

# THE ORDER OF PRECEDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Revised on May 14, 2020

The U.S. Order of Precedence is an advisory document maintained by the Ceremonials Division of the Office of the Chief of Protocol. *The U.S. Order of Precedence is not the order of succession.* For purposes of protocol, the U.S. Order of Precedence establishes the order and ranking of the United States leadership for official events at home and abroad, e.g. seating or speaking order. Although this document establishes a *general* order for the country's highest-level positions, it does not include every positional title across the federal government. Offices of Protocol for the executive departments and independent agencies should be consulted for internal rankings regarding positions not listed.

In 1908, the Roosevelt Administration created the first U.S. Order of Precedence as a means of settling a history of embarrassment, confusion, and miscommunication amongst officials invited to events at the White House. As the structure of the federal government evolved, this list has adapted and grown. The President of the United States may make adjustments to the Cabinet, to give certain White House positions the status of Cabinet-rank which then follow the heads of the executive departments.

The U.S. Order of Precedence is used primarily in diplomacy. International rules on precedence were first established at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. By determining that envoys of equal title would be ranked according to the date and hour that they presented their credentials to the government that accredited them for service, the Congress of Vienna solidified a fair and justifiable system for diplomatic relations. These same rules are still used to determine the order of precedence of the Diplomatic Corps in Washington, D.C. Additionally, when on official business in the United States, foreign government officials are afforded the same protocol ranking as their corresponding position in the United States government.

A few basic principles regarding precedence should be noted. First, the host or hostess of a meeting or event always takes the primary position of precedence, regardless of their title or traditional ranking. Second, a person's relative precedence may increase or decrease depending on the policy or context behind the specific meeting or event, or based on the wishes of the host on any occasion.

The methodology used in ordering officials for this list includes the United States Code; statutory prescription on precedence, including executive orders; well-established and widely-accepted principles, procedures, and traditions throughout the history of the order of precedence; the current structure of the federal government and the executive departments; and finally, recommendations by the Chief of Protocol based on practical treatment of a particular position or positions.

For any questions regarding the U.S. Order of Precedence, please email the Office of the Chief of Protocol at [ProtocolHelp@state.gov](mailto:ProtocolHelp@state.gov).

**UNITED STATES ORDER OF PRECEDENCE**  
**Revised 5/14/2020**

1	President of the United States <sup>1</sup>
2	Vice President of the United States <sup>1</sup>
3	Governor of a State <sup>1</sup> – when in own state
4	Speaker of the House of Representatives
5	Chief Justice of the United States
6 a	Former Presidents of the United States or their widows/widowers (by seniority of assuming office)
b	Former Vice Presidents of the United States or their widows/widowers (by seniority of assuming office)
7 a	American Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to foreign governments – when at post <i>See also 29a in the order of precedence.</i>
b	American Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives or Representatives to international organizations who hold Chief of Mission authority <sup>2</sup> – when at post <i>See also 29c in the order of precedence.</i>
c	American Chargé d’Affaires ad interim – when at post
8	Secretary of State
9 a	President, United Nations General Assembly – when in session
b	Secretary General of the United Nations – when at the United Nations
c	President, United Nations General Assembly – when not in session
10	Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of foreign diplomatic missions <sup>3</sup> to the United States (in order of presentation of credentials to the President of the United States)
11 a	Associate Justices of the Supreme Court (ranked by date of appointment)
b	Retired Chief Justices of the United States (ranked by date of appointment)
c	Retired Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, unless they resigned (ranked by date of appointment)
12	The Cabinet (other than the Secretary of State), ranked according to date of establishment of the Department <sup>4</sup> , and as added by the President(*) <sup>5</sup> , as follows:
a	Secretary of the Treasury
b	Secretary of Defense
c	Attorney General
d	Secretary of the Interior
e	Secretary of Agriculture
f	Secretary of Commerce
g	Secretary of Labor
h	Secretary of Health and Human Services
i	Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
j	Secretary of Transportation
k	Secretary of Energy

l	Secretary of Education
m	Secretary of Veterans Affairs
n	Secretary of Homeland Security
o	Chief of Staff to the President*
p	Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA)
q	Director, Office of Management and Budget* (OMB)
r	United States Trade Representative* (USTR)
s	Administrator, Small Business Administration* (SBA)
t	Director of National Intelligence* (DNI)
u	Director, Central Intelligence Agency* (CIA)
13 a	President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate
b	Senate Majority Leader
c	Senate Minority Leader
d	Senate Majority Whip
e	Senate Minority Whip
f	Senators (by length of service; if the same, by the state's date of admission into the Union or alphabetically by state)
14	Governors of States <sup>1</sup> – when outside their own states (Relative precedence among governors, all of whom are outside their own state, is determined by each state's date of admission into the Union or alphabetically by state) <i>See Appendix B.</i>
15 a	House Majority Leader
b	House Minority Leader
c	House Majority Whip
d	House Minority Whip
e	Members of the House of Representatives (by length of service; if the same, by the state's date of admission into the Union or alphabetically by state)
16 a	Delegates or Resident Commissioners to the House of Representatives (non-voting members) from Territory of American Samoa, District of Columbia, Territory of Guam, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and United States Virgin Islands (by length of service) <i>See Appendix C.</i>
b	Governors of Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Territory of Guam, Territory of American Samoa, United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (ordered by territory's date of entering U.S. jurisdiction or alphabetically by territory) <i>See Appendix C.</i>
17 a	Assistants to the President and Deputy Chiefs of Staff (ranked by date of appointment)
b	Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (also known as the "National Security Advisor")
c	Assistants to the President and Senior Advisor (ranked by date of appointment)
d	Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the Spouse of the President
e	Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the Vice President
f	Assistants to the President (ranked by date of appointment)
g	Chair, Council of Economic Advisors
h	Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
i	Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy
j	Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)
k	Chief of Protocol – when at the White House or accompanying the President

	<i>See also 29b in the order of precedence.</i>
18 a	American Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives or Representatives to international organizations who do not hold Chief of Mission authority <sup>6</sup> – when at post <i>See also 29d in the order of precedence.</i>
b	Chargé d’Affaires ad interim assigned to foreign diplomatic missions to the United States (in order of date of assumption of this position)
19 a	Former Secretaries of State (by seniority of assuming office)
b	Former Cabinet Members (by seniority of assuming office)
c	Former Senators (by leadership position, then length of service; if the same, by state’s admission into the Union or alphabetically by state) <i>See Appendix B.</i>
d	Former Governors of States – when in own state (ranked by seniority of assuming office)
e	Former Governors of States – when outside their own states (relative precedence among governors, all of whom are outside their own states, is determined by each state’s date of admission into the Union or alphabetically by state) <i>See Appendix B.</i>
f	Former Members of the House of Representatives (by leadership position, then length of service; if the same, by state’s admission into the Union or alphabetically by state) <i>See Appendix B.</i>
20	Deputies to Members of the Cabinet, ranked according to date of establishment of the Department, and as added by the President(*) <sup>7</sup> , as follows:
a	Deputy Secretary of State
b	Deputy Secretary of the Treasury
c	Deputy Secretary of Defense
d	Deputy Attorney General
e	Deputy Secretary of the Interior
f	Deputy Secretary of Agriculture
g	Deputy Secretary of Commerce
h	Deputy Secretary of Labor
i	Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services
j	Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
k	Deputy Secretary of Transportation
l	Deputy Secretary of Energy
m	Deputy Secretary of Education
n	Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs
o	Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security
p	Deputy Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA)
q	Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget* (OMB)
r	Deputy United States Trade Representative* (USTR)
s	Deputy Administrator, Small Business Administration*(SBA)
t	Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence (DNI)*
u	Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency* (CIA)
21 a	Secretary of the Army
b	Secretary of the Navy
c	Secretary of the Air Force
d	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
22 a	Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve and Commissioner of Social Security of the Social Security Administration (SSA)

b	<p>Heads of Federal Independent Agencies whom are at Level II of the Executive Schedule (ranked by agency's creation date; if the same, by length of service).<sup>8</sup> <i>See Appendix A.</i></p> <p>These agencies include, but are not limited to, the following: National Science Foundation (NSF), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) [Formerly Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)]<sup>9</sup></p>
c	Vice Chairman and Governors of the Federal Reserve System (by length of service)
d	Deputy Commissioner, Social Security Administration (SSA)
e	Deputy Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)
f	Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)
g	Deputy Heads of Federal Independent Agencies whom are at Level II of the Executive Schedule (ranked by agency's creation date, when the same, by length of service). <i>See Appendix A.</i>
23 a	Under Secretaries of State and Counselor of the Department of State (as ranked by State Department)
b	Under Secretaries of Executive Departments, Treasurer of the United States, Associate Attorneys General and Solicitor General (according to date of establishment of the Department; if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
c	<p>Heads of Federal Departmental Agencies that report to the head of an Executive Department (ranked by date of establishment of the Department; if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)</p> <p>These agencies include, but not limited to: Director of Foreign Assistance at the Department of State; Defense Agencies, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Secret Service (USSS), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and Customs &amp; Border Protection (CBP)</p>
24a	Retired Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff <sup>10</sup>
b	Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
c	Chief of Staff, Army; Commandant of the Marine Corps; Chief of Naval Operations; and Chief of Staff, Air Force (order is established by date of appointment)
d	Chief, National Guard Bureau
e	Commandant of the Coast Guard
f	Combatant Commanders (order is established by date of appointment) <sup>11</sup>
25 a	<p>Heads of Federal Independent Agencies whom are at Level III of the Executive Schedule (ranked by agency's creation date; when the same, by length of service) <i>See Appendix A.</i></p> <p>These agencies include, but are not limited to, the following: U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC), Export-Import Bank of the United States, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), General Services Administration (GSA), Peace Corps (PC), U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities (NFAH), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB)</p>
b	Deputy Heads of Federal Independent Agencies whom are at Level III of the Executive Schedule (ranked by agency's creation date, when the same, by length of service). <i>See Appendix A.</i>
c	Postmaster General

26	Lieutenant Governors – when in own State
27	Mayors <sup>1</sup> of U.S. cities and the District of Columbia – when in own city
28a	Heads of International Organizations (ranked by their date of establishment) – when not at post  These organizations are including, but not limited to, the following: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), Organization of American States (OAS), World Bank, United Nations (UN)
b	Ambassadors or Permanent Representatives of foreign governments accredited to international organizations headquartered in the United States
29 a	American Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to foreign governments – on official business in the United States or another country (ranked by the oath of office) <i>See also 7a in the order of precedence.</i>
b	Chief of Protocol – when at the Department of State or at events outside the White House <i>See also 17k in the order of precedence.</i>
c	American Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives or Representatives to international organizations who hold Chief of Mission authority <sup>2</sup> – on official business in the United States or when representing the United States at a meeting of their international organization away from post (ranked by the oath of office) <i>See also 7b in the order of precedence.</i>
d	American Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives or Representatives to international organizations who do not hold Chief of Mission authority <sup>6</sup> –on official business in the United States or when representing the United States at a meeting of their international organization away from post (ranked by the oath of office) <i>See 18a in the order of precedence.</i>
e	Career Ambassadors <sup>13</sup>
f	Deputy Assistants to the President (ranked by date of appointment)
30 a	Chief Judges and Circuit Judges of the United States Courts of Appeals (by length of service)
b	Chief Judges and District Judges, United States District Courts (by length of service)
c	Chief Judges and Judges of the United States Court of Military Appeals
d	Chief Judges and Judges of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
e	Chief Judge and Associate Judges, United States Tax Court
31	American Chargé d’Affaires ad interim – on official business in the United States or when representing the United States
32	Under Secretaries of the Department of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (by date of appointment)
33 a	Assistant Secretaries (according to date of establishment of the Department, if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
b	Chiefs of Staff to the Head of an Executive Department (according to date of establishment of the Department, if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
c	Ambassadors at Large (according to date of establishment of the Department, if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)

d	Special Envoys/Representatives (according to date of establishment of the Department, if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
e	Assistant Attorneys General (according to date of establishment of the Department, if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
f	Legal Advisers of Executive Departments (according to date of establishment of the Department, if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
g	Special Assistants to the President, which includes the White House Social Secretary and Senior Directors of the National Security Council (NSC) (ranked by date of appointment)
h	Heads of Federal Independent Agencies whom are at Level IV of the Executive Schedule (ranked by agency's creation date, when the same, by length of service). <i>See Appendix A.</i>
i	Deputy Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
j	Deputy Heads of Federal Independent Agencies whom are at Level IV of the Executive Schedule (ranked by agency's creation date, when the same, by length of service). <i>See Appendix A.</i>
34 a	Assistant Administrators, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
b	Assistant Administrators, Agency for International Development (USAID)
c	Assistant United States Trade Representatives (USTR)
d	Associate Administrators, Small Business Administration (SBA)
35 a	Comptroller General of the United States
b	Members of the Council of Economic Advisers (ranked alphabetically)
c	Members of the Council of Environmental Quality
36	American Ambassadors-designate (in the United States) <sup>14</sup>
37a	Mayors <sup>1</sup> of U.S. cities – when not in own city (if multiple mayors present, rank by length of service)
b	Mayor <sup>1</sup> of the District of Columbia – when not in own city (if multiple mayors present, rank by length of service)
c	Mayors <sup>1</sup> of U.S. territories – when not in own city (if multiple mayors present, rank by length of service)
38 a	Vice Chief of Staff, Army; Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps; Vice Chief of Naval Operations; and Vice Chief of Staff, Air Force (by date of appointment)
b	Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau
c	Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard
d	Assistant Secretaries and General Counsels of the Department of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (by date of appointment)
e	Four Star Military Officers - General or Admiral (in order of seniority; retired officers rank with but after active duty officers)
f	Executive Secretary, National Security Council (NSC)
g	Officers of the U.S. Senate, including the following: the Chaplain, the Party Secretaries, the Secretary of the Senate, the Sergeant at Arms, and the Parliamentarian
h	Officers of the U.S. House of Representatives, including the following: the Chaplain, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Clerk of the House, and the Sergeant at Arms
39 a	Three Star Military Officers – Lieutenant General, Vice Admiral (in order of seniority; retired officers rank after active duty members)
b	State Senators – when in own state (ranked by length of service, when the same, by alphabetical order by surname)
c	State Representatives – when in own state (ranked by length of service, when the same, by

	alphabetical order by surname)
d	Former American Ambassadors/Chiefs of Diplomatic Missions (in order of presentation of credentials at first post)
40 a	Chairmen or Heads of other federal Boards, Councils and Commissions not previously listed <sup>15</sup> (ranked by creation date, when the same, by length of service)
b	Librarian of Congress
c	Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution
d	Chairman of the American Red Cross
e	Deputy Chief of Protocol (ranked by date of appointment)
f	Minister-rank officials assigned to foreign diplomatic missions
41 a	Deputy Under Secretaries of Executive Departments (according to date of establishment of the Department; if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
b	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Executive Departments (according to date of establishment of the Department; if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
c	Deputy Counsels of Executive Departments (according to date of establishment of the Department; if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
d	Two Star Military – Major General, Rear Admiral (in order of seniority; retired officers rank with but after active duty officers)
42 a	Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Executive Departments (according to date of establishment of the Department; if more than one from a Department, then as ranked within the Department)
b	Deputy Assistant Secretaries and Deputy General Counsels of the Army, Navy and Air Force (by date of appointment)
c	Directors of the National Security Council
d	American Consuls General to foreign governments – at post
e	American Deputy Chiefs of Mission – at post
f	Deputy Permanent Representatives of foreign governments accredited to international organizations headquartered in the United States – at post
g	Assistant Chiefs of Protocol (ranked by date of appointment)
h	Minister-Counselor-rank officials assigned to foreign diplomatic missions
42 a	Chief Judge and Judges, United States Court of International Trade
b	Chief Judge and Associate Judges, United States Court of Claims
43 a	One Star Military – Brigadier Generals, Rear Admirals (in order of seniority; retired officers rank with but after active officers)
b	Directors of Offices of Executive Departments
c	Consuls General of foreign governments accredited to the United States
d	Counselor-rank officials assigned to foreign diplomatic missions
e	Members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) not holding previously listed positions (by date of appointment, unless ranked differently as determined by the respective Executive Department)
f	Members of other federal Boards, Councils, and Commissions not previously listed
g	Desk Officers of Executive Departments
h	First Secretary-rank officials assigned to foreign diplomatic missions



## **Endnotes and Further Explanation of Positional Rankings:**

<sup>1</sup> Spouses of the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, Governors in their own state and Mayors in their own cities are afforded the same rank and courtesy that accompanies their spouses' positions at official functions. Spouses of other federal, state, or municipal government officials are accorded the same rank as the Principal at official functions when they are attending together, and they are seated accordingly. This seating courtesy is the only ranking a spouse without title receives in the United States, unless the spouse himself or herself holds a separate position on the Order of Precedence.

<sup>2</sup> The American Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives or Representatives to international organizations with Chief of Mission authority include the following: U.S. Mission to the United Nations (USUN) – New York; U.S. Mission to the African Union (USAU) – Addis Ababa; U.S. Representative to the Organization for Security & Cooperation in Europe with rank of Ambassador (OSCE) – Vienna; U.S. Mission to the Vienna Office of the United Nations (UNVIE) – Vienna; U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (USNATO) – Brussels; U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development with the rank of Ambassador (USOECD) – Paris; U.S. Mission to the UN and Other International Organizations – Geneva; U.S. Mission to the European Union (USEU) – Brussels; U.S. Mission to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (USASEAN) – Jakarta; U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States (USOAS) – Washington, DC.

<sup>3</sup> Diplomatic missions refer to all bilateral missions and the delegations of the European Union and African Union.

<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of the Order of Precedence, any reference to “executive department” shall mean the Cabinet Departments led by the Cabinet Secretaries in #8 and #11a-n. *See Appendix D for listing of executive departments by date of establishment.*

<sup>5</sup> The President may make changes in his or her administration to the Cabinet-rank positions listed in 11o-u. Positions listed with an (\*) have been given the status of Cabinet-rank by the current presidential administration (as of March 2020).

<sup>6</sup> The American Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives or Representatives to international organizations who do not hold Chief of Mission authority, and are given an Ambassador-rank only for the time served in the role, include the following: U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament – Geneva; Representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) – Montreal; U.S. Representative to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) – Geneva; U.S. Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – Paris; U.S. Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) – The Hague; U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture (FAO) – Rome.

<sup>7</sup> See endnote #4. The Deputies to Members of the Cabinet holding Cabinet-rank positions, marked with a (\*), would also change based on the structure of the current Cabinet, as decided by the President.

<sup>8</sup> The Executive Schedule (EX), created by title 5 of the United States Code (5 U.S.C. § 5311), is the basic pay schedule of the highest-level management positions in the United States government. All Executive Schedule positions are statutory and require Presidential appointment and Senate confirmation, otherwise known as “PAS”. For purposes of order of precedence, the Head and Deputy Head positions of Independent Federal Agencies are ranked accordingly. *See Appendix A.*

<sup>9</sup> DFC was established in 2019 through the passage of Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD), Act. The BUILD Act combined the capabilities of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Development Credit Authority which had previously been housed in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

<sup>10</sup> Retired military officers take precedence immediately after active-duty officers of the same position (or grade if the officer did not serve in a position that is explicitly listed) by the initial date of appointment to the position (or grade). The positions for which this rule applies include the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, the Chiefs of Staff of the Military Services, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, the Combatant Commanders, the Vice Chiefs of Staff of the Military Services, and Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard. Precedence for retired military officers will be immediately after the highest position on the list for which an individual served, except for retired Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Retired Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. [Revised Department of Defense (DoD) Order of Precedence, July 15, 2016]

<sup>11</sup> Precedence is established by date of appointment as a Combatant Commander. However, if that individual was previously appointed as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Service Chief, or a previous Combatant Commander position, then the initial date of appointment to the previously held position will be used. Retired Combatant Commanders take precedence with but immediately after active-duty Commanders by the initial date of appointment. [Revised Department of Defense (DoD) Order of Precedence, July 15, 2016]

<sup>12</sup> For purposes of order of precedence, the common practice for many municipal governments is to rank the mayor immediately following the Governor of their state when in their own city.

<sup>13</sup> Career Ambassadors refer to a specific and limited group of individuals. Under the 1980 Foreign Service Act (P.L. 96-465; 94 Stat. 2084), the President is empowered, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to confer the personal rank of Career Ambassador upon a career member of the Senior Foreign Service in recognition of especially distinguished service over a sustained period. In writing and upon retirement, Career Ambassadors may use the title Career Ambassador of the Foreign Service of the United States of America, Retired.

An individual who has served as an Ambassador, appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, may use the title of ambassador, as appropriate, upon retirement: U.S. Ambassador, Retired; or Ambassador-at-Large of the United States, Retired.

This long-standing custom and practice, has established a tradition that persons who have served as an Ambassador, appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, may continue to use the title after such service in appropriate communications with others, may be referred to in communications and conversations by the title of Ambassador, and may be introduced to public audiences by the title. However, this does not apply to officials who are given the rank of ambassador only for their tenure in that position or who are not confirmed by the Senate.

*See Department of State Foreign Affairs Handbook for more information.*

<https://fam.state.gov/FAM/03FAH01/03FAH012430.html#H2439>

In the United States, Government officials who have been elected to public office or are appointed by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the Senate are afforded the courtesy title of *The Honorable*. These positions include, but are not limited to the President, Vice President, members of the Cabinet, Assistants to the President, Special Assistants to the President, Deputy and Under Secretaries of executive departments, Assistant Secretaries, American Ambassadors, Governors, and Mayors. Courtesy titles are not salutations and used only in writing before the full name of a person. Additionally, it is custom in the United States for a person who has held the courtesy title of *The Honorable* to be addressed as *The Honorable* after leaving a high-ranking position, unless they are removed from office or leaves in disgrace.

<sup>14</sup> Ambassador-designate is a diplomatic agent who has been nominated by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate, but who has not presented copies of our credentials to the foreign government. *See Department of State Foreign Affairs Handbook for more diplomatic terms.*

<https://fam.state.gov/FAM/05FAH01/05FAH010610.html#X611>

<sup>15</sup> See *Appendix A* for the list of Federal Independent Agencies as noted in the United States Government Policy and Supporting Positions “Plum Book”. Chairmen or Heads of Boards, Councils or Commissions listed as “V” or not listed in the Executive Schedule should be included here in order of agency’s creation date. Other members or commissioners below the head should be placed at 43f.

## **Additional Guidance regarding Order of Precedence:**

### **Member of Delegation Precedence Order**

As a member of a delegation to a meeting, summit, ministerial or other event, a person's relative precedence may increase or decrease depending on the policy or context behind a specific meeting or event, or based on the wishes of the host on any occasion. Although ambassadors at Post traditionally outrank other Cabinet-level ministers who might represent their countries as the head of delegation, out of courtesy for the subject-matter and Cabinet-level diplomat, the ambassador will drop down in rank as a member of the official delegation for that official visit.

### **Officials in "acting," "interim," or "performing the duties of" positions**

Any official appointed to serve as "Acting," "Interim" or "Performing the Duties of" in a position where the original office-holder was appointed to office by the President, by and with consent by the Senate, will be afforded the protocol level for the position in which he or she is serving while "Acting." When more than one official of the same rank are present at the same event, the "acting" official(s) should be ranked with, but after all others of the same rank. This ensures the rank of the position is afforded protocol courtesies, not the specific individual appointed to serve in that role. *For more information, see the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, as amended (5 U.S.C. §§ 3345-3349d).*

### **Foreign Government Officials and International Organizations**

For purposes of order of precedence, it is important to note that the United States Order of Precedence list refers to positions being held by American officials only.

Positions of equivalence in foreign sovereign nations are afforded the same protocol level when in the United States. For example, foreign Chiefs of State and/or Heads of Government would equate to the United States President, and therefore be positioned accordingly. In situations where multiple sovereign nations are sending representatives to a meeting, summit or other event, the head of delegation will be the most senior member of that nation's delegation, and will be ranked in precedence order by category of their title. Within each category, seniority is given to each representative based on the individual's length of service within that position, or sometimes alphabetically by short form country name.

The following categories are used to determine relative precedence between sovereign nations' representatives or heads of delegation, and the corresponding precedence rank for their U.S. counterpart has been provided for situational awareness: (1) chiefs of state, (1) heads of government, (2) deputy chiefs of state, (2) deputy heads of government, (8) foreign ministers, (11) other Cabinet-level ministers, (10) ambassadors, (28) ambassadors to an international organization, and other senior members of that government. Some nations, including the United States, only have one chief of state or head of government, represented by the same individual. Although ambassadors at Post traditionally outrank other Cabinet-level ministers who might represent their countries as the head of delegation, out of courtesy for the subject-matter and Cabinet-level diplomat, the ambassador will drop down in rank as a member of the official delegation for that official visit.

The United States of America is a member of multiple international alliances and organizations, and often works with the heads of those organizations during meetings, summits, or other events. A head of an international organization (including, but not limited to, the following positions: President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Director of Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), Secretary General of the Organization of American States, President of the World Bank, Secretary General of the United Nations) should be listed in precedence order after official representatives of the sovereign nations present. The only exception to this would be if that organization is hosting the meeting or summit, in which case the head of that international organization would serve in the primary and top position of precedence. Ranking for heads of international organizations is determined by the organization's date of establishment.

### **Leaders or Chief Executives of American Indian Tribes**

For purposes of order of precedence, American Indian Tribes should be treated as foreign governments, with their leaders positioned just after leaders of sovereign foreign nation states, and before any

heads of international organizations (see above guidance regarding Foreign Government Officials and International Organizations for further clarification). When multiple American Indian tribal leaders are present, precedence should be organized alphabetically by the official name of each tribe, beginning first with any federally recognized tribes, then state-recognized tribes, then any non-officially recognized tribes.

American Indian Tribes are defined both as “Sovereign Nations” and “Dependent Nations” in the United States. Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the power “to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.” Additionally, three bedrock principals regarding the sovereignty of the American Indian Tribes underlie U.S. Supreme Court decisions since 1832: (1) by virtue of aboriginal political and territorial status, Indian tribes possessed certain incidents of preexisting sovereignty; (2) such sovereignty was subject to diminution or elimination by the United States, but not by the individual states; and (3) the tribes’ limited inherent sovereignty and their corresponding dependency on the United States for protection imposed on the latter a trust responsibility.

The leader or chief executive of a tribe is usually called a chairman, chairwoman or chairperson, but may also be called a principal chief, governor, president, mayor, spokesperson, or representative. The chief executive presides over the governing body of the tribe. In modern tribal government, the chief executive and members of the tribal council or business council are almost always elected.

**APPENDIX A:** List of Federal Independent Agencies & Government Corporations (Heads & Deputy Heads)

**KEY to Executive Schedule (EX) Level Ranking:**

Head of Agency		Deputy Head of Agency	
EX Level	Precedence Rank	EX Level	Precedence Rank
II	22b	II	22c-f
III	25a	III	25b
IV	33h	IV	33j
V or N/A	40a	V or N/A	43f

*These officials are ranked by the agency's creation date; and if the same, by length of service in the position.*

Agency Name	Agency Acronym	Creation Date	Precedence Rank of Head of Agency	Precedence Rank of Deputy Head of Agency
Administrative Conference of the United States	ACUS	1964	22b (Chairman)	43f
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	ACHP	1966	40a	43f
African Development Foundation	ADF	1980	40a	43f
American Battle Monuments Commission	ABMC	1923	40a	43f
Appalachian Regional Commission	ARC	1965	25a (Federal Co-Chairman)	43f (Alternate Federal Co-Chairman)
Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (United States Access Board)	ATBCB	1973	40a	43f
Armed Forces Retirement Home (1831 US Naval Asylum & 1851 US Soldiers' Home merged)	AFRH	1991	40a	43f
Broadcasting Board of Governors	BBG	1999	33h (Director, IBB)	43f
Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board	CSB	1998	33h (Board Chairperson)	33j (Board Members)
Commission of Fine Arts	CFA	1910	40a	43f
Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled	AbilityOne	1971	40a	43f
Commodity Futures Trading Commission	CFTC	1974	25a (Chairperson)	33j (Commissioners)
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	CFPB	2008	22b (Director)	43f
Consumer Product Safety Commission	CPSC	1972	25a (Chairman)	33j (Commissioners)
Corporation for National and Community Service	CNCS	1993	25a (CEO)	43f
Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency	CIGIE	2008	40a	43f
Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia	CSOSA	1997	33h (Director)	43f
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board	DNFSB	1988	25a (Chairman)	25b (Vice Chairman & Members)
Delaware River Basin Commission	DRBC	1961	40a	43f

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Agency Acronym</b>	<b>Creation Date</b>	<b>Precedence Rank of Head of Agency</b>	<b>Precedence Rank of Deputy Head of Agency</b>
Delta Regional Authority	DRA	2000	40a (Federal Co-Chairman)	43f
Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission	Eisenhower Memorial	1999	40a	43f
Election Assistance Commission	EAC	2002	33h (Commissioner)	33j (Commissioners)
Environmental Protection Agency	EPA	1970	22b (Administrator)	25b
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	EEOC	1965	25a (Chairman)	33j (Commissioners)
Export-Import Bank of the United States	Ex-Im Bank	1934	25a (President/Chairman)	33j (Vice-Chair/VP and Members)
Farm Credit Administration	FCA	1933	25a (Chairman)	33j (Members)
Federal Communications Commission	FCC	1934	25a (Chairman)	33j (Commissioners)
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC	1933	33h (Chairman)	33j (Vice-Chairman & Members)
Federal Election Commission	FEC	1975	33h (Commissioner Members)	43f
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	FERC	1977	25a (Chairman)	33j (Members)
Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council	FFIEC	1979	40a	43f
Federal Housing Finance Agency	FHFA	2008	40a	43f
Federal Labor Relations Authority	FLRA	1978	33h (Chairman)	43f (Members)
Federal Maritime Commission	FMC	1961	25a (Chairman)	33j (Members)
Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service	FMCS	1947	25a (Director)	43f
Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission	FMSHRC	1977	25a (Chairman)	33j (Commissioners)
Federal Reserve System	FRS	1913	22a (Chairman)	22c (Vice-Chairman & Governors)
Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board	FRTIB	1986	25a (Executive Director)	43f
Federal Trade Commission	FTC	1914	25a (Chairman)	33j (Commissioners)
General Services Administration	GSA	1949	25a (Administrator)	43f (Deputy Administrator)
Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation	Truman Scholarship Program	1975	40a	43f
Holocaust Memorial Council	HMC	1980	40a	43f
Inter-American Foundation	IAF	1972	33h (President)	43f
International Boundary Commission: United States and Canada	IBC	1925	40a	43f
International Joint Commission	IJC	1909	40a	43f
Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin	ICPRB	1940	40a	43f
James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation	JMMFF	1986	40a	43f
Japan - United States Friendship Commission	JUSFC	1975	40a	43f
John F. Kennedy Center	KC	1958 ( <i>public debut 1971</i> )	40a (all trustees)	43f

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Agency Acronym</b>	<b>Creation Date</b>	<b>Precedence Rank of Head of Agency</b>	<b>Precedence Rank of Deputy Head of Agency</b>
Marine Mammal Commission	MMC	1972	40a	43f
Medicaid and Chip Payment and Access Commission	MACPAC	1997	40a	43f
Medicare Payment Advisory Commission	MedPAC	1997	40a	43f
Merit Systems Protection Board	MSPB	1978	25a (Chairman)	33j (Vice-Chairman & Member)
Millennium Challenge Corporation	MCC	2004	22b (CEO)	43f
Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation	Udall Foundation	1992	40a	43f
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA	1958	22b (Administrator)	25b (Deputy Administrator)
National Archives and Records Administration	NARA	1934	25a (Archivist)	43f
National Capital Planning Commission	NCPC	1924	40a	43f
National Council on Disability	NCD	1978	40a	43f
National Credit Union Administration	NCUA	1970	25a (Chairman)	33j (Board Members)
National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities	NFAH	1965	25a (Director and both Chairmen)	43f
National Labor Relations Board	NLRB	1935	25a (Chairman)	33j (Board Members)
National Mediation Board	NMB	1934	25a (Chairman)	33j (Board Member)
National Science Foundation	NSF	1950	22b (Director)	25b (Deputy Director)
National Transportation Safety Board	NTSB	1967	25a (Chairman)	33j (Vice-Chairman & Members)
Northern Border Regional Commission	NBRC	2008	25a (Federal Co-Chairperson)	43f
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	NRC	1975	22b (Chairman)	25b (Commissioners)
Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board	NWTRB	1987	40a	43f
Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission	OSHRC	1970	25a (Chairman)	33j (Commission Members)
Office of Government Ethics	OGE	1978	25a (Director)	43f
Office of Personnel Management	OPM	1979	22b (Director)	25b (Deputy Director)
Office of Special Counsel	OSC	1979	33h (Special Counsel)	43f
Peace Corps	PC	1961	25a (Director)	33j (Deputy Director)
Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation	PBGC	1974	25a (Director)	43f
Postal Regulatory Commission	PRC	1970	33h (Chairman)	33j (Commissioners)
President's Commission on White House Fellowships	WH Fellows	1964	40a	43f
Presidio Trust	Presidio Trust	1996	40a	43f
Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board	PCLOB	2007	40a	43f
Railroad Retirement Board	RRB	1930s	25a (Chairman)	33j (Members of Board)
Securities and Exchange Commission	SEC	1934	25a (Chairman)	33j (Commissioners)
Selective Service System	SSS	1917	33h (Director)	43e (Deputy Director)
Smithsonian Institution	SI	1846	40a	43f
Social Security Administration	SSA	1935	22a (Commissioner)	22d (Dep. Commissioner)
Social Security Advisory Board	SSAB	1994	40a	43f
Special Inspector General for	SIGAR	2008	40a	43f



<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Agency Acronym</b>	<b>Creation Date</b>	<b>Precedence Rank of Head of Agency</b>	<b>Precedence Rank of Deputy Head of Agency</b>
Afghanistan Reconstruction				
State Justice Institute	SJI	1984	40a	43f
Susquehanna River Basin Commission	SRBC	1970	40a	43f
Tennessee Valley Authority	TVA	1933	40a	43f
The Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation	BGS	1986	40a	43f
U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (with Mexico)	USIBWC	1889	25a (Commissioner)	43f
United States - China Economic and Security Review Commission	USCC	2000	40a	43f
United States Agency for International Development	USAID	1961	22b (Administrator)	25b (Deputy Administrator)
United States Arctic Research Commission	USARC	1984	40a	43f
United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad	Heritage Abroad	1985	40a	43f
United States Commission on Civil Rights	USCCR	1957	33h (Chairman)	33j (Commissioners)
United States Commission on International Religious Freedom	USCIRF	1998	40a	43f
United States Institute of Peace	USIP	1984	40a	43f
United States Interagency Council on Homelessness	USICH	1987	40a	43f
U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (Formerly Overseas Private Investment Corporation)	DFC	2019	22b (CEO)	25b
United States International Trade Commission	USITC	1916	25a (Chairman)	33j (Vice-Chairman & Commissioners)
United States Postal Service	USPS	1775	40a	43f
United States Trade and Development Agency	USTDA	1961	25d (Director)	43e (Deputy Director)
Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission	Mitigation Commission	1992	40a	43f
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars	Wilson Center	1968	40a	43f

**APPENDIX B:** List of U.S. States by Date of Admission to the Union – Chronological

	<b>State</b>	<b>Date of Admission</b>
1	Delaware	December 7, 1787
2	Pennsylvania	December 12, 1787
3	New Jersey	December 18, 1787
4	Georgia	January 2, 1788
5	Connecticut	January 9, 1788
6	Massachusetts	February 6, 1788
7	Maryland	April 28, 1788
8	South Carolina	May 23, 1788
9	New Hampshire	June 21, 1788
10	Virginia	June 25, 1788
11	New York	July 26, 1788
12	North Carolina	November 21, 1789
13	Rhode Island	May 29, 1790
14	Vermont	March 4, 1791
15	Kentucky	June 1, 1792
16	Tennessee	June 1, 1796
17	Ohio	March 1, 1803
18	Louisiana	April 30, 1812
19	Indiana	December 11, 1816
20	Mississippi	December 10, 1817
21	Illinois	December 3, 1818
22	Alabama	December 14, 1819
23	Maine	March 15, 1820
24	Missouri	August 10, 1821
25	Arkansas	June 15, 1836
26	Michigan	January 26, 1837
27	Florida	March 3, 1845
28	Texas	December 29, 1845
29	Iowa	December 28, 1846
30	Wisconsin	May 29, 1848
31	California	September 9, 1850
32	Minnesota	May 11, 1858
33	Oregon	February 14, 1859
34	Kansas	January 29, 1861
35	West Virginia	June 20, 1863
36	Nevada	October 31, 1864
37	Nebraska	March 1, 1867
38	Colorado	August 1, 1876
39	North Dakota	November 2, 1889
40	South Dakota	November 2, 1889
41	Montana	November 8, 1889
42	Washington	November 11, 1889
43	Idaho	July 3, 1890
44	Wyoming	July 10, 1890
45	Utah	January 4, 1896
46	Oklahoma	November 16, 1907
47	New Mexico	January 6, 1912
48	Arizona	February 14, 1912
49	Alaska	January 3, 1959
50	Hawaii	August 21, 1959
	District of Columbia	June 1, 1871 – by an act of Congress

**APPENDIX C:** List of U.S. Territories by Date of Admission to the Union – Chronological

	<b>Territory</b>	<b>Date of Admission</b>
1	Commonwealth of Puerto Rico	1889
2	Territory of Guam	1898
3	Territory of American Samoa	1899
4	U.S. Virgin Islands	1917
5	Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands	1978

**APPENDIX D:** List of Executive Departments by Date of Establishment

	<b>Executive Department</b>	<b>Date of Establishment</b>
1	Department of State	July 27, 1789
2	Department of Treasury	September 2, 1789
3	Department of Defense	September 18, 1947
4	Department of Justice	July 1, 1870
5	Department of the Interior	March 3, 1849
6	Department of Agriculture	May 15, 1862
7	Department of Commerce	February 14, 1903
8	Department of Labor	March 4, 1913
9	Department of Health and Human Services	April 11, 1953
10	Department of Housing and Urban Development	September 9, 1965
11	Department of Transportation	April 1, 1967
12	Department of Energy	August 4, 1977
13	Department of Education	October 17, 1979
14	Department of Veterans Affairs	March 15, 1989
15	Department of Homeland Security	November 25, 2002