



# **Bureau of Legislative Research**

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## **Duties and Services Performed during the Interim**

**July 2025**

## Introduction

*This document is meant to provide information as to the duties carried out by the staff of the Bureau of Legislative Research and the availability and scope of staff services available to members of the General Assembly during the interim period each year between legislative sessions.*

The Bureau serves as the centralized staff for the members of the Arkansas General Assembly, and as such, provides services to the members both during legislative sessions and during the interim in between sessions.

The Bureau provides a wide range of services, but there are times when some services are emphasized more than others. For many new members, the first contact with Bureau staff will be with Bureau bill drafters or with the Bureau's committee staff. Bills continue to be drafted year round, but after a legislative session other Bureau services become more in demand. For example, in the interim between sessions, the members of the General Assembly are able to focus more time and energy on monitoring the activities of state agencies, and the Bureau does a significant amount of work to help the General Assembly with this task. The interim is also a time when the Bureau can better assist committees with major research projects.

This document provides information regarding the various divisions and sections of the Bureau and each of their duties and activities during the interim.

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## **PART I: SUMMARY OF SERVICES**

### **Legislative Drafting**

(as requested by members of the General Assembly)

- Substantive Bills (Legal Research and Drafting Section, Legal Services Division)
- Fiscal Bills (Budget and Fiscal Review Section, Fiscal Services Division)
- Interim Study Proposals (Legal Research and Drafting Section, Legal Services Division)

### **Research**

- Legal Research, as requested by members of the General Assembly (Legal Research and Drafting Section, Administrative Rules Review Section, and Statutory Review Section of the Legal Services Division)
- General Research and preparation of reports for members of the General Assembly (Policy Analysis and Research Section and Committee Staff Section, Research Services Division)
- Preparation of maps and information to members of the General Assembly concerning redistricting of state House and Senate districts (Policy Analysis and Research Section, Research Services Division)
- Preparation of analyses and reports concerning interim studies (Policy Analysis and Research Section and Committee Staff Section, Research Services Division)
- Fiscal Research concerning legislative requests for information pertaining to state fiscal matters, state agency budgets, expenditures, and authorized positions (Budget and Fiscal Review Section, Fiscal Services Division)
- Personnel Research concerning legislative requests for information pertaining to the state pay plan, personnel classification and compensation issues (Personnel Review Section, Fiscal Services Division)

### **Interim Committees and Subcommittees**

- Legal Staff Services (Legal Research and Drafting Section and Administrative Rules Review Section, Legal Services Division; Director's Office)
- Fiscal Staff Services to the Arkansas Legislative Council ("ALC") and various

subcommittees, Arkansas Legislative Council/Joint Budget Committee (“ALC/JBC”) and its subcommittees, as well as the Joint Budget Committee (“JBC”) and its subcommittees (Budget and Fiscal Review Section, Fiscal Services Division)

- Personnel Staff Services to the Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation Plan Subcommittee of the ALC, JBC, and the ALC/JBC (Personnel Review Section, Fiscal Services Division)
- General Staff Services to committees, subcommittees, task forces, study commissions, advisory committees, and legislative caucuses (Committee Staff Section, Research Services Division)
- Processing of per diem and mileage payments for committee meeting attendance (Administrative Services Division)
- Monthly Expenditure Reports for interim committee in-state and out-of-state travel to committee staff and the Policy-Making Subcommittee (Administrative Services Division)
- Printing and Duplicating Services (Director’s Office)

### **Assisting with Legislative Oversight of State Agencies**

- Review of:
  - Administrative Rules and Regulations (Administrative Rules Review Section, Legal Services Division)
  - State Agency Personnel Matters (Personnel Review Section, Fiscal Services Division)
  - Agency Requests for Professional Services Contracts and Consultant Services Contracts (Fiscal Staff for the ALC Review Subcommittee; Budget and Fiscal Review Section, Fiscal Services Division)
  - Financial Operations and Fiscal Performances of State Agencies (Fiscal Staff for the ALC PEER Subcommittee; Budget and Fiscal Review Section, Fiscal Services Division)
  - Claims Referred from the Arkansas State Claims Commission (Legal and Fiscal Staff for the ALC Claims Review Subcommittee; Legal Research and Drafting Section, Legal Services Division; Budget and Fiscal Review Section, Fiscal Services Division)
- Coordination of Presenters and Witnesses for committee meetings (Committee Staff Section, Research Services Division)

- Assisting committees with communication between the committee and various state agencies (Committee Staff Section, Research Services Division)

## **IT Support**

- Reporting upon request to members of the General Assembly on various topics including bills sponsored by the member or a specific committee, bills that fall under a specific topic, etc. (Information Technology Division)
- Technical Support, Maintenance and Repair of all servers, desktop and laptop computers, printers, most copiers, and digital imaging solutions (Information Technology Division)
- Support and maintenance of the multimedia and sound equipment in all committee rooms (Information Technology Division)
- Setup and technical support of chamber computers and voting machines (Information Technology Division)

## **Services That Cannot Be Provided by the Bureau of Legislative Research**

- **Campaign Assistance:** The Bureau cannot assist with a legislator's campaign or the campaign of any other person. First, assistance with a campaign would be contrary to the Bureau's nonpartisan and impartial role. Second, state law prohibits state employees from doing campaign work on state time or with state equipment.
- **Personal Legal Representation:** The Bureau and its attorneys cannot provide personal legal representation or advice to a legislator or a legislator's constituent.

## **PART II: FUNCTIONS OF THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS AND SECTIONS OF THE BUREAU OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH**

### **Director's Office**

The Director's Office, located in Room 315 of the State Capitol Building, consists of the Director of the Bureau of Legislative Research, the BLR Chief Counsel, Human Resources Analyst, various administrative staff, as well as the printing and duplicating center for the Bureau. The Director's Office performs the following duties and services for members of the General Assembly during the interim:

#### **The Director:**

- Oversees services to the General Assembly provided by the various divisions of the Bureau of Legislative Research
- Serves as the Executive Secretary of the Arkansas Legislative Council ("ALC") and its Executive Subcommittee
- Upon request of members of the General Assembly, provides legal research and advice concerning various issues affecting the General Assembly

#### **Other Staff:**

- The BLR Chief Counsel serves as the attorney for the ALC and the ALC Executive Subcommittee
- Provides staff support to the ALC, the Executive Subcommittee, and the Joint Interim Committee on Legislative Facilities
- Provides a review of all reports required by law to be submitted to the ALC and preparation of agendas and meeting minutes
- Manages consultant contracts and services for ALC, its subcommittees, the interim committees and task forces, including procurement of consulting services.

- Provides printing and duplicating services to the ALC, its subcommittees, and the interim committees

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## **Fiscal Services Division**

The Fiscal Services Division is divided into two (2) sections: Budget and Fiscal Review; and Personnel Review. The Division also contains the Office of Economic and Tax Policy.

### **Budget and Fiscal Review Section**

The Budget and Fiscal Review Section is made up of legislative analysts and administrative assistants and performs the following duties and services during the interim:

- Responds to legislative requests for information pertaining to state fiscal matters, state agency budgets, expenditures and authorized positions
- Staffs the Arkansas Legislative Council/Joint Budget Committee and its subcommittees
- Staffs various Arkansas Legislative Council subcommittees
- Staffs the Joint Budget Committee and its subcommittees
- Prepares and coordinates the Legislative Budget Hearing Process before Regular and Fiscal Legislative Sessions
  - Prepares the schedule of state agency dates and times for pre-session budget hearings
  - Analyzes each state agency, board, commission, and institution of higher education budget request and recommendation for the next fiscal year for presentation to the ALC/JBC or the Joint Budget Committee
  - Presents all special language requests for information concerning programs, budget and state agency personnel matters to assist members in determining the legislative recommendation
- Drafts and prepares all appropriation bills as sponsored by the Joint Budget Committee for each Regular, Fiscal, or Extraordinary Session as well as individual member sponsored bills
- Produces Various Fiscal Publication and Resource Materials including:

- Fiscal Legislation Summary for each legislative session
- "A" Book: Ten-Year Expenditure History by each state agency, board, commission, and institution of higher education
- "B" Book: Selected Statistical Financial Data
- Power Point Slide Presentation regarding: the Arkansas Budget and Appropriation Process
- Reviews current Special Language and prepares a comprehensive document of all existing Special Language in appropriation acts -- this information is provided to the Department of Finance & Administration for consideration in the various agencies' budget requests and executive hearings
- Meets and confers upon request with individual legislators, legislative member groups, and legislative leadership in order to assist policy makers with the various processes, components, and programs making up the state budget as well as individual agency and institution operations

### Personnel Review Section

The Personnel Review Section is made up of legislative analysts and administrative assistants and performs the following duties and services during the interim:

- Responds to legislative requests for information pertaining to the state pay plan, and personnel classification and compensation issues
- Staffs the Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation Plan Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council, Joint Budget Committee, and ALC/JBC
- Makes recommendations to the subcommittees regarding various state agency personnel requests
- Responds to information and procedural requests from members and agency personnel pertaining to matters before the subcommittee
- Reviews current and proposed personnel related Special Language in appropriation bills

## Office of Economic and Tax Policy

The Office of Economic and Tax Policy is created within the Bureau by Arkansas Code § 10-3-1402 and performs the following duties and services during the interim:

- Publishes the Tax Handbook
- Generates Monthly and Annual Revenue Reports
- Generates Interim Fiscal Impact Statements and Cost-Benefit Analyses concerning any subject matter
- Creates Original and Alternative BLR Revenue Forecasts
- Recreates and Breaks Down the Executive Official Revenue Forecast, upon request of a member
- Generates K-12 Funding Formulae

### **Key Contacts:**

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## **Legal Services Division**

The Legal Services Division of the Bureau of Legislative Research is divided into three (3) sections: Administrative Rules Review; Legal Research and Drafting; and Statutory Review.

### **Administrative Rules Review Section**

The Administrative Rules Review Section consists of rules review attorneys, rules codification attorneys, non-attorneys editors, and an administrative assistant. This section performs the following duties and services during the interim:

- Staffs the Administrative Rules Subcommittee of the ALC, which meets monthly during the interim -- this includes the preparation of a detailed agenda for each meeting that summarizes each rule on the agenda, identifies public comments received by the state agency concerning the rule, and states the legal authorization for the rule.
- Provides services to the members in connection with the promulgation of those rules, including: notifying members of the General Assembly of rules implementing legislation sponsored by the member and providing the member with a copy of the rules for review, preparation of letters containing member comments to the state agency, and communication with state agency officials
- Conducts a thorough review of each rule filed with the ALC for content, legal authority, and consistency with the law
- Attends state agency public hearings on administrative rules to gauge public interest and identify any issues in advance of the subcommittee meetings
- Works with state agencies as needed during the rule promulgation process to ensure that proposed rules conform with statutory requirements
- Keeps track of acts passed by the General Assembly that require the promulgation of rules to determine whether the rules are in fact promulgated by the state agencies
- Implements and maintains a codification of administrative rules, known as the Code of Arkansas Rules

- Collaborates with state agencies concerning the codification of their rules, including providing editorial review and comments to agencies
- Staffs the ALC-Claims Review/Litigation Reports Oversight Subcommittee
- Legal research for members of the General Assembly

### Legal Research and Drafting Section

The Legal Research and Drafting Section is made up of bill drafting attorneys and their administrative assistants. The Legal Research and Drafting section performs the following duties and services during the interim:

- Legal research for members of the General Assembly
- Bill drafting as requested by members of the General Assembly
- Drafting of interim study proposals
- Drafting of letters requesting official opinions by the Attorney General
- Provides legal staff for interim committees
- Preparation of general act summaries
- Review of conformed acts and any potential substantive law changes
- Organizes and conducts bill drafting seminars
- Revises legislative session procedures and policies as necessary

### Statutory Review Section

The Statutory Review Section consists of editorial attorneys, non-attorney editors, administrative assistants, and temporary proof readers. This section performs the following duties and

## services during the interim:

- Reads, edits, and prepares acts to conform to Arkansas Code format, style, organization, and structure pursuant to Arkansas Code § 1-2-303 for publication of page proofs of volume supplements to the Arkansas Code
- Reads, reviews, and corrects page proofs and works with the publisher to produce the supplements of the Arkansas Code, replacement volumes, and the Arkansas Code Service for final publication
- Reviews drafts of proposed legislation for the upcoming legislative session

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## **Research Services Division**

The Research Services Division is divided into two (2) sections: Committee Staff; and Policy Analysis and Research.

### **Committee Staff Services Section**

The Committee Staff Services Section is made up of legislative analysts and administrative assistants and performs the following duties and services during the interim:

- Provides staff services to committees, subcommittees, task forces, study commissions, advisory committees, and legislative caucuses
- Coordinates meeting dates, times, location, logistics, and equipment for meetings, both at the State Capitol building and other locations, including out-of-town meetings
- Prepares meeting agendas, meeting notices, and meeting minutes upon direction of the committee chair
- Coordinates presenters at meetings
- Provides research for interim studies referred to subject matter committees, as well as research as requested by members or legislators
- Prepares correspondence on behalf of legislators and committees
- Advises chairs monthly of interim committee fund balances
- Prepares summaries of legislation referred to interim committees
- Responds to requests for information from constituents, government entities, media, other states, various associations, lobbyists
- Works with state agencies in carrying out requests/directives of interim committees
- Updates interim study proposal information on the General Assembly website to reflect all action and monitors sponsor/committee requests on respective interim studies

## Policy Analysis and Research Section

The Policy Analysis and Research Section is made up of legislative analysts and administrative staff and performs the following duties and services during the interim:

- Conducts research and provides reports to members of the General Assembly on various issues, including the following: Adequacy; Higher Education, including Lottery Scholarships; Education (K-12); Health Care; Public Safety and Courts; Immigration Costs and State Agency Policies; and Policies of Other States on various issues
- Prepares analyses, provides research materials, conducts (web) surveys, and drafts reports with regard to interim studies
- Provides maps and information to members of the General Assembly concerning redistricting of state House and Senate Districts
- Provides web page information updates concerning education and health care reform

### **Key Contacts:**

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## **Information Technology Division**

The IT Division is made up of network specialists, PC support specialists, desktop applications support staff, digital research technicians, applications programmers, and a web programmer. The IT Division performs the following duties and services during the interim:

- Provides reporting upon request by members of the General Assembly on various topics including bills sponsored by the member or a specific committee, bills that fall under a specific topic, etc.
- Performs the configuration, ordering, setup, deployment, technical support, and repair of all servers, desktop and laptop computers, mobile devices, printers, most copiers, and digital imaging solutions -- including those for the members of the General Assembly
- Maintains the multimedia and sound equipment in all committee rooms
- Provides setup and technical support for all chamber computers and voting systems
- Provides for the support of approximately three hundred (300) full time users, over fifty (50) in-house developed computer programs and two (2) server rooms with a combined total of twenty-nine (29) network servers and the associated infrastructure and security
- Develops computer applications for the legislative process, including: committee agendas, bill drafting and tracking, meeting schedules, members' pay, House of Representatives and Senate session payroll, chamber automation software, management of public information on the General Assembly website
- Continuously reviews and updates, and rewrites as needed, all software programs and hardware to take advantage of better functionality available in newer software and technologies
- Provides digital imaging of all records, including bills, amendments, and acts, committee agendas, meeting handouts and minutes, and financial records of the Bureau of Legislative Research

**Key Contacts:**

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Information Services Help Desk  
537-9161

## **Administrative Services Division**

The Administrative Services Division performs the following duties and services for members of the General Assembly during the interim:

- Processes per diem and mileage payments for committee meeting attendance, including administering the direct deposits made for such payments
- Provides monthly expenditure reports for interim committee in-state and out-of-state travel to committee staff and the Policy-Making Subcommittee
- Verifies data compiled by the Arkansas Transparency website and assists the Director with public requests for information concerning the data
- Responds to Freedom of Information Act requests pertaining to expenses of members of the General Assembly, including providing members with notification prior to release of the requested information
- Reports, upon request, on costs of task forces, interim committee meetings, and out-of-state travel for review
- Provides year-end reporting of members' reimbursement expenses
- Supervises a central inventory for various supplies and equipment for legislative committee usage
- Handles Human Resources functions, including employee paperwork, payroll, benefit administration (457, health plan, and workers' compensation, etc.), and assists employees with questions and problems
- Performs Bureau accounting functions, including accounts payable, deposits to the treasury of incoming checks, warrant cancellations, vendor maintenance information, and maintaining W-9 files for each vendor.

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