

Public Administration Glossary of Terms

The following list of selected terms and concepts are commonly used in public administration and finance¹.

ABILITY TO PAY: The principle of taxation that holds that the tax burden should be distributed according to a person's wealth. It is based on the assumption that, as a person's income increases, the person or corporation can and should contribute a larger percentage of income to support government activities. The progressive income tax is based on the ability to pay principle.

ABSOLUTISM: A government with no limits to its power and under which the people have no guaranteed or constitutional rights.

ABUSE: 1. The use of an existing authority for purposes that extend beyond or even contradict the intentions of the grantors of that authority. 2. The furnishing of excessive services to beneficiaries of government programs, violating program regulations, or performing improper practices, none of which involves prosecutable fraud.

ACCESS: 1. The ability to gain the attention and to influence the decisions of key political agents. Political party leaders, the heads of major interest groups, and those who make large campaign contributions are typically said to have access. 2. Lobbying; getting information to key decision makers at critical times.

ACCLAMATION: Overwhelming approval by voice vote.

ACCOUNTABILITY: A political principle according to which agencies or organizations, such as those in government, are subject to some form of external control, causing them to give a general accounting of and for their actions; an essential concept in democratic public administration.

¹ This list of terms is adapted from several sources:

Denhardt, Robert B., Public Administration: An Action Orientation, Second Edition Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, CA, 1995.

Gordon, George J., Public Administration in America, Fourth Edition, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1992.

Marlow, Michael L., Public Finance: Theory and Practice, The Dryden Press, Fort Worth, Texas, 1995.

McCurdy, Howard E., Public Administration: A Synthesis, Cummings Publishing Company, Menlo Park, CA, 1977.

Shafritz, Jay M., The Dorsey Dictionary of American Government and Politics, The Dorsey Press, Chicago, IL 1988.

ACCOUNTING: The process of classifying, measuring, and interpreting financial transactions. Cash accounting is the recording of transactions at the time the payment is actually made; accrual accounting means that revenues are recorded when they are earned and expenses are recorded as they are incurred.

ACT: A written bill formally passed by a legislature, such as the U.S. Congress, and signed by an executive, such as the U.S. president. An act is a bill from its introduction until its passage by a legislature. An act becomes a law; becomes a formal statute, when it is signed by (or passed over the veto of) a chief executive, such as the U.S. president. 2. A bill that has been passed by only one house of a legislature.

ACTING: Temporary. For example, someone might be the acting director of a government agency. Acting appointments are sometimes automatic, as when a lieutenant governor is the acting governor whenever the elected governor leaves the state.

ACTIVIST: One who is seriously and passionately involved in politics by running for office, mobilizing support for issues, participating in campaigns, and so on.

ACT OF CONGRESS: A statute; a law passed by the U.S. Congress and signed (or passed over the veto of) the president. All of the acts passed by the Congress are published, in chronological order according to term and session of Congress in the U.S. Statutes-at-Large. The statutes are organized by subject in the U.S. Code.

ACT OF STATE: The judicial policy that a court in one nation should not rule on the legality of the internal acts of a foreign country.

AD HOC: A Latin term meaning temporarily; for this one time. It is sometimes used to criticize methods that substitute for standard procedures.

AD INTERIM: A Latin term meaning in the meantime. A public official is ad interim when serving the unexpired term of a predecessor (who has died, resigned, or been removed) until a permanent official can be appointed or elected.

ADJOURNMENT: The putting off of a business to another time or place; the decision of a court, legislature, or other group to stop meeting either temporarily or permanently.

ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE: The adjournment of a legislature that does not fix a day for reconvening. (Sine die is a Latin term meaning without a day.) It is used to indicate the final adjournment of a session of the Congress or of a state legislature.

ADJUDICATION: 1. The resolution of a dispute by means of judicial or quasi-judicial processing in which the parties are able to present evidence and reasoned arguments. 2. The formal pronouncing and recording of the decisions of a court or quasi-judicial entity.

ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME: An income tax term referring to the money a person earns minus allowable deductions for certain expenses for travel, work, business, moving, etc.

ADMINISTERED PRICES: Prices determined by other than market forces such as those set by monopolies, cartels, or governments.

ADMINISTRATION: 1. The management and direction of the affairs of governments and institutions. 2. A collective term for all policy making officials of a government. 3. The execution and implementation of public policy. 4. The time in office of a chief executive such as a president, governor, or mayor. 5. The supervision of the estate of a dead person to pay taxes and assign assets to heirs.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY: That aspect of administrative responsibility by which officials are held answerable for general notions of democracy and morality as well as for specific legal mandates.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADVOCACY: The presentation of alternative policies to an administrative agency. This practice recognizes that public administration is a highly political process involving significant differences of judgement. The most feasible course of action often emerges from the competition produced when each interested group pleads the case it presents, whether that cause be more funds to carry out agency policies, the survival of a particular program, or the desire for a more efficient system of administrative decision making.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY: 1. A government organization set up to implement a law. 2. Any civilian government body (board, bureau, department, or individual), other than a court or legislature, that deals with the rights of private parties by adjudication, rule making, investigation, prosecuting, and so on.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF TAXATION: Costs related to administering the tax system.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION: The ability of individual administrators in a bureaucracy to make significant choices affecting management and operation of programs for which they are responsible; particularly evident in separation-of-powers systems.

ADMINISTRATIVE DUE PROCESS: Term encompassing a number of points in administrative law that require that the administrative procedures of government agencies and regulatory commissions, as they affect private parties, be based upon written guidelines that safeguard individual rights and protect against the arbitrary or inequitable exercise of government authority.

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW: 1. That branch of law concerned with the procedures by which administrative agencies make rules and adjudicate cases; the conditions under which these actions can be reviewed by courts. 2. The legislation that creates administrative agencies. 3. The rules and

regulations promulgated by administrative agencies. 4. The law governing judicial review of administrative actions.

ADMINISTRATIVE MORALITY: The use of ethical, political, or social precepts to create standards by which the quality of public administration may be judged; such as the standards of honesty, responsiveness, efficiency effectiveness, competence, effect on individual rights, adherence to democratic procedures, and social equity.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: A directive carrying the force of law issued by an administrative agency after adjudication.

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDY: A means of enforcing a right by going to an administrative agency either for help or for a decision. People are often required to exhaust all administrative remedies by submitting their problems to the proper agency before taking their cases to court.

ADMINISTRATOR: 1. A manager. 2. The head of a government agency. 3. Someone appointed by a court to handle a deceased person's estate. 4. Anyone with fiduciary responsibility.

AD VALOREM TAXES: Those levied as a percentage of product price.

ADVERSE OR DISPARATE IMPACT: Criterion for showing that employment practices affect one group more harshly than another.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN: An organization's written plan to remedy past discrimination against, or underutilization of, women and minorities. The plan itself usually consists of a statement of goals, timetables for achieving them, and specific program efforts.

AGENCY: 1. Any department, office, commission, authority, administration, board, government-owned corporation, or other independent establishment of any branch of government in the United States. 2. A formal relation whereby one person is authorized to act for another.

AGENCY MISSION: Responsibility assigned to a specific agency and its components, in terms of the purpose served.

AGENDA SETTING: 1. The process of deciding what issues will be considered at a formal meeting. 2. The process by which ideas or issues come up through the various political processes to wind up on the agenda of a political institution, such as a legislature or court. The process makes extensive use of the mass media to take a relatively unknown or unsupported issue and through publicity expand the numbers who care about the issue, so an institution whether it be city hall or the U.S. Congress, is forced to take some action.

ALLOCATIONAL EFFECTS: The ways in which policies influence of the use of resources.

ALLOCATION FUNCTION: The shifting of resources into preferred (and out of non-preferred) areas.

ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX (AMT): The least possible legal amount that must be paid by high-income taxpayers.

AMENDMENT: 1. A change in a prior law by the enactment of a new law. 2. A change in a bill during its time of consideration in a legislature. 3. A provision of a constitution adopted since its original ratification.

AMICUS CURIAE: A Latin term for friend of the court; any person or organization allowed to participate in a lawsuit who would not otherwise have a right to do so. Participation is usually limited to filing a brief on behalf of one side or the other.

ANARCHISM: The belief that government and its administrative institutions are intrinsically evil and should be abolished (typically by violence) so they can be replaced by arrangements not corrupted by exploitative and oppressive governments.

APOLITICAL: 1. Outside of politics; not concerned with political dominance; apathetic toward voting or politics. 2. Nonpartisan; not affiliated with a political party.

APPEAL: 1. Any proceeding or request to a higher authority that a lower authority's decision be reviewed. 2. A formal request to a higher court that it review the actions of a lower court. 3. A challenge to a ruling made by a presiding officer of a legislature. If the challenge is supported by a majority vote of the legislators, the initial ruling is overridden.

APPOINTMENT: A non-elected government job. Most jurisdictions offer several kinds of appointments. A noncompetitive appointment is government employment obtained without competing with others, in the sense that is done without regard to civil service registers.

APPORTIONMENT: Process by which funds are allocated to agencies for specific portion of the year.

APPROPRIATION: 1. Funds set aside by a legislature to pay for something authorized by law.

AUTHORITY: Power defined according to a legal and institutional framework, and vested in a formal structure (a nation, organization, profession); power exercised through recognized, legitimate channels.

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION: Legislation action that permits establishment or continuation of a particular program or agency.

AUTOCRACY: Government by one.

AVERAGE TAX RATE: Calculated by dividing tax liability by taxable income.

BASE: The point from which most budgetary calculations begin, generally that appropriation which the agency received in the previous fiscal year, with the expectation that spending in each agency will approximate the existing level of expenditures.

BASE BROADENING: Increasing the tax base to eliminate or reduce tax expenditures.

BENEFIT-COST RATIO: The ratio of the present value of benefits over the present value of costs.

BENEFITE PRINCIPLE: Taxation principle whereby taxes are assigned on the basis of benefits received.

BLOCK GRANTS: Grants in which the money can be used for nearly any purpose within a specific function field.

BOND: Promise to repay a certain amount (principal) at a certain time (maturity date) at a particular rate of interest.

BOUNDARY SPANNING: Representing an organization to outside groups and organizations.

BOUNDED RATIONALITY: Seeking the best possible solution, but not necessarily the most rational from a purely economic standpoint.

BRACKET CREEP: When increases in nominal income result in higher marginal tax rates.

BUDGET PADDING: Proposing a higher budget than is actually needed.

BUDGET DEFICIT: When public spending exceeds tax revenues.

BUDGET SURPLUS: When tax revenues exceed public spending.

BUREAUCRACY: A formal organizational arrangement characterized by division of labor, job specialization with no functional overlap, exercise of authority through a vertical hierarchy (chain of command) and a system of internal rules, regulations, and record keeping; the administrative branch of government (national, state, local).

CAPITAL BUDGETING: The separation of expenditures that produce long-term benefits, especially those involving the construction of public facilities, from the annual operating costs of government; the process for reviewing expenditure decisions for capital projects and deciding on the methods for financing them, usually through the sale of bonds.

CAPITAL GAINS: Increases in the value of assets realized at the time of their sale.

CAPITAL GRANTS: Grants for use in construction or renovation.

CASH TRANSFERS: Transfer policies that give money to recipients.

CATEGORICAL OR PROJECT GRANTS: Grants requiring that the money may be spent for only a limited purpose; typically available on a competitive basis.

CHARTER: Local government's equivalent of a constitution.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: The involvement of citizens in a wide range of administrative policy-making activities, including the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects, in order to orient government programs toward community needs, build public support, and encourage a sense of cohesiveness within neighborhoods.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: The process by which an agent chosen by public employees negotiates a formal labor agreement or settles day-to-day labor disputes on behalf of the employees in the areas of wages, benefits, working conditions, and administrative policy with parties representing the top politically elected or appointed executives.

COMMON-POOL PROBLEMS: Problems that occur when public stewardship of resources allocates resources inefficiently.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: An approach to the administration of social and economic development programs in which government officials are dispatched to the field to act as catalysts at the local level, encouraging local residents to form groups, define their own needs, and develop self-help projects. The government provides technical and material assistance and helps the community establish institutions, such as farm cooperatives, to carry on the development programs after the officials have left.

COMPARABLE WORTH: Notion that men and women in jobs that are not identical but require similar levels of skill and training should be paid equally.

COMPLIANCE COSTS OF TAXATION: Costs taxpayers incur in order to comply with tax laws.

CONSTITUENCY: Any group or organization interested in the work and actions of a given official, agency, or organization, and a potential source of support for it; also, the interest (sometimes geographic area) served by an elected or appointed public official.

CONSTITUENT POLICY: Policy designed to benefit the public generally or to serve the government.

CONSUMER SURPLUS: The difference between maximum possible expenditures and actual expenditures.

CONTINGENCY APPROACH: The use of different administrative strategies under different conditions; the study of the relationship between factors such as the task an agency performs or the technology it uses and the style of supervision, type of organizational design, and other administrative strategies that will work best given those factors.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION: Resolution permitting the government to continue operating until an appropriations measure is passed.

COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM: Greater sharing of responsibilities between federal and state governments.

CO-OPTATION: Alliance building between an administrative agency and a clientele group in which the clientele group is allowed to influence agency policy making, in return for which the clientele group tacitly agrees to support the general mission of the agency, provide it with political support, and defend the agency against assaults on its powers, programs, or budget.

CORPORATIONS: Legal entities created by states, which approve charters submitted by founders.

CORRECTIVE TAXATION: Tax policy that forces market participants to account for the opportunity costs of all resources.

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS: Technique designed to measure relative gains and losses resulting from alternative policy or program options; emphasizes identification of the most desirable cost-benefit ratio, in quantitative or other terms.

COST-BENEFIT RATIO: The proportional relationship between expenditure of a given quantity of resources and the benefits derived therefrom; a guideline for choosing among alternatives, of greatest relevance to the rational model of decision making.

COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT: Oversight bodies representing various localities to help coordinate local affairs.

CROSS-CUTTING REQUIREMENTS: Rules that apply to most grant programs.

CURRENT SERVICES BUDGET: Allows for automatic spending increases to maintain post levels of service.

CUTBACK MANAGEMENT: A management strategy made necessary by the advent of fiscal stress; tactics can include, among others, systematic priority setting, diversifying programs, adopting user charges, improving productivity, eliminating weak programs, and decreasing services.

DEBT CAPACITY: Value of a city's resources combined with the ability of the government to draw on them to provide payment.

DECISION ANALYSIS: Technique where decisions are likely to be made sequentially and under some degree of uncertainty.

DECISION TREE: Technique that identifies various possible outcomes, given the risks associated with each.

DELEGATION: Assigning tasks to others.

DEMOCRACY: A political system in which decision making power is widely shared among members of the society.

DIALECTICAL ORGANIZATION: A post-bureaucratic form of organization designed to be responsive to clientele needs; dialectical refers to the permanent state of tension between the tendency toward bureaucratization and the tendency toward responsiveness to clients, a tension the organization uses to continually renew itself.

DIFFERENTIAL TAX INCIDENT: Evaluates the incidence of taxation under the assumption that public spending does not change.

DILLON'S RULE: Municipalities have only those powers granted in their charters; cities are creatures of the state.

DISCRETIONARY SPENDING: That portion of the budget still open to changes by the president and Congress.

DISTRIBUTIONAL EFFECTS: The ways in which policies transfer income from one person to another.

DISTRIBUTIVE POLICY: Policy involving use of general tax funds to provide assistance and benefits to individuals or groups.

DIVIDENDS: Payments made to owners of corporations.

DIVISION OF WORK: One of the fundamental principles upon which the science of administration is based; increased specialization in the organization of work in order to narrow the

range of tasks for which each person is responsible, which in turn increases the need for administrative planning and coordination and raises the productivity of the organization as a whole.

DOUBLE-DECLINING BALANCE: A variant of straight-line depreciation whereby the majority of depreciation is deducted in the early years of an asset's tax life.

DOUBLE TAXATION: The taxing of income when it is earned by corporations and again when it is distributed to stockholders.

DUAL FEDERALISM: Pattern in which federal and state governments are struggling for power and influenced with little inter-governmental cooperation.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDITS: lower tax liabilities of poor taxpayers.

ECONOMIC DEPRECIATION: The process by which capital resources are actually consumed or made obsolete.

ECONOMIC INCIDENCE: Indicates who actually bears the burden of taxation.

ECONOMIES OF SCALE: When increased levels of production result in decreased average costs of production.

EFFECTIVENESS: Extent to which a program is achieving or failing to achieve its stated objectives.

EFFECTIVE TAX RATE: Tax rates calculated by dividing tax liability by a comprehensive measure of income.

EFFICIENCY: Relationship between inputs and outputs.

ENTITLEMENT GRANTS: Grants that provide assistance to persons who meet certain criteria.

ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS: Programs that provide a specified set of benefits to those who meet certain eligibility requirements.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: Refers to efforts to eliminate employment discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic background, sex, age, or physical handicap; ensures that all persons have an equal chance to compete for employment and promotions based on job qualifications.

EQUALITY: The idea that all persons have an equal claim to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

EQUITY: A criterion for allocating resources on the basis of fairness.

ESTATE TAXES: taxes imposed on the transfer of wealth after the death of a taxpayer.

ETHICS: Process by which we clarify right and wrong and act on what we take to be right.

EVALUATION: The use of research techniques to measure the past performance of a specific program--in particular, the program's impact on the conditions it seeks to modify--for the purposes of changing the operation of the program so as to improve its effectiveness at achieving its objectives.

EXCISE SUBSIDIES: Subsidies given to the purchasers of particular goods or services.

EXCISE TAX: Tax applied to the sale of specific commodities.

EXECUTIVE ORDER: A presidential mandate directed to and governing, with the effect of law, the actions of government officials and agencies.

EXPENDITURE TAX: A comprehensive consumption tax.

EXPENSING: Allows for the depreciation of the entire cost of an asset during the first year of purchase.

EXPERT SYSTEMS: Computer programs that mimic the decision making processes of human experts within a particular field.

EXTERNAL COSTS: Those costs imposed by majorities on minorities.

FEDERALISM: A constitutional division of governmental power between a central or national government and regional governmental units (such as states), with each having some independent authority over its citizens.

FIDUCIARY FUNDS: Funds used when government must hold assets for individuals or when government holds resources to be transmitted to another organization.

FISCAL CENTRALIZATION: The degree to which government responsibilities are borne by the central government.

FISCAL POLICY: Public policy concerned with the impact of government taxation and spending on the economy.

FISCAL STRESS: A condition confronting increasing numbers of governments and public agencies, resulting from a combination of economic inflation, declining productivity, slower

economic growth, and taxpayer resistance to shouldering a larger tax burden; a prime cause for the need to engage in "cutback management."

FISCAL YEAR (FY): Government's basic accounting period.

FOREIGN SHARE OF DEBT: That share of the national debt held by foreigners.

FORMAL THEORIES OF ORGANIZATION: Theories stressing formal, structural arrangements within organizations, and "correct" or "scientific" methods to be followed in order to achieve the highest degree of organizational efficiency; examples include Weber's theory of bureaucracy and Taylor's scientific management approach.

FORMULA GRANTS: Grants that employ a specific division rule to indicate how much money any given jurisdiction will receive.

FREE RIDERS: Individuals who let others pay for goods they themselves consume.

FULLY FUNDED PENSION FUND: A pension fund that has the financial resources necessary to meet future retirement benefits.

"GARBAGE CAN" theory of organizational choice: A theory of organizational decision making applicable to organizations where goals are unclear, technologies are imperfectly understood, histories are difficult to interpret, and participants wander in and out; such "organized anarchies" operate under conditions of pervasive ambiguity, with so much uncertainty in the decision making process that traditional theories about coping with uncertainty do not apply.

GENERAL FUND: Fund that handles "unrestricted" funds of government.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND: A bond that guarantees that all taxpayers will be responsible for the bond's principal and interest payments.

GENERATIONAL ACCOUNTING: A method of recording long-term liabilities in order to measure their impact on future generations.

GIFT TAXES: Taxes imposed on the transfer of wealth while a taxpayer is living.

GOAL ARTICULATION: A process of defining and clearly expressing goals generally held by those in an organization or group; usually regarded as a function of organization or group leaders; a key step in developing support for official goals.

GOAL CONGRUENCE: Agreement on fundamental goals in the context of an organization, refers to agreement among leaders and followers in the organization on central objectives; in practice, its absence in many instances creates internal tension and difficulties in goal definition.

GOVERNMENT FAILURE: When a public policy results in an inefficient or inequitable outcome.

GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED ENTERPRISES (GSEs): Off-budget government agencies that reallocate resources in credit markets.

GRANTS: Transfers of money (and/or property) from one government to another.

GROSS FEDERAL DEBT: The debt held by federal government agencies plus that held by the public.

GROSS INCOME: Sum of all income sources subject to taxation.

HIERARCHY: A characteristic of formal bureaucratic organizations; a clear vertical "chain of command" in which each unit is subordinate to the one above it and superior to the one below it; one of the most common features of governmental and other bureaucratic organizations.

HOME RULE: Provision allowing cities greater autonomy over local activities.

HORIZONTAL EQUITY: All individuals with identical abilities to pay are assigned identical tax burdens.

HUMAN RELATIONS THEORIES OF ORGANIZATION: Theories stressing workers' non-economic needs and motivations on the job that seek to identify these needs and how to satisfy them; focused on working conditions and social interactions among workers.

IMPLICIT FEDERAL GUARANTEES: Unstated or indirectly stated promises by the federal government to cover any losses in cases of default by government-sponsored enterprises.

IMPOUNDMENT: Withholding of funds authorized and appropriated by law.

INCREMENTALISM: A model of decision making that stresses making decisions through limited successive comparisons, in contrast to the rational model; also focuses on simplifying choices rather than aspiring to complete problem analyses, on "satisfying" rather than "maximizing."

INDEPENDENT AGENCIES: Agencies intentionally created outside the normal cabinet organization.

IN-KIND INCOME: Income in the form of goods and services rather than cash.

INTEREST GROUP: A private organization representing a portion (usually small) of the general adult population; it exists in order to pursue particular public policy objectives and seeks to influence government activity so as to achieve its particular objectives.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMPETITION: A fiscal structure characterized by many competing governments.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS: All the activities and interactions occurring between or among governmental units of all types and levels within the American federal system.

INTERJURISDICTIONAL EXTERNALITIES: Arise when governments fail to fully account for costs and benefits imposed on citizens of other governments.

INTERNAL RATE OF DISCOUNT: Discount rate at which the present value of a project is zero.

INTERNALIZATION OF COSTS: The allocation of resources by private markets on the basis of full social costs.

INTERORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS: Patterns of relationships within and among various groups and organizations working in a single policy area.

IRON TRIANGLE: Term given to a coalition of interest groups, agency personnel, and members of Congress created to exert influence on a particular policy issue.

ISSUE NETWORKS: Open and fluid groupings of various political actors (in and out of government) attempting to influence policy.

ITEM VETO: A constitutional power available to more than forty of America's governors, under which they may disapprove some provisions of a bill while approving the others.

JURIDICAL DEMOCRACY: The restoration of the rule of law and the requirements of administrative formality in which a corps of professional administrators would implement detailed legislative policies through formal administrative procedures instead of receiving broad delegations of power and developing governmental policy themselves in conjunction with special interest groups.

JURISDICTION: In bureaucratic politics, the area of programmatic responsibility assigned to an agency by the legislature or chief executive; also, a term used to describe the territory within the boundaries of a government entity (as a local jurisdiction).

LACK OF EXCLUSION: Characteristic of public goods making it difficult or impossible to restrict the enjoyment of benefits to any individual.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT: The purposes and objectives of a legislative body, given concrete form in its enactment (though actual intent may change over time); the bureaucracy is assumed to follow legislative intent in implementing laws.

LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT: The process by which a legislative body continually supervises the work of the bureaucracy in order to ensure its conformity with legislative intent.

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY: A fundamental form of political arrangement, founded on the concepts of popular sovereignty and limited government.

LIBERTY: The idea that individual citizens of a democracy should have a high degree of self-determination.

LIMITED GOVERNMENT: A central concept of American politics, holding that because government poses a fundamental threat to individual liberties, it must be carefully limited in its capacity to act arbitrarily; the Founders of American government believed it was to be achieved through separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, and judicial review.

LINE-ITEM BUDGET: Budget format for listing categories of expenditures along with amounts allocated to each.

LOAN GUARANTEES: Loans guaranteed by the public sector.

LONG-LIVED RESOURCES: Assets with a useful life of one year or more.

LUMP SUM TAX: A tax that does not vary with units of goods purchased or sold.

MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES (MBO): A management technique designed to facilitate goal- and priority-setting, development of plans, resource allocation, monitoring progress towards goals, evaluating results, and generating and implementing improvements in performance.

MANAGERIAL SUBSYSTEM: Concerned with providing necessary resources for accomplishing a technical task and mediating between the technical and institutional subsystems.

MANDATE: Order requiring a government to do something.

MANDATORY SPENDING: Disbursements not subject to annual review or budgeting.

MARGINAL TAX RATES: Rates that change at various thresholds of income.

MARKET FAILURE: When the private market fails to produce an efficient or equitable outcome.

MERIT PAY: Increases in salary and wages that are tied to actual quality of work performed.

MERIT PRINCIPLE: Concept that selections of government employees should be based on merit or competence rather than personal or political favoritism.

MERIT SYSTEM: A professional system of personnel administration, free from political interference, in which selection and progress in the service are based upon the performance, expertise, and technical qualifications of each employee, measured objectively, (often through open, competitive examinations), accompanied by the development of a position classification and salary standardization system and administered through offices of personnel administration and a central civil service commission.

MIXED SCANNING: A model of decision making that combines the rational-comprehensive model's emphasis on fundamental choices and long-term consequences with the incrementalists' emphasis on changing only what needs to be changed in the immediate situation.

MODERN ORGANIZATION THEORY: A body of theory emphasizing empirical examination of organizational behavior, interdisciplinary research employing varied approaches, and attempts to arrive at generalizations applicable to many different kinds of organizations.

MONOPOLY GOVERNMENT: A public sector characterized by a single government.

NATIONAL CONSUMPTION TAX: Federal taxes levied on the consumption of goods and services.

NATIONAL DEBT: The sum of all unpaid public debt.

NEGATIVE EXTERNALITIES: When private markets fail to allocate resources on the basis of full social costs.

NEGATIVE INCOME TAX POLICY: Provides a minimum amount of income for all members of society.

NET FEDERAL DEBT: Gross federal debt minus debt held by federal agencies.

NET INTEREST EXPENDITURES: Interest expenses from borrowing less the interest fees from lending.

NEW PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: A general movement inspired mainly by younger scholars who challenged several tenets of public administration, primarily the emphasis upon value-neutrality in administrative research and practice, and appealed to scholars and practitioners to take a more proactive role, guided not only by the search for efficiency, but by a sensitivity to the forces of change, the needs of clients, and the problems of social equity in service delivery.

NEUTRAL COMPETENCE: The belief that a neutral public bureaucracy following the mandates of a legislative body will meet the requirements of democracy.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS: Organizations prohibited by law from distributing surplus revenues to individuals.

NONCASH TRANSFERS: Transfer policies that provide goods or services, such as housing or food, rather than money.

OFF-BUDGET POLICIES: Credit and insurance policies that do not directly show up on the government budget; versus **ON-BUDGET POLICIES** in which spending and tax policies show up directly on the government budget.

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB): An important entity in the Executive Office of the U.S. President that assists the president in assembling executive-branch budget requests, coordinating programs, developing executive talent, and supervising program management processes in national government agencies.

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (OPM): A key administrative unit in the national government operating under presidential direction; it is responsible for managing the national government personnel system, consistent with presidential personnel policy.

OLIGARCHY: Government by the few.

OMBUDSMAN: Permanent office that receives complaints and acts on behalf of citizens to secure information, request services, or pursue grievances.

OPEN SYSTEMS THEORY: A theory of organization that views organizations not as simple, "closed" bureaucratic structures separate from their surroundings, but as highly complex, facing considerable uncertainty in their operations, and constantly interacting with their environment; assumes that organizational components will seek an "equilibrium" among the forces pressing on them and their own responses to those forces.

OPERATING GRANTS: Grants for use in development and operation of specific programs.

ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT: A theory of organization that concentrates on increasing the ability of an organization to solve internal problems of organizational behavior as one of its routine functions; concerned primarily with identification and analysis of such problems.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: A theory of organization that focuses on those characteristics of an organization that promote or hinder change; assumes that demands for change originate in the external environment, and that the organization should be in the best position to respond to them.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: Basic patterns of attitudes, beliefs, and values that underlie an organization's operation.

ORGANIZATIONAL HUMANISM: A set of organization theories stressing that work holds intrinsic interest for the worker, that workers seek satisfaction in their work, that they want to work rather than avoid it, and that they can be motivated through systems of positive incentives (such as participation in decision making).

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY: A political and philosophical belief in direct involvement by affected citizens in the processes of governmental decision making; believed by some to be essential to the existence of democratic government; related term is citizen participation.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: Specific evaluation with respect to an individual's progress in completing specified tasks.

PERFORMANCE AUDITING: Analysis and evaluation of the effective performance of agencies in carrying out their objectives.

PERFORMANCE BUDGET: Budget format organized around programs or activities (rather than the objects it purchases), including various performance measurements that indicate the relationship between work actually done and its cost.

PLANNING-PROGRAMMING-BUDGETING SYSTEM (PPBS): Effort to connect planning, systems analysis, and budgeting in a single exercise.

PLURALISM: A social and political concept stressing the appropriateness of group organization, and diversity of groups and their activities, as a means of protecting broad group interests in society; assumes that groups are good and that bargaining and competition among them will benefit the public interest.

POLICY: Statement of goals and intentions with respect to a particular problem or set of problems.

POLICY ANALYSIS: Process of researching or analyzing public problems to provide policy makers with specific information about the range of available policy options and advantages and disadvantages of different approaches.

POLICY ENTREPRENEUR: A person willing to invest person time, energy, and money in pursuit of particular policy changes.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: A general political and governmental process of carrying out programs in order to fulfill specified policy objectives; a responsibility chiefly of administrative agencies, under chief executive and/or legislative guidance; also the activities directed toward putting a policy into effect.

POLITICAL ECONOMY APPROACH: Focusing on politics and economics as categories for analyzing organizational behavior.

POLITICS/ADMINISTRATION DICHOTOMY: The belief, growing out of the early administrative reform movement and its reaction against the spoils system, which held that political interference in administration would erode the opportunity for administrative efficiency, that the policy making activities of government ought to be wholly separated from the administrative functions, and that administrators had to have an explicit assignment of objectives before they could begin to develop an efficient administrative system.

POLITICS OF THE BUDGETARY PROCESS: The requirement that administrators act as advocates for their own programs during the appropriation process by soliciting outside support, protecting their budgetary base, and inching ahead with new programs; a budgetary system that deals with complex problems by relying upon incremental methods of decision making, information drawn from past experience rather than analysis, and satisfactory rather than optimal standards of quality.

POSITION CLASSIFICATION: Analyzing and organizing jobs on the basis of duties, responsibilities, and the knowledge and skills required to perform them.

PREEMPTION: Federal government efforts to preempt an area traditionally associated with state government.

PRIVATIZATION: Use of nongovernmental agencies to provide goods and services previously provided by government, also known as "contracting out."

PROGRESSIVE TAX: One that taxes those with higher incomes at a higher rate.

PROPORTIONAL TAX: One that taxes everyone at the same rate.

PROPRIETARY FUNDS: Used to account for government activities that more closely resemble private business.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: The management and administration of public programs.

PUBLIC-CHOICE ECONOMICS: An approach to public administration based on micro-economic theory which views the citizen as a consumer of government goods and services and would attempt to maximize administrative responsiveness to citizen demand by creating a market system for governmental activities in which public agencies would compete to provide citizens with goods and services. This would replace the current system under which administrative agencies in effect act as monopolies under the influence of organized pressure groups which, the public-choice economists argue, are institutionally incapable of representing the demands of individual citizens.

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT: A field of practice and study central to public administration, emphasizing internal operations of public agencies, focuses on managerial concerns related to

control and direction, such as planning, organizational maintenance, information systems, personnel management, and performance evaluation.

PUBLIC POLICY: 1. The organizing framework of purposes and rationales for government programs that deal with specified societal problems; 2. the complex of programs enacted and implemented by the government.

RATIONAL MODEL OF DECISION MAKING: Derived from economic theories of how to make the "best" decisions; involves efforts to move toward consciously-held goals in a way that requires the smallest input of scarce resources; assumes the ability to separate ends from means, rank all alternatives, gather all possible data, and objectively weigh alternatives; stresses rationality in the process of reaching decisions.

RECONCILIATION BILL: Legislative action that attempts to reconcile individual actions in taxes, authorizations, or appropriations with the totals.

REDISTRIBUTIVE POLICY: Policy designed to take taxes from certain groups and give them to another group.

REGRESSIVE TAX: One that taxes those with lower incomes at a proportionately higher rate than those with higher incomes.

REGULATION: Government activity designed to monitor and guide private economic competition; specific actions (characterized as economic regulation) have included placing limits on producers' prices and practices, and promoting commerce through grants or subsidies; other actions emerging more recently (termed social regulation) have included regulating conditions under which goods and services are produced and attempting to minimize product hazards and risks to consumers.

REGULATORY COMMISSION: Group formed to regulate a particular area of the economy: usually headed by a group of individuals appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

REGULATORY POLICY: Policy designed to limit actions of persons or groups to protect all or parts of the general public.

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT: 1. The title of a book written by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler in 1992. 2. Term referring to ideas used in government that are entrepreneurial in nature whose purpose is to improve government services.

RESCISSION: Presidential decision to permanently withhold funds.

REVENUE SHARING: Grant pattern in which the money can be used in any way the recipient government chooses.

RULE MAKING: Administrative establishment of general guidelines for application to a class of people or a class of actions at some future time.

SATISFICING: The process of decision making that characterizes most governmental action; a limited search through familiar patterns of behavior for a course of action that meets pre-established, minimum standards of performance, rather than an exhaustive review of all alternatives in search of the optimal solution to a particular problem.

SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT: A formal theory of organization developed by Frederick Taylor in the early 1900s; concerned with achieving efficiency in production, rational work procedures, maximum productivity, and profit; focused on management's responsibilities and on "scientifically" developed work procedures, based on "time and motion" studies.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE (SES): Established in the national Civil Service Reform Act of 1978; designed to foster professional growth, mobility, and versatility among senior career officials (and some "political" appointees); incorporated into national government personnel management broad emphasis on performance appraisal and merit pay concepts, as part of both the SES itself and broader merit system reform.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS: Local governments created for a specific purpose within a specific area.

SPAN OF CONTROL: One of the early principles of administration which states that there is an upper limit to the number of subordinates any administrator can directly supervise, generally set at twelve, and advises administrators to eliminate any violations of this principle by reducing the number of officials reporting to them by either merging certain offices or stretching out the hierarchy.

SPOILS SYSTEM: A system of hiring personnel based on political loyalty and connections; can also extend to government contracts and the like; usually takes the form of rewarding party supporters with government jobs.

STAKEHOLDERS: The many different persons or interest groups that are involved in a policy decision and are affected by the results.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: Matching organizational objectives and capabilities to the anticipated demands of the environment to produce a plan of action that will ensure achievement of objectives.

SUBGOVERNMENTS: The tendency of bureaucrats to seek political support for their programs by building informal alliances outside of the official hierarchy with groups that possess resources the bureaucrats lack, primarily with legislative committees and organized interest or pressure groups (also known as iron triangles).

SUNSET LAW: Provision that sets a specific termination date for a program.

SUNSHINE LAW: Provision that requires agencies to conduct business in public view.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION: Bill passed during the fiscal year, adding new money to an agency's budget for the same fiscal year.

SYSTEM: Set of regularized interactions configured or "bounded" in a way that differentiates and separates them from other actions that constitute the system's environment.

SYSTEMS THEORY: A theory of social organizations, holding that organizations--like other organisms--may behave according to inputs from their environment, outputs resulting from organizational activity, and feedback leading to further inputs; also, change in any one part of a group or organizational system that affects all other parts.

TASK FORCES: Groups brought together to work on specific organizational problems.

THEORY X and THEORY Y: Two opposing assumptions about people at work that lead to opposing styles of management. Theory X assumes that most people hate work, avoid responsibility, prefer to be directed, and have to be controlled and coerced to put out a fair day's work; Theory Y assumes that people will seek responsibility, demonstrate a high degree of imagination, and exercise self-direction if they have a creative, challenging job to which they can become committed.

WHISTLE-BLOWING: Making any disclosure of legal violations (especially within public organizations), mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a danger to public health or safety, whether the disclosure is made within or outside the formal chain of command.

ZERO-BASE BUDGETING: Budget format that presents information about the efficiency and effectiveness of existing programs and highlights possibilities for eliminating or reducing programs by assuming that the minimum funding level for the agency is zero, thereby requiring agency administrators to justify all expenditures by the same standard of review that normally are applied only to new programs or increments above the base.

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS
FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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