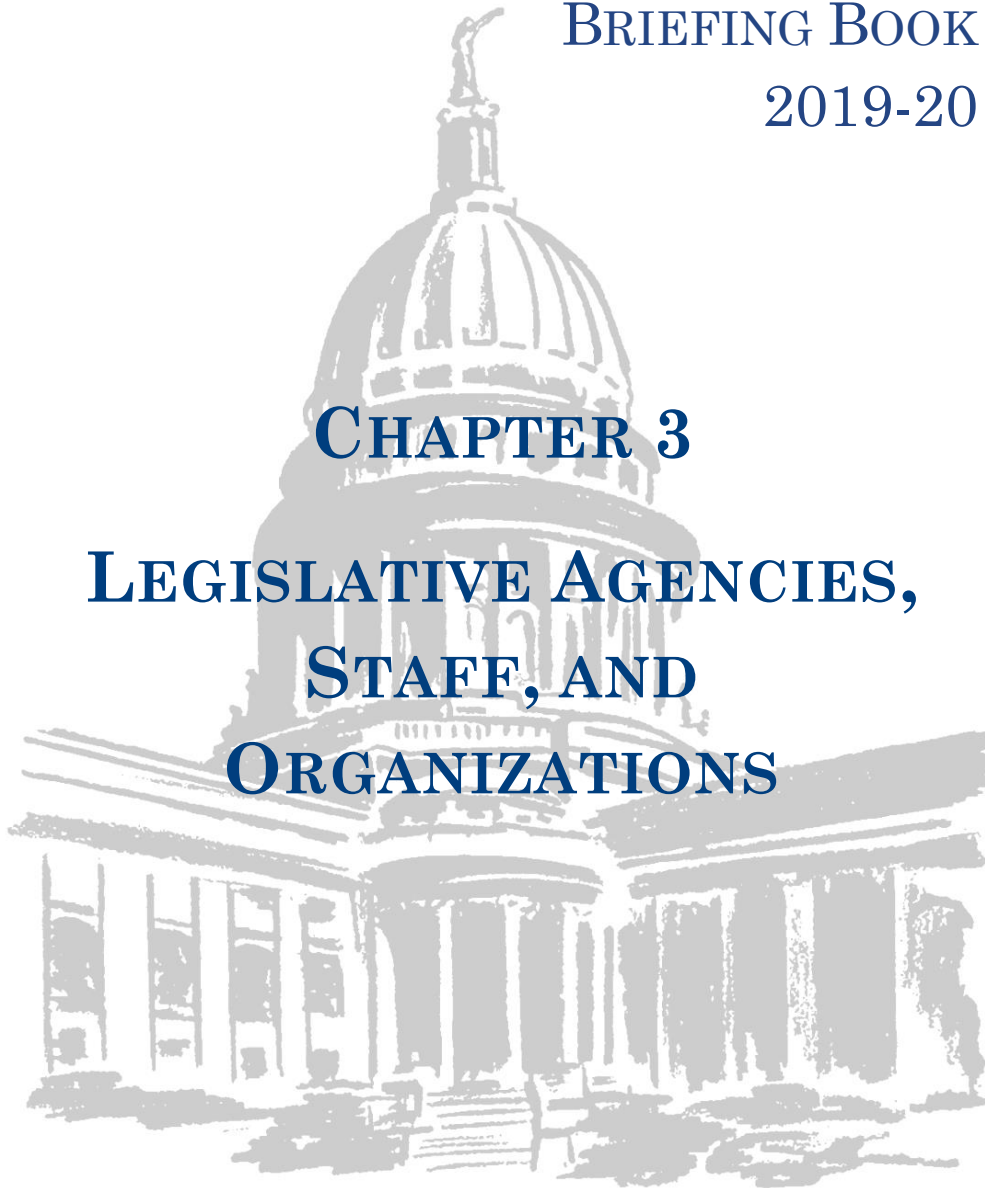


WISCONSIN LEGISLATOR
BRIEFING BOOK
2019-20



CHAPTER 3
**LEGISLATIVE AGENCIES,
STAFF, AND
ORGANIZATIONS**

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Wisconsin Legislative Council



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Copies of the Wisconsin Legislator Briefing Book are available at:
<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lc>

INTRODUCTION

Legislative staff who serve the Legislature as a whole can be divided into legislative service agencies, chamber assistance, and legislators' personal staff. The five legislative service agencies' nonpartisan staff provide professional services, including bill drafting, audits, analysis and research, and technical support. Chamber staff prepare records of legislative action and provide other services. Legislators' personal staff assist legislators in their committee work, policymaking, constituent services, and managing their personal offices.

LEGISLATIVE SERVICE AGENCIES

Although the legislative service agencies are established and managed separately, there are many points of contact among the agencies, both formal and informal. Many legislative issues require the involvement of staff from more than one agency, and the staff of legislative service agencies often collaborate. 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.

Any legislator may request an audit by writing to the Co-Chairs of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. Legislators are encouraged to discuss their requests with the State Auditor before submitting them to the Audit Committee Co-Chairs.

Legislative Audit Bureau

The Legislative Audit Bureau:

Contact:

Joe Chrisman, State Auditor
22 East Mifflin St., Ste. 500
(608) 266-2818

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab>

Toll-Free Fraud, Waste, and Mismanagement Hotline:

1-877-FRAUD-17 or 1-877-372-8317

- Performs audits of the accounts and records of state agencies and certain nonstate agencies and organizations to ensure 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.

- Investigates allegations of fraud, waste, or mismanagement reported to a toll-free hotline.
- Conducts best practices reviews of governmental service delivery by counties and municipalities.

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

Legislative Council Staff

The Legislative Council staff:

Contact:

**One East Main St., Ste. 401
(608) 266-1304**

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lc>

- Staffs the standing committees of the Legislature (other than the Joint Committee on Finance).
- Prepares Amendment Memos that describe the changes made to a bill by amendments adopted by a standing committee or on the floor of either house of the Legislature.
- Prepares Act Memos to describe enacted legislation.
- Staffs study committees created by the Joint Legislative Council. Legislative Council staff create research documents and prepare implementing legislation related to such studies.
- Prepares reports on all proposed administrative rules and assists standing committees in their oversight of the administrative rulemaking process.
- Provides staff services to the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization and the Joint Committee on Employment Relations.
- Responds to requests for information and legal and policy research from legislators, other legislative service agencies, legislative staff, and the public.

The Legislative Council staffs every standing committee except the Joint Committee on Finance, which is staffed by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

Legislative Fiscal Bureau

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau:

Contact:

**Robert Wm. Lang, Director
One East Main St., Ste. 301
(608) 266-3847**

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb>

- 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, factors influencing the state's financial affairs and activities.

- 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

The Legislative Reference Bureau:

Contact:

**Rick Champagne, Chief and
General Counsel**
One East Main St., Ste. 200
(608) 266-9930

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb>

- Prepares the drafts of all legislative proposals; prepares an analysis for inclusion in 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 and 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 *Wisconsin Statutes*, the *Wisconsin Administrative Register*, and the *Wisconsin Administrative Code*.
- Develops and distributes the *Wisconsin Statutes*, the *Wisconsin Administrative Code*, and other sources of Wisconsin law in electronic 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.

The Legislative Reference Bureau drafts all bills, resolutions, and amendments, and provides research services to legislators.

Legislative Technology Services Bureau

The Legislative Technology Services Bureau:

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

Contact:

Jeff Ylvisaker, Director
 17 West Main St., Ste. 200
 (608) 264-8582

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/ltsb>

- Manages and supports the Legislature’s office automation system, which provides computers and software to each legislative office.
- Creates, manages, and supports specialized software used to produce legislative branch documents and publications.

- Provides computer support and computer training to legislative staff.
- Manages legislative branch access to the Internet.
- Provides technical support for legislative redistricting and Forward, a constituent tracking database application.

CHAMBER ASSISTANCE

Chief Clerks

The Chief Clerks:

Contact:

Jeff Renk, Senate Chief Clerk
 B20 Southeast, State Capitol
 (608) 266-2517

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/scc/>

Patrick Fuller, Assembly Chief Clerk
 17 West Main St., Rm. 401
 (608) 266-1501

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/acc/>

- Supervise the general business functions of each house, such as the processing of travel vouchers and payrolls and the purchasing of supplies.
- Assist the presiding officer in the conduct of sessions of the house.
- Prepare the official *Journal* of each day’s proceedings, the daily *Calendar*, the *Bulletin of Proceedings*, and the weekly *Bulletin of Hearings* for each house.

- Record all legislative actions in the official record books and make required entries on the jackets of bills, resolutions, joint resolutions, and administrative rules.
- Present to the Governor for action all bills that have passed both houses.
- Deposit 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.

Sergeants-at-Arms

The Sergeants-at-Arms:

- Execute orders of the house or its presiding officer.
- Supervise access of all persons to and from the house chamber.

Contact:

Ted Blazel, Senate Sergeant-at-Arms
B35 South, State Capitol
(608) 266-1801

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/ssgt/>

Anne Tonnon Byers, Assembly
Sergeant-at-Arms
411 West, State Capitol
(608) 266-1503

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/asgt/>

- Supervise the distribution to members of all legislative documents.
- Supervise the delivery of bills, resolutions, and other communications to the chief clerk's desk, presiding officer's rostrum, or other required places.
- Maintain order and quiet in and about the chamber.
- Assist committees of the house in conducting orderly public hearings.
- Carry out the instructions of the

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

LEGISLATOR OFFICE ASSISTANCE

Each Senator has a specific allotment for the biennium for salaries for any combination of full-time or part-time staff, as determined by each individual Senator. The Committee on Senate Organization determines the number of benefited staff positions allocated to each Senator.

Each Representative who is not a committee chair and who has served more than one term has one and one-half staff positions 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.

INTERSTATE LEGISLATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Interstate legislative organizations serve several functions on behalf of state legislatures. The organizations collect and provide information to aid in state policy development. They compile issue-based summaries of state legislation, offer briefings and background on various policy areas, and disseminate information directly to legislators and staff.

Interstate legislative organizations host conferences or meetings for legislators and legislative staff. These meetings provide seminars on policy areas and current topics faced by states. The meetings also provide an opportunity for legislators and staff to interact with their counterparts in other states, with representatives of nonlegislative governmental institutions, and with private sector organizations.

In addition, interstate legislative organizations represent the views of state legislatures at the federal level, and promote state cooperation and consistency in state laws in areas where such uniformity is desirable.

NCSL CONTACT INFORMATION:

<http://www.ncsl.org>

Denver Headquarters
(303) 364-7700

Washington, D.C. Office
(202) 624-5400

STAFF CONTACT FOR WISCONSIN (Denver Office):

Wendy Underhill
wendy.underhill@ncsl.org

(303) 856-1379

This section provides an overview of the interstate legislative organizations to which Wisconsin belongs through a charter or a legislative appropriation.

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

NCSL was founded in 1975 and resulted from the merger of three legislative groups: the National Legislative Conference, the National Conference of State Legislative Leaders, and the National Society of State Legislators.

The purposes and objectives of NCSL, as stated in its bylaws, are to: (1) advance the effectiveness, independence, and integrity of the legislatures in the states, territories, and commonwealths of the United

States; (2) foster interstate cooperation and facilitate information exchange among state legislatures; (3) represent the states and their legislatures in the American federal system of government consistent with support of state sovereignty and state flexibility and protection from unfunded federal mandates and unwarranted federal preemption; (4) improve the operations and management of the state legislatures and the effectiveness of legislators and legislative staff; encourage the practice of high standards of conduct by legislators and legislative staff; and (5) promote cooperation between state legislatures in the U.S. and legislatures in other countries.

NCSL is a nonpartisan organization that represents and supports state legislators from all political parties. The organization does not participate or intervene in any political campaign and is expressly prohibited from doing so by the organizational bylaws.

NCSL offers several publications and research services:

***NCSL Today*, a daily e-newsletter that covers state-related news stories and research, publications, and multi-media from NCSL.**

***State Legislatures*, a national magazine of state government and politics published 10 times a year featuring articles on significant state and federal public policy issues from all 50 states.**

***LegisBrief*, two-page reports summarizing emerging issues facing state legislatures.**

***Capitol to Capitol*, an information service that provides updates to legislators and staff on federal legislation and events in Washington, D.C.**

NCSL’s membership consists of the legislatures of each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, each of the territories of the United States, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

NCSL is financed by appropriations from member legislatures, as determined by the 63-member executive committee. Each state is assessed a flat-rate charge, plus an amount prorated based on population. NCSL also receives support from the NCSL Foundation for State Legislatures, a nonprofit tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) corporation.

NCSL hosts an annual legislative summit in July or August, as well as a forum held in Washington, D.C. in December.

NCSL also conducts in-depth legislative training programs and seminars for legislators and staff on particular issues of importance to state legislatures.

Council of State Governments (CSG)

CSG was founded in 1933 and is a nonpartisan interstate organization serving all three branches of state and U.S. territorial governments. The organization is a region-based, national organization that helps state officials exchange ideas to assist them in shaping public policy. Wisconsin is served by the Midwest forum, which includes 11 states as members and four Canadian provinces as affiliate members. CSG provides policy expertise and resources on best practices, facilitates multistate solutions, fosters leader to leader interactions, and advocates for the states at the federal level.

CSG’s membership consists of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories.

CSG is supported, in part, through direct contributions by the states and other U.S. jurisdictions. Each state’s assessment is calculated from a base fee amount and a population factor for that state. CSG administers federal and private foundation grants that support research and information-gathering projects on topics of interest to state officials. The organization also generates revenue from publication sales and by conducting workshops and conferences.

CSG offers the following publications and research tools:

***The Book of the States*, an annual encyclopedia of information on state governments nationwide.**

***CSG’s Shared State Legislation*, a compilation of noteworthy legislation in the states.**

***CSG Knowledge Center*, an interactive website containing hundreds of policy reports, blogs, and other policy items.**

***Capitol Ideas*, a bi-monthly magazine and e-newsletter featuring articles and reports on key state and national public policy issues.**

***Stateline Midwest*, a monthly newsletter focused on key policies and trends of interest to the Midwest and its elected officials.**

CSG CONTACT INFORMATION:<http://www.csg.org>**CSG Headquarters
Lexington, KY
(859) 244-8000****Midwest Office
Lombard, IL
(630) 925-1922****STAFF CONTACT FOR WISCONSIN:****Jon Davis
jdavis@csg.org
Midwest Office**

CSG holds an annual National Leadership Conference, as well as annual meetings for the regional conferences.

The Uniform Law Commission (ULC)

The ULC was founded in 1892 and is a nonprofit association that serves the states by drafting state laws on subjects where uniformity is desirable and practicable. The ULC drafts uniform or model acts for individual states to consider and enact.

The ULC is comprised of more than 300 commissioners from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. A commissioner is typically appointed by the Governor of his or her state or by the state's legislature. ULC commissioners must be attorneys and serve on a volunteer basis.

Wisconsin's ULC representatives are selected as specified in state statute which provides for eight commissioners:

- The Director of the Legislative Council staff or a designee (no specified term).
- The Chief of the Legislative Reference Bureau or a designee (no specified term).
- Two Senators and two Representatives from the two major political parties (two-year term).
- Two public members appointed by the Governor (four-year term).

[s. 13.55, Stats.]

If a Senator or Representative is unable to serve, a former Senator or Representative may serve instead as long as the person is from the respective house and political party and served as a commissioner during his or her term of office. Wisconsin's commissioners not only represent Wisconsin at ULC meetings, but also comprise a separate commission, the Wisconsin Commission on Uniform State Laws (WCUSL). The WCUSL meets at least once every two years to advise the Wisconsin Legislature on uniform laws and model laws and prepare uniform law legislation to be introduced into the Legislature.

The following publications are produced by ULC:

***Guide to Uniform and Model Acts*, a guide to uniform acts designed to assist legislators, legislative drafting bureaus, commissioners, and others interested in state legislation in understanding acts promulgated by ULC and recommended for enactment.**

***Annual Report*, a year-end publication listing ULC's international efforts, tribal government activities, fiscal report, committee reports, and all uniform acts promulgated by ULC.**

***ULC Quarterly Report*, a report highlighting drafting news from ULC's various drafting committees, study committees, and standing and governance committees.**

ULC CONTACT INFORMATION:<http://www.uniformlaws.org>**Chicago, IL
(312) 450-6600****STAFF CONTACT:****Liza Karsai
Executive Director
lkarsai@uniformlaws.org**

The ULC is primarily supported by state appropriations. Every jurisdiction is also asked to fund its commissioners' participation at the ULC annual meeting. In addition, ULC seeks revenue from publication of uniform laws and grants from private foundations and public agencies.

The ULC holds an annual meeting, usually in July or August. Drafting and study committees also meet at various other times throughout the year.

Education Commission of the States

The Education Commission of the United States (ECS) was founded in 1965 and helps states develop effective policy and practice for public education. ECS conducts policy research, tracks state education policy trends, provides advice and policy assistance to states, and fosters nationwide leadership and collaboration in education. ECS is a nonpartisan organization that works on issues at all levels of education from pre-K to postsecondary.

The commission's outreach and collaborative efforts serve two major purposes: (1) bringing information into ECS to better understand the issues and problems facing its constituents; and (2) providing ECS with opportunities to assist policymakers with complex education decisions.

ECS provides the following publications:

***Ed Clips*, published electronically on a daily basis, listing education articles from newspapers around the country.**

***Ed Beat*, a biweekly newsletter with links to key research and reports.**

***ArtsEd Digest*, a bimonthly publication addressing timely education issues based on recent studies and reports.**

ECS CONTACT INFORMATION:<http://www.ecs.org>**Denver, CO
(303) 299-3600****STAFF CONTACT:****Sara Shelton
sshelton@ecs.org**

The ECS Executive Committee has day-to-day oversight of the organization and a Steering Committee of Commissioners maintains broad oversight of ECS.

Forty-nine states, three territories, and the District of Columbia have enacted the Interstate Compact on Education and are members of the commission. Each member state or territory has seven commissioners. The seven-member Wisconsin delegation consists of the Governor, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, one member each from the Senate and Assembly, and three members appointed by

the Governor. [s. 39.76, Stats.]

ECS is financed by fees paid by member states and territories, as well as grants and sponsorship funding.

ECS holds an annual meeting each summer. The ECS steering committee, which consists of one commissioner from each of the member states, holds two additional meetings and other networks also hold various meetings throughout the year.

Midwest Higher Education Commission (MHEC)

MHEC was established in 1991 under the statutorily created Midwest Higher Education Compact. The purpose of the compact is to provide greater higher education opportunities and services in the Midwestern region, with the aim of furthering regional access to, research in, and choice of, higher education for the citizens residing in the member states. [s. 39.80, Stats.]

MHEC is charged with promoting interstate cooperation and resource sharing in higher education. The commission seeks to improve access to a wide variety of high-quality postsecondary education programs while maintaining affordability and maximizing return on investment for students and taxpayers.

The Executive Committee, made up of a subset of commissioners, acts for the commission in the interim between annual meetings and oversees development of the compact's short and long-range activities.

MHEC CONTACT INFORMATION:

<http://www.mhec.org>

**Minneapolis, MN
(612) 677-2777**

MHEC is comprised of five commissioners appointed by each state. The commissioners include: the Governor or the Governor's designee, a member of each chamber of the Legislature, and two at-large members, one of whom must have background in post-secondary education. [s. 14.90, Stats.] The member states are: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

MHEC is financed through member state dues, program fees, and foundation grants.

MHEC meets annually in November and the Executive Committee meets during the interim.

The following publications are available through MHEC:

***MHEC Annual Report to the States*, published annually addressing the commission's policy initiatives, research reports, and financial statements.**

***Compact eNews*, monthly electronic publication providing information on MHEC programs and events.**

***Research Briefs*, reports published periodically that provide information on higher education issues and policy research.**

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