

Legislative Service Office
Fiscal Policies & Procedures

October 2014

LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE

CREATION

The Legislative Service Office was created in 1971 and operates pursuant to Wyoming Statutes Title 28, Chapter 8. The Office provides research and bill drafting services for legislative standing or interim committees and for individual legislators, including pre-filing and distribution of proposed legislation prior to legislative sessions; revision and recompilation of the laws of Wyoming; preparation of copy and contracting for the printing and publishing of all revisions, compilations, session laws, journals and digests; and accounting for all legislative expenditures, supplies and properties. In addition, members of the office staff prepare administrative rule reviews and reports for the Management Council, conduct program evaluations of executive agencies under the direction of the Management Audit Committee, and conduct fiscal studies and budget analysis for the Joint Appropriations Committee and other legislative committees.

Policies, rules and regulations governing general operations of the Office and its relationship to legislative standing committees and individual legislators are made by a Management Council composed of thirteen legislators – six members from each house and one member elected at large.

The Director is employed by and subject to the direction of the Management Council. The Director with the approval of the Management Council employs LSO employees.

Budget Process

The budget is prepared by the director along with the fiscal officer every two years. Before the budget session (even years) convenes, the budget goes before the Management Council for approval. The budget is subsequently reviewed by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees during the session.

Expenditures/Processing of Vouchers

There are several types of vouchers/payment requests processed by the fiscal officer: Internal payments and external payments.

Internal payments (IET's) are payments that are paid to other state agencies. Examples include Dept of Administration and Information (A&I - Motor Pool, Telecommunications, ITD, and Central Mail), Worker's Compensation & the Dept of Transportation.

External payments include most other payments and include two different documents. GAX documents (travel reimbursement and most monthly bills) & PRC documents (fixed asset purchases).

The fiscal officer enters the voucher information into the WOLFS system. The voucher is stamped with a preset approval stamp which has the Legislative Service Office (LSO) director's signature. The preset stamp has a line for a second signature which the fiscal officer signs. The fiscal officer gives the vouchers to the director for review along with an approval memo. This memo lists the voucher numbers and has a line for the director's signature noting the date of the actual approval. Pursuant to an internal control recommendation contained in the 2004 CPA Audit of legislative finances, the director performs a general review of each voucher in the packet provided by the fiscal officer and then randomly selects several of the vouchers for an in-depth detailed review before signing off on the approval memo.

Exception: Vouchers for a legislator's attendance at a committee meeting which are paid on payroll and are not entered into the WOLFS system are signed by the fiscal officer and then individually reviewed and counter-signed by the director directly on the original voucher.

If the director is unavailable the assistant directors are authorized to sign.

All electronic funds transfers & warrants for payments go through the State Auditor's office.

New vendors, legislators etc., complete the WOLFS109 Vendor Form which goes to the State Auditor's Office. The State Auditor's Office enters the information on

the vendor file. They also make any changes that need to be made to existing vendors.

The LSO currently has two purchase Cards (PCards) – the executive assistant primarily orders office supplies with this card as well as IT items like software. In addition, travel arrangements and registrations for conferences are also made with this card. An assistant director has the second PCard. The dollar limit for individual purchases is set at \$2,500. The limit may be raised if needed for expenditures over the limit.

Daily reports (A602) are reconciled after each WOLFS run. WOLFS monthly reports are reconciled to monthly financial reports prepared by the fiscal officer and reviewed by the director.

GEM documents correct expenditures that are incorrectly coded.

All contracts are approved by the LSO director and the Management Council. If contracts are required to go through the State procurement process (printing for example), the LSO works with the A & I Procurement office, however, the final decision of which bid to select is made by the LSO office. Most contracts are for a two year period. Contracts often can be renewed for additional one or two year periods. After the final extension, LSO typically opens up the contract for bid again. In some cases where a contract is for a specific project, like a research study, the contract can be extended by amendment until the project is complete without entering into a new bid process.

Each session interns are selected from the University of WY and community colleges. Most interns are provided a small stipend to help cover travel and other expenses. The student signs a contract & generally gets paid in two installments. These payments follow the general voucher process.

Petty Cash Account

The LSO maintains a petty cash account in the amount of \$200.00 that is used for making change and for payment of low dollar amount local purchases. The account is maintained in accordance with the State Treasurer's "Petty Cash Guidelines."

Inventory

The State Auditor's Office provides a monthly report by agency detailing asset purchases in the \$500-\$4,900 range. LSO keeps a master inventory list and adds the purchases from the report to the master inventory. The executive assistant keeps track of the inventory tags, while the fiscal officer maintains the inventory documentation. The LSO IT staff track the physical location of and maintenance for all LSO fixed assets (mostly computers). If an item is to be disposed of, IT alerts the fiscal officer. The asset is sent to surplus or destroyed.

If sent to surplus an additional document is prepared & accompanies the item to surplus. Most “disposed” computers are taken to salvage.

The LSO maintains a “Laptop Fund”. Each legislator plus some LSO staff members are provided a laptop for business use. If the legislator is not re-elected, the legislator is given the option to purchase their laptop at fair market value. Pursuant to legislative authorization, the money received from the sale of the asset is placed in the “Laptop Fund”, an interest bearing account. This fund is used to replace or purchase new laptops.

Legislators - Travel Out-of-State

Legislators are reimbursed for actual expenses when they travel out of state to attend authorized meetings. Receipts are required for all expenditures greater than \$15.00. They are allowed up to \$60.00 per day for meals. Legislators request reimbursement on the “Legislator Reimbursement Request Form Travel Expenses” which is signed by the legislator requesting reimbursement.

Staff - Travel

LSO Staff are reimbursed for actual expenses when they travel on legislative business (in-state & out-of-state). Receipts are required for all expenditures greater than \$15.00. Employees request reimbursement on the “LSO Staff Reimbursement Schedule” which is signed by the employee requesting reimbursement. If the employee attempts to obtain a state car but is unable to do so they are reimbursed for mileage for the use of their own vehicle at the non-taxable federal rate set each January, however, if the employee does not attempt to obtain a state car they are reimbursed at a lower rate.

Note: All legislators and staff are given a policy manual which outlines what type of travel expenditures can & cannot be reimbursed.

Payroll

LSO Staff

When an employee is hired or a new legislator is elected, the fiscal officer inputs the information into the payroll system. The fiscal officer maintains all personnel files, including W-4's & payroll deduction forms. All LSO office staff members are full-time, salaried employees. In addition, the LSO office has at least four temporary staff during the legislative session. Temporary staff members are paid hourly wages.

Payroll is done monthly. After the payroll cutoff date, the fiscal officer enters the hours worked by hourly employees into the payroll system & approves payroll for the period for all salary & hourly employees. The payroll system is run by the

State Auditor's Office which issues the checks or electronic fund transfers (EFT's). The director reviews payroll monthly. In addition, the fiscal officer maintains a spreadsheet in excel to track salaries and compares the "cost analysis report" from the state payroll system to the payroll spreadsheet.

If an employee is voluntarily or involuntarily terminated, the fiscal officer changes the status of the employee for the final month to hourly (if not already) to ensure the final payout is accurate. Following termination, the status is changed in the payroll system to terminate. All termination paperwork is kept in the employee's file. The fiscal officer files the appropriate paperwork with Employees Group Insurance and the WY Retirement System notifying them of the employee's termination.

All pay raises for LSO staff are determined by the Management Council. The Council generally meets in December to discuss salaries. At this time the director and assistant directors submit salary recommendations to the Council within ranges previously approved by the Council. Once adjustments are approved the final action (raise amount or percentage) is given to the fiscal officer, who updates the payroll system as appropriate. Raises are generally effective beginning January 1 of the new year.

Legislators

The salary for legislators is set by state statute & is currently \$150.00 per day. In addition to salary, legislators receive per diem & mileage. Per diem is set by statute & is currently \$109.00 per day & mileage is reimbursed at the non-taxable federal rate set each January. Legislators receive a quarterly Constituent Service Allowance (CSA) of \$750.00 per quarter. CSA payments are run through the payroll system.

During the session legislators receive \$150.00 salary and \$109.00 per diem each day beginning the first day the session convenes until the session adjourns. In addition, legislators living outside Cheyenne receive \$109.00 per diem if they travel the day before and/or after session plus 1 round trip mileage reimbursement. They have the option to sign up for weekly round trip mileage reimbursement if they travel home during the session.

During each month the legislature is not in session, the speaker of the house and president of the senate are paid full statutory salary for 6 days, floor leaders & committee chairmen are paid for 4 days, & all other legislators are paid for 2 days.

During the interim, Legislators receive \$150.00 salary for each day of meetings plus \$109.00 per diem & round trip mileage if applicable. Management Council policy provides options for reduced salary and per diem for local or short meetings.

Legislators are compensated ½ salary (\$75.00) for preparation days for interim committee meetings that the member attends. JAC pre-session budget hearings are excluded.

Legislators are compensated ½ salary (\$75.00) for each day of travel to engage in an interim committee activity or meeting that the member is an entitled to receive salary for attending. Salary for travel is not paid on a day the legislator receives a salary for attending the committee meeting.

LSO staff provides legislators with a “Legislator Reimbursement Request Form” which notes what event they attend, travel dates & date(s) of the meeting they attended. The completed forms are given to the chairman who approves the expenditures and then are given to the fiscal officer who computes the salary, per diem & mileage. For per diem reimbursed for a day that is not a “legislative day” under federal tax law, 25% of the meal portion is taxed (currently \$9.75).

Taxable items, i.e., salary, taxable per diem & CSA are processed through the payroll system. Non taxable items, i.e., non taxable per diem and mileage are processed on a voucher through the WOLFS system.

The fiscal officer provides legislators with an individual “Payroll Voucher Information” sheet with their payroll check/payroll advice, which tracks what the legislator is being paid for.

Session Staff

LSO pays session staff for each day when the House & Senate are in session. In addition, session staff may arrive prior to the beginning of session to prepare and/or remain after session is adjourned to wrap up. Occasionally session staff attend training, which is also paid. Session staff members are paid a daily rate, which is broken down into an hourly rate.

If session staff members participate in pre-session training, he/she fills out a daily time card until session starts. Each time card is approved by the administrative assistant or chief clerk via signature. When session starts, attendance & hours worked are noted on the payroll attendance form with the hours per session day per session staff member. In the house, the administrative assistant marks if the session staff employee was in attendance, whereas the senate administrative assistant keeps track of the actual time spent by each session staff member. The time sheet is approved by the administrative assistant & given to the fiscal officer for processing into the payroll system. Student interns serving as pages are treated the same as session staff.