

The Role of Legislative Staff

To communicate effectively with legislators, it is important to be knowledgeable about the staff that supports legislators, as your advocacy efforts will most likely go through staff to reach the legislator. In doing so, your concerns will more successfully be heard.

Chief of Staff: This individual is typically responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the legislator's office and often acts as the legislative director of the office if there is not a separate legislative director. This is often the case among state legislators.

Legislative Director: This individual is generally responsible for monitoring and managing many of the legislative activities of the legislator's office, including the legislator's committee-related activities, the drafting and co-sponsorship of legislation, and the supervision of any legislative assistants.

Legislative Assistants: These individuals (or individual) are responsible for tracking pending legislation and keeping the legislator well informed of constituent interest and opinion. Each legislative assistant is typically assigned a specific set of issues to follow such as health care, agriculture, etc.

Communications Director/Press Secretary: This individual acts in many ways as a spokesperson for the legislator and is usually responsible for promoting the legislator's positions and views to the media, the legislator's constituency, and the general public. In addition, he or she may also assist the legislator with drafts of public communication, such as press releases.

Scheduler: The legislator's scheduler is responsible for allocating a legislator's time among the many demands that arise from legislative responsibilities, staff requirements, and constituents' requests. Scheduling travel to and from the legislator's district, as well as meetings with constituents or other groups is also the duty of this position.

Support/Clerical Staff: Titles in offices vary and include such as variety as Executive Assistant, Executive Secretary, Systems Administrator, Office Manager, and Receptionist.