



How to Read an Appropriations Act, Part 4:

General & Administrative Provisions

THE ACCOUNTS APPROPRIATE THE MONEY.
THE PROVISIONS SET THE RULES.



Framework

Administrative Provisions — Apply to one bureau.

General Provisions — Apply bill-wide. Found in their own title (usually the last).

Key Insight

The dollar amounts tell you *how much*.

The provisions tell you *how* – and sometimes whether.

A \$100M appropriation with a "none of the funds" provision blocking its primary purpose is worth \$0 for that purpose.

None of the Funds

The most powerful phrase in appropriations:
"None of the funds"

This is a funding prohibition – a policy rider.

It doesn't change the law. It just says the government can't spend money on it. For one year.

Why Riders Work

- Appropriations bills must pass
- Expires automatically
- Hard to veto – buried in a must-pass bill

Transfer vs. Reprogramming

- **Transfer** – Between accounts. Requires explicit statutory authority.
- **Reprogramming** – Within an account.
- Both have limits: percentage caps, notification requirements, exclusions.
- They usually require notification and/or consultation with the appropriators.

Permanent Law

Most provisions expire with the fiscal year. But not all.

Watch for:

- "hereafter"
- "in this and subsequent fiscal years"
- "Section X of title Y, United States Code, is amended..."

These create permanent law through appropriations.

What to Watch For

- "None of the funds" – policy fight
- Dollar thresholds or percentages – transfer limits
- Notification requirements – oversight
- Changes from prior year – new policy
- "Hereafter" – permanent law

Read our full guide

Part 4 of 5 in the
"How to Read an Appropriations Act" series

More examples and concepts in the full article.

