

2026 Agency Transition Planning

Goal

To effectuate a smooth transition between administrations, both the incoming and outgoing Governors' offices should complete a landscape analysis that identifies the strengths, challenges and opportunities in each of their executive branch departments, agencies, and offices. Transparent communication from each will enable a more seamless operational transition

Steps

- 1) As part of their overall transition activities, both the outgoing and the incoming Governors should identify transition leads for each department and agency. If that transition lead comes from outside state government, to the extent practicable, that lead should be paired with an official within the department being reviewed to ensure a full picture of operational strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. An assessment should be made on whether it would be helpful to also include a departmental budget official in those transition activities.
- 2) The outgoing Governor should begin their landscape assessment by the spring of the year of the election so that the necessary materials and analysis are ready to be handed off immediately after the election.
- 3) While this schedule will essentially let the outgoing Governor drive what information is collected and at what level that information is collected, both should understand that transition is a process – and that the incoming administration may require additional information or executive unit breakdowns.
- 4) Each state has different administrative structures with different cabinet memberships and organizational units. To the extent practicable, the transition landscape analysis should be completed by function and statutory responsibility. The transition landscape analysis must strike the appropriate balance between including enough detail to make it meaningful and too much detail that renders it overwhelming. States should consider organizing their transition documents on a department or cabinet basis – with the cabinets or department responsible for assembling the information for offices, agencies and subagencies located within each department or cabinet office.

Deliverables and Implementation Process

- 1) The outgoing Governor should require a transition landscape analysis for each executive branch agency or department to be prepared and ready to be delivered immediately following the election. Following discussions with the incoming Governor, these materials should be forwarded by the outgoing Governor or the outgoing transition lead to the incoming Governor or the incoming transition lead.
- 2) The incoming Governor or transition lead should assign each of the outgoing Governor's department and agency landscape analyses to the appropriate transition leads for the new administration.
- 3) The incoming Governor's department or agency transition leads should use the materials to develop their own landscape analyses to the incoming governor at least one-month prior to the beginning of the new administration. The incoming transition leads should use that time to thoroughly review the materials provided by the outgoing administration, request clarification or additional information if necessary, and match the information assembled to the priorities of the incoming administration.
- 4) Each department and agency landscape analysis should be formally presented by the department or agency transition lead to the incoming governor and his or her transition team with an opportunity given for questions and further development.

Suggested Template

Both the incoming and outgoing Governor's transition offices may wish to consider using the following template to gather and organize information for the transition landscape analysis:

Department of _____

2026 Briefing Book

I. Department Structure

- a. Department Description
 - i. General mission and role of the department within state government
 - ii. Description of all major component parts (agencies, bureaus, divisions, etc.)
- b. Organization Chart
 - i. Top Level organizational chart of department
 - ii. Organizational chart down to a defined level for major component parts (agencies, bureaus, divisions, etc.)
- c. Legal Authority/Major Statutes Administered by the Department
- d. Federal Interactions and Delegated Authority

II. Operational Overview

- a. Staffing Levels (by department and by unit)
 - i. Include appropriated, filled and anticipated vacancy fills
- b. Summary of Budget (by department and by unit)
 - i. Description of primary revenue streams (GF/SAF, restricted funds, federal funds, grant funds)
 - ii. Timing and key formulas regarding federal funds
 - iii. Description of non-lapsing anticipated unexpended balances
 - iv. Description of fund mobility
 - v. Identification of budget challenges (structural and one-time)
- c. Timeline of Key Department Events
 - i. Timeline of major grants issued by department
 - ii. Timeline of major federal grant application processes

- d. Map of key office locations and approximate size of workforce in each location
- e. Description of recent and pending audits (State, Federal, internal)
- f. Description of on-going or scheduled process review/LEAN initiatives
- g. Description of on-going or scheduled rule revisions
- h. Key Performance Indicators
 - i. Current Metrics/Dashboard
 - ii. Strategic Plan (if available)

III. Department Relations/Issues

- a. Inter-Department Relationships
- b. Contractual Relationships and RFPs
- c. Issues Needing Immediate Attention
 - i. Pending contracts or grants or contract/grant expirations
 - ii. Major constituent/stakeholder issues/permits/enforcement action
 - iii. Decisions to be made in first 60 days
- d. Outstanding/Pending Litigations

IV. Employees, Appointees and Unclassified

- a. Names, job specifications, and salaries of all Unclassified/Paid Appointees
- b. Names and job specifications of all contractual employees above a defined level with salaries and term
- c. Name and expiration date of all paid board and commission members
- d. Board or Commission appointments held by Department Director and department leadership

V. Talent Assessment

- a. Anticipated key scheduled retirements
- b. Identification of other possible retirements or departures that could significantly impact operations
- c. Identification of “utility infielders” able to step into leadership roles
- d. Identification of rising talent that can or should be groomed for growth in the department