



**The
Executive Agency
Training Program**

**Managing the
Interagency Process**



Roles of the Interagency Process

1. **Inform** – Learn what other agencies are doing on your issue.
2. **Coordinate** – U.S. policy often ends up being the sum of the policies of many separate agencies. Coordinate so as to avoid the scenario where a dozen agencies, acting separately, make decisions that collectively decimate the economies of Caribbean island nations!
3. **Identify Problems** – Locate gaps in the current policy.
4. **Develop Solutions** – Develop coordinated solutions to fill policy gaps.
5. **Make Decisions or Punt to DC/PC** – Choose among various solutions or if consensus is not forthcoming, pass options to the Deputies or Principals Committees
6. **Perform Oversight** – By the time Congress exercises oversight, it's too late. Self-police. Determine whether an issue is going off the rails or might cause a problem, and deal with it early.

Tips for Succeeding in the Interagency Process

1. Learn agency culture

- Each agency has a unique culture. Learn it. Only by learning what motivates an agency and its people can you compel that agency to do what you need them to do.
- Think about what sort of person chooses to go into a particular type of work. Why would someone choose the Coast Guard over the Navy? The Foreign Service, where they spend most of their lives outside of America? The culture of the individuals within an organization also create the culture of that department, and provide crucial information into what the incentives and goals of the individuals in that department are likely to be.
- Use that knowledge to get that agency pursue your goal. They will not be motivated by what motivates you. Reach out to them where they are motivated.

2. Develop friendly relationships with others in the interagency

- The interagency moves as much because of personal relationships as official lines of power. Hold informal lunches or go out for drinks. Move out of the meeting room, where you represent your agencies and build the personal trust that will help you work together.

Tips for Succeeding in the Interagency Process

3. Build the stature of those in other agencies that are working on your issues

- Is there someone in another agency whose help you really need, but whose agency doesn't care as much about your issue? Your issue may not have the same stature in other agencies that it does in yours. Find ways to help build the stature of the individuals who are helping you work your issue. Give them a boost. Have your agency offer them an award that they receive in front of their spouse and children, for a job well done. Help them garner the resources they need to do their jobs well. Let a friendly reporter know what good work they are doing. Give them the boost that can make them want to help you more.

4. Follow the money

- The key to getting anything done is having the budget to do it. Find out who is working on your issue within other agencies by looking at who has the budget to do the work. Find out who the most important players are by looking at who has the most budget to do the work.
- If you are not comfortable with budgets, get comfortable. It is the number one arrow you can add to your quiver to make you more effective. If possible, try to do a rotation in the Office of Management and Budget to really learn budgeting. Don't be a snob about the numbers—ask those who know them, learn at their knee, and learn them cold.

Tips for Succeeding in the Interagency Process

5. Run useful meetings

- Meetings are meant to make decisions. Go into the meeting with the decisions you want made already written down. Lead the meeting towards those decisions. End the meeting when they have been made. Don't think meetings themselves are the goal.

6. Be able to walk away

- You are serving the national interest. Whenever you want a job so badly that you cannot imagine leaving it, and would do anything to keep it, that is when you should leave. You should always be willing to walk away if you feel you are being pushed to do the wrong thing. Treasure your moral compass more than your job.