

Montana Legislative Reference Center



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Montana Legislative Reference Center staff help legislators, legislative staff, state agencies, and the general public access resources on topics of concern to the Montana Legislature. We locate objective, timely information, answer quick reference questions, and research background information.

To assist clients, library staff use indexes, library catalogs, references in articles, publisher's catalogs, etc., and procure identified resources. Once materials arrive, we enter them into our tracking systems so that clients are aware of available resources and items can be found when needed.

In a typical month during the interim, the Center handles over 100 questions from state agencies and the public and over 100 questions from staff and legislators. During session, we handle over 300 questions per month from November through March, with a high of over 500 in January. We also check in and route materials to staff and legislators, procure items through interlibrary loan, and purchase, catalog, and index materials.

The Legislative Librarian, Sonia Gavin, is responsible for library administration and planning, oversight of research and reference operations, including assessing questions for appropriate avenues of response, and purchasing decisions for the collection. The Library Technician, Pam Weitz, is responsible for general library maintenance -- making sure the electronic databases are up-to-date, obtaining materials through interlibrary loans and orders, and keeping the collection in a highly functional state. She also provides reference services and compiles lists of indexed articles and recent library acquisitions.

If you have questions about how to locate information for legislative research, call 444-3064 and ask for the Reference Center or call us directly at 444-3598. We'll happily help determine the best resource for your needs.

Please call, e-mail, or stop by and see us with any questions --we're in Room 10 of the Capitol building.

Sonia Gavin, Legislative Librarian
Pam Weitz, Library Technician

SERVICES

Since 1976 librarians in the Reference Center have assisted Montana's legislators and legislative staff by answering reference and research questions, obtaining and circulating materials such as research reports and state and federal legislation, and providing interlibrary loan services. Resources collected focus on issues of current concern to the Montana Legislature.

CLIENTELE

In addition to serving the Legislative Branch, we help other state agencies and the general public with questions about Montana's legislative process. The public is welcome to use our collection for legislative research. Historical material such as former legislator information is housed at the Montana Historical Society Library (444-2681).

REFERENCE CENTER HOLDINGS

Books. Over 5,000 titles cover the broad range of issues studied by the Legislature and include publications from other states' legislatures, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and the Council of State Governments (CSG). Legal materials such as the West's Uniform Laws and legislative interim committee publications are also available.

Periodicals. More than 100 periodical subscriptions provide up-to-date information on economics, criminal justice, economic development, education finance, environmental policy, federal-state relations, health care, human services, state and local government, tax policy, and utilities.

Subject File. We have an extensive subject file of newspaper clippings and reports of current and historical interest. Search our online clippings index for articles dating back to 1995.

Legislative Materials. The Center's collection includes the Montana Code Annotated (1895-), House and Senate Journals (1879-), Session Laws (1889-), papers of the 1972 Constitutional Convention; Montana legislative rule books (1925-), and Lawmakers of Montana "Copper Books" (1957-).

Staff Memos and Interim Reports. Memos written by Legislative Services Division (LSD) staff and selected memos from the Legislative Environmental Policy Office (LEPO) and Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD) comprise an archive of past research. We also have LSD Interim Committee Reports back to the 1950s.

Online Catalogs. Online databases include our book catalog, and periodical, newspaper, and memo indexes. We have access to LEXIS for searching legal information, as well as Capital Universe, HeinOnline, and NCSL 50 States Database. We also subscribe to a number of specialized online databases.