



**State Transitions:  
What are Lessons Learned and Best Practices?**

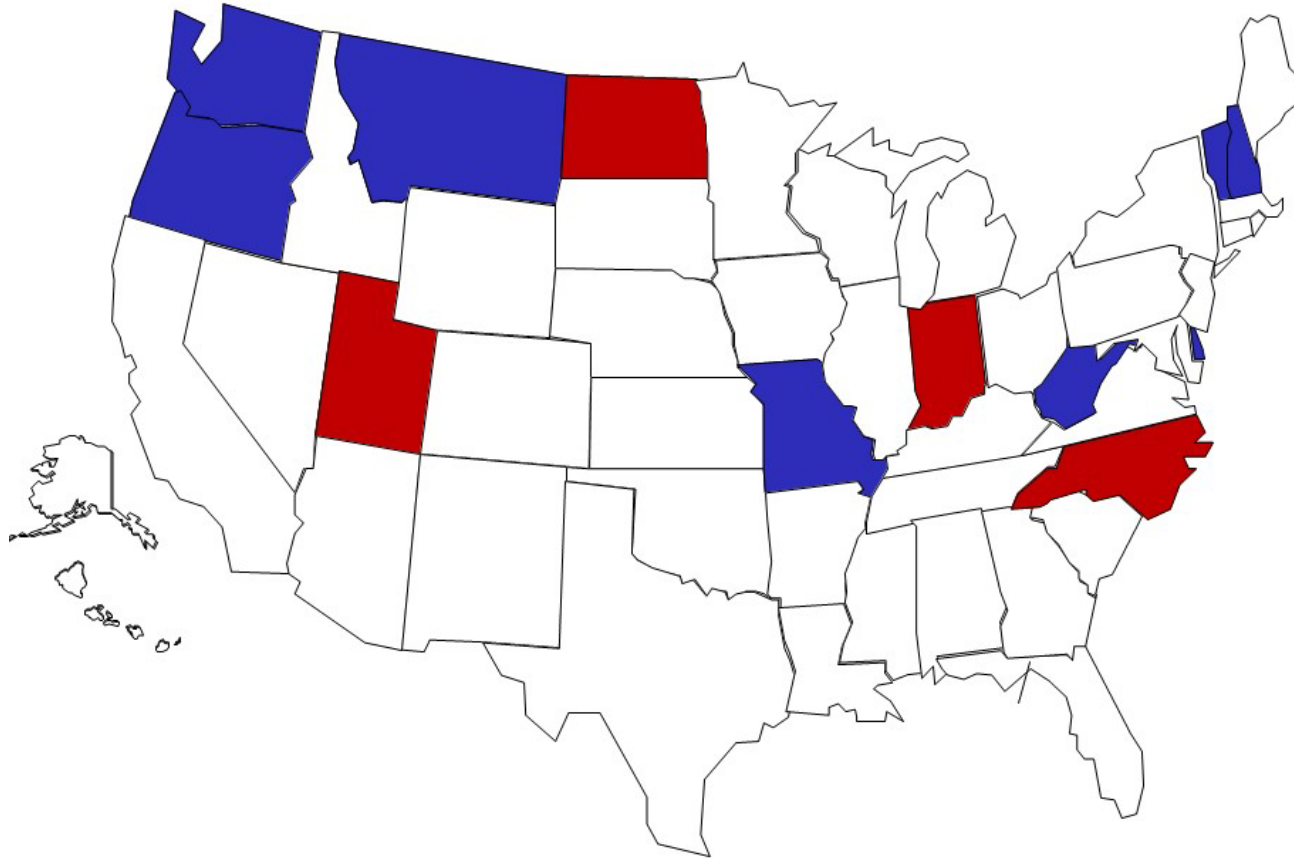
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# The National Landscape for Change

- Most Governor's elections occur in off-Presidential election even numbered years
  - 34 elections held in 2014
  - Three of those states will have elections (again) in 2016
  - Vermont and New Hampshire elect Governors to two-year terms
  - Oregon special election
- Very few (five) elections occur in odd-numbered years
  - NJ, KY, LA, VA, MS
- 12 states will have elections in 2016
  - DE, IN, MO, MT, NH, NC, ND, UT, VT, WA, WV, OR
  - Five are open seats (MO, NH, ND, VT, WV)

# Governors 2016 Election Map



- Eight Democrat, four Republican Governors' seats will be contested
- Five are open – term limits in DE, MO; retiring in ND, VT; running for US Senate in NH

# Election Morning Epiphany . . .

*'What do we do now?'*



*“On election night, it feels like a finish line. It feels like you’ve accomplished something. And early the next morning, you realize you haven’t really started.”*

*Steven Waguespack, Louisiana Governor’s Transition Team*

# Governor's 'To Do' List

- Shift from one finish line to a new/different one
- Assemble transition team and determine its roles
- Plan/fundraise for inauguration and surrounding events
- Begin learning/crafting state budget
- Select Cabinet officials and Governor's key staff
- Begin work on carrying out campaign promises
- Prepare inaugural, state of the state and budget address
- Establish policy priorities and 'first 100 days' plan
- Develop and execute media and communication plan
- Move family/belongings into Governor's residence
- In many states, figure out how to pay for full-time staff to coordinate and undertake day-to-day activities prior to taking office
- ***Decide who/how to delegate.***



# Transition at the State Level

- Unlike the federal government, no two states handle transition (or anything) exactly the same
- In some states, (some) formal structures are in place
- Generally, transition is addressed on a case-by-case basis
- In some states, the structure of key staff (such as in the budget office) make transition more seamless than others
- Other organizations may act as a resource when there otherwise is a void

# Formal State Transition Structures

- Often little legislative statutory involvement
  - Illinois: required to provide space for five transitional staff members
  - Iowa: appropriates small transition budget (under \$100,000)
- Outgoing Administrations often prepare some formal record, for example:
  - Briefing books/papers on key issues
  - Formal briefings/sit downs with key outgoing leadership and staff
  - Budget simulations/models that identify key choices
  - Other tools – outgoing Massachusetts Governor Patrick's transition website



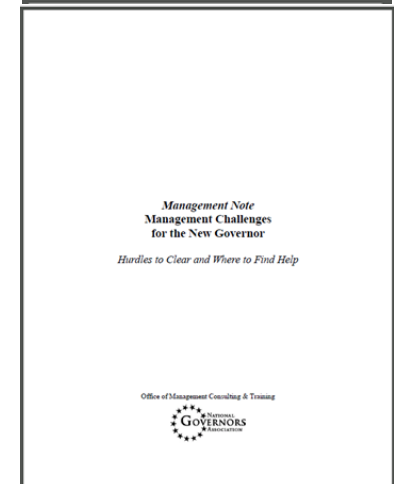
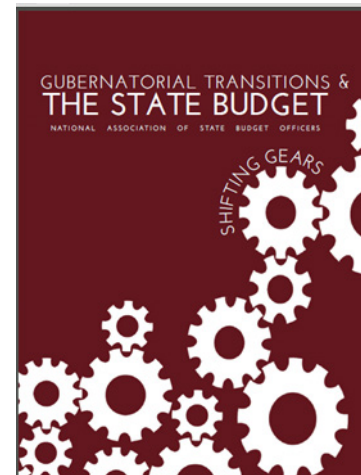
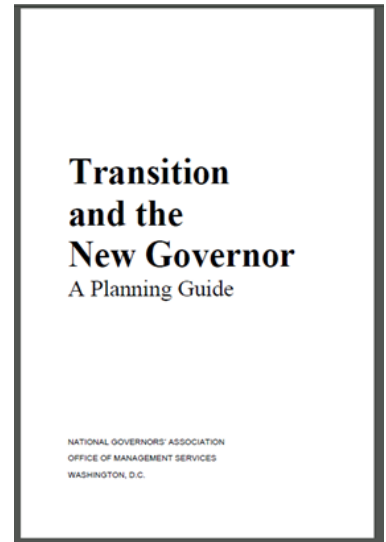
# Informal Structures

- Governors create their own transition teams and forms – lots of variation
  - Generally includes a small, close-knit group of advisors for key decisions (particularly Cabinet and Governor's staff)
  - Often has a 'heavy hitter' steering group and multiple committees
  - Often a specialized committee for the inaugural and related activities
- Transition team characteristics
  - Wide variation in size
  - The biggest need: full-time staff who 'know the ropes'
- Some state transitions are easier than others (for example where budget and finance operations are relatively constant even with change in political party control)



# Other Transition Resources

- Key non-partisan national organizations provide resources to support
  - National Governor's Association (NGA)
  - National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO)
  - National Association of State Procurement Officers (NASPO)
- Other organizations will assist
  - Democratic and Republican Governors Associations
  - Special interest groups
  - State financial/other advisers



# Transition Frontline Challenges

- It will be organized chaos – on a good day
  - Myriad small (but important) details
  - Thousands of people wanting time/attention
- There is a political campaign/policymaking dichotomy
  - Natural tendency to ‘dance with the one who brought you’
  - Political practitioners may not be experienced in state government
- Temptation to view new Administration as entering a vacuum
  - There are ongoing tasks that require continuity (correspondence, casework, etc.)
  - There may be hard feelings/competition between Administrations
- There is no time (or often money) to hire enough/the right staff from day one

# Strategies for Auditors' Engagement in Transition

- Organized chaos
  - Staffing or other resource assistance – at least single point of contact
  - Be proactive in 'making connections' before Election Night
  - Accept they will need 'getting to know you' assistance (don't crowd)
- Campaign/policymaking dichotomy
  - Be strategic on shared interests – accountability/transparency can be sold to both political and policymaking groups (if you sell it)
  - Save the 'nuts and bolts' discussions for the government types
- Leadership vacuum
  - Important to reinforce the importance of continuity of operations
  - Early on 'high level' briefing on assessment of risks and ongoing joint efforts between accountability and administration staff
  - Offer later briefings on department or key issue level

# Looking Forward/Parting Thoughts

- Accountability/transparency is a good pitch, but the product needs work
  - Government 'checkbook' and similar websites are a mess
  - 'Open government' approaches have a 'drink from a firehose' feel to them – frustrating and overwhelming
  - Siloed or splintered efforts
- We need more dialogue on respective opportunities for 'constructive communication'
  - How can we work together to make the process more open and accessible?
  - How can we, at the start of our relationship, identify the necessary and appropriate 'rules of engagement'
  - This will have greater opportunity for success if it occurs at the beginning of the new Administration
  - Every relationship must be continually nurtured and maintained

# Discussion/Questions



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