**Committee Staffing and Contracts**

**Committee Staffing**

**Using Existing Staff Resources.** Under the terms of S.C.R. 11, joint committees must use, to the greatest extent possible, existing staff and administrative resources of committee members, standing committees, officers of the senate and house, and legislative service agencies. Use of such staff has no impact on the committee budget as long as the staff remain on the same legislative office payroll. Employers of such staff may wish to formalize an agreement on the nature, terms, and conditions of such support.

The following legislative agencies and offices may be valuable resources for the committee:

* + - * [Texas Legislative Council Research Division](http://www.tlc.texas.gov/research). The research division can provide research support, drafting of policy resolutions, assistance in writing the committee’s report, preparation of statistical data and analysis, and preparation of maps for analysis or presentation. Requests for assistance from the research division should be made to the research division director.
      * [Texas Legislative Council Legal Division](http://www.tlc.texas.gov/legal). The legal division can provide drafting of proposed legislation, legal research, and limited legal counsel. Inquiries about legal staff assistance should be directed to the legal division director.
      * [Legislative Reference Library](http://www.lrl.texas.gov/). The Legislative Reference Library houses copies of legislation and reports, books, periodicals, and newspaper clippings relating to state government issues. The collection includes material from other states and is valuable as a source of background information relevant to a committee’s assigned study topic. Library staff are available to assist with research and locating appropriate materials.
      * [Senate Research Center](http://www.senate.texas.gov/src.php). The Senate Research Center can provide research support and assistance in writing the committee’s report.
      * Senate Engrossing and Enrolling. Senate Engrossing and Enrolling can provide legal research and drafting of proposed legislation for the committee.
      * [Legislative Budget Board](http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/). The Legislative Budget Board sometimes assists committees whose assignments relate to state finance. The board’s primary responsibility is to prepare the general appropriations bill that is introduced each regular session. The board also conducts performance reviews of state agencies and institutions.
      * [Sunset Advisory Commission](https://www.sunset.texas.gov/). The Sunset Advisory Commission reports and staff are useful sources of information about state government organization and individual agencies. Each interim, the commission evaluates a number of state agencies scheduled for automatic termination unless renewed by law in the next legislative session.
      * [State Auditor’s Office](https://www.sao.texas.gov/). The State Auditor’s Office performs financial, compliance, efficiency, and effectiveness audits of state agencies and institutions. It may also conduct special audits or investigations of specific alleged problems. The auditor’s personnel classification division assists in developing position listings and salary schedules used in the general appropriations bill.
      * [House Research Organization](http://www.hro.house.texas.gov/). The House Research Organization publishes research reports examining state issues and analyzing proposed legislation.

**Budgeted Staff**

A committee budget may include salaried or contract staff. Salaried staff included in the committee budget are placed on the Texas Legislative Council payroll and paid from council funds reserved for the committee.

**Considerations for Staff on Council Payroll.** If a joint committee wishes to propose staff placement on or transfer to the council payroll for the duration of a study, such prospective council employees should be aware of applicable council employment policies.

*Restrictions on Political Activities.* The council, as a nonpartisan service agency, prohibits employees from:

* + - * taking an active part in political campaigns
      * taking part in political funds management

*Restrictions on Vacation, Sick, and Compensatory Leave.* Other restrictions relate to employee benefits:

* + - * Vacation and Sick Leave. Council employees accrue vacation and sick leave but may forfeit leave if they transfer to certain senate or house payrolls on expiration of the committee. Accumulated vacation and sick leave can be transferred if an employee separates from employment and is reemployed within 30 calendar days by a state agency to a position that accrues leave. If a 30-day break occurs, a transferring or terminating employee may be paid a lump sum for unused vacation leave if the employee has six months’ continuous state employment and if sufficient funds remain in the committee’s budget for that purpose.
      * Compensatory Leave. Accumulated compensatory time cannot be transferred or reimbursed monetarily.

*Time Sheet Requirement.* A committee employee paid by the council must fill out a council Monthly Time Report each month, have it signed by the committee’s designee for expenditure approval, and forward it to the council’s human resources department.

*Advance Approval for Travel on Committee Business.* A committee employee paid by the council must always obtain advance approval for travel. See the Travel portion of the Administrative Support section for more information. Questions relating to council employment should be addressed to the council’s human resources department.

**Procedure for Placing Staff on Council Payroll.** Hiring or placement of committee staff on the council’s payroll requires completion of a council Personnel Action Form, or PAF. The completed PAF, signed by the committee’s designee for expenditure approval, must be submitted to the human resources department for processing. All joint committee PAFs are subject to approval by the Texas Legislative Council executive director.

When an employee joins the council, the human resources department will provide a new employee orientation explaining the documents needed for adding the employee to the council’s payroll.

**Procedure for Removing Staff from Council Payroll.** When the committee budget expires, the council executive director will execute PAFs removing from the council payroll any committee staff for whom PAFs have not previously been initiated by the co-chairs’ designee. If the co-chairs wish to continue to employ such staff, they have until the next state payroll deadline (around the 20th of the month) to obtain approval for a new budget or to execute paperwork transferring the staff to a senate or house payroll.

**Contract Staff, Consultants, and Expert Witnesses**

Paperwork relating to contract staff, consultants, and expert witnesses will be prepared by the council’s legal division and accounting office in conjunction with the committee and will be forwarded to the committee designee for signature. All joint committee consulting contracts are subject to approval by the Texas Legislative Council executive director.

Consulting contracts with engineers, accountants, architects, physicians, and other specified professionals are governed by the Professional Services Procurement Act ([Subchapter A, Chapter 2254, Government Code](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/GV/htm/GV.2254.htm#00)), which provides for the award of contracts without competitive bidding on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications and for a fair and reasonable price.