

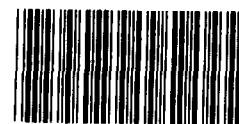
GAO

Fact Sheet for the Chairman,
Subcommittee on Federal Services, Post
Office and Civil Service, Committee on
Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

March 1993

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Personnel Engaged in Public and Congressional Affairs in Federal Agencies



148902

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United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division

B-249157

March 8, 1993

The Honorable David H. Pryor
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Services,
Post Office and Civil Service
Committee on Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This fact sheet responds to your request for information on the number of personnel engaged in public and congressional affairs activities in 31 selected federal agencies. You asked us to update the staffing information in our 1986 report, Public Affairs and Congressional Affairs Activities of Federal Agencies (GAO/GGD-86-24, Feb. 14, 1986), that covered the same 31 agencies. As requested, we surveyed the selected federal agencies regarding personnel engaged in these activities for fiscal years 1991 and 1992.¹ Agencies also identified the number of individuals engaged in these activities that were political appointees.

RESULTS

Based on agency-provided data, excluding the Department of Defense (DOD), the estimated full-time equivalent (FTE) count of personnel engaged in public and congressional affairs during fiscal years 1991 and 1992 appears to have increased since fiscal year 1985. For example, agencies reported that the estimated combined public and congressional affairs FTEs during fiscal years 1991 and 1992 was 6,382 and 6,673, respectively, compared with 6,293 in fiscal year 1985. Table 1 shows the total estimated FTEs for public and congressional affairs in the 30 civilian agencies for fiscal years 1985, 1991, and 1992.

¹The Department of Defense (DOD) notified us that it could not provide FTE data for fiscal years 1991 and 1992. Consequently, the portion of our survey concerning FTEs only covers the 30 civilian agencies included in our 1986 report.

Table 1: Estimated Number of FTE Personnel Engaged in Public and Congressional Affairs Activities in 30 Civilian Agencies in Fiscal Years 1985, 1991, and 1992

Activity	FY 1985	FY 1991	FY 1992
Public affairs	4,537	4,656	4,860
Congressional affairs	1,756	1,726	1,813
Total	6,293	6,382	6,673

Source: Agency responses to 1985 and 1992 GAO surveys.

Twenty-six agencies reported FTE totals for public and/or congressional affairs for fiscal years 1991 and/or 1992 that were either greater or less than they reported in fiscal year 1985 by 25 percent or more. We asked these agencies to give us their best explanation for these differences. Seventeen agencies responded. In general, their explanations fell into one or both of the following categories. (app. III summarizes the explanations received from each responding agency):

- Changes due to increased/decreased involvement in either public or congressional affairs. For example, one agency pointed out that several recent statutes required greater analysis of public comments as well as greater activity in communication planning and issue management. Another agency pointed out that during fiscal years 1991 and 1992, legislative activity involving it declined.
- Differences in interpreting the 1985 and 1992 GAO questionnaires. Several agencies believed, when no institutional knowledge of the earlier questionnaire existed, that the 1985 questionnaire may have been limited strictly to those staff members specifically designated as public affairs and congressional affairs. In our current questionnaire, agencies included all staff involved in any public affairs and congressional affairs activities. In other instances, agency officials told us that our 1992 request was given departmentwide circulation, which was greater than the earlier survey.

We also asked agencies to provide us with the number of political appointees--Schedule C, noncareer Senior Executive Service (SES),

and presidential appointee, Senate confirmed (PAS)--that were engaged in public and congressional affairs during fiscal years 1991 and 1992.² Agencies reported that 320 and 329 political appointees were engaged in public affairs activities during fiscal years 1991 and 1992, respectively. The agencies reported that 372 and 366 political appointees were engaged in congressional affairs activities during the 2 respective fiscal years.³

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

As requested by the Subcommittee, we surveyed the same 31 agencies (14 cabinet departments and 17 independent agencies) and used the same definitions for public affairs and congressional affairs activities as we did for our 1986 report. The questionnaire and these definitions appear in appendix V. In order to obtain comparable data, we developed the questionnaire based on the instrument used to collect the data for the 1986 report.

We mailed the questionnaire to the heads of 31 agencies on October 9, 1992, and requested them to provide information on the number of personnel engaged in public and congressional affairs activities in federal agencies for fiscal years 1991 and 1992. We asked each agency to provide information on employees involved in these activities in terms of FTEs and actual numbers on a consolidated basis covering all of its components. We sent follow-up letters and called agencies that did not meet the response deadline. DOD did not provide FTE data because two major components, the departments of the Army and the Air Force, did not have these data available.

We also asked the agencies to provide data on the number of political appointees engaged in public and congressional affairs activities. We asked them to provide this information for the same time periods, fiscal years 1991 and 1992, and by category (Schedule C, noncareer SES, and PAS). We had a 100-percent response rate to this request.

²These numbers are not FTEs; they are the actual number of people engaged in these activities. Some of them may only have worked on these activities on a part-time basis.

³DOD was able to provide the political appointee data for fiscal years 1991 and 1992; therefore, its data are included in these totals.

Additionally, we requested certain agencies to provide us with information explaining changes in their FTEs. We sent follow-up letters to 26 agencies whose fiscal years 1991 and/or 1992 information differed by 25 percent or more from the fiscal year 1985 data. We received responses from 17 of the 26 agencies.

Caution should be used in drawing conclusions from the information provided because much of the data supplied involved "best guess" estimates and were not consistently prepared by the respondents.

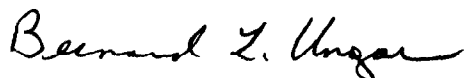
We did not independently verify the data or information the agencies provided. We did our work from March 1992 to February 1993 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We did not obtain agency comments. We did, however, hold follow-up discussions with agency officials when necessary to clarify questionnaire responses.

- - - - -

As agreed with the Subcommittee, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this fact sheet until 30 days from the date of the letter. At that time, we will send copies to other congressional committees and each of the agencies identified in this fact sheet. We will also send copies to interested parties and make copies available to others upon request.

Please contact me at (202) 512-5074 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this fact sheet. The major contributors to this fact sheet are listed in appendix VI.

Sincerely yours,



Bernard L. Ungar
Director, Federal Human Resource
Management Issues

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ABBREVIATIONS

DOD Department of Defense
FTE Full Time Equivalent
PAS Presidential Appointee, Senate Confirmed
SES Senior Executive Service

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF FTE PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN PUBLIC
AFFAIRS DUTIES FOR FISCAL YEARS 1981, 1983, 1985, 1991, AND 1992

Agency	Public affairs personnel				
	FY 1981	FY 1983	FY 1985	FY 1991	FY 1992
Agriculture	822	718	629	962	965
Commerce	141	117	123	111	111
Education	56	43	36	95	94
Energy	373	296	286	235	280
Health and Human Services	808	725	718	761	830
Housing and Urban Development	39	36	33	57	62
Interior	266	213	200	247	266
Justice	178	194	184	241	257
Labor	153	125	109	103	105
State	538	539	581	138	139
Transportation	191	260	263	153 ^a	156 ^a
Treasury	446	412	433	334	354
Veterans Affairs	72	67	70	321	333
Consumer Product Safety Commission	58	37	32	28	28
Environmental Protection Agency	145	118	153	234	234
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	15	23	18	15	18
Federal Communications Commission	32	20	21	21	20
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	11	11	11	17	17
Federal Reserve System	12	13	13	11	11
Federal Trade Commission	46	43	30	5	5

Agency	Public affairs personnel				
	FY 1981	FY 1983	FY 1985	FY 1991	FY 1992
General Services Administration	15	10	11	28	28
Interstate Commerce Commission	59	51	33	5	4
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	173	176	175	228	230
National Labor Relations Board	11	10	10	7	7
Office of Personnel Management	22	19	19	18	18
Securities and Exchange Commission	93	85	85	22	25
Small Business Administration	30	28	31	58	57
U.S. Information Agency	17	25	27	25	25
U.S. Agency for International Development	35	47	46	37	40
U.S. Postal Service	139	154	157	139	141
Total	4,996	4,615	4,537	4,656	4,860

*Includes both civilian and Coast Guard.

Source: Agency responses to 1985 and 1992 GAO surveys.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF FTE PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN CONGRESSIONAL
AFFAIRS DUTIES FOR FISCAL YEARS 1981, 1983, 1985, 1991, AND 1992.

Agency	Congressional affairs personnel				
	FY 1981	FY 1983	FY 1985	FY 1991	FY 1992
Agriculture	94	100	83	100	102
Commerce	61	56	60	70	71
Education	27	37	34	42	48
Energy	242	215	210	65	80
Health and Human Services	211	195	190	326	362
Housing and Urban Development	42	30	33	79	75
Interior	96	85	71	85	84
Justice	114	110	114	150	166
Labor	98	85	76	35	35
State	167	170	192	75	76
Transportation	67	72	72	55 ^a	53 ^a
Treasury	128	125	123	91	96
Veterans Affairs	37	39	43	229	233
Consumer Product Safety Commission	7	4	4	2	2
Environmental Protection Agency	59	51	54	116	123
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	6	7	6	6	9
Federal Communications Commission	9	9	7	8	8
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	5	5	6	13	13
Federal Reserve System	6	6	6	5	6
Federal Trade Commission	9	9	7	6	6
General Services Administration	8	10	10	8	8

Agency	Congressional affairs personnel				
	FY 1981	FY 1983	FY 1985	FY 1991	FY 1992
Interstate Commerce Commission	17	14	13	6	4
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	23	25	21	29	29
National Labor Relations Board	0	0	0	0	0
Office of Personnel Management	13	12	12	16	16
Securities and Exchange Commission	4	5	4	7	7
Small Business Administration	14	14	13	25	25
U.S. Information Agency	4	9	6	8	7
U.S. Agency for International Development	233	235	235	20	20
U.S. Postal Service	63	54	51	48	49
Total	1,864	1,788	1,756	1,725	1,813

*Both civilian and Coast Guard.

Source: Agency responses to 1985 and 1992 GAO surveys.

EXPLANATION OF CHANGES IN FTEs
FROM FISCAL YEARS 1985 AND 1991 AND 1992

Agency	Explanation
Agriculture	Increase in public affairs FTEs: - More offices included. - Support personnel included. - Increase in public affairs personnel.
Education	Increase in public affairs FTEs: - Broader definition of and higher level of activity in public affairs.
Energy	Decrease in congressional affairs FTEs: - Department-wide response and broader activities covered in 1985. - 1992 congressional activities FTEs calculated on the basis of individuals devoting full-time to this activity.
Health and Human Services	Increase in congressional affairs FTEs: - Current survey was Department-wide and included all personnel involved in these activities.
Housing and Urban Development	Increase in both public and congressional affairs FTEs: - The 1992 data are Department-wide. - The 1985 data were only for the offices of public and congressional affairs.
Interior	Increase in public affairs FTEs: - Expanded level of information sources in response to expanding public need.
Labor	Decrease in congressional affairs FTEs: - Declining resources and diminishing legislative activity concerning the agency.
State	Decrease in both public and congressional affairs FTEs: - Different interpretation of definitions between the 1992 and 1985 surveys. - Possible inclusion in the 1985 data of non-State overseas personnel assigned to overseas posts. - A question of 1985 State Department data's accuracy.

Agency	Explanation
Treasury	Decrease in congressional affairs FTEs: - Due to automation and budgetary constraints.
Veterans Affairs	Increase in public and congressional affairs FTEs: - Different methodologies used by the agency in collecting the data for the 1985 and 1992 surveys. - Increase in public and congressional affairs activities. - The decentralization of the public affairs function.
Consumer Product Safety Commission	Decrease in congressional affairs FTEs: - The decrease in personnel was a result of differences between the two surveys.
Environmental Protection Agency	Increase in both public and congressional affairs FTEs: - The current survey includes both headquarters and regional staff; the 1985 survey only accounted for the former. - An increasing workload in congressional affairs.
Federal Trade Commission	Decrease in public affairs FTEs: - Reduction in the agency's overall staff.
Interstate Commerce Commission	Decrease in both public and congressional affairs FTEs: - Decrease commensurate to the downsizing of the Commission. - Current response excludes public assistance activities, unlike the 1985 data. - Large number of congressional affairs FTEs became unnecessary due to a lack of significant legislative changes to the agency.
National Labor Relations Board	Decrease in public affairs FTEs: - Overall cutback in staffing levels.

Agency	Explanation
Securities and Exchange Commission	Decrease in public affairs and increase in congressional affairs FTEs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Public affairs FTEs declined due to the exclusion of certain responsibilities by Congress.- Increase in congressional affairs FTEs due to increased congressional requests as a result of marketplace changes.
Small Business Administration	Increase in both public and congressional affairs FTEs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Current survey data is national in scope and includes collateral duties; the 1985 data did not.
U.S. Information Agency	Increase in congressional affairs FTEs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vacancies filled in the Office of Congressional Liaison to respond to increasing congressional interest in agency's programs.

Source: Agency responses to GAO correspondence.

**NUMBER OF POLITICAL APPOINTEES ENGAGED IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND
CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS DUTIES FOR FISCAL YEARS 1991 AND 1992**

Agency	Public affairs personnel		Congressional affairs personnel	
	FY 1991	FY 1992	FY 1991	FY 1992
Agriculture	56	61	52	52
Commerce	20	20	21	21
Defense	8	8	12	12
Education	29	32	34	38
Energy	15	14	13	16
Health and Human Services	34	44	43	48
Housing and Urban Development	27	21	41	38
Interior	6	6	12	11
Justice	8	12	13	11
Labor	9	9	21	17
State	13	11	12	12
Transportation	20	17	20	16
Treasury	20	19	16	17
Veterans Affairs	2	2	6	6
Consumer Product Safety Commission	1	1	1	1
Environmental Protection Agency	14	9	14	11
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	4	6	1	2
Federal Communications Commission	2	2	1	1
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	1	1	2	2
Federal Reserve System	0	0	0	0
Federal Trade Commission	1	1	3	3

Agency	Public affairs personnel		Congressional affairs personnel	
	FY 1991	FY 1992	FY 1991	FY 1992
General Services Administration	4	4	6	6
Interstate Commerce Commission	2	1	4	3
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	1	2	1	1
National Labor Relations Board	0	0	3	3
Office of Personnel Management	4	4	5	3
Securities and Exchange Commission	1	3	1	1
Small Business Administration	4	4	7	7
U.S. Information Agency	5	4	2	2
U.S. Agency for International Development	9	11	5	5
U.S. Postal Service	0	0	0	0
Total	320	329	372	366

Source: Agency responses to the 1992 GAO survey.

**SURVEY OF 31 FEDERAL EXECUTIVE AGENCIES TO
DETERMINE PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN PUBLIC AND
CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES IN
FISCAL YEARS 1991 AND 1992**

United States General Accounting Office



Survey of Federal Executive Agencies' Personnel Involved in Public Affairs and Congressional Affairs Activities

Fiscal Years 1991, 1992

Introduction

The U.S. General Accounting Office is conducting a survey of federal executive agencies' public affairs and congressional affairs activities. The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the number of personnel, including political appointees, that were involved in these activities during FY91 and FY92. Your response will help us answer a congressional request.

We are sending the questionnaire to all cabinet departments, major regulatory agencies, and large independent agencies. To ensure consistency of responses, the definitions of public affairs, congressional affairs, political appointees, and general instructions are shown on page 2.

We are requesting a consolidated response from each department/agency (i.e., one response per department/agency covering its various offices). To form this consolidated reply, you may need to gather information from the various agencies, military commands, bureaus, offices, and regional and field offices within your organization. The information should include the number of staff involved in public and congressional affairs activities even if they are in program offices or in organizational elements other than the public affairs/public information office or the congressional affairs office.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope within 30 days. In the event that the envelope is misplaced, the return address is:

U.S. General Accounting Office
Mr. Walter E. Reed, Jr.
Room 3150
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

If you anticipate any difficulty in returning the questionnaire promptly or if you have any questions, please call Mr. Reed on (202) 275-5584.

* * * * *

Respondent Information

Please enter below the organization name and the name, title, address, and telephone number of the individual who should be contacted if clarification of and/or additional information are needed:

Organization: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____
(Area code) (Number)

Instructions

1. Many public and congressional affairs activities are performed by personnel as part of other full-time duties and responsibilities. Figures reporting the number of personnel should include the applicable portion of their efforts in public and congressional affairs activities.
2. If actual numbers are not yet available for FY92, enter estimated number and so indicate.
3. If your answer to any question is "Not applicable", enter "N/A". If your answer to any question is "None", enter "0".

Definitions

Public Affairs - an effort to develop and disseminate information to explain the activities of and the issues facing your organization. Some of the activities that we consider public affairs are to:

1. issue press releases on activities,
2. respond to press inquiries,
3. conduct press conferences and briefings,
4. produce leaflets, fact sheets, articles, and periodicals for the general public
5. produce photographic and graphic materials for publications,
6. produce material for radio and television broadcasts,
7. organize exhibits and offer speakers to schools and groups to explain the organization,
8. develop advertising programs to provide information about the organization's programs and services, and
9. develop information provided in response to specific requests from the public (e.g., Freedom of Information Requests).

Exclude from public affairs:

1. information that is developed for your organization's employees, and
2. accounting, statistical, and legal information that is developed for use within the government.

Congressional Affairs - an effort to manage day-to-day contact with Congress. Some of the activities that we consider congressional affairs activities are to:

1. participate in the selection and briefing of your organization's witnesses for congressional hearings,
2. prepare testimony, hearing reports, and followup,
3. arrange congressional committee briefings on key issues (in conjunction with program personnel),
4. provide technical assistance on legislation, and
5. furnish general information and publications in response to congressional requests.

Political Appointee - an individual serving in a position (1) covered by the Executive Schedule, which is filled by a presidential appointment subject to Senate confirmation (PAS); (2) filled by a noncareer member of the Senior Executive Service, the duties of which involve formulating, advocating, and directing administration policies; or (3) filled through a noncompetitive, excepted service (Schedule C) appointment, the duties of which are of a policy-determining or confidential nature.

I. Public and Congressional Affairs

1. How many personnel in your agency--full-time equivalents (FTE's)-- were involved in public affairs and congressional affairs in fiscal years 1991, 1992? (Enter the number of full-time equivalents.)

	Number of personnel (FTE)	
	FY 1991 (1)	FY 1992 (2)
CIVILIAN		
1. Public affairs		
2. Congressional affairs		
3. SUBTOTAL		
MILITARY		
1. Public affairs		
2. Congressional affairs		
3. SUBTOTAL		
TOTAL		

2. What were the actual numbers of personnel involved in public affairs and congressional affairs as of September 30, 1991 and September 30, 1992? (Enter actual personnel numbers, not FTE's.)

	Number of personnel (not FTE)	
	FY 1991 (1)	FY 1992 (2)
CIVILIAN		
1. Public affairs		
2. Congressional affairs		
3. SUBTOTAL		
MILITARY		
1. Public affairs		
2. Congressional affairs		
3. SUBTOTAL		
TOTAL		

APPENDIX V

3. Of the total number of personnel reported in Question 2, how many were political appointees (Schedule C, non-career SES, and PAS)? (Enter numbers.)

	Number of personnel (not FTE)			
	Public affairs		Congressional affairs	
	FY 1991 (1)	FY 1992 (2)	FY 1991 (3)	FY 1992 (4)
1. Schedule C				
2. Non-career SES				
3. PAS				

4. Did your responses in Questions 1-3 include input from all offices of your department/agency? (Check one.)

1. ☐ Yes (Skip to Question 6.)
2. ☐ No (Continue to Question 5.)

APPENDIX V

5. Please list any offices that were not included in your response to Questions 1-3, and explain why. (List and explain. Use attachments, if needed.)

II. Comments

6. If you have any comments regarding the previous questions or general comments concerning public and congressional affairs, please use the space provided below or attach additional sheets. If you had any difficulties gathering the data, please explain.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Job code: 966525
GGD/MS/10-92

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(966525)

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