

What to Expect: The First 100 Days

The first hundred days of any new Administration is a benchmark and is considered a litmus test of securing key initiatives. The overwhelming needs of the intertwined threats of COVID-19 and the economy will be center stage from which all other policy initiatives will follow. The first hundred days of a Biden Administration will feel like four years as Congress and the White House seek to stem the health and economic losses of the past year. The Biden legislative agenda will likely have two tiers with the first tier targeting three overarching issues: 1) implementing a national strategy on COVID-19 including coordination with Governors, putting in place the delivery system of a vaccine, and ensuring Americans understand and accept that any vaccine is safe, 2) securing federal economic assistance for state and local governments, businesses and individuals to help weather the COVID-19 crisis, and 3) securing Senate confirmation of political appointees that will carry-out the policy goals and objectives of the White House.

The second tier of priorities will likely embody the non-COVID-19 priorities as detailed in the [Biden transition blueprint](#) that keys off of the campaign's Build Back Better plan of action. The issue of particular note will be rebuilding the country's economy through the stimulative effect of infrastructure investments. The Biden focus seeks to secure \$2 trillion in infrastructure assistance to support all elements of the nation's infrastructure from water to the electric grid to airports, ports, highways, broadband and public education. It is an ambitious initiative, but is bolstered by the fact that the House has already approved a \$1.5 trillion package and the Senate appears receptive to infrastructure funding.

The pent-up demand for an infrastructure policy after three years of promises of action does seem to have a roadmap for congressional action. The anticipated provisions could include:

- Targeting environmental justice such as water for all
- Increasing funding for core infrastructure programs such as water programs
- Funding projects and programs to address resiliency needs ranging from drought to floods to wildfires to sea level rise impacts
- Supporting energy efficiency and water use efficiency standards
- Promoting innovative financing such as Build America Bonds
- Supporting next generation of workforce jobs in infrastructure
- Requiring compliance with Buy America mandates as conditions to securing federal assistance

In addition to basic infrastructure investments through existing federal programs, expect that climate needs and resiliency investments, including tax credits and other expenditures and grants and loans to incentivize a transition to a "clean" economy could be weaved into any package, thereby avoiding contentious votes on climate policies that would fall flat in the Senate. Health care will also be a focus, because of the economic and health impacts should the Supreme Court cast aside all or some of the remaining elements of the Affordable Care Act. The issue of racial justice should also be anticipated to dominate after a summer of protests

and the prominent role the issue played during the election. And, last, a newfound commitment by some to deficit reduction could translate into a battle between tax reform versus reducing federal spending as part of any formal budget development process in the coming year.

With the election over, the rampaging virus and an economic recovery that appears to rely on a successful response to the virus coupled with stalled efforts to address infrastructure makes the prospect of an unprecedented legislative session beginning in January.