

Main Idea

The president leads a large team of people who help carry out the duties of the office. This team includes a staff of advisers, the vice president, and members of the cabinet.

Reading Focus

1. What is the Executive Office of the President, and what are its duties?
2. How has the role of the vice president changed over time?
3. What is the cabinet, and how does it work with the president?

Key Terms

administration

Executive Office of the President

White House Office

chief of staff

National Security Council

Council of Economic Advisers

Office of Management and Budget

executive departments

Executive Office of the President (pp. 181–183)

A president's **administration** is made up of all the people who work for the executive branch. Most of these people are career government employees, while others are appointed to their posts by the president.

Many of the top administration officials belong to the **Executive Office of the President** (EOP). The EOP is made up of a number of separate offices that help the president formulate, or make, policy.

Among them are the White House Office, the National Security Council, the Council of Economic Advisers, and the Office of Management and Budget.

The Formation of the EOP During the Great Depression in the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt and Congress created many new government programs and agencies. In 1939 Roosevelt asked Congress to authorize a new organizational structure to manage these new agencies—the Executive Office of the President. New

modern challenges such as global leadership following World War II spurred further growth of the EOP. Most members of the EOP are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate.

The White House Office At the heart of the EOP is the **White House Office**. The White House Office consists of the president's key personal and political staff. They serve without Senate confirmation. To manage the White House Office the president appoints a **chief of staff**. In some administrations the chief of staff focuses on managing the everyday operations of the White House Office. In others, he or she is a primary presidential adviser who controls all access to the president and helps map political strategy.

The president's personal secretary and legal counsel report to the chief of staff. The chief of staff also oversees teams charged with political tasks and manages the work of the staff offices. The White House press secretary manages media relations.

National Security Council One of the most important parts of the EOP is the **National Security Council** (NSC). The National Security Council brings together the top military, foreign affairs, and intelligence officials in the administration to coordinate U.S. national security policy. NSC activities are coordinated by the assistant to the president for national security affairs, also known as the national security adviser.

NSC meetings include the vice president; the secretaries of state, treasury, and defense, the director of national intelligence, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs is a group made up of the heads of each major branch of the armed forces. The president's chief of staff, chief counsel, and the attorney general may also be involved in NSC meetings. Other members of the cabinet may be invited, depending on matters under discussion.

Council of Economic Advisers Congress created the **Council of Economic Advisers** (CEA) as a part of the EOP in 1946. The CEA provides the president with expert analysis of the economy. The CEA also assists the president in forming economic policy. It is made up of three members nominated by the president and approved by the Senate.

The OMB Another key part of the EOP is the **Office of Management and Budget** (OMB). The purpose of the OMB is to help develop the federal budget and to oversee its execution by the agencies in the executive branch. The OMB also gathers information and sets policies for the management of government finances and the purchase of government goods, services, and property. Its director is appointed by the president and approved by the Senate.

Reading Check Summarizing What are some of the main offices located within the Executive Office of the President?

The Vice President (pp. 183–184) The vice president is the only other elected official in the president's administration. The Constitution gives the vice president three major duties. These are: presiding over the Senate, opening and counting the electoral votes in presidential elections, and serving as president if the president cannot do the job.

The Early Vice Presidency Early vice presidents did little more than perform the duties outlined above. They did not attend cabinet meetings or help make policy. The vice presidency increased in importance once the Twelfth Amendment was passed in 1804. The Twelfth Amendment established separate votes for president and vice president, which meant the vice president became important in helping get the president elected. A vice presidential candidate can help balance the ticket, or bring in votes from certain political groups or particular geographic areas that the presidential candidate cannot get.

The Modern Vice Presidency Since the 1970s presidents have come to rely more heavily on their vice presidents to help make policy and carry out programs. Some recent vice presidents have also been given special assignments.

Vice presidents have their own staffs to help them carry out their duties. The vice president's office is also near the Oval Office in the West Wing, which allows for more interaction between the two offices.

Reading Check Making Generalizations How has the role of the vice president changed over time?

The Cabinet (pp. 184–185)

The cabinet is an organization made up of the heads of the executive departments. The **executive departments** are responsible for carrying out laws, administering programs, and making regulations in their particular area of responsibility. When assembled as the cabinet, the secretaries can act as an advisory body to the president. Cabinet members are nominated by the president and must be confirmed by the Senate. In recent years, presidents have given other administrative officers, such as the director of the OMB, cabinet rank.

The Cabinet's History The Constitution does not directly mention the term *cabinet*. It does say that the president can ask for opinions from the heads of the executive departments, however. President George Washington created the first cabinet, which was made up of only four members—the secretaries of state, war, and treasury, and the attorney general.

Historically, cabinets have provided valuable advice to presidents. Some presidents have chosen to include powerful political figures with views different from their own, while others have placed skilled administrators on their cabinets. Presidents also tend to choose people with strong ties to the business community—an important source of funding during election campaigns.

The Cabinet Today Today there are 16 official cabinet positions, including the vice president. At the president's request, other high-ranking officials, such as the chief of staff, also sit on the cabinet. Recent presidents vary on how much they rely on the advice of their cabinet. The role of other advisory bodies such as the Executive Office of the President has increased.

Reading Check Identifying the Main Idea How has the cabinet changed over time?

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

1. **Define** What is the **Executive Office of the President**?
2. **Identify** What are the formal duties of the vice president?
3. **Identify** Who makes up the cabinet?