open and accessible?
 - How can we, at the start of our relationship, identify the necessary and appropriate 'rules of engagement'
 - This will have greater opportunity for success if it occurs at the beginning of the new Administration
 - Every relationship must be continually nurtured and maintained

Discussion/Questions



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