State of Colorado

LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM
State Capitol
Denver, Colorado 80203

Memorandum

November 12, 2026

To: Interested Persons

From: Legislative Management Team

Subject: Organizational Structure of Colorado's Legislative Staff, FY 2026-27

Summary

This memorandum describes the organizational structure of the staff of the Colorado legislative branch. Figure 1 on page 3 shows the organizational chart of all state-funded staff of Colorado's legislative branch. These staff are categorized as follows:

- Senate staff, who are overseen by the top three members of leadership in the Senate and the Secretary of the Senate. This includes the nonpartisan Senate Services staff, the partisan staff of the Majority and Minority caucuses, and aides.
- House staff, who are overseen by the Speaker and a four-member House Services Committee. The Chief Clerk of the House has authority over the nonpartisan House Services staff and the House aides. In practice, each of the caucus staffs are supervised by their caucus leadership, although the official authority belongs to the Speaker.
- The four nonpartisan agencies, who are each overseen by the Executive Committee with the help of an oversight committee. They include:
  - the Office of the State Auditor (OSA);
  - Joint Budget Committee Staff (JBC Staff);
  - Legislative Council Staff (LCS); and
  - the Office of Legislative Legal Services (OLLS), which includes the Legislative Human Resources Division (LHRD).

Each of these staff agencies, including their responsibilities, oversight, and funding, are described in more detail below.

Some legislators may employ additional staff or interns using campaign or other funding. However, these staff are not included here because they are not directly employed by the State of Colorado. Contract staff are also not addressed here.

Legislative Management Team

The Legislative Management Team (LMT) fosters communication among agencies and facilitates collaboration on significant policy and operational matters affecting all staff agencies. The team is made up of the Secretary of the Senate; the Chief Clerk of the House; the State Auditor; the directors of the Joint Budget Committee Staff, Legislative Council Staff, and the Office of Legislative Legal Services; and the four caucus chiefs of staff. The chair of the team rotates annually among the six nonpartisan agency directors. Current members include:

- State Auditor Kerri Hunter, Chair
- LCS Director Natalie Castle, Vice-Chair
- OLLS Director Ed DeCecco
- JBC Staff Director Craig Harper
- Secretary of the Senate Esther van Mourik
- Senate Majority Chief of Staff Arriana Belkin
- Senate Minority Chief of Staff Jason Helland
- Chief Clerk of the House Vanessa Reilly
- House Majority Chief of Staff Rebecca Kisner
- House Minority Chief of Staff Kimberley Hanson

Table of Contents

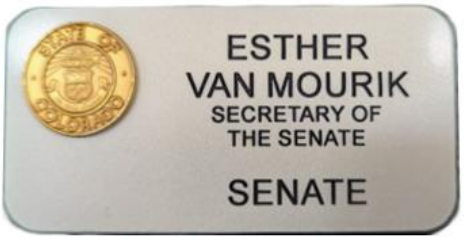
Senate Staff....4
Office of the State Auditor....5
Joint Budget Committee Staff....6
Legislative Council Staff....7
Office of Legislative Legal Services....9
Legislative Human Resources Division....10
House Staff....11

Figure 1. Colorado Legislative Staff Organizational Chart



Senate Staff

Senate Staff include the nonpartisan Office of the Secretary of the Senate (a.k.a. "Senate Services Staff"), the partisan staffs of the Senate Majority and Minority caucuses, and legislative aides employed by Senators.



Oversight

The Secretary of the Senate is elected by a majority vote of the full Senate without regard to political affiliation and, pursuant to Senate Rule 21(f), is under the authority of the Senate Services Committee. Custom and practice is that the President appoints the Secretary, who is sworn in on the first day of session. Appointed by Senate leadership, the Senate Services Committee is, by custom and practice, comprised of the President and the Majority and Minority Leaders. In addition, pursuant to Senate Rule 13(a)(5), the Secretary of the Senate has administrative authority over all employees of the Senate.

Senate Services Staff

Senate services staff include the assistant secretary of the senate, the journal clerk, the calendar clerk, the docket clerk, the reading clerk, the senate services clerk, assignable staff, enrolling staff, sergeants-at-arms, and (jointly with the House) bill room staff. The Office of the Secretary of the Senate was appropriated funding for a total of 16.1 FTE for FY 2026-27, including 6.5 permanent and 16 session-only positions.

Caucus Staff

The Senate Majority caucus was appropriated funding for 13.4 FTE, and the Senate Minority was appropriated funding for 8.2 FTE in FY 2026-27. In practice, these staff report to their respective party leadership. However, Senate Rule 13(a)(5) gives the Secretary of the Senate authority over these staff, under the oversight of the Senate Services Committee.

Aides

Pursuant to Joint Rule 39, the Executive Committee has authority over the administrative policies and compensation for legislative aides. In FY 2026-27, each senator may pay legislative aides for a total of 1,800 hours. A senator may employ up to two aides at a time and may share an aide's services with another member. Aides report jointly to the employing senator and the Secretary of the Senate.

Funding

A total of $6.3 million General Fund was appropriated for all Senate staff in FY 2026-27.

Office of the State Auditor

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) is created in the Colorado Constitution as the State's independent external auditor, with broad statutory authority to conduct financial, performance, and information technology (IT) audits of all state government departments and agencies, public colleges and universities, the Judicial Branch, and certain other political subdivisions of the State. The purpose of audits is to provide the General Assembly and the public with objective, fact-based, nonpartisan information about state government operations and the use of taxpayer resources.

The OSA is also statutorily required to evaluate the effectiveness of state tax expenditures, monitor local governments for compliance with the Local Government Audit Law (§ 29 1 601, et seq., C.R.S.), and administer a statewide fraud reporting hotline related to occupational fraud by state employees/contractors).

Oversight and Director

The OSA is overseen by the State Auditor, who is appointed by a majority vote of the members of the General Assembly to serve for a term of five years. The State Auditor is appointed without reference to political affiliation, and is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). The State Auditor determines the audit schedule, which is dictated primarily by statutorily required audits, and oversees day-to-day operations of the OSA.

The State Auditor and up to three of his or her staff are non-classified, and therefore not subject to the state personnel system. The remaining OSA staff are classified state employees subject to the state personnel system, and as a result, the OSA has its own human resources staff. Generally, members of the General Assembly have less daily interaction with the State Auditor and OSA staff than with staff of the other legislative service agencies.

Audit Committee

The Legislative Audit Committee's (LAC) key responsibilities are releasing the OSA's audit reports to the public, given that statute requires audits to be confidential until released, and holding hearings to discuss the audit results and question the audited agencies. The LAC is made up of four senators and four representatives with equal representation from the two major political parties. Each of the four caucus leaders appoint two LAC members, and the LAC selects its own Chair and Vice-Chair.

In addition to releasing audits and hearing the results, the LAC recommends to the General Assembly a candidate for State Auditor.

Funding

The OSA was appropriated $15.2 million and 83.3 FTE for FY 2026-27. Of this amount, $13.5 million is General Fund and $1.6 million is reappropriated from other state agencies. About 81 percent of the budget is appropriated for staff, with most of the remaining balance for contract audits.

Joint Budget Committee Staff



The Joint Budget Committee Staff (JBC Staff) supports the Joint Budget Committee (JBC), which is the General Assembly's permanent fiscal and budget review agency. The staff of the JBC assists the committee in writing each year's state budget bill as well as any midyear (supplemental) adjustments to appropriations. To accomplish this task, the staff studies the management, operations, programs, and fiscal needs of state agencies. Each analyst is responsible for one or more particular departments, programs, or issue areas. The staff review related budget requests, statutes, and other pertinent information to provide written and oral recommendations for funding and program changes to the JBC.

The staff of the JBC is also responsible for staffing the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, and for preparing a fiscal analysis and amendments related to the appropriation clause for each bill heard by the Appropriations committees. In addition, the staff prepares the annual Long Bill Narrative, the explanatory document that accompanies the introduced version of the budget bill; and the Appropriations Report, which provides information on the final appropriation for the fiscal year, detail on program functions, and the TABOR revenue limit.

Oversight

The Joint Budget Committee provides oversight of the JBC Staff. Committee members must be members of their respective chamber's Appropriations Committee. The chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees serve on the Joint Budget Committee, plus one additional majority party member and one minority party member from each chamber. In the House, the majority party members are appointed by the Speaker and the minority party member by the House Minority Leader as specified by House Rule 3(b)(8). Senate members of the committee are elected by their respective party caucuses and then officially appointed to the committee by the Majority Leader and Minority Leader as specified by Senate Rule 21(b). The committee elects its own chair and vice-chair.

Director

The JBC Staff Director is appointed by the Executive Committee of the Legislative Council from finalists interviewed and recommended by the Joint Budget Committee. The Director is appointed without reference to political affiliation. The JBC Staff are not subject to the state personnel system.

Funding

The JBC Staff was appropriated $3.3 million General Fund and 19.7 FTE for FY 2026-27. Staff costs represent 98 percent of JBC Staff appropriations.

Legislative Council Staff



Legislative Council Staff (LCS) is the primary information technology (IT), committee, research, and institutional support staff of the Colorado General Assembly. LCS provides a full service IT department for the legislative branch, employing support, application development, system administration, digital accessibility, and cybersecurity positions. LCS also service as the General Assembly's primary research and committee staff, employing fiscal note analysts, economists, research analysts, committee analysts, and constituent services analysts. In addition, LCS houses the legislature's visitor services and tour guide; central accounting; and print shop staff.

LCS also hosts four nonpartisan science fellows employed by the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in the areas of public health; energy and climate; natural resources and water; and technology.

Responsibilities of the Legislative Council Staff include, but are not limited to:

- Research services, including;
  - Constituent services;
  - Policy and fiscal research;
  - Economic and school finance research, modelling, and forecasting;
  - Fiscal notes for legislative bills during the session and interim committee process; and
  - Demographic notes;
- Committee staffing, including remote public testimony management;
- Services related to ballot measures and the citizen initiative process, including:
  - Working with the OLLS to facilitate the Initiative review and comment process;
  - Preparing and distributing the ballot information (blue) book; and
  - Fiscal summaries and impact statements for the citizen initiative and blue book processes;
- Central accounting services for the House, Senate, OLLS, LCS, and JBC Staff including:
  - Payroll and benefits management;
  - Accounts payable and budget reporting; and
  - Financial statements, oversight, and audits;
- Analytical budget support for the legislative department, including the development of the annual legislative appropriation bill;
- Visitor services, including managing the gift shop, public tours, the museum, and the dome;
- Printing services, including introduced bills, calendars, journals, reports, and other products;
- Information technology (IT) for the legislative branch, including:
  - IT support and audio visual services;
  - IT procurement and contract management;
  - Information security;

    - Network infrastructure maintenance and administration; and
    - Custom application maintenance and development;
- Training services, including working with other agencies on new legislator and committee chair training programs; and
- Administrative services, including:
    - The legislative resource center and library;
    - Legislative databases, including the ballot, legislator history, boards and commissions; and required reports databases;
    - Construction project management and facility planning; and
    - Contract management as needed, including but not limited to contracts related to the PERA Actuarial analysis; the Colorado Youth Advisory Council, the Cost of Living Study, and the Property Tax Assessment Study.

Oversight

Legislative Council provides oversight of Legislative Council Staff. Its 18 members are evenly divided between the House and the Senate and include the Executive Committee of the Legislative Council, which is made up of the top three officers in each chamber. The party representation from each chamber must be generally proportional to the party representation in each chamber. The committee's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, oversight over the Legislative Council Staff's budget request, any legislation requiring legislative staff resources, interim committees, the science fellowship, and the ballot information booklet (a.k.a. "Blue Book").

Director

The LCS Director of Research is appointed by the Executive Committee of the Legislative Council from finalists interviewed and recommended by the Legislative Council. The Director is appointed without reference to political affiliation. LCS are not subject to the state personnel system.

Funding

LCS was appropriated $23.3 million and 108.2 FTE for FY 2026-27, of which $23.1 million is General Fund and $141,000 is reappropriated. Appropriations include funding for IT software and hardware needs branch-wide, Blue Book printing and distribution costs, new legislator orientation, and contracts for studies required by law. Staff costs represent about 70 percent of LCS appropriations.

Office of Legislative Legal Services



The Office of Legislative Legal Services (OLLS) prepares the bills, resolutions, and memorials introduced in the General Assembly, excluding the state budget bill and supplemental budget bills. Likewise, the OLLS drafts most amendments and conference committee reports and reviews all bills and amendments after they are passed by either house.

In addition, OLLS provides the following services:

- Performs legal research. The OLLS performs legal research for members of the General Assembly and may provide legal assistance in connection with other business conducted by the General Assembly.
- Coordinates litigation. The OLLS is the conduit through which legal counsel retained by the Committee on Legal Services communicates with the committee or the General Assembly. Staff attorneys may assist outside counsel in preparing pleadings, including briefs, and in conducting other legal research and writing.
- Reviews administrative rules and regulations. Every rule adopted or amended by an executive agency is reviewed by the OLLS to determine if the rule is within the power delegated to the agency and consistent with law.
- Prepares publications. The Revisor of Statutes is responsible for various statutory publications: the session laws, the digest of bills, and the Colorado Revised Statutes.
- Reviews initiatives. The OLLS and Legislative Council Staff are required by law to prepare written comments on proposed citizen initiatives that propose changes to the constitution or statutes. In addition, the Director or the Director's designee sits on the Title Board, which sets titles for initiatives.
- Reviews contracts. The OLLS reviews all contracts executed by the General Assembly.

Oversight

The primary responsibilities of the Committee on Legal Services (COLS) are to provide oversight of the OLLS; retain outside legal counsel to represent the General Assembly, either house or any committee of the General Assembly, or any member or agency of the legislative branch, when the committee deems retention of outside counsel appropriate; oversee the review of executive branch agency rules; and oversee the publication of the Colorado Session Laws and Colorado Revised Statutes. The COLS includes the chairs of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees and two members appointed by each of the following: the Speaker, the Senate President, the House Minority Leader, and the Senate Minority Leader. The committee selects its own chair and vice-chair, and those positions rotate each year from one chamber to the other.

Director

The OLLS Director is appointed by the Executive Committee of the Legislative Council from finalists interviewed and recommended by the Committee on Legal Services. The Director is appointed without reference to political affiliation. The staff of the OLLS are not subject to the state personnel system.

Funding

The OLLS (excluding the LHRD) was appropriated $11.1 million General Fund and 60.4 FTE for FY 2026-27. Appropriations include operating costs for the Colorado Commission on Uniform State Laws, legal services for the legislative branch, and the publication of session laws and statutes. Staff costs represent 93 percent of OLLS appropriations in FY 2026-27.

Legislative Human Resources Division

The Legislative Human Resources Division (LHRD) offers comprehensive human resources services to the Colorado General Assembly, including employee relations; workplace investigations; training and development; compliance; recruitment; onboarding; offboarding; compensation; performance management; and handbook and policy consultation.

Oversight and Director

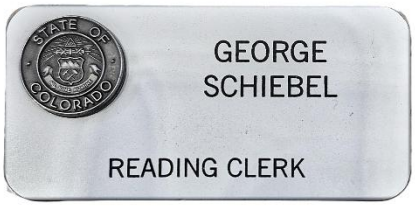
The LHRD is a division of the OLLS, and the Director of the OLLS appoints the LHRD Director.

Funding

The LHRD was appropriated $0.6 million General Fund and 3.0 FTE for FY 2026-27. Staff costs represent 85 percent of appropriations. Appropriations for the operating budget are primarily to procure professional services, including investigative services.

House Staff

House staff include the nonpartisan Office of the Chief Clerk of the House (a.k.a. "House Services Staff"), the partisan staffs of the House Majority and House Minority Caucuses, and legislative aides employed by representatives.



Oversight

The Speaker has authority over all House officers and staff, pursuant to House Rule 3(a). In addition, the House Services Committee provides oversight to all House staff. Members of the committee are appointed in proportion to the political membership of the House by the Speaker and Minority Leader; the chair and vice-chair are appointed by the Speaker (House Rule 3(b)(8) and 25(b),(d),(f), and (h)).

House Services staff. The Chief Clerk of the House is appointed by the Speaker without regard to political affiliation and, pursuant to House Rule 43(a.5), is under the authority of the House Services Committee. House services staff include the assistant chief clerk, the journal clerk, the reading/bill status clerk, the house services clerk, assignable staff, enrolling staff, sergeants-at-arms, a student aide, and (jointly with the Senate) bill room staff. The Office of the Chief Clerk was appropriated funding for a total of 23.5 FTE for FY 2026-27, including 7.9 permanent, 27 session-only positions, and half of 1.2 FTE shared jointly with the Senate.

Aides

Pursuant to Joint Rule 39, the Executive Committee of the Legislative Council has authority over the administrative policies and compensation for legislative aides. In FY 2026-27, each Representative may pay legislative aides for a total of 1,800 hours. A Representative may employ up to two aides at a time and may share an aide's services with another member. Aides report jointly to the supervising Representative and the Chief Clerk of the House.

Caucus Staff

The House Majority caucus was appropriated funding for 13.4 FTE and the House Minority caucus was appropriated funding for 8.8 FTE for FY 2026-27. In practice, these staff report to their respective party leadership.

Funding

A total of $8.2 million was appropriated for all House staff in FY 2026-27.