

The White House Blog

Jeff Zients Will Lead Reorganization of Federal Government

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As the President said in the [State of the Union address](#), winning the future will take doing what we can do now to prepare America to compete in the global economy for decades to come. That means out-educating, out-innovating, and out-building our competition; restoring fiscal responsibility to remove the burden of deficits and debt; and reforming our government so that it is more effective, efficient, and open to the American people. As the President put it, "We cannot win the future with a government of the past."

The fact is that we live and do business in the information age, but the last major reorganization of the government happened in the middle of the last century. Over the past few decades, there has not been a business or large organization that has not rethought, retooled, and revamped how they did their job to respond to a growing, more competitive global economy and an ever-changing technology landscape. Yet too often, it seems that the federal government is stuck in the age of black-and-white television while we are competing in the age of the iPad.

For millions of Americans, this can lead to frustrating encounters trying to get the services you need and a waste of taxpayer dollars. For many businesses, it means that they may not have all the assistance they need to compete around the world. For instance, we have more than a dozen different agencies involved in exports. They all work well with each other, but this is certainly not the optimal organization or allocation of resources if you were designing a system from scratch.

The President believes that we need to reform our government to make it better organized and better equipped to support American competitiveness. We want to ensure that we're aligning all of the resources we have into negotiating the best agreements, enforcing our trade rights, supporting our exporters and promoting their products.

That is why the President has asked Jeffrey Zients, our nation's first Chief Performance Officer (CPO), to lead our reorganization effort. Our first focus will be looking at trade and exports to see how we can better reform these functions to give American companies a leg up in the global economy.

For the past two years as CPO and Deputy Director for Management of [OMB](#), Jeff has led our Accountable Government Initiative (AGI), the President's initiative to make government more efficient and effective, open and responsive. On his watch, we have cut government waste, bringing down the amount of improper payments on our way of reducing them by \$50 billion by 2012; started to get rid of unused federal buildings and property; overhauled how IT is purchased and used, saving billions; and deployed the latest technologies to make it easier for people to get the information and services they need from their government.

Jeff's years of private sector experience means that he brings a unique perspective to his job as CPO and to this new assignment. Having been a CEO, management consultant, and entrepreneur, Jeff has a deep understanding of business strategy, process reengineering and operational management. In fact, Jeff spent the majority of his career leading two companies that help corporations around the world improve their performance by adopting best management practices.

The President has also asked Lisa Brown to take on a new position and work with Jeff on this endeavor. Lisa is currently Assistant to the President and Staff Secretary and previously served as Co-Chair of the Agency Review Working Group for the Obama-Biden Transition Project. In these capacities and from her prior government service, she has developed a keen understanding of how the executive branch works. She also brings management and legal acumen, having run a national non-profit organization and been a partner at a DC law firm.

Jeff and Lisa will draw on the resources of OMB to launch and run this effort, and they will be reaching out to the business community, experts, those who run these programs, members of Congress, and a wide range of stakeholders and citizens to get their input about how government can be reformed to best work for them. I know that we all look forward to working with Jeff and Lisa on this important effort and to helping to create a better organized and more effective federal government.

Dan Pfeiffer is the White House's Communications Director