



LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

77 SOUTH HIGH STREET
9TH FLOOR
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
(614) 466-3615

OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION



LARRY OBHOF
PRESIDENT

CLIFFORD A. ROSENBERGER
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

MARK FLANDERS
DIRECTOR

THE LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

The Ohio Legislative Service Commission (LSC) was created by statute in 1953 to provide technical and research services to members of the Ohio General Assembly. The Commission's fourteen members consist of the Speaker of the House of Representatives; six members of the House appointed by the Speaker; the President of the Senate; and six members of the Senate appointed by the President. Not more than four of the six members appointed by the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate may be of the same political party. The Commission selects from its membership a Chairperson and a Vice-chairperson who serve for two years. The two positions customarily alternate between the houses. Traditionally, the Senate President or the Speaker of the House serves as Chairperson.

LSC STAFF SERVICES

Led by a staff director who is appointed by the legislators who serve as members of the Legislative Service Commission, the LSC staff provides nonpartisan drafting, fiscal, research, training, and other legislative services to the General Assembly.

LEGISLATIVE

Drafting Legislation

The LSC research staff drafts all types of legislation (bills, resolutions, and amendments). The LSC fiscal staff drafts appropriations and budget-related provisions for bills and amendments. Staff respond to assignments requested by any member of the General Assembly.

Staffing Committees

One or more staff persons, assigned by the LSC staff director, assists each standing committee of the General Assembly. Staff assistance, provided to any legislator on the committee, normally involves explaining legislation, drafting amendments, writing substitute bills, providing fiscal analysis, and researching questions relating to pending legislation.

Staffing for Joint and Select Committees

Upon request, the LSC staff also provides staffing assistance to joint and select committees created by the General Assembly. These committees may be charged with researching a legislative issue or reviewing one or more bills on a particular legislative topic.

RESEARCH

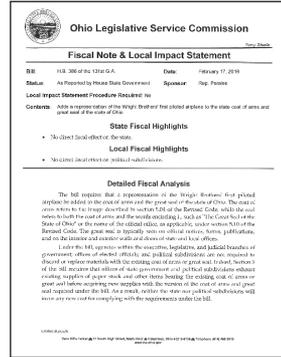
Fiscal Analysis and Research

The LSC fiscal staff monitors, forecasts, and reports on state revenues and expenditures and is generally able to provide members with independent information about fiscal issues of importance in state and local government. In addition, the LSC fiscal staff reviews requests coming before the Controlling Board (the seven-member statutory board charged with overseeing the release or transfer of appropriated funds and authorizing certain state agency purchases).



Fiscal Notes and Local Impact Statements

Ohio law requires LSC fiscal staff to prepare and update fiscal analyses of various bills to inform members of the estimated revenue and expenditure effects that proposed legislation has on state and local government. It also requires LSC to prepare a local impact statement for bills that result in net additional costs (exceeding a minimal threshold) to school districts, counties, municipalities, or townships. These analyses are published in the fiscal note and local impact statement, the document LSC prepares for individual bills of the General Assembly.



Bill Analyses

The LSC research staff produces an analysis of how each bill scheduled for a hearing by a standing committee adds to or modifies state law. Updated when the legislation is reported by the committee and scheduled for a vote by the membership of the House or Senate, a revised analysis reflects all changes made to the legislation by the committee. The LSC staff repeats the updating process at each major step toward enactment, thereby providing members of the General Assembly with current information on the content and effects of any bill during the legislative process.

Short- and Long-Term Research

The LSC staff provides short-term research on any matter of legislative concern to any member of the General Assembly. Research responses range from a brief telephone call to in-depth research papers on legal, fiscal, and technical issues. The LSC staff also engages in long-term research projects that are required by statute or require Commission approval. The Commission sometimes directs the staff to conduct the research and report its findings to the Commission members. At other times, the staff provides research assistance to special committees created to study a problem or issue.



TECHNICAL

Legal Review and Technical Services

The Legal Review and Technical Services (LRTS) division of the LSC staff is responsible for maintaining the laws of Ohio in an orderly and uniform system. In addition, the LRTS staff reviews all bills before their introduction in the General Assembly to ensure that each draft is in conformity with required technical standards.

Rules Codification

The LSC staff within the Rules Codification division has the responsibility for the review, codification, and public availability of administrative rules adopted by state agencies. Notice of and documents related to proposed and emergency rulemaking conducted under the Ohio Administrative Procedure Act are available in electronic format through the Register of Ohio at www.registerofohio.state.oh.us.

LIBRARY SERVICES

The LSC staff includes professional librarians and staff who provide library services to members of the General Assembly and to legislative staff. The LSC library includes basic Ohio and federal legal collections, books, periodicals, historic legislative documents, and reference texts relating to subjects of general legislative interest. The library receives and files many reports issued by state agencies, the federal government, other states, and state and national associations.

Legislative Information Office

Housed within the LSC Library, the Legislative Information Office staff responds to calls from constituents by providing information about the status of bills, session, and committee schedules. The staff also takes messages from the constituents for legislators.



LEGISLATIVE PUBLICATIONS

Legislative Publications

The LSC staff prepares numerous documents to assist the General Assembly. Most LSC products and publications are available on the Internet at www.lsc.state.oh.us. Included among them are:

- **Budget Documents Reports** providing analysis of the state’s operating and capital budgets at each step of the legislative process. Detailed budget information is included in the Budget in Brief, Budget in Detail, agency redbooks and greenbooks, comparison documents, Catalog of Budget Line Items (COBLI), and other reports.
- **Budget Footnotes** A monthly publication that monitors state revenues and expenditures and provides updates on the economy and a variety of budget and fiscal issues.
- **Ohio Facts** A broad overview of public finance in Ohio designed as a quick reference tool for legislators and legislative staff.
- **“Status Report of Legislation”** Report listing the current status of bills and certain resolutions introduced in the General Assembly, updated on line daily and printed weekly during legislative voting sessions.
- **A Guidebook for Ohio Legislators** A reference book that describes Ohio state government and the operation of the legislative branch.
- **Ohio General Assembly Glossary of Terms**
- **A reference guide** designed to provide an introductory explanation of terms that members may encounter as they consider legislation.
- **Members Only** Informational briefs providing concise summaries of Ohio law, programs, or issues relevant to the Ohio legislative process.



OTHER SERVICES

Honorary Resolutions

In accordance with House and Senate guidelines, the LSC staff drafts honorary resolutions at the request of any member of the General Assembly. Generally, these resolutions honor a person or an organization whose accomplishments are of statewide significance or commemorate an event of statewide or national importance.



Letters of Commendation

The LSC staff drafts letters of commendation at the request of any member of the General Assembly who would like to recognize a special event or an individual's or organization's achievement.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

New Member Orientation Programs

Following November general elections, the LSC conducts a New Member Orientation Program. The program includes, in part, discussions about legislative ethics, reviews of legislative session and committee procedures, and panel discussions with both veteran and new legislators. New members participating in the 2012 program are pictured here.



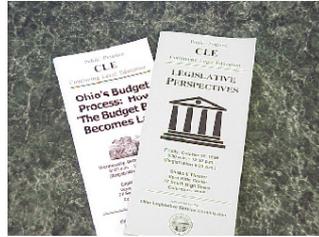
New Legislative Staff Training

The LSC staff provides online training for new legislative staff hired to work in the House, the Senate, and the various legislative agencies. Presentations include an overview of the fundamentals of the legislative process and an introduction to the basic resources available to help staff in their work for the General Assembly.

OTHER PROGRAMS

Continuing Legal Education Programs

As part of a coalition of several agencies, the LSC participates in the effort to provide continuing legal education (CLE) programs for attorneys employed by the state. The coalition, currently including the LSC and several other state agencies, presents sufficient program hours for these public employees to obtain the required CLE credits.



Legislative Fellowship Program

The Legislative Service Commission has sponsored a legislative internship program for over 45 years, providing over 950 college graduates with an introduction to state government and practical experience in the legislative process. Renamed the LSC Legislative Fellowship Program

For program years 1976 - 2012, 64% of the participants in LSC's Legislative Fellowship Program took positions in public service upon completion of the program.

in 2010, its continued purpose is to encourage outstanding college graduates to pursue careers in public service. Refer to page 14 for application information.

Many former fellows credit LSC's program as an important step in their careers. Following their fellowships, they have taken a variety of positions such as public information officers, congressional aides, lobbyists, and high-ranking staff members in both the legislative and executive branches of Ohio state government. In addition, several have successfully run for elective office. Others have decided to complete graduate studies after their fellowship experience.



EMPLOYMENT

ALL LSC STAFF

The Legislative Service Commission, through the staff director, employs a highly trained research, fiscal, and support staff. Research and fiscal staff employees generally are attorneys or persons with graduate degrees. Although not required for all support staff positions, many support staff employees have college degrees. The size of the LSC staff fluctuates with workload and the number of legislative committees established by the General Assembly. The staff consists of about 150 persons, including attorneys, budget analysts, economists, research associates, and support staff. Staff offices are located in the Riffe Center in Columbus.

Employee Classification and Benefits

LSC employees are unclassified state employees and as such are not in the state classified civil service system. Employees are eligible for the standard benefits available to unclassified state employees, and participate in the Public Employees Retirement System. LSC salaries are competitive with those of other state agencies.

Employment at LSC is “at will” and may be terminated, at any time, and for any reason, by the LSC Director. LSC employees have never been affected by a change in political control of the General Assembly. More than 50% of the staff has over ten years of service with LSC.

Nonpartisan Status

As a nonpartisan agency, the LSC staff is responsible for serving all members of the General Assembly. Therefore, LSC employees must agree to certain restrictions, such as not engaging in partisan political activities or issue advocacy during the period of their employment.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

WHO WORKS AT LSC?

Staff Qualifications Major qualifications for employment for research, fiscal, and support staff include:

- A strong interest in public service;
 - An ability to provide nonbiased, accurate information to all members of the General Assembly on a timely basis;
 - A willingness to work more than 40 hours per week when necessary and the ability to adjust personal schedules to changing legislative priorities;
 - An ability to work collaboratively;
 - An ability to work under pressure and perform multiple tasks.
- Added qualifications for research and fiscal staff include:
- J.D. or graduate degree;
 - Superior writing and research skills;
 - Excellent analytical skills;
 - An ability to communicate in a concise and effective manner;
 - For fiscal positions, strong quantitative and Excel skills.

Added qualifications for support staff include:

- Exceptional spelling and grammatical skills;
- An ability to produce high quality work with a high level of attention to detail and, for some positions, accurate typing skills.



RESEARCH & FISCAL STAFF

The research staff is organized, by subject matter, into divisions (e.g., Human Services, Education, and Judiciary), each of which is supervised by a division chief. Each research staff member is assigned to one of LSC's several divisions and has responsibility for staffing at least one of the House and Senate standing committees or subcommittees. Staff responsibilities also include:

- Drafting legislation and amendments;
- Analyzing legislation;
- Conducting legal research;
- Obtaining information for legislators;
- Responding to legislators' questions;
- Meeting with individual legislators.



As with research staff, the fiscal staff is supervised by division chiefs. The fiscal staff, however, is organized slightly differently; budget analysts and economists are assigned specific agencies to monitor or have specific economic analysis responsibilities. Some of the duties for this area of the staff include:

- Writing fiscal analyses of pending legislation;
- Drafting appropriations language;
- Monitoring state revenues and expenditures and providing economic forecasts to the General Assembly.

Fiscal and research staff work closely together and often are assigned to work collaboratively on bill drafts, research assignments, and special staff studies.

SUPPORT STAFF

The support staff includes sections that are primarily responsible for analysis and fiscal note typing, bill preparation, document duplication and distribution, general word processing, and resolution typing. Except for information technology, bookkeeping, and personnel staff who report directly to one of the LSC directors, the support staff is supervised by the LSC support staff supervisor.

The support staff facilitates the completion of the work produced by the research and fiscal staff for members of the General Assembly. Other important support staff responsibilities include:

- Proofreading all assignments;
- Delivering completed assignments to members' offices;
- Maintaining bill and research files;
- Tracking assignments for legislators;
- Designing and preparing in-house publications;
- Conducting the day-to-day operations of LSC including ordering supplies and maintaining office equipment;
- Providing computer support and training to LSC staff;
- Maintaining the LSC computer equipment and network;
- Maintaining the agency's web site;
- Providing bookkeeping and personnel services to LSC and other legislative agencies.



CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

RESEARCH & FISCAL STAFF

As employees of the research agency of the General Assembly, LSC staff members have the opportunity to develop a unique and specialized career in public service. Research and fiscal staff interact directly with legislators and the General Assembly's partisan legislative staff. All but a small percentage of LSC work is generated by assignments from Ohio's 132 legislators. LSC employees become an integral part of the institution that has been providing nonpartisan, objective information to the Ohio legislature for almost 60 years.

Developing Legislative Skills

New staff members receive training conducted by senior staff members and work with a mentor to learn the nuances of working in a legislative environment. At times, LSC conducts in-house professional development seminars. In addition, staff members have the opportunity to interact with national legislative organizations and may serve on their committees or attend their conferences.

During their tenure at LSC, research staff members develop research and technical bill drafting skills needed to translate legislators' bill ideas into clearly written legislation that may become law. Successful staff members become experts in specific subject areas of Ohio law.

LSC fiscal staff members learn the intricacies of the state budget by preparing various budget briefing documents for state agency budgets. They become experts about the budgets and programs of specific state agencies that they are assigned to monitor. Economists on LSC's staff become specialists who forecast both state revenues and Medicaid and public assistance expenditures.

Career Paths

Successful LSC staff members are given assignments with increasing levels of complexity and, in time, may be asked to review the work of less experienced staff. Staff promotions to higher responsibility levels and salary grades are based on performance. When openings occur, senior staff members may apply for supervisory or project coordinator positions that require coordinating and reviewing the work of several staff members.

Finance committee liaisons are specialized LSC staff positions that afford these staff members an opportunity to provide assistance directly to the legislators and partisan staff who are instrumental in determining state budget policies.

Senior staff members who are not interested in pursuing a management role may mentor less experienced staff members, advise group leaders, and serve as in-house experts on a variety of subject areas. When positions become available, research and fiscal staff may transfer to another division within the office.

SUPPORT STAFF

LSC support staff members also have the opportunity to assume more responsibility as positions become available. They may seek supervisory roles among the document processing and document distribution staff or may transfer to or take on additional duties as assistants within the administrative or legal and technical review divisions of the agency.



APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Persons seeking employment with the LSC research or fiscal staff must complete a Research Staff or Fiscal Staff application and provide a cover letter, résumé, college transcripts, and a legal brief or research paper as a writing sample. Persons seeking employment on the LSC support staff must complete a Support Staff Application.

As part of the application, all applicants must execute an agreement that permits LSC to conduct a background check. This check typically involves reviewing court and law enforcement records and contacting personal references, previous employers, and educational institutions attended.

Those applicants who appear to have the best qualifications will be requested to visit the LSC office to complete a set of written exercises. Based on general qualifications and a review of the exercises, some applicants will be requested to participate in one or more personal interviews with senior staff and the LSC staff director.

Interested persons may find applications for the research, fiscal, IT, and support staff on the agency's web site or may contact LSC to request an application. Address all inquiries regarding employment to:

Ohio Legislative Service Commission
Attn: Stefanie Thurman
Vern Riffe Center
77 South High Street, Ninth Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6136
(614) 466-3615
www.lsc.ohio.gov

*The Ohio Legislative Service Commission
is an equal opportunity employer.*

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Legislative Service Commission hires individuals for full-time paid 13-month legislative fellowships. LSC administers the program; however, since the program's goal is to encourage fellows to gain experience in public service, specifically in the legislative branch, most fellows are assigned to work with members of the House or the Senate. All but a few program participants engage in research, constituent services, writing speeches and news releases, and related administrative work. The others work directly with the LSC staff or the staff of the Ohio Government Telecommunications Center (OGT).



The application period for the fellowship program begins January 1 and ends April 1 each year. (Applicants for LSC telecommunications fellowships at OGT must apply by May 31.) The program begins the first week of December every year and continues through December 31 of the following year. To be eligible for the program, applicants must complete at least a bachelor's degree program by the beginning of the fellowship in December.

Persons seeking more detailed information about the Legislative Fellowship Program should check the LSC web site for a description of the program and an application. Interested persons also may direct inquiries to:

Ohio Legislative Service Commission
Attn: Fellowship Program Coordinator
Vern Riffe Center
77 South High Street, Ninth Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6136
(614) 466-3615
www.lsc.ohio.gov

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MARK FLANDERS
Director

WENDY ZHAN
Deputy Director,
Budget and Fiscal Analysis

JIM KELLY
Deputy Director,
Research and Drafting Services

Legislative Service Commission
Vern Riffe Center
77 South High Street
Ninth Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6136

(614) 466-3615

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