



National Conference of State Legislatures

**Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee
2009-2010
Final Report**

By

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As NCSL Staff Chair, my primary goal this year was to expand and enhance opportunities and services for legislative staff by providing programs and tools designed to be educational, useful, and long lasting.

Thanks to the imagination, dedication and hard work of the LSCC subcommittees, we were able to achieve that goal.

Following is a summary of the LSCC highlights for 2009-2010. For a more detailed description of each subcommittee's activities, please read each subcommittee's final report.

E-learning and NCSLU

2009-2010 was the year of E-learning.

In 2008-2009, the NCSL Foundation awarded NCSL \$35,000 to be used for e-learning purposes. The Programs and Strategic Planning Subcommittee of NCSL's Executive Committee implemented guidelines for using the funds, making funding for e-learning programs available to NCSL's staff sections and standing committees.

Staff sections and the LSCC made good use of the available funds and provided quality online programming and policy information to their members via webinars or other electronic media. For example, between November 2009 to April 2010, eight webinars were produced, with approximately 1706 staffers from around the country participating.

The e-learning highlight of the year took place on April 15, 2010, when Stan Stenerson presented "Drafting for the Legislative Audience". Over 900 staffers from 47 states participated in the webinar, which was co-sponsored by the LSCC, all NCSL staff sections, as well as the Legislative Education Staff Network.

E-learning benefits for legislative staff include (1) free training and ongoing professional development; (2) no travel costs to the state; (3) in some cases, continuing professional education credits (again at no cost to the state or individual); and (4) ongoing expansions of the wealth of NCSL resources and expertise.

The program proved so successful that the NCSL Foundation awarded NCSL another \$35,000 e-learning grant for 2010-2011.

The subcommittee also worked with NCSL staff to develop NCSL University, an e-learning portal for legislators and staff. "NCSLU" is now a feature on the NCSL home page.

Promote Legislative Service as a Career

The campaign to promote legislative service as a career is well on its way. The project resulted from a 2008-2009 legislative staff survey conducted by NCSL at the request of the Legislative Institutions Subcommittee. Survey results indicated that a large number of legislative staff, particularly nonpartisan staff, was nearing retirement.

Believing that strong legislative staffs make strong legislatures, staff recognized a need to replace retiring veterans with energized and educated legislative staffers. The campaign to promote legislative service as a career is aimed at college students and highlights the variety of professional opportunities available to them by working for their state legislatures.

With the help of NCSL staff and other legislative staffers throughout the country, the subcommittee developed a series of video presentations featuring many of the career opportunities working for a state legislature provide. The presentations are centered on an “anchor video”, which celebrates the passage and signing of a “Jobs Creation” bill. The anchor video highlights the contributions legislative staff makes throughout the legislative process, from researching the idea to drafting the bill to preparing a fiscal analysis to making the capitol building a safe place for legislators and the public during session. From the anchor video, more detailed video presentations will be developed featuring the various professions and other opportunities that are available in the legislature.

The goal is to post the presentations on the NCSL website and various social networking sites, such as Face book and You Tube, as well as market the presentations to career placement offices of colleges and universities throughout the country.

The subcommittee completed the anchor video and four other videos highlighting specific career opportunities; another three videos are in various stages of production.

The anchor video is ready to be featured on the NCSL website. In 2010-2011, the remaining videos can be completed and the marketing campaign can begin.

Continue core staff programs and services

The primary responsibility of the Professional Development and Outreach Subcommittee was to oversee, organize, produce, and market professional development opportunities for legislative staff.

To that end, the subcommittee was charged with organizing and overseeing many of the core programs and services NCSL offers to legislative staff each year.

Among its many duties and responsibilities, the subcommittee:

- (1) Coordinated the scheduling and planning of the Legislative Staff University sessions offered at the annual summit. This year the featured speakers were Massachusetts Representative Jay Kaufman, who spoke on leadership in challenging times, and Anna Post, from the Emily Post Institute, who offered advice on how to make your point successfully;
- (2) Organized the orientation for first-time attendees at the Legislative Summit;
- (3) Presented information regarding the 2010 Legislative Staff Management Institute (LSMI), including proposed outreach and recruitment efforts and the proposed budget;
- (4) Updated the “NCSL and You” brochure. Because of budget constraints, the “new and improved” brochure is available only online. The updated brochure includes hot links and embedded short videos;
- (5) Continued the promotion and development of the Statehouse Ambassador Program;
- (6) Tackled programming and outreach efforts to personal, district, and partisan staff;
- (7) Undertook several projects to increase legislative staff participation in Standing Committees, including updating lists of staff appointed to standing committees, updating the list of staff appointing authorities, updating a “cheat sheet” concerning committee policies and procedures and a “motions table” as a quick reference on parliamentary procedure; and
- (8) Continued the development of the Project Citizen Pilot Project.

Separation of Powers

The Separation of Powers portal has been updated and expanded into a repository of documents and research material for various issues related to separation of powers, including appropriation power, executive veto power, legislative-judicial relations, and legislative immunity.

Separation of powers is an issue that many legislative staffers confront and wrestle with as they draft legislation and shepherd various proposals through the legislative process. The material included in this portal will be a useful resource.

Advertising the “new and improved” Separation of Powers portal is needed to ensure that staff is aware of this great source of information.

Additionally, I hope the LSCC continues to build repositories of information on a variety of topics and issues that legislative staff confronts on a regular basis. Possible topics include: **continuity of government and personnel management issues, such as telecommuting or managing across generations.**

Hub Locations for Future Professional Development Seminars

Staff section officers, with help from the Marketing and Professional Development Subcommittee, worked to identify possible hub locations for 2011 and 2012 professional development seminars. The group believed that sharing meeting facilities at hub locations would help insure the success of each participating staff section's professional development seminar. Possible hub locations identified for 2011 were Baltimore, MD; Denver, CO; New Orleans, LA; and Portland, OR. 2012 locations selected were Austin, TX; Atlanta, GA; and Madison, WI;

Conclusion

As you can see from the summary and the subcommittee reports, 2009-2010 was an action-packed year. Together, we produced programs, provided tools and resources, and reached out to legislative staff throughout the country, demonstrating that NCSL is indeed the premier professional development organization for legislative staff.

We did great work. Strong legislative staffs make strong legislatures. As members of NCSL's Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee, we did our part to insure the continued quality and professionalism of legislative staffs throughout the country.