



WYOMING LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE

Overview of LSO Services

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE LSO

The Legislative Service Office (LSO) is the permanent, non-partisan central staff office of the Wyoming Legislature. LSO was created by the Legislature in 1971 to provide permanent staffing resources for the legislative branch of government. Policies, rules, and regulations governing the general operations of the LSO and its relationship to legislative committees and individual legislators are made by the Management Council, composed of 13 legislators primarily in leadership positions. The LSO director is employed by, and subject to the direction of, the Management Council. Other employees are employed by the LSO director with the approval of Management Council. The staff is selected and services are performed on a non-partisan basis.

The LSO provides research and bill-drafting services, including pre-filing and distribution of proposed legislation prior to legislative sessions. It is also responsible for revision and recompilation of the laws of Wyoming; preparation of copy and contracting for the printing and publication of all revisions, compilations, session laws, journals and digests; and accounting for all legislative expenditures, supplies, and properties. In addition, members of the staff prepare administrative rules reviews and reports, conduct oversight evaluations of executive agency programs, conduct fiscal studies and budget analyses, coordinate legislative activities related to school finance, and provide general research and information services to the Legislature.

Legislators in Wyoming do not have individual staff. Rather, staff services for Wyoming legislators are provided by the LSO. The primary mission of the LSO is to help members of the Wyoming Legislature identify and articulate legislative issues, develop information related to those issues, help identify possible solutions to address those issues, and provide information about the pros and cons of those solutions. The Office serves the public by providing services to the legislative branch of government. Thirty-two staff members work within the LSO. The services provided to members of the Wyoming Legislature by the Office are described below.

LEGAL SERVICES DIVISION

This division provides bill and amendment drafting for committees and individual legislators. Members of this division serve as the staff of the Legislature's joint interim and select committees. Staff is responsible for providing legal research services to committees and individual legislators. The division also performs reviews of agency rules and regulations as required by law under the administrative rule review process.

BUDGET AND FISCAL SECTION

This section staffs the Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC). The section also provides support to other committees and individual legislators on budget matters and state expenditures. The staff develops information on revenues and prepares fiscal notes for proposed legislation. The section manager also serves as co-chairman of the state's Consensus Revenue Estimating Group (CREG).

PROGRAM EVALUATION SECTION

Staff from the Program Evaluation Section conduct evaluations of the effectiveness and efficiency of state government programs. This section's work is conducted under the direction of the Management Audit Committee (MAC). Topics are selected by the committee, although all legislators can suggest potential program evaluation topics for the committee's consideration.

SCHOOL FINANCE SECTION

In November of 1995, the Wyoming Supreme Court declared the entire Wyoming K-12 school finance system unconstitutional. In response to the Supreme Court ruling, LSO created a School Finance Office to coordinate legislative activities related to K-12 school finance reform and for school capital construction. This section serves as staff to the various committees charged with K-12 education responsibilities, in addition to staffing the Education Committee. Staff coordinates K-12 legislative activities between the Legislature, the State Department of Education, local school districts, and education consultants.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTION

LSO information technology personnel provide computer support for the LSO staff, the session staff, and the Legislature. Computer support includes hardware and software purchase and maintenance, training, and application development. Technology staff provides support for the staff computers and the laptop computers provided to each legislator. The section is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Legislature's bill drafting and tracking system and for maintaining and distributing the Wyoming Statutes on diskette to the public. Technology staff also maintain a legislative intranet and a website on the Internet, which allows the public access to a variety of legislative information, including the text of bills, committee and roll call votes during the session, and interim legislative committee activities.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION SERVICES

In 2003, the Legislature created additional research capacity within the LSO by authorizing two general research positions. These staff provide policy analysis on a wide variety of subject matters and respond to general research and information requests from committees and individual legislators. LSO also provides research services for legislators using analytical mapping services available from the Legislature's geographic information system (GIS). In addition, the Legislature employs a legislative information officer, who coordinates legislator training, media relations, legislative information management, and civic education activities that promote understanding of, and participation in, the legislative process.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

In addition to providing staffing support to the LSO, administrative service staff provide information to legislators regarding items such as reimbursement for meetings, stationery, parking issues, and other administrative details. These staff members are also responsible for answering many general questions from the public about the Legislature.

Please visit our website for more information about the Wyoming Legislature at:

<http://legisweb.state.wy.us>

