# ADMINIST BATION HANDSOOK OF PUBLIC

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Editor

# Handbook of Public Administration



HANDBOOK OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION by James L. Perry, Editor

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350 Sansome Street

San Francisco, California 94104

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### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Handbook of public administration.

(The Jossey-Bass public administration series)

Bibliography: p. Includes indexes.

1. Public administration. I. Perry,

James L. II. Series.

JF1351.H276 1989 350 88-46078

ISBN 1-55542-128-8 (alk. paper)

Manufactured in the United States of America

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.

JACKET DESIGN BY WILLI BAUM

FIRST EDITION

First printing: March 1989 Second Printing: April 1990







## Preface

Governmental activity has grown enormously since the turn of the century, when public administration first became recognized as a field for research and practice. Since that time the missions of government and, concomitantly, the knowledge and skills to accomplish them have evolved significantly in scope and complexity. These changes pose tremendous challenges to the institutions and individuals charged with administering public programs and services. There is little margin for failure. The vitality of our civic life and the legitimacy of our political institutions hinge on how well public administrators are able to respond to these challenges.

The obstacles public administrators face in rising to the challenges of modern government are substantial. Many public administrators come to their positions without formal administrative and managerial training. They achieve responsibility because of their excellence in such other professional fields as engineering, law, social work, and education. They confront dual obstacles to their effectiveness; they need both to develop new skills and to adapt to new performance expectations. Even individuals with formal training in public administration face the prospect of falling short of the demands imposed on them because of the broad range of skills necessary for effective performance and the persistence of changes in their environment.

### Intended Audience

The Handbook of Public Administration is intended to help public administrators cope with the many challenges facing them and to update or fill gaps in their knowledge base. Written by public administration experts from all areas of the field—law, politics, public policy, finance, personnel, operations, and others—it is designed to meet the needs of the range of pro-

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fessionals who work in government or who interact with public agencies. The handbook is intended to help public administrators act effectively in accomplishing their delegated missions.

The Handbook of Public Administration is unique in the recent history of public administration. It is a detailed overview of the field, grounded in both research and theory, written for public administration professionals. Its forty-three chapters cover a broad range of problems and situations that confront public administrators at all levels of government and in all types of services. These situations and problems are carefully analyzed in light of research, theory, and administrative experience. Each chapter offers a guide to effective practice, as well as some ideas about how to improve performance. But the handbook is more than a "how to" book; it is also a "how do we know it" book. Each of the chapters places professional practice in the context of relevant research and theory. Because the chapters are grounded in theory and research, readers should find the material useful not only for handling current problems but also for grappling with new situations.

The handbook offers a unified picture of public administration. Public administration is legitimately recognized as a diverse field, encompassing many different administrative roles, occupational specialties, policy arenas, and levels of government. This fragmentation has often masked both the high degree of overlap among these subareas and the relevance of each to effective practice in public administration. The *Handbook of Public Administration* illustrates that effective public administration is built on many disciplines. It emphasizes the mutual dependence of many perspectives for healthy public service.

The handbook provides a vehicle for communicating the accumulated body of knowledge about public administration to people with varying degrees of responsibility and levels of experience. It is directed to line administrators—public sector executives, managers, and supervisors—who are accountable for the success of public programs and the productivity of public services. It is also directed to staff personnel, including policy, personnel, and financial analysts, who may be responsible for evaluating administrative performance, assessing human resource requirements, or preparing annual budgets. The handbook should be helpful to judicial and legislative staff, oversight bodies, corporate public affairs personnel, and public interest groups concerned about obtaining a better understanding of the activities and requirements of administrative effectiveness. Finally, because the handbook conveys the accumulated body of knowledge about public administration, it is a valuable resource for faculty and students involved in degree and certificate programs in public administration. In short, the audience for this handbook is anyone who works in public administration or is interested in the field.

### Overview of the Contents

The contributors, selected for their expertise and professional experience, have prepared original chapters on many facets of public adminPreface xv

istration. The book is organized into eight parts, representing domains of knowledge and practice essential to effective public administration. Readers can proceed sequentially through the book for an overview of the entire field or can turn to individual parts or chapters for information on specific areas or topics. Each chapter brings fresh insights to familiar problems or situations.

Part One, "Public Administration in a New Era," looks at the changing context of public administration and the challenges it poses to today's public administrator. The changes currently affecting government have been characterized as megatrends, but, regardless of their magnitude, they bring forth new challenges and require novel adaptations. The authors examine the character of these challenges at the federal, state, and local levels. They also examine the implications of the explosion of science and technology, shifting social and demographic trends, and global interdependence.

Part Two, "Effective Administrative and Organizational Systems," focuses on broad issues of governance and effectiveness in administrative and organizational systems. Administrative accountability, responsiveness, and effectiveness are influenced by administrative arrangements, just as they are by the quality of the people who serve. The authors show how laws and institutions shape administrative behavior and thereby promote major governance goals. They also identify means for managing intergovernmental and strategic processes and for designing effective organizational systems.

Part Three, "Strengthening Relationships with Legislatures, Elected and Appointed Officials, and Citizens," focuses on the administrator's ties with key actors in the environment. An administrator's environment is segmented into different actors and institutions, among them legislatures, elected executives, appointees, and citizens. The administrator needs to approach these relationships strategically, securing support from and serving the needs of all segments of the environment. Therefore, the authors provide insights into and methods of managing these relationships.

Part Four, "Establishing Successful Policies and Programs," addresses the public administrator's roles as manager, formulator, and implementer of public policies and programs. Success in making policy requires public administrators to master a range of technical, substantive, and political skills. These skills contribute to an administrator's ability to understand the policy process, to assess policies before and after execution, and to intervene effectively (or defer from doing so) when necessary. The authors convey the political requirements of establishing effective policies through the administrator's role in setting agendas and formulating, implementing, and evaluating programs. They also discuss the policy analyst's role and how the contributions of the analyst can improve the results of public policy.

Part Five, "Effective Budgeting and Fiscal Administration," focuses on issues involving revenues and expenditures in government. The authors look at processes for making choices about the allocation of financial resources and about how resources can be efficiently managed and utilized. On the budgetary side, the authors discuss relationships between budget methods and budgetary objectives, strategies administrators employ to achieve bud-

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getary goals, and systems and methods of accounting for government expenditures. With respect to fiscal affairs, they discuss criteria for assessing a jurisdiction's portfolio of revenue sources and methods for managing debt.

Part Six, "Managing Human Resources," parallels the preceding part but looks at human, in contrast to financial, resources. Many human resource problems in government are similar to those in private organizations, but the constraints, priorities, and methods often differ. Over the years, many governmental jurisdictions have adopted some form of civil service structure, which typically provides for selection by examination, political neutrality, and job security. Civil service systems do succeed in buffering public administrators from arbitrary political interference, but the cost of discretion is often flexibility. The authors provide guidelines on how to manage human resources in this context and on how to overcome such common problems as those involved in appraising and rewarding performance, managing poor performers, and achieving equal employment goals.

Part Seven, "Improving Operations and Services," focuses on operational considerations facing public administrators. Government's role in society encompasses more than strategies for effecting and securing compliance with public policies. It also involves such routine and mundane activities as collecting trash, sweeping streets, and procuring services from the private sector, services that happen to be vital for promoting confidence in government. The authors communicate some of the methods and approaches for ensuring that government operations provide high-quality results. Several of the chapters address readily recognizable operational problems of government, including the measurement of performance and the management of contracts. Other issues—public enterprises, coproduction, information systems, and cycles of growth and decline—have more recent origins but will be quickly recognized by seasoned administrators.

Part Eight, "The Professional Practice of Public Administration," concludes the handbook by reflecting on what it means to be a member of the public administration profession. The authors identify values appropriate to the social and political roles of the public administrator, rules of legal liability, and precepts for administrative conduct. The final chapter summarizes the lessons that this volume offers on being an effective public administrator.

The handbook is sponsored by the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), an association of approximately fifteen thousand practitioners and academicians dedicated to advancing the art, science, and processes of public administration.

### Acknowledgments

To my associates whose contributions appear in this handbook, I offer my sincere thanks. Their cooperation, which in some cases involved exPreface xvii

tensive reorganizing and rewriting of chapters in response to reviewers' comments and my editorial suggestions, helped to produce an integrated volume. I hope the final product measures up to their original expectations.

I also thank the editorial advisory board of distinguished scholars and public administrators. Members of the board helped at many stages of this project, commenting on the draft table of contents, offering advice about potential authors, and reviewing draft chapters.

I thank the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) for its willingness to sponsor this volume, which commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the society. Special thanks go to the ASPA Publications Committee and to ASPA's past and present executive directors, Keith Mulrooney and Shirley Wester.

Special thanks go to David Arnold, Charles Bingman, and Robert Denhardt for devoting many hours of their time to reviewing the manuscript in its entirety and offering helpful criticism, praise, and wisdom. I also thank the many other colleagues who reviewed parts of the manuscript, and I hope they see the fruits of their labors reflected in this volume.

The School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University provided generous secretarial, office, and telephone support. My secretaries during this project, Cindy Backherms, Rebecca Bouse, and Tammy Hancock, diligently tended to many details and helped to keep everything on track.

To my wife, Wendy, I express deep appreciation for her flexibility and tolerance of my work schedule.

Bloomington, Indiana January 1989 James L. Perry

On September 23, 1988, Charles H. Levine, distinguished professor of government and public administration at American University, died suddenly from a heart attack at the age of forty-nine. Charlie, as he was known to so many friends, played a special role in the development of this handbook. As chair of the ASPA Publications Committee, Charlie was instrumental in developing the concept for the handbook and obtaining approval for it. He also served on the handbook's editorial advisory board. Charlie's contributions to public administration, however, went far beyond this handbook. He was an eminent scholar, valued colleague, caring teacher and mentor, and an activist for better government. Above all else, Charlie was a wonderful human being. It is to his memory that we dedicate this book.



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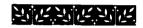
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