

SONJA R. HOOVER

WORK EXPERIENCE

Democratic National Committee

Washington, D.C.

Chief Administrative Officer & Executive Assistant to Chair Thomas E. Perez

April 2017 – Present

- Maintain a sense of order & decorum in a fast paced, often chaotic workplace, creating a welcoming and professional atmosphere for leadership to thrive and host meetings with high profile guests & donors.
- First line of defense for all official & personal incoming requests, queries, and demands for Chair's time & attention. Prioritizing urgency & relevancy, redirecting lower priority items to other staff for fulfillment. Served as the connection to Chair's family in long term planning, travel and participation.
- Coordinate travel for 200+ staff, including \$1 Million budget oversight, booking, approval/denial and presentation of alternative choices. Refreshed all employee travel rules and streamlined process for approval and purchase of travel arrangements, leading to conservation of resources.
- Execute \$800k + contracts with hotels and travel booking platform to coordinate travel and needs for national meetings, GOTV, 11 national Democratic debates and the Democratic National Convention.
- Serve as liaison for Chair on internal work teams including Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, project oversight of building facilities upgrade and management, tech advisory committee, authored continuity of operations plan, & active on COVID response team. Complete comprehensive work on special projects and orchestrate internal special functions hosted by the Chair and leadership.
- Work in concert with COO and building manager on COVID-19 mitigation and building upgrades to comply with CDC guidelines for social distancing. Implementing more robust cleaning practices, one way traffic flows, signage, and alternative workspaces. Created new workflows and obtained office supplies to accommodate staff and allow them to acclimate and thrive in a remote work period. Sought out and negotiated services for COVID-19 testing for all staff.
- Sought approval for \$475,000 building wireless upgrade. Consulted in the hiring of project manager to see to fruition. Understanding construction impacts on workplace and pushing project through while building was vacant due to COVID-19 work from home guidelines.
- Aligned with COO on human resources initiatives and staff engagement. Lead weekly All Staff meetings and joint staff meetings with Biden for President. Setting agendas, oversight of presentation materials, communications with staff, coordination with special guests & technical troubleshooting.
- Keeper of institutional knowledge of the Chair and organization. Act as a repository for highly sensitive materials. Serve as the first stop for most staff as many questions that arise on a daily basis.
- Handle correspondence, scheduling and execution of daily tasks for the Chair. Anticipate Chair's needs and triage any conflicts as they arise. Established close relationships with counterparts for labor presidents, sister committees, constituency / advocacy groups, and members of Congress.
- Source and purchase gifts on behalf of Chair, notably for staff thank you and holiday gifts with budget of \$80,000.
- Serve as Chair's official voice through his public email account. Including response to external incoming correspondence and all official communications from leadership. Averaging 20+ internal communications a week and answering 10+ emails a day from external stakeholders.
- Managed of team of at least three, including Chair's traveling staffer, Special Assistant overseeing briefing materials and 1-2 interns.

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Secretary

Washington, D.C.

Executive Assistant to Secretary Thomas E. Perez

February 2015 – January 2017

- Provided professional and confidential support to cabinet member, managed daily schedule and kept Secretary on task and prepared for day's events, anticipated needs and triage conflicts as they arise.
- Gatekeeper of Secretary's office; full understanding of agency leadership and the roles they hold, daily interaction with high-level government officials and staff from Executive and Legislative branches. Greet all guests and foreign dignitaries, ensure that meeting setup meets all rules of protocol. Served as primary liaison with Secretary's spouse; coordinating schedules and any issues that need her attention.
- Maintained Top Secret clearance, serve as primary contact for all confidential, classified, and top secret documents for Secretary, Deputy Secretary and senior staff.

- Managed Secretary's front office operation including direct report of one staff, oversight of daily briefing book compilation, direct management of incoming correspondence and calls, work with Executive Secretariat to ensure response to all inquiries. Work in concert with Chief of Staff's Executive Assistant to tackle any issues as they arose.
- Serve as Secretary's voice through his public email account. Including response to external incoming correspondence and all official communications with the approval of leadership. Averaging 20+ internal communications a week and answering 10+ emails a day from external stakeholders.
- Acted as surrogate for Secretary in planning meetings and as ambassador for Secretary in agency building.
- Served as host for outside groups, including 26 day strike negotiation hosted in building. Given a \$5000 budget for meals, following strict guidelines for use of official funds.
- Coordinated arrangements for taking of official portrait and its framing; worked in concert with Deputy Secretary to arrange a ceremony for the portrait unveiling.
- Oversaw archiving of Secretary's record, papers, and gifts. Coordinated photos with departing staff.

United States Senator Tom Harkin

Washington, D.C.

Administrative Director

March 2000 - January 2015

- Oversaw daily operations of a 100 plus-person staff in Washington, D.C., five offices in state of Iowa, as well as a full committee and subcommittee.
- Management of operating budget over \$3.5 million dollars including staff payroll, travel reimbursements, vendor contract negotiation, and payments for services.
- Direct supervision of seven administrative staff including Staff Assistants, Schedulers, Interns, Mailroom and Senator's Personal Assistant
- Daily coordination with Chief of Staff and Senator's scheduler to execute day smoothly
- Direct daily contact with Mrs. Harkin on any scheduling issues or projects that needed her attention
- Handled all human resources aspects of organization including interviewing, hiring, firing, disciplinary actions and annual evaluations for full time staff as well as over 50 interns a year
- Work directly with Senator's committee staff directors to coordinate office policies, budget, and serve as an information bridge between all staffs
- Served as liaison between office and Architect of the Capitol, Senate Superintendents Office, Secretary of the Senate, Senate Rules Committee and Senate Ethics Committee to keep office compliant with all rules and regulations as well as day to day office maintenance of operations
- In charge of security and maintenance for all office locations
- Worked directly with US Capitol Police on threat assessment and abnormalities in constituent behavior. This included security assessments of our physical space and the Senator's personal homes.
- Established and implemented protocol for the archiving of the Senator's 40 year congressional record including professional and political papers, photos, videos and memorabilia; train staff on historical record preservation
- Supervised the establishment of repository for Senator's papers; including contract negotiation, packaging, and transfer of goods to repository
- Served as Senator's event planner for special occasions such as formal portrait unveiling, delegation Inaugural events, swearing in, staff retirements and other various occasions
- Represented Senator in planning meetings, negotiations and special events for shared historic space
- Handled Chairmanship transition including acclimating 50+ new staff to Harkin office protocol, establishing office policy, hiring and movement of staff, settlement of space negotiations with minority staff
- Plan and administer bi-annual staff retreats for over 100 staff; working with Senator, committee directors, and personal office senior staff to establish goals and agenda for retreat

Intern Coordinator / Mailroom Manager

September 2000 –August 2001

- Communicate with Iowa colleges and universities regarding intern opportunities within Senate office: recruit, interview, and hire prospective interns
- Direct supervision of 15+ interns per work period; including training and oversight of work product and assignments
- Served as Senator's body person. Driving him to and from work and staffing him at all evening events

- Responsible for all incoming and outgoing mail

Staff Assistant

March 2000 – September 2000

- Served as face and voice of Senator to constituents visiting office and communicating via phone; arranged and guided tours of the United States Capitol
- Provided constituent congratulatory letters and fulfilled constituent flag requests

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

United States Senator Richard Blumenthal

Washington, D.C.

Interim Administrative Director

September 2018 – November 2018

- Provided administrative support to office that was in leadership transition, taking on the payment of incoming invoices, travel reimbursements and vendor contracts.
- Oversight of travel and expenditure budget of \$523k
- Authored office archiving and information retention policy
- Worked 8-10 hours weekly

United States Senator Robert Casey

Washington, D.C.

Administrative Assistant (temporary)

January 2017 – May 2018

- Provided administrative support to office that was in leadership transition, taking on the payment of incoming invoices, travel reimbursements and vendor contracts.
- Oversight of travel and expenditure budget of \$700k
- Maintained mail room and oversight of interns
- Worked 10 hours weekly

State Historical Society of Iowa

Des Moines, IA

Archiving and Museum Education Intern

May 1998 – March 2000

- Worked directly with museum registrar to document and preserve all incoming collection pieces; provided research and supplemental information to documentation
- Recorded cemetery and death records to historical library collection; guided genealogic research for patrons by identifying their objective and establishing a starting point for their research
- Coordinated and led tours of historical museum for schools across Iowa
- Prepared and oversaw the execution of History Day in Iowa competition as well as served in role of judge

ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

United States Senate Softball League

Washington, D.C.

Head Commissioner

2002 - 2014

- Established 8k-10k budget, plan and operate all league functions including 32 team tournament, identify potential problems and propose rule change to correct; mediate disputes. Oversaw recruitment of teams and volunteers for recreational softball league with over 80+ diverse teams participating.

Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies

Washington, D.C.

Volunteer

January 2013

- Served as seating manager and section leader on the outer ring of the inaugural platform, ensuring appropriate greeting and seating of more than 100 high-level dignitaries and elected officials; triage and managed any unexpected problems that arose with distinguished guests in the sections; directed the activities of assigned military aides in the section to ensure safety and efficiency in seating under exacting time constraints.
- Assisted the Architect of the Capitol's staff in preparing the inaugural platform for day's events on a strict timeline; trained extensively in emergency procedures and etiquette protocol.

EDUCATION

Simpson College
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science and History

Indianola, IA
1999

Secretary of the Senate, Employment Counsel
Certificate of Course Completion
Employment Law under Congressional Accountability Act of 1995

Washington, D.C.
February 2010