2013 LEGISLATIVE STAFF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

The NCSL Legislative Staff Sections and Networks annually present Legislative Staff Achievement Awards to recognize staff excellence in supporting the work of a state legislature and strengthening the legislative institution. Each staff section and network may make two awards, and each decides the criteria for its awards. The staff co-chairs of the NCSL Standing Committees also may name two award recipients. Examples of accomplishments recognized by the Legislative Staff Achievement Awards include, but are not limited to:

- Helping to improve the effectiveness of the legislative institution.
- Supporting the legislative process and the mission of the legislature.
- Exhibiting a high degree of professionalism, competence and integrity in serving the legislature and the public.
- Contributing to the work of the National Conference of State Legislatures.
- Demonstrating expertise in a particular field.
- Contributing to existing knowledge.
2013 RECIPIENTS

American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries (ASLCS)
Terry Spieler, Secretary of the Senate, Missouri Senate
Judy Barrows, Senior Systems Support Coordinator, Office of the Clerk of the House, Maine House of Representatives

Leadership Staff Section (LSS)
Aurora Hauke, Chief of Staff, Office of the House Minority Leader, Alaska House of Representatives
Janeen Halverson, Minority Assistant, Utah Senate

Legal Services Staff Section (LSSS)
J. Patrick Ford, Senior Manager, Office of Policy Analysis, Department of Legislative Services, Maryland General Assembly
Richard Merkel, Judiciary Division Chief, Legislative Service Commission, Ohio General Assembly

Legislative Education Staff Network (LESN)
Paula Dominguez, Director of Legislative Research, House Senior Education Policy Advisor, Rhode Island General Assembly

Legislative Health Staff Network (LHSN)
Michael Hely, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service, New Mexico Legislature

Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section (LINCS)
Bladen Finch, Senate Page Program Director, Virginia Senate

Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section (LRL)
Mary Camp, Director, Legislative Reference Library, Texas Legislature

National Association of Legislative Fiscal Offices (NALFO)
Amanda Bickel, Chief Legislative Analyst, and Steve Allen, Senior Legislative Analyst, Joint Budget Committee, Colorado General Assembly
David Rosen, Legislative Budget and Finance Officer, Office of Legislative Services, New Jersey Legislature

National Association of Legislative Information Technology (NALIT)
Gary Schaefer, Information Systems Coordinator, Louisiana Senate Legislative Technology Services Bureau, Software Development Team, Wisconsin Legislature

National Legislative Program Evaluation Society (NLPES)
Marion Higa, State Auditor, Hawaii Office of the Auditor (Retired), NLPES Outstanding Achievement Award
Colorado Office of the State Auditor, 2013 NLPES Excellence in Evaluation Award
Texas Sunset Advisory Commission, 2012 NLPES Excellence in Evaluation Award
**National Legislative Services and Security Association (NLSSA)**
Sam Smith, Senate Security, Alabama Senate
Martin Brock, Lieutenant, North Carolina General Assembly

**Research and Committee Staff Section (RACSS)**
Mark Mitchell, Committee Staff Administrator, Legislative Research Commission, Kentucky General Assembly

**NCSL Standing Committees**
Marion Higa, State Auditor, Hawaii Office of the Auditor (Retired)
Holly Lyons, Fiscal Services Division Director, Legislative Services Agency, Iowa General Assembly
The American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries recognizes Terry Spieler for her outstanding contributions to the Missouri Senate and her distinguished service to ASLCS and NCSL. Terry was elected secretary of the Missouri Senate in 1982 and is currently the second-longest-serving clerk or secretary in the country. She has served in every leadership role available to principal ASLCS members, including president, president-elect, secretary-treasurer, executive committee member and ASLCS committee chair. As president of ASLCS in 2011 and 2012, Terry brought wisdom, fortitude and extensive knowledge of the society’s history to the position.

Terry is greatly respected by members of the Missouri Senate, her staff and her legislative colleagues across the country. Because of her many years of experience and strong leadership skills, Terry is able to help her members and provide expertise about the legislative process and the Senate’s traditions and history. She has demonstrated her commitment to the institution by working in many capacities, including helping implement new chamber technology. She deeply appreciates the legislative process, respects her colleagues and always gives her very best in every situation.
The American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries recognizes Judy Barrows for her outstanding contributions to the Maine House of Representatives and her distinguished service to ASLCS and NCSL. Judy started her service in the Maine House of Representatives in 1992, serving as House calendar clerk. In 2004, she became the House’s senior systems support coordinator as well as the webmaster. Judy’s dedication to the institution is demonstrated by her work in 2007 as lead coordinator on a project to develop a “paperless” system in the House, the largest technological effort in the history of the chamber. Thanks to Judy’s expertise, the rollout was seamless, a feat widely acclaimed by House members.

Judy’s service to ASLCS is unmatched. She’s been an enthusiastic and valuable member of many ASLCS standing committees, chairing both the Support Staff and Program Development committees and serving as vice-chair for the Technology & Innovation, Membership & Communication, and Bylaws & Standing Orders committees. Judy also devoted her time and talents to the ASLCS Executive Committee as an appointed associate member.

Judy exemplifies the term “quiet efficiency”—not in the sense of blending into the woodwork, but, on the contrary, functioning at peak performance. Those who have the pleasure of working with Judy see this attribute in action. She can always be counted on to get the job done, make sure the end product is the absolute best, and deflect praise for her accomplishments. She has gained the respect of members of both parties of the Maine House of Representatives, as well as her fellow staff and colleagues within the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries.
The Leadership Staff Section recognizes Aurora Hauke with the Legislative Staff Achievement Award for her contributions to the Alaska House of Representatives and to the LSS. Aurora has been active in the LSS since 2007, when she attended the professional development seminar in Anchorage. She has attended every seminar since then and has boosted participation by recruiting other caucus staff members to accompany her. She became an LSS Executive Committee member in 2010 and is now second vice chair. She has served on several committees, chaired the Bylaws Committee for two consecutive years, participated on panels and led a fundraising effort. She also has been involved with NCSL by attending the Legislative Summit and the Leadership Staff Management Institute in 2011.

Partly through her LSS involvement and partly because of her innate desire to help others succeed, Aurora has improved the House minority caucus in many ways. Aurora uses her connection with LSS to build opportunities for herself and those around her. She has taken ideas, principles and resources from LSS and NCSL meetings and shared them with Alaska legislators and staff. For example, she helped develop an intensive and interactive training program for staffers that is thorough, timely and responsive to the needs of the caucus. Aurora conscientiously works to protect the integrity of the legislative institution, sharing her respect for it with legislators and staff alike.
Leadership Staff Section (LSS)

Janeen Halverson, Minority Assistant, Utah Senate

The Leadership Staff Section recognizes Janeen Halverson with the Legislative Staff Achievement Award for her contributions to the Utah Senate and to LSS. Janeen began working for the Utah Legislature in 1999. She is an asset to the Utah Senate minority leadership, constantly demonstrating the qualities of outstanding legislative staff—loyalty to her leaders, a broad understanding of the legislative process, excellent communication skills and a devotion to the institution of the legislature. She is willing to go the extra mile, and she does it graciously with a smile.

Janeen has been active in the Leadership Staff Section for a number of years and is always a part of efforts to improve and expand the section, whether it involves serving on a committee, fundraising, being a panelist or spearheading the effort to produce the LSS newsletter. She has served on numerous LSS committees, on the executive committee, as an officer, and ultimately as chair in 2009 and 2010. She has frequently attended NCSL annual meetings and LSS professional development seminars. Janeen’s high degree of professionalism and integrity is evident in her work for LSS and the Utah Legislature.
The Legal Services Staff Section recognizes J. Patrick Ford for supporting the work of the Maryland General Assembly and fostering the integrity and strength of the legislative process. As senior manager of the legislative function, Pat oversees, reviews, or has a hands-on role in fashioning all bills and amendments. A consummate legal analyst, Pat is known for his integrity, broad knowledge of law and judicious attention to detail in all facets of drafting. During the 2013 legislative session, Pat and his team of drafters produced 16,287 pages of legislative resolutions and bills, 891 committee amendments and 2,537 individual amendments. Since his start with the Maryland General Assembly as an attorney-analyst in 1986, Pat has been a dedicated member of the Office of Policy Analysis.
Richard Merkel, Judiciary Division Chief, Legislative Service Commission, Ohio General Assembly

The Legal Services Staff Section recognizes Rich Merkel for his dedicated service to the Ohio Legislature and his active participation in LSSS and NCSL. Rich began his service with the Ohio Legislative Service Commission in 1974, drafting bills, conducting legal research, and staffing the House Judiciary Committee, the House Children and Youth Committee, and the House Ethics Committee. As staff for the House Ethics Committee, he drafted advisory opinions for, and investigated ethics complaints against, members and staff of the Ohio House of Representatives. Since 1991, he has supervised the attorneys who staff the judiciary-related committees of the Ohio Legislature.

Rich has been active with the Legal Services Staff Section and NCSL for many years. He sat on the NCSL Executive Committee from 2006 to 2008 and served on the Bylaws Committee of the Legal Services Staff Section in 2006. That year, he also chaired the Outreach Committee. During his tenure with the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee (LSCC) from 2002 to 2004, he urged the leadership of each staff section to interact and share information with one another to make LSCC a stronger voice within NCSL. He was the vice chair of the Legal Services Staff Section in 2002 and 2003, and chair in 2003 and 2004. In 2008, Rich organized the LSSS professional development seminar in Columbus, Ohio.
The Legislative Education Staff Network (LESN) recognizes Paula Dominguez for her outstanding contributions to the Rhode Island General Assembly and her distinguished service to LESN and NCSL. Paula serves as the senior education policy advisor for the Rhode Island House of Representatives and is the director of the General Assembly’s Legislative Research Office. Paula worked extensively on the new education funding formula. Her insights and efforts enabled Rhode Island to develop, draft and ultimately implement the formula being used to fund every public school district in Rhode Island.

Paula has been active in LESN for many years. She served on the LESN Steering Committee as an NCSL appointee from 2008 to 2011. In this capacity, Paula helped develop a fundraising roadmap, wrote several grant proposals and contacted a number of research-based organizations. She also has participated in countless LESN initiatives, including coordinating, facilitating and presenting at a number of LESN sessions during meetings of the Education Commission of the States and the NCSL. Paula continues with great skill and professionalism to provide invaluable guidance to the network in maintaining a sustainable strategic planning process focused on obtaining grant funding to support leadership and professional development activities for LESN members.
The Legislative Health Staff Network recognizes Michael Hely for his outstanding contributions to the New Mexico Legislature and his distinguished service to LHSN and NCSL. Since 2007, Michael has served as a staff attorney for the New Mexico Legislative Council Service, focusing in the areas of health and human services-related legislation. He is lead staff for the interim Legislative Health and Human Services Committee and also supports the Disabilities Concerns Subcommittee and the Behavioral Health Subcommittee. Much of his focus in the past several years has been on advising legislators, policymakers and the public on New Mexico's response to federal and state health care reform legislation.

Michael has served as staff co-chair of NCSL’s Health Committee and is a member of the LHSN Steering Committee.
The Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section recognizes Bladen Finch for his outstanding contributions to the Virginia Senate and his distinguished service to LINCS and NCSL. Bladen, who joined the Senate Clerk's Office in 2008, directs the Senate Page Program for the Virginia General Assembly, an opportunity for 13- and 14-year-old Virginians to engage in the legislative process and one of only a few programs like it in the nation. Bladen also provides information and communications services and coordinates school group visits to the Capitol.

In addition to his work with the Senate, Bladen is chair of NCSL’s Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section. He is the recipient of the Legislative Staff Achievement Award in recognition of leadership and distinguished accomplishments in a professional capacity.
The Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section recognizes Mary Camp for her outstanding contributions to the Texas Legislature and her distinguished service to LRL and NCSL. Mary has set a standard of leadership and service to the Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section, to her colleagues in the Texas Legislature, and to legislative staff throughout the nation. With over three decades of work for the State of Texas, Mary is truly the person to know when it comes to questions about the Texas legislative process. In 2006, Mary was named director of the Legislative Reference Library because of her organizational and leadership abilities; she had previously served as assistant director and administrative services manager. The chief clerk of the House describes Mary as "the unsung hero of the Texas legislative process"; the Senate parliamentarian says Mary’s "visionary work in developing research tools" has made Texas residents a part of the legislative process, rather than observers of the process; and the Senate calendar clerk simply sums up Mary’s help and guidance as "invaluable."

Mary’s extensive contributions to librarianship and the legislative community were recognized in 2009 with her election as secretary of the Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section. A steady and wise presence, in 2011 Mary was named chair of LRL, where she ably performed her new duties and set high standards. Even after stepping down as chair, she served LRL as immediate past chair and as co-chair of the LRL Bylaws Revision Committee.

At NCSL, Mary also has led by example, moderating webinars and NCSL Legislative Summit presentations. She served on the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee and on the Host State Committee of the Legislative Summit in 2011. She has repeatedly demonstrated an ability to bring together different viewpoints and personalities and mesh them into a unanimous vision.
The National Association of Legislative Fiscal Offices recognizes Amanda Bickel and Steve Allen for their outstanding contributions to the Colorado General Assembly and their distinguished service to NALFO and NCSL. Amanda is a chief legislative analyst who has worked for the Joint Budget Committee since 1997. She has developed an expertise in the area of human and social services, including mental health services, services for persons with developmental disabilities, child welfare programs and youth corrections programs. She also has served as the budget analyst for economic development programs, local government grant programs and the governor’s office, and she recently assumed responsibility for the higher education and capital construction budgets.

Steve is a senior legislative analyst who has worked for the Joint Budget Committee since 2003. He has had responsibility for a number of program areas, including public health, the Department of Regulatory Agencies, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the Attorney General's Office, the State Treasurer's Office and the Secretary of State's Office. Steve recently assumed responsibility for the adult and youth corrections budgets.
National Association of Legislative Fiscal Offices (NALFO)

David Rosen, Legislative Budget and Finance Officer, Office of Legislative Services, New Jersey Legislature

The National Association of Legislative Fiscal Offices recognizes David Rosen for his outstanding contributions to the New Jersey Legislature and his distinguished service to NALFO and NCSL. David is the legislative budget and finance officer and directs the Revenue, Finance and Appropriations Section of the New Jersey Office of Legislative Services, the nonpartisan staff of the New Jersey Legislature. In that capacity he oversees the analyses of the governor's proposed budgets and the preparation of the annual appropriations act, the staffing of the budget and appropriations committees, the fiscal analysis of pending legislation, the drafting of tax legislation and the formulation of annual state revenue projections. During his 27 years with the New Jersey Legislature, David has served as the principal aide to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and the General Assembly Education Committee.
The National Association of Legislative Information Technology recognizes Gary Schaefer, information systems coordinator for the Louisiana Senate, for his active and ardent support of NALIT and NCSL and for his efforts and activities to enhance and advance the work of state legislatures nationwide. In his position at the Louisiana Senate, Gary helps innovate and support the Senate’s technology, processes and systems.

Gary is serving his second term as a director on the NALIT Executive Committee. Previously, he served as NALIT secretary, vice chair and chair. He has been a member of numerous NALIT committees and has addressed, moderated and helped coordinate sessions for NALIT meetings. In 2008, Gary also coordinated and hosted a tour and briefings for NALIT at the Louisiana State Capitol.

Beyond his official roles in NALIT, Gary is always among the first to share his ideas about legislative technology and the role of legislative staff in support of their institutions. He is very often the first to volunteer his services or introduce a special guest. He is always encouraging and welcoming to new NALIT members. There are countless other examples of things Gary has done in support of NCSL, NALIT and his colleagues in legislative technology offices around the country. Gary always exhibits a high degree of professionalism and competence as a representative of the Louisiana Senate’s staff, and his spirit of public service never wanes.
The National Association of Legislative Information Technology recognizes the Wisconsin Legislative Technology Service Bureau’s (LTSB) Software Development Team for creating a successful bill drafting and legislative database system. Completing the work in-house saved the Legislature millions of dollars and resulted in user-friendly systems designed for efficiency and accuracy.

The system serves the Legislature with efficient processing of legislative proposals and information input and output, as well as all document publication. The system went live in September 2012, when the drafting agency first converted to the new system for bill drafting for the 2013-14 legislative session. The Senate and Assembly clerk’s applications went live at the beginning of the January 2013 session. LTSB Director Jeff Ylvisaker and team members Doug DeMuth, Tony Snelling, Dan Fitch, John Pellett, Brett Betchey, Carlos Conti, Jerry Federspiel, Arun Subramanian, Amanda Duesterbeck and Lucas Chasteen continue to enhance the system to meet the needs of its legislative users.

The LTSB also hosted members of NALIT attending the NCSL “Super PDS” in Madison in October 2012, helping plan sessions and providing tours and in-depth briefings for attendees at the LTSB offices.
The National Legislative Program Evaluation Society presents the 2013 NLPES Outstanding Achievement Award to Marion Higa for her contributions and service to the field of legislative program evaluation, NLPES and NCSL. Marion has been called one of Hawaii’s most trusted officials. She worked in the Hawaii Office of the Auditor for 41 years, starting as an assistant analyst and becoming a deputy auditor. In 1992, Marion was appointed Hawaii state auditor, a position she held until her retirement in December 2012. Marion used her auditing expertise and leadership skills not only to lead her own office, but also to help create county auditor offices in three of Hawaii’s five counties.

Marion was an active member of NLPES, serving on the NLPES Executive Committee and as its secretary. Marion also was active in NCSL, serving on its Executive Committee and in leadership roles of its Assembly on State Issues and Standing Committees.
The National Legislative Program Evaluation Society presents the 2013 NLPES Excellence in Evaluation Award to the Colorado Office of the State Auditor (OSA). From 2009 to 2012, the OSA completed 59 performance audits, consistently demonstrating the value of a thorough, credible and impartial assessment of the operation of state programs for legislators, agencies and the public. All Coloradans benefit from the audits, which promote transparency and accountability in state government; improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of operations and service delivery; identify cost savings and other financial benefits; and produce legislative change. The OSA and its staff advance the profession of legislative program evaluation and performance auditing through active involvement and leadership in professional associations such as NCSL and NLPES and the broader accountability community.
Recipient of the 2012 NLPES Excellence in Evaluation Award was the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission for its significant contributions to the field of legislative program evaluation from 2008 to 2011. Sunset Advisory Commission reports provided valuable information to the Legislature, improved agency operations and identified millions of dollars in cost savings. Its body of work encompassed a variety of topics, from transportation to juvenile justice agencies. Sunset commission staff developed an innovative reporting methodology to help the commission and the public follow the decision-making process on agencies under review. Beyond the legislative arena, the staff gave outreach presentations to a variety of audiences, including delegations from 17 countries.

The Texas Sunset Advisory Commission continues to contribute to the field of legislative evaluation by developing innovative evaluation tools, serving on numerous NLPES and NCSL panels and committees, and sharing program-evaluation knowledge with lawmakers and staff in other states.
The National Legislative Services and Security Association recognizes Sam Smith for his outstanding contributions to the Alabama Senate and his distinguished service to NLSSA and NCSL. Sam has served as a security officer for the Alabama Senate since 2001. He is certified by the Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission.

Sam has been a member of the National Legislative Services and Security Association since 2002. He served as Region 4 vice chair in 2006 and 2007, and as chair in 2007 and 2008. Sam has been an elected NLSSA trustee since 2009.
The National Legislative Services and Security Association recognizes Martin Brock for his outstanding contributions to the North Carolina General Assembly and his distinguished service to NLSSA and NCSL. Martin has worked with the North Carolina General Assembly’s Police Department for 16 years and currently holds the rank of lieutenant. The position is the police chief’s designee during the chief’s absence. Martin directly supervises the shift sergeants, oversees daily operations and supervises special events.

Martin is an active member in the National Legislative Services and Security Association where he serves as the Region 4 chair. He has presented in the association’s professional development seminars and regional meetings.
Research and Committee Staff Section (RACSS)

Mark Mitchell, Committee Staff Administrator, Legislative Research Commission, Kentucky General Assembly

The Research and Committee Staff Section recognizes Mark Mitchell for his outstanding contributions to the Kentucky General Assembly and his distinguished service to RACSS and NCSL. Mark has been with the Kentucky Legislative Services Office for over 23 years, currently serving as the committee staff administrator for the Local Government Committee. In his time with the Kentucky General Assembly, he has worked extensively in the area of local government. His colleagues praise Mark as an outstanding legislative staffer, as an expert in his field with a keen political sense and most importantly, as a supportive colleague.

Mark has been a member and officer of the Research and Committee Staff Section for many years, leading with a calm, deliberative style, insuring that all ideas are considered and the best policies are followed for colleagues across the country. Mark is a consensus-builder but is willing to make a decision when one is needed. He also has always had a progressive vision for RACSS, encouraging members to consider not only the immediate problems, but how the organization should move into the future.

This year, Mark will complete eight years on the RACSS Executive Committee as a member, vice chair, chair and past chair. During his long years of service, Mark has been an active contributor to RACSS, often volunteering to take on projects and leading the section for an extra year. He has been instrumental in planning RACSS programs, seminars and webinars, and has frequently served as both moderator and speaker for RACSS sessions. Mark’s remarkable service to RACSS and NCSL is defined by his exceptional professionalism, competence, integrity and selflessness. He is a true gentleman and a valued friend.
The NCSL Standing Committees recognize Marion Higa for her outstanding contributions to the Hawaii Legislature and her distinguished service to NCSL. Marion has been called one of Hawaii’s most trusted officials. She worked in the Hawaii Office of the Auditor for 41 years. She started as an assistant analyst and then became a deputy auditor. In 1992, Marion was appointed as Hawaii’s third state auditor, a position she held until her retirement in December 2012. Marion used her auditing expertise and leadership skills not only to lead her own office, but also to help create county auditor offices in three of Hawaii’s five counties.

Marion was actively involved in NCSL, serving on its Executive Committee and in leadership roles of its Assembly on State Issues and Standing Committees.
The NCSL Standing Committees recognize Holly Lyons for her outstanding contributions to the Iowa General Assembly and her distinguished service to NCSL. Holly joined the legislative staff in 1984 and has held various fiscal positions for more than 29 years in the Legislative Services Agency and its predecessor agency, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the non-partisan fiscal agency of the Iowa General Assembly. Following the merger of various central legislative staff agencies in 2002, she was named division director of the Fiscal Services Division. Holly has been the legislative branch’s representative to the Iowa Revenue Estimating Conference since 2008.

Holly has been active in NCSL since 1986. She has served on the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee, was the 2009-2010 president of the National Association of Legislative Fiscal Offices, and was a member of the NCSL Executive Committee from 2010 to 2013.