

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

December 22, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARDS

I. BACKGROUND

The scope and variety of programs administered by the executive departments and agencies have brought concentrations of federal activity in principal cities throughout the United States. In major field centers, the number of federal offices and installations independently reporting to other headquarters ranges up to one hundred or more.

The separate field activities have developed interagency relationships in varying degrees. In some cities cooperative arrangements have been informal and limited; in others field agency heads have organized federal business associations or federal agency councils to provide a more formal medium for interagency cooperation. Many of these associations have been effective for the interchange of information and joint sponsorship of mutually beneficial activities. The lack of official endorsement and encouragement of their cooperative work, however, has prevented them from achieving their potential for cooperation in the many matters on which the work of the several departments and agencies have common characteristics.

During recent months the Special Assistant to the President for Interdepartmental Coordination, the Executive Assistant Director of the Bureau of the Budget, and the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission conducted a series of White House regional management conferences with field agency heads at principal locations. Their purpose was to emphasize Presidential management policies of current importance and to ascertain the extent of attention and implementation that these and other management programs were receiving among executive branch activities in the field service. They found a significant need for better communication between Washington and the field, and a wide range of management matters on which improvement could be achieved through interagency cooperation at the local level. Regional managers expressed keen interest in strengthening inter-agency relationships.

These impressions of the regional conferences were discussed with the Executive Officers Group and were presented to the President and the Cabinet. On November 10, 1961 the President issued instructions to the heads of departments and agencies directing a significant strengthening of the coordination of government activities in the field service. A copy of the President's memorandum is attached. It calls for improvement simultaneously on two

fronts: one, the development within each department of improved arrangements for the management and direction of its field offices and, two, the establishment of boards of federal executives in designated cities to facilitate closer working relationships and communications among federal agencies in the field.

This memorandum describes the arrangements for establishing and continuing relationships with federal executive boards, which were assigned as the joint responsibility of the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission and the Director of the Bureau of the Budget. The Commission is responsible for establishing the boards in its regional headquarters cities.

II. ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

Authority and Status - Federal Executive Boards are established by direction of the President in order to strengthen management of executive branch activities in selected centers of field operations. Action to organize the boards will be initiated by the CSC regional directors, who will report on their continuing activities and progress.

Location - A federal executive board will be set up in CSC headquarters cities across the country, located in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, St. Louis, Denver, Seattle, and San Francisco. There are of course other important centers of federal activity, but it is impractical at the outset to undertake a complete program at more than ten locations.

Membership - The President has directed the executive departments and agencies to arrange for personal participation in the work of federal executive boards by the heads of their field activities. The field agency heads located in the cities named and their immediate vicinities will constitute the official membership of the boards. It is not intended that, in general, field activities headquartered in other cities will participate, since the federal executive boards will concern themselves principally with local considerations.

Small military or civilian units in the local area which do not have significant management or coordinating functions may be restricted from membership, in the discretion of the heads of their departments or agencies. Where both a regional or area office and a sizeable operating installation of the same department or agency are located in the CSC headquarters city, as for example a regional office and a post office of the Post Office Department, the heads of both activities should participate as members of the board. On the other hand, it is not intended that the heads of subordinate segments of a single regional office or installation will be board members; membership is limited to the principal head of the activity. Where two or more major installations of a department or agency are located in the same city, each installation head may properly participate as a board member.

Based upon these guidelines, the heads of departments and agencies are requested to designate which of their field agency heads in the named cities and their immediate vicinities will be members of the federal executive boards and to notify the Chairman of the Commission of their designations by January 17, 1962.

Board members will each designate an alternate who will participate in board meetings and activities when the principal is not on duty in the city. The alternate will normally be the chief deputy of the field agency head. Board members will also designate other members of their staff, as needed from time to time, to participate in activities undertaken by the board. Such assignments will not constitute membership on the federal executive board. No additional personnel may be employed for board work.

Organization - The chairman of the federal executive board should be elected by the board members, and provision should be made for the election or for appointment by the chairman of other necessary officers from among the membership. No set pattern of organization is prescribed since it is expected that functions will vary somewhat depending upon local needs. Sufficient formality of structure should be provided in order to maintain stability and insure effective work.

Authorized Activities - The federal executive boards are expected to initiate consideration of common management and program problems and to develop cooperative arrangements that will promote the general objectives of the government and of the several departments and agencies in the local area. Their mutual efforts will be conducted within the range of authority and discretion which they hold by delegation from superiors in their respective agencies and within the resources available to them.

Four general categories of activity are appropriate: (1) provision of a forum for the interchange of information about programs and management methods and problems between Washington and the field and among field elements in the area; (2) coordinated approaches to the development and operation of programs which have common characteristics; (3) liaison relationships with state and local officials which will contribute to better mutual understanding and support of the roles and purposes of their respective governmental jurisdictions and which will aid in solving problems that may arise in providing services to the public; and (4) referral of problems that cannot be solved locally to the national level for attention.

The potential for activities that can be self-initiated is extremely broad.

In the management area, subject to department and agency policies, it includes arrangements for such matters as --

- stimulation of wider understanding and initiative in special programs of current importance such as effective manpower

utilization, equal employment opportunity, sound employee organization relationships, and improvement of management processes;

- sharing technical knowledge and resources through reimbursable detail or loan of experts or equipment from one agency to another to get new programs underway, to resolve special problems, or to meet peak workloads in finance, internal audit, personnel management, ADP application, and so forth;
- pooling resources to provide common services such as employee first-aid and preventive health programs and inter-agency use of ADP installations;
- joint planning of manpower needs, especially for high quality technical, professional and scientific personnel, and top management support and involvement in recruiting, interagency placement, and personnel adjustment and retraining programs;
- cooperation in improving the management knowledge and skills of federal agency staffs through interchange of information and joint educational and training activities;
- encouragement of employee initiative and higher performance through special recognition and other incentive programs, and additional guidance to supervisors in the handling of employees who do not meet required performance standards; and
- developing a wider community of interest and knowledge among federal managers and employees through sponsorship of program meetings with large representation from all federal activities.

In the area of public affairs, the federal executive boards should provide top level leadership and coordination and should reinforce the special programs of individual agencies. Illustrations are --

- on-the-job charitable solicitations by recognized health and welfare agencies under the federal fund-raising program, and Treasury savings bond campaigns among federal employees;
- community programs for youth employment, rehabilitation of the physically handicapped, and employment of the older worker;
- citizen educational programs in national defense such as Armed Forces Day celebrations; and
- liaison with communications media and with civic, business, and professional groups to facilitate their relationships with the government.

In substantive program operations, better coordination will derive from the personal association of agency heads on the board and from briefings by regional and national executives on their respective roles in interrelated programs affecting the financial health of the economy, the development and conservation of natural resources, the renewal of urban areas, and the redevelopment of depressed areas.

The boards should establish liaison arrangements with key state and local officials in the city as a basis for exchange of information and technical assistance and for cooperative efforts consonant with federal, state and local authority.

In addition to self-initiated activities, from time to time the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission and the Director of the Bureau of the Budget will advise the boards on specific programs to which their cooperative activity should be directed.

III. EFFECT ON OTHER INTERAGENCY ORGANIZATIONS

If a federal business association or council exists in any of the ten cities designated, the federal executive board will determine whether the federal business association or council will continue as an unofficial organization or be reorganized under the sponsorship of the federal executive board.

Federal business associations or councils will be continued at other locations and are urged to orient their activities towards those described for federal executive boards. While they cannot be provided the same central program leadership, briefings by national executives, and Washington clearinghouse arrangements which are involved in the federal executive board program, they will be furnished general guidance insofar as is feasible.

In the ten designated cities, no official associations of agency heads other than the federal executive boards are authorized. Local coordinating committees of the federal fund-raising program should be disbanded and their responsibilities assumed by the boards.

Interagency associations of technical and staff specialists such as the federal safety councils of the Department of Labor, the interagency records administration conferences of the General Services Administration, and the federal personnel councils are not directly affected by the establishment of the federal executive boards; however, in the discretion of the boards they may wish to establish liaison arrangements with such groups. The heads of departments and agencies which sponsor interagency specialist groups of this kind are requested to review the practicability of integrating such management activities in the federal executive boards, as functional committees or otherwise, and to advise the Chairman of the Commission of their views.

IV. NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND REPORTING

In order to focus their work on matters of direct cooperative value in the local areas the boards' activities must be undertaken primarily through the initiative of the field agency heads. National guidance will be provided from time to time by the White House, the Bureau of the Budget and the Commission so as to channel direct to the boards appropriate emphasis on Presidential policies of general application.

Communication will ordinarily be from the Chairman, Civil Service Commission, to the chairmen of federal executive boards. Any department or agency may communicate with the boards through the Commission. Written communication will be supplemented periodically by personal briefing and consultation with the boards by national executives through arrangements similar to the recent White House Regional Management Conferences.

The chairmen of federal executive boards will forward direct to the Chairman, Civil Service Commission, reports on any significant management problems that cannot be resolved locally, with the board's recommendation for action at the national level. The Commission will forward copies of such reports to the Bureau of the Budget and will refer them for necessary attention to the departments and agencies that are responsible.

To the extent desired by the departments and agencies, the members of federal executive boards will keep their headquarters informed through regular reporting channels of the activities and problems being worked on by the boards.

An annual summary report of board activities and accomplishments will be submitted by board chairmen to the Chairman, Civil Service Commission, at the close of the fiscal year. The first report is due July 10, 1962.

John W. Macy, Jr.

John W. Macy, Jr.
Chairman

Attachment