

A faint, light-colored illustration of the Wisconsin State Capitol dome is centered in the background of the page. The dome features a central spire with a weather vane and is surrounded by a series of columns.

# WISCONSIN LEGISLATOR BRIEFING BOOK 2017-18

## CHAPTER 3 – LEGISLATIVE SERVICE AGENCIES AND STAFF

The most well-known and visible activity of the Legislature is its deliberations on legislation. The Legislature is involved in many more activities than simply the passage of legislation, however. 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.

Rachel E. Letzing, Principal Attorney  
Wisconsin Legislative Council

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Legislative staff who serve the Legislature as a whole can be divided into legislative service agencies, chamber assistance, and legislators' personal staff. The service agencies have nonpartisan staffs, four of which focus attention on analysis and research regarding issues of interest to the Legislature; the fifth provides technical support. Chamber staff work to 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 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.

### Legislative Audit Bureau

The Legislative Audit Bureau:

- 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.

**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**

**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.**

- 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

The Legislative Council:

- 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 that are adopted by a standing committee or on the floor of either house of the Legislature and Act Memos to describe enacted legislation.

### Contact:

**Terry C. Anderson, Director**  
**One East Main St., Ste. 401**  
**(608) 266-1304**

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

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

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

## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

The 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.

**The Legislative Fiscal Bureau provides extensive information and analysis of the biennial budget bill and other legislation that has a fiscal effect.**

**Contact:**

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

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

- Prepares independent estimates of state revenues and reviews, on a continuing basis, 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:

- 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.

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

**Contact:**

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

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

- 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 (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.

## Legislative Technology Services Bureau

The 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.

**Contact:**

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

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

- Manages and supports the specialized software used to produce legislative branch documents and publications.
- Provides computer support to legislative staff and provides computer training.
- 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:

- 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.

**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/>

- 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.
- 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.

**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/>

## 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 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.

The responsibilities of a legislator’s staff include:

- Researching and analyzing issues pending in the Legislature.

**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.**

- Communicating for the legislator with other legislators, other branches of government, news media, lobbyists, and legislative service agencies.
- Responding to constituent inquiries.
- Preparing speeches and news releases.
- Researching and developing legislation and working with legislators, committee staff, and others regarding legislation referred to the committee.
- Serving as the committee clerk if working for a standing committee chair.

**Wisconsin Legislative Council**

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