

Legislative Branch  
Mission, Goals, and Objectives

2025 Biennium

September 2022

## Mission of the Montana Legislature

The Montana Legislature exists to exercise the powers provided in Article V of the Montana State Constitution and Section 5-2-503, MCA.

## Legislative Services Division (LSD)

Legislative Services drafts and processes all legislation and amendments, performs policy research and analysis, provides legal counsel, and staffs legislative interim and standing committees. It provides all these services in an objective, non-partisan manner. Legislative Services also provides HR services, processes payroll and reimbursements and provides IT services to the three staff offices and to the Montana Legislature.

Legislative Services has six primary staff groups:

- IT Specialists
- Attorneys
- Research and Policy Analysts
- Administrative Support
- Human Resources
- Budget and Accounting

Legislative Services works in subject matter-based teams to:

- Provide information technology solutions and management to all three legislative staff offices and to the Legislature, including managing several dozen data bases, a Legislative website, and the management of a bill drafting and amendment system for all legislation that includes voting systems, bill status systems, email systems, and a publication system to that is used to publish the Montana Code and annotations
- Provide a state broadcasting service (MPAN) through a public affairs television and internet broadcasting service
- Provide staff support for the Legislative Council, standing committees, interim committees, and other legislative committees, commissions, and task forces, including assisting these entities in accomplishing their respective policy objectives
- Provide research, policy analysis, and legal services for individual legislators and committees
- Draft and process all proposed legislation and amendments
- Assist individual legislators with preparing research, information, policy analysis, and materials for committee presentations and meetings with various stakeholders
- Provide payroll and reimbursement services to all three legislative staff offices and for individual legislators
- Provide accounting and budgeting services for the Legislative Council and the Legislature

## Goals

- a. **Improve** the efficiency and effectiveness of the Legislative institution by:
  - Encouraging the Legislative Council to consider, and where appropriate, adopt practices that promote the best interests of the Legislature;
  - Reviewing internal processes and procedures of the Legislative Services Division
- b. Improve **the** Legislature's website by:
  - Creating a master public calendar of all legislative meetings

- Creating budget, audit, and house and senate pages on the website, with links to four partisan pages where party affiliated messaging and newsletters have a proper space;
  - Providing easier access to all the information on the website;
  - Improve the search engine on the website
- c. Provide **more** training opportunities for legislators by increasing the number of staff sponsored educational opportunities
- d. Assist **staff** develop and improve non-partisan, analytical skills by:
- Providing advanced communication training;
  - Improving skills of managers through training and seminars, including participation in academic and professional associations
- e. **Improve** employee selection and retention by:
- Offering competitive pay
  - Hiring the best qualified person to fill job openings
  - Cross-training employees so that they are qualified for future job openings
  - Providing flexibility, telework, and other policies to improve work-life balance
  - Breaking down silos
  - Encouraging all employees to be cooperative problem solvers
- f. **Implement the State of Montana’s “Digital First” challenge.**

If the LSD’s request for additional FTE’s is approved, LSD will amend its goals and objectives to increase effectiveness and improve efficiencies of legislative research and policy analysis products, bill drafting and IT services.

### **Legislative Services Division, Interim Committees and Activities Program**

- a. Support Legislative Council efforts to promote and develop mutually constructive contact and relations with interstate, international and intergovernmental entities.
- To the extent appropriations are provided:
    - Dues and travel expenses, legislators participate in interstate organizations and conferences with peers.
    - Legislators participate in the formulation of policy statements of interstate legislative organizations.
    - Legislators participate in activities promoting cooperation and information exchange between international and intergovernmental entities.
- b. Accomplish duties assigned to interim committees under Title 5, chapter 5, part 3, MCA. (Note: staff support of interim committees is provided under the Legislative Services Division program)
- Fulfill statutory duties, including administrative rule review, conduct interim studies as assigned, monitor the operation of assigned executive branch agencies, and provide public notice and participation in each committee meeting.
  - Allocate funding efficiently among committees.
- c. Implement the State of Montana’s “Digital First” challenge.

## Legislative Fiscal Division

The Legislative Fiscal Division provides non-partisan budget and data analysis to the Montana Legislature, so all lawmakers have objective, accurate, and relevant information to make state financial decisions.

With current staff

- a. Improve communication with legislators in-person and on the web to better meet the division's mission by:
  - Virtual and in-person outreach to legislators to explain state financial status
  - Increasing web usage by increased performance, accessibility, and information
  - Continuously improving the education of legislators through:
    - orientation training
    - various training opportunities during the legislative session
    - educational materials
    - interactive fiscal products for website integration
- b. Meeting statutory responsibilities including staffing Interim Budget Committees (six meetings per interim). Minimal data support for policy committees.
- c. Actively participating with regional and national legislative fiscal officer associations to be on the leading edge of fiscal analytics, trends, emerging issues, and best practices
- d. Continually investing in staff and developing their non-partisan, independent analytical skills by:
  - Participating in NCSL and other non-partisan training opportunities
  - Improving existing and developing new internal analytic tools for efficient LFD data analysis
  - Building interactive visualizations for LFC
  - Stabilizing data sets

If the LFD's request for an additional 3.00 FTE is adopted by the legislature, the LFD will amend its goals and objectives to represent expanded outreach, and data analysis and reporting resources for interim committees.

## Legislative Audit Division

The goal of the Legislative Audit Division is to conduct timely and responsive audits and analyses while considering the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes for recommending purposeful change.

- a. Determine whether an audited agency's financial operations, in relation to generally accepted accounting principles, are properly conducted; the financial reports are presented fairly; and the agency has complied with applicable laws and regulations;
- b. Determine whether an audited activity, in relation to the principles of proper management, is accomplishing its purposes and whether those purposes can be achieved with greater efficiency and economy; and
- c. Determine whether controls exist and are operating to provide assurance over the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of the financial and management information processed and reported.