

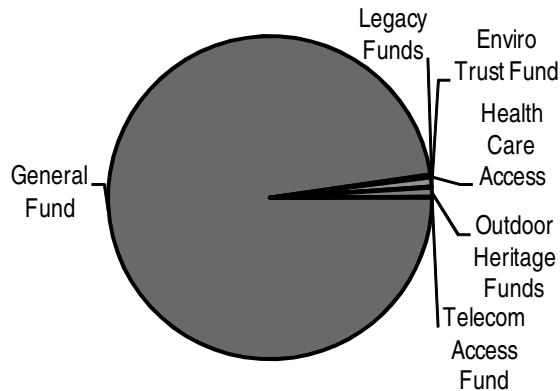
Agency Purpose

The legislature is one of the three principal branches of state government (the others are the executive and judicial branches), created by the constitution of the state of Minnesota. The legislative branch is responsible for the enactment and revision of state laws, establishing a state budget and tax policy, electing regents of the University of Minnesota, overseeing the work of state government, as well as proposing amendments to the state constitution. The Minnesota Legislature consists of two bodies: the House of Representatives and the Senate. In addition, the House and the Senate have jointly created Joint Offices that serve specific purposes described more fully below.

At a Glance

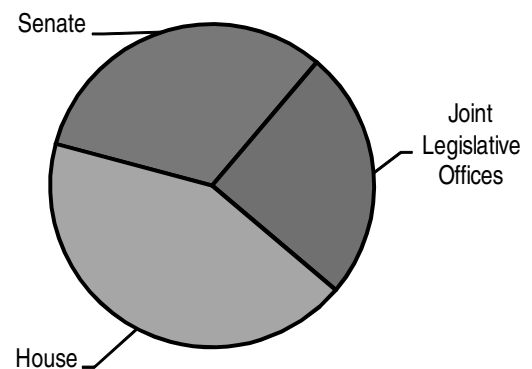
- 67 senators and 134 representatives compose the Minnesota Legislature.
- Senators serve four-year terms, and representatives serve two-year terms.
- The constitution provides that the legislature may meet for up to 120 days during a two-year period.
- (A legislative day is counted when a quorum of either the house or senate is present to conduct business as a body.)
- For the 2009-2010 biennial legislative session and the 2010 special session, 3,866 bills were introduced in the House, and 3,432 bills were introduced in the Senate. Of those, 400 bills were presented to the governor for signing.

Legislature FY 2010-11 Biennial Budget Appropriations by Fund



Source: MN State Laws

Legislature FY 2010-11 Biennial Budget Appropriations



Source: MN State Laws

Operations

The House and Senate employ separate staff to serve the separate bodies and maintain the structural checks and balances of the bicameral system.

House of Representatives

House of Representatives staff works in one of several non-partisan departments or in one of the caucus departments.

The **DFL Caucus** and the **GOP Caucus** departments each provide legislative services to their respective members. Services provided include legislative management, member administrative support, committee administration and support services, constituent and communication/media services, and caucus research services.

The **Chief Clerk's Office** provides assistance and advice to the speaker and members of the House of Representatives in meeting the legal and parliamentary requirements of the lawmaking process and to record the history of that process in a clear, unbiased, and accurate manner. The chief clerk, first and second assistant clerks, index clerk, and chaplain are elected officers of the house. The Chief Clerk's Office is responsible for all computer technology functions in the House, such as managing a secure local area network, managing numerous application programs and coordinating computer support to all house staff.

The **House Research Department** provides research and legal services to the house and its members and committees. The work of House Research focuses on legislative decision-making: helping house members and committees develop and evaluate government policies and laws. The House Research is a department of the House of Representatives as a whole, rather than a committee or caucus. House Research provides nonpartisan, confidential services to all members of the house without regard to partisan affiliation or legislative position. The department strives to be politically neutral and impartial on the issues. Its staff does not advocate, endorse, promote, or oppose legislation or legislative decision.

The **Fiscal Analysis Department** provides professional, nonpartisan, and confidential services for all members of the House of Representatives, and provides assistance to the house finance and tax committees on state budgetary and fiscal legislation. Department staff analyze spending requests, aid committees in developing and analyzing budgetary options, draft legislation to implement budget decisions, track legislative decisions, and provide analysis for legislative oversight of enacted budgets. Fiscal analysts respond to requests from individual members needing analyses or information on state budgetary issues or government finances. The Fiscal Analysis Department researches, prepares, and distributes publications providing information on state budget issues and government finances.

The **House Public Information Services Department** is a contact point to help the public connect with the Legislature. The mission of the department is to provide credible and timely nonpartisan services that inform the general public of legislative actions, educate the public about the legislative process and encourage public participation in the Minnesota Legislature. The department produces and distributes Session Weekly newsmagazine, Session Daily, committee schedules, committee rosters, member and staff lists, legislative directories and various publications that explain the state, its governmental structure and lawmaking process. It provides photography services for members, staff and the public, and distributes audio CD copies of all House meetings and DVD copies of all House television coverage. The department creates and distributes unedited, gavel-to-gavel television coverage of all House floor sessions, select committee hearings, press conferences, and informational and educational programming. Beginning with the start of each legislative session, programming is broadcast, in conjunction with the Senate, weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the Minnesota Channel, which is carried by the six public television stations around the state. Live webcasting and video archives of all House television programming is available on the Internet.

The **House Budget & Accounting Department and Human Resources Department** performs the financial and human resources functions for the house. Financial functions include accounting, budgeting, staff and member payroll, accounts payable, and expense reimbursements. Human resource functions include compensation and benefit administration, personnel policy development and communication and house staffing management.

The **Sergeant-At-Arms Office** provides temporary support staff (pages), parking, facility management, telephone system management, supply and equipment purchases, security, post office, duplication and printing, and educational program services for members, staff, and the public. The speaker appoints the chief sergeant. The assistant sergeants, postmaster, and assistant postmaster are elected by house members to serve with the chief sergeant as officers of the house. Pages serve as support staff for all house and conference committee hearings and aid all departments in accomplishing their duties.

Senate

In addition to the functions listed under agency purpose, the senate also has the responsibility to advise and consent to governor's appointments.

Joint Legislative Offices

As provided by M.S. Chapter 3 the legislature has established a number of joint legislative offices and commissions.

Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC)

The **LCC** coordinates certain activities of the Senate and House of Representatives and serves as an umbrella organization for joint legislative agencies and commissions. It determines the employee benefits for all legislative staff and health benefits for legislators. The LCC reviews budget requests and establishes staffing levels for all legislative commissions and joint agencies under its jurisdiction. The LCC also sets the compensation for all employees under its jurisdiction.

The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House alternately serve as chair on an annual basis. The LCC provides staff support for the Compensation Council, the University of Minnesota Regent Candidate Advisory Council, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees Candidate Advisory Council, the Joint House-Senate Subcommittee on Claims, the Electronic Real Estate Recording Commission and a number of other commissions, task forces and working groups. The LCC coordinates the provision of sign language interpreters at legislative hearings and meetings and serves as the first point of contact in scheduling meetings and arranging itineraries for visiting international and state delegations seeking to discuss policy issues and learn more about Minnesota's legislative process. The office maintains a web site that shows Minnesotans how Legacy Amendment and Environmental Trust Fund dollars are spent.

Within the LCC, the Geographic Information Services Office supports the Legislature during the re-districting process, develops and maintains spatial databases and produces legislative district maps, reports, and web applications. Also within the LCC, the Office on the Economic Status of Women studies and reports on all matters relating to the economic status of women in Minnesota. In total, the LCC maintains 9.5 full-time equivalent positions.

The **Legislative Reference Library (LRL)**, collects, indexes, publishes, and makes available public policy information, both online and in the Library. The LRL works closely with legislators and legislative staff to provide information services that support the legislative process. Executive agencies and the public are also served. Library staff track and acquire all reports mandated by the Legislature. In addition, state law requires that copies of the publications of Minnesota state government agencies, boards, and commissions, and a copy of all state-funded consultants' reports must be deposited with the library. Rules of the House and Senate assign the director a custodial role of the floor and committee hearing recordings, and the accompanying minutes and logs. LRL staff is nonpartisan and all information requests are confidential. The LRL currently employs 13.5 full-time equivalent positions.

The **Revisor of Statutes** is a nonpartisan, professional joint legislative office providing drafting, editing, publication, and computer services to the legislature, executive departments, and to the governor and other constitutional officers. Drafting services are provided on a confidential basis and consist primarily of bills and administrative rules. The office also prepares amendments, including House floor amendments, committee reports, engrossments, side-by-side bill comparisons, and conference committee reports. Under the direction of the House and Senate, the office enrolls bills and presents them to the Governor. Publications produced by the office include: Laws of Minnesota, Minnesota Statutes, Minnesota Rules, and other miscellaneous publications of legislative and public interest. The computer system designed and maintained by the Revisor's office is used by House, Senate, LCC and Revisor's staff to draft, edit, and publish legislative materials, including electronic publication on the Minnesota Legislature's website. The office has been under the jurisdiction of the LCC since 1973, and currently employs 47.25 full-time equivalent positions.

The mission of the Office of the **Legislative Auditor** and **Legislative Audit Commission** is to strengthen accountability in state government. The office completes 30 to 35 financial audit reports and six to eight program evaluation reports each year with a staff of 62. The office is nonpartisan, and its chief goal is to produce audit and evaluation reports that are accurate and objective. The legislative auditor, who is appointed for a six-year term by the Legislative Audit Commission, directs the office. The bipartisan commission consists of 12 legislators (six representatives and six senators).

The **Mississippi River Parkway Commission** of Minnesota (MN-MRPC) was established in 1963. It is part of the 10-state National Mississippi River Parkway Commission which works collectively to preserve, promote, and enhance the scenic, historic, and recreational resources of the Mississippi River and to develop the national, scenic, and historic parkway known as the Great River Road. In Minnesota, the Great River Road runs 575 miles through the heart of the state, adjacent to the Mississippi River, beginning at the river's headwaters at Lake Itasca through Minnesota's north woods, lake country, Twin Cities, and into bluff country along the Minnesota-Wisconsin border before entering Iowa. For its historic, cultural, recreational and scenic qualities, the Federal Highway Administration selected the Minnesota Great River Road to be designated as a National Scenic Byway in 2000 – a distinguished honor bestowed upon the most treasured routes in America. The MN-MRPC consists of 15 members: two from the House; two from the Senate; five regional citizen members; one each from the state departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Tourism, Transportation and the Historical Society; and one member voted in by the other 14. The MN-MRPC has one staff member that manages its administration and marketing with the LCC providing fiscal service support.

The **Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy** studies and evaluates the actual and projected expenditures by state government, the actual and projected sources of revenue that support these expenditures, and the various options available to meet the state's future fiscal needs. In addition to projected state revenue, expenditures, and tax expenditures, other subjects include economic and fiscal policy, mix of revenue sources for programs, investigation of state building needs, and other related matters. Staff is provided by the House, Senate, and the LCC.

The **Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement** was established in 1955 to study and investigate on an ongoing basis the various public retirement systems applicable to nonfederal government employees in the state and to make recommendations to establish and maintain sound public employee pension legislation. The commission currently employs 3.5 full-time equivalent positions.

The **Great Lakes Commission** promotes the orderly, integrated, and comprehensive development, use, and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes Basin, which consists of eight Great Lakes states, Canada, and all water interconnections between them. There is currently no staff funded for the Commission. The LCC provides fiscal service support.

The **LCC Subcommittee on Employee Relations** assists the Legislature by reviewing and providing interim approval of negotiated agreements and arbitrated awards between the state and its employees. The Commission also reviews and approves the Commissioner's and Managerial Compensation Plans, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Personnel Plan for Administrators, and the Office of Higher Education Unclassified Compensation Plan. In addition, the Subcommittee reviews and provides interim approval of the governor's salary proposal for agency heads. Other duties include the monitoring of the state civil service system, conducting research as directed, and performing other functions as delegated by the legislature. Staff is provided by the LCC

The **Legislative Energy Commission** evaluates the energy policies of this state and the degree to which they promote an environmentally and economically sustainable energy future. It consists of ten members of the Senate and ten members of the House of Representatives. Staff is provided by the House, Senate, and the LCC.

The **Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)** advises the legislature on the allocations for certain dedicated funding sources (primarily the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund) for projects "for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources" – Minnesota Constitution Sec. 14 as amended 11-3-1998. The commission consists of five representatives, five senators and seven citizen members (five appointed by the governor and one each by the House and Senate). The governing statute is M.S. Chapter 116P. Funding for LCCMR administration is provided by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund through a direct appropriation. For the 2012-2013 biennium, the LCCMR recommendations will be introduced as separate legislation for consideration by the 2011 Legislature. The 2012-2013 recommendations are posted to: <http://www.lccmr.leg.mn> and total \$50.6 million. LCCMR is currently staffed by five full-time equivalent positions.

The **Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)** advises the legislature on appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, a fund constitutionally dedicated to be spent “only to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife” – Minnesota Constitution Art. XI, Sec. 15. M.S. Chapter 97A.056 governs the council. Membership consists of two senators, two representatives, and eight citizen members. The governor appoints four citizen members and the House and the Senate each appoint two. LSOHC administrative expenses are paid out of the Outdoor Heritage Fund and are statutorily limited to no more than one-percent of the appropriations from the fund. LSOHC employs three full-time equivalent positions.

Budget

The state legislature receives its funding as direct appropriations from the General Fund or other funds as noted.

Contact

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