



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 9, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Rahm Emanuel 
Chief of Staff

Peter R. Orszag 
Director, Office of Management and Budget

SUBJECT: Preparing for Implementation of the Pending Recovery Legislation

The purpose of this memorandum is to emphasize the critical work that needs to be undertaken immediately across government to implement the economy recovery bill, which we hope will be enacted soon, in a manner that is transparent, effective, and efficient.

As you know, the President and Congress are working together on an economic recovery package that will serve as an essential step in fighting off the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression. Although the details of the bill are not yet final, the President and Congress are committed to spending recovery dollars with an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability so Americans know where their tax dollars are going and how they are being spent.

Meeting these commitments will require sustained focus by managers throughout the Federal government, particularly in planning, awarding, managing, and overseeing contracts and grants. Departments and agencies should immediately begin developing plans for allocating workforce resources to meet recovery-related responsibilities and for mitigating potential implementation risks.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is coordinating the development of government-wide implementing guidance to provide clarity and consistency in Federal agency actions. This guidance will cover, at a minimum, requirements and guidelines for:

- Providing spending and performance data that will be posted on the www.recovery.gov web site to give Americans detailed and timely information on how and where recovery dollars are spent;
- Establishing rigorous internal controls, oversight mechanisms, and other approaches to meet the accountability objectives of the bill; and
- Enhancing, as necessary, standard processes for awarding and overseeing funds to meet accelerated timeframes and other unique challenges posed by the recovery bill's transparency and accountability framework.

We cannot overstate the importance of this effort. We are asking the American people to trust their government with an unprecedented level of funding to address the economic emergency. In return, we must prove to them that their dollars are being invested in initiatives and strategies that make a difference in their communities and across the country. Following through on our commitments for accountability and openness will create a foundation upon which we can build as we continue to tackle the economic crisis and the many other challenges facing our nation.

As currently envisioned, the government-wide guidance will be issued in two phases: (i) initial guidance that will be issued soon after the enactment of the recovery bill and cover items critical to early implementation; and (ii) more detailed guidance covering a fuller range of items that will be issued 30-60 days after enactment. These timeframes will require that we develop and issue guidance materials on extremely tight timeframes. To meet these timeframes, staff from OMB has begun reaching out to their agency counterparts to request assistance in the development of the guidance. We appreciate in advance your agency's willingness to support these efforts. We also are asking each agency receiving significant funding from the recovery bill to name, no later than February 13, 2009, a senior official responsible for coordinating recovery-related efforts across your agency.

We intend to work collaboratively with you on the implementation challenges associated with the recovery bill. OMB will soon send out specific instructions for agency review of the detailed guidance. Your team should immediately convey to your OMB counterparts your ideas on:

- Implementation challenges that you have identified to date along with solutions being considered; and
- Implementation items or questions that you believe should be identified in the government-wide guidance document being developed.

Questions about this memorandum or the guidance document should be addressed to OMB Deputy Director Robert Nabors (202-395-4742).

Thank you for your cooperation.