

# Frequently Asked Questions about Legislative Analysts

## What do Legislative Analysts do?

- We provide professional nonpartisan staffing for legislative committees, designated subcommittees and study commissions. Analysts from OPLA staff all joint standing committees except the Taxation and Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committees, which are staffed by analysts from OFPR.
- We are here for everyone. We are part of the Legislative Council's nonpartisan staff and we are hired specifically to work with and for all legislators in a nonpartisan fashion in accordance with strict Legislative Council policies.
- We work confidentially with individual committee members and other legislators in accordance with strict Legislative Council policies.
- We do just about everything you can imagine professional, nonpartisan committee staff doing. We:
  - Provide nonpartisan policy and legal analysis of legislation and issues before the committee, identifying and providing information on public policies and legal issues that may appear in legislative proposals;
  - Draft committee papers, including committee amendments (unanimous reports, majority reports, minority reports – we draft them all), committee bills, reports and other correspondence;
  - Assist committees in understanding what legislative proposals (bills, resolves, amendments) propose to do and how they fit into current law;
  - Collect information requested by the committee, or individual legislators, related to legislative proposals and related issues; and
  - Assist committee chairs in facilitating the committee process and organizing (scheduling) committee work to keep things moving forward in as logical and efficient a fashion as possible.

## What are some examples of things Legislative Analysts do that I might not realize they do?

- We work with interested parties to identify where there are agreements or disagreements on items within legislative proposals and report this information back to the committee (this can save time for the committee when it wants to find out if there are items on which all sides might agree). The committee makes the decisions, of course, not interested parties or committee staff.
- We summarize policy options and questions in an organized fashion so that the committee can work through a complex subject in an efficient and productive fashion.
- We conduct research during the interim between sessions on issues of importance to the committee at the request of the committee, with the approval of the Legislative Council.

## Is there anything I shouldn't ask a Legislative Analyst to do?

- If in doubt about what we can do for you, ask us. We are here to help in any way we possibly can. Again, your conversations with us are confidential. If it turns out that you need something that we really cannot provide (for example, partisan policy advice), we can suggest other people or other resources that may be helpful to you.
- Remember we are nonpartisan staff. This means that we cannot and do not act in any manner, inside or outside the legislative context, that is or could appear to be partisan.

### When do Legislative Analysts do their work?

- Legislative Analysts are year-around employees:
  - During the session, our primary responsibility is staffing the committees: when the committee or any subcommittee is meeting, we are with them (except for confirmation hearings).
  - During the interim, we staff legislative study commissions and any interim meetings of the committees. We also complete a number of other interim projects, such as summarizing all the bills and amendments considered in the prior session.
- During session, the Legislature needs to accomplish a lot of work within a limited time and our work often extends beyond regular office hours.

### Where do Legislative Analysts do their work?

- Analysts are in the room (or virtual meeting platform) with committee members during committee meetings (including public hearings, work sessions, briefings and other meetings, except for confirmation hearings, which we do not staff).
- When not in committee meetings (note: analysts may staff more than one committee), we are typically working in our offices. Call or email – we are here for you.
- You can find information about the offices and contact information for individual staff at
  - OPLA: <http://legislature.maine.gov/opla/>
  - OFPR: <http://legislature.maine.gov/ofpr/>
- Office Locations and Phone Numbers

OPLA	Cross Office Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 215 (farthest offices on South side of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor)	(207)287-1670
OFPR	State House, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 226 (adjacent to AFA Committee Room)	(207)287-1635