**Executive Order 7034**

**Works Progress Administration**

**President: Franklin D. Roosevelt**

**Year: 1935**

**Executive Order Summary**

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was created by Executive Order #7034 on May 6, 1935. [President Roosevelt](http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/people/roosevelt-franklin-delano/)had the authority for this Executive Order via the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935.  The WPA was created to offer direct government employment to the jobless.  Section I.C. of the Executive Order says: “A Works Progress Administration, which shall be responsible to the President for the honest, efficient, speedy, and coordinated execution of the work relief program as a whole, and for the execution of that program in such manner as to move from the relief rolls to work on such projects or in private employment the maximum number of persons in the shortest time possible.”

**Historical Background Information**

The WPA was created to offer direct government employment to the jobless.  The unemployment rate was about 20% at the time the WPA was created.  The WPA lasted until June 30, 1943.  The unemployment rate then was possibly below 2%, with many Americans working in the armed services, defense industries, etc.  WPA employees built bridges, roads, public buildings, public parks and airports. WPA employees were also involved in projects such as theater, food distribution, and archaeological digs. The WPA–during its 8 years of existence–employed over 8.5 million different Americans, and reached peak employment of over 3.3 million in late 1938.

**Presidential Justification of Action**

In his 7th Fireside Chat, President Roosevelt said the following about the need for the Works Progress Administration. “My most immediate concern is in carrying out the purposes of the great work program just enacted by the Congress. Its first objective is to put men and women now on the relief rolls to work…These measures are of two kinds… the second is to establish the practical means to help those who are unemployed in this present emergency… Our work relief program the second.” In addition, [President Roosevelt](http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/people/roosevelt-franklin-delano/)was given the authority for this Executive Order via the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935

**Opposition to the Executive Order**

New Deal critics in Congress accused the program of waste, political maneuvering, and even subversive (Communist) activity. Critics will also point out that WPA funding was not equitably distributed throughout the U.S. Many say that funding was used as a way to buy votes. Southern states that were sure wins for democrats received far less funding than Western “swing” states.