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Legislative Staff Services

The most well-known and visible activity of the Legislature is its deliberations on legislation. Of course, the Legislature is involved in many more activities than simply the passage of legislation. Legislative committees hold public informational hearings, oversee the activities of state administrative agencies, and conduct studies. Individual legislators respond to constituent inquiries and serve as members of a wide variety of committees in state government.

All of the functions of the Legislature require some degree of support from the legislative staff employed by the Legislature.

Legislative staff can be divided into service agencies and chamber assistance. The service agencies have nonpartisan staffs and focus attention on analysis and research regarding issues of interest to the Legislature. Chamber staff work to prepare records of legislative action.

Although the agencies are established and managed separately, there are many points of contact between the agencies, both formal and informal. Many legislative issues require the involvement of staff from more than one agency, and the staffs of legislative service agencies collaborate on many issues. Often, a contact with one agency may lead to a referral to another agency. Also, although each of the nonpartisan service agencies has a specifically defined function, these agencies are available to assist any individual legislator.

By:
Ronald Sklansky
Senior Staff Attorney

Legislative Service Agencies

Legislative Audit Bureau

Performs audits of the accounts and records of state agencies and certain nonstate agencies and organizations to assure that all financial and management transactions have been made in a legal and proper manner.

Reviews and evaluates the performance and program accomplishments of state agencies to determine whether the agencies have carried out the objectives of the Legislature and whether the programs are efficient, cost-effective, and not duplicative.

Audit reports are submitted to and acted upon by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, which has advisory responsibilities for the Legislative Audit Bureau.

Contact:
Janice Mueller
State Auditor
22 East Mifflin St., Suite 500
(608) 266-2818
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lab>

Legislative Council

Serves as staff for the substantive standing committees of the Legislature (other than the Joint Committee on Finance).

Drafts amendment memoranda that describe the changes made to a bill by amendments that are adopted by a standing committee or on the floor of either house of the Legislature.

Staffs study committees created by the Joint Legislative Council, creates research documents, and prepares implementing legislation related to such studies.

Prepares reports on all proposed administrative rules and assists standing committees in their oversight of the administrative rule-making process.

Provides staff services to the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization (JCLO) and the Joint Committee on Employment Relations (JCOER).

Responds to information and legal and policy research requests from legislators, other legislative service agencies, legislative staff, and the public.

Contact:
Terry C. Anderson
Director
One East Main St., Suite 401
(608) 266-1304
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>

Legislative Fiscal Bureau

Staffs the Joint Committee on Finance.

Develops information on fiscal matters for the Legislature.

Analyzes state agency budget requests and suggests alternatives to the Joint Committee on Finance and the Legislature.

Responds to requests for fiscal information from individual legislators.

Prepares, upon request, independent estimates of the fiscal effect of legislative proposals.

Prepares independent estimates of state revenues and reviews, on a continuing basis, factors influencing the state's financial affairs and activities.

Contact:
Robert Wm. Lang
Director
One East Main St., Suite 301
(608) 266-3847
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb>

Evaluates state agency programs.

Conducts in-depth studies on specific subjects or program areas as directed by the Joint Committee on Finance or the Legislature.

Legislative Reference Bureau

Prepares the drafts of all legislative proposals; prepares an analysis for inclusion in drafts of bills and joint resolutions; and maintains drafting records.

Indexes, by subject and author, all legislation considered by the Legislature and publishes the *Index* volume of the Legislature's *Bulletin of Proceedings*.

Researches topics relating to state government and issues studies or reports.

Maintains a reference library of public documents and the Legislature's website.

Prepares and edits the *Wisconsin Blue Book*.

Publishes all acts, both at the time of enactment and as the compiled *Laws of Wisconsin*.

Responds to information requests relating to legislation and state government from legislators and staff, government agencies, the media, students, and the general public.

Edits and publishes the biennial editions of the *Wisconsin Statutes*, the *Wisconsin Administrative Register*, and the *Wisconsin Administrative Code*.

Develops and distributes Wisconsin Statutes, Administrative Code, and other sources of Wisconsin law in electronic (CD-ROM) form.

Examines the statutes and session laws to identify provisions that have defects, anachronisms, conflicts, ambiguities, and unconstitutional or obsolete provisions. Prepares technical revision and corrections bills for introduction into the Legislature.

Prepares a booklet, entitled *Wisconsin Town Law Forms*, after every biennial session.

Contact:
Stephen R. Miller
Chief
One East Main St., Suite 200
(608) 266-3561
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb>

Legislative Technology Services Bureau

Provides and coordinates information technology services and support to the legislative branch of state government.

Manages and supports the Legislature's office automation system, which provides computers and software to each legislative office and provides computer training.

Manages and supports the specialized software used to produce legislative branch documents and publications.

Provides computer support to legislative support staff and provides computer training.

Contact:
Jeff Ylvisaker
Director
17 West Main St., Suite 200
(608) 267-9528
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/ltsb>

Manages legislative branch access to the Internet.

Provides technical support for legislative redistricting and Forward, a constituent tracking database application.

Chamber Assistance

Chief Clerks

Supervises the general business functions of each house, such as the processing of travel vouchers and payrolls and the purchasing of supplies.

Prepares the official *Journal* of each day's proceedings, the daily *Calendar*, the *Bulletin of Proceedings*, and the weekly *Bulletin of Hearings* for each house.

Records all legislative actions in the official record books and makes required entries on the jackets of bills, resolutions, and joint resolutions.

Presents to the Governor for action all bills which have passed both houses.

Deposits with the Secretary of State at the close of each session of the Legislature the full record of action and disposition of all bills, resolutions, and joint resolutions.

Contact:

Robert J. Marchant
Senate Chief Clerk

B20 Southeast, Capitol
(608) 266-2517

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/scc/>

Patrick Fuller

Assembly Chief Clerk

17 West Main St., Room 401
(608) 266-1501

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/acc/>

Sergeants- At-Arms

Executes orders of the house or its presiding officer.

Supervises access of all persons to and from the house chamber.

Supervises the distribution to members of all legislative documents.

Supervises the delivery of bills, resolutions, and other communications to the chief clerk's desk, presiding officer's rostrum, or other required places.

Maintains order and quiet in and about the chamber.

Assists committees of the house in conducting orderly public hearings.

Carries out the instructions of the presiding officer in compelling the attendance of absent members and securing the chamber during a call of the house.

Contact:

Ted Blazel

Senate Sergeant-at-Arms

B35 South, State Capitol
(608) 266-1801

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/ssgt/>

Rick Skindrud

Assembly Sergeant-at-Arms

411 West, State Capitol
(608) 266-1503

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asgt/>

Legislator Office Assistance

Administrative, Legislative, and Committee Research Assistants

Each Senator has a specific allotment for the biennium for salaries for any combination of full-time or part-time secretaries or assistants, as determined by each individual Senator. The Committee on Senate Organization determines the number of benefited staff positions allocated to each Senator. The remaining authorized positions, at least one for each Senator, are paid for out of the Senate's general operating budget, which is overseen by the chief clerk.

Each representative who is not a committee chairperson and who has served more than one term has one and one-half employees from the legislative assistant and research assistant categories. Representatives serving their first term have one legislative assistant.

A legislator's staff are employed and supervised by the individual legislator, although payroll and other administrative matters related to employment are handled by the chief clerks.

The responsibilities of a legislator's staff include:

Research and analyze issues pending in the Legislature.

Communicate for the legislator with other legislators, other branches of government, news media, lobbyists, and legislative service agencies.

Respond to constituent inquiries.

Prepare speeches and news releases.

Research and develop legislation and work with legislators, committee staff, and others regarding legislation referred to the committee. The committee clerk keeps the records of the committee.

Wisconsin Legislative Council

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Suite 401
Madison, WI 53703-3382

Phone: (608) 266-1304
Fax: (608) 266-3830

www.legis.state.wi.us/lc