

Alaska State Legislature

Legislative Affairs Agency

Office of the Executive Director


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MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson, Chair
Legislative Council

FROM: Jessica Geary 
Executive Director

DATE: April 14, 2023

SUBJECT: Legislative Affairs Agency Report 2020-2022

As discussed for inclusion in the meeting packet, I am happy to provide the Agency Report detailing projects, initiatives, and other activities accomplished by LAA staff from 2020-2022, as well as some particulars of session work. As a reminder, this report was distributed via email in October 2022; I appreciate the opportunity to distribute again to the Legislative Council of the 33rd Legislature.

On behalf of LAA, I want to share how proud we are to serve the Legislature. The services we provide support the important policy work legislators and their staff do on behalf of Alaskans across our state. One of our guiding principles is to protect and preserve the legislative institution, a separate and coequal branch of state government, and we are always looking for efficiencies and process improvements to ensure public funds are well spent in this endeavor. To that end, a biannual Agency report shall be provided at the end of each Legislature.

I am happy to provide additional detail about any item(s) in the report or about Agency operations in general. Thank you.

Legislative Affairs Agency 2020-2022 Agency Report

The Legislative Affairs Agency executes Legislative Council policy and carries out other statutory and rule assignments made by the Legislature. The Agency is headed by an Executive Director who serves at the pleasure of the council and is responsible for the hiring and direction of the activities of the Agency staff according to the law and directives consistent with law and rule. The Executive Director serves as the coordinating authority for the two functional divisions of the Agency: Administrative Services and Legal and Research Services.

The Division of Administrative Services provides management assistance to the Executive Director, administrative support to the Legislature and all ten Agency divisions, and has the responsibility for accounting, payroll and personnel, maintenance and security of the Capitol Complex, supply, procurement, information technology, printing, document distribution and the statewide legislative information and teleconference network. There are twenty-three Legislative Information Offices (LIOs) across the state.

Legal Services provides bill drafting and legal research/advice for legislators, as well as contract review, session law production, and statute revision. The Legislative Reference Library is open to the public as well as legislative personnel and contains most legislative committee records. Legislative Research provides research and information services to Alaska legislators. Research is non-partisan and accessible to all members of both houses. It is a source of independent and objective information, research, and analysis.

Below is a summary of work done in support of the Legislature since 2020:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director and staff prepared and coordinated information for the annual independent audit of the Legislature which occurred in October/November 2021. The FY21 audit was clean with no exceptions.

Preparation and presentation of the FY23 Legislative Council Operating Budget began as soon as the audit was finished and was passed out of Legislative Council to the Finance Committees in February 2022.

As required by statute, the Executive Director serves as the executive officer for Legislative Council. There was a change of Chair with the Thirty-Second Legislature. Council held eight meetings in 2020, twelve in 2021, and ten to-date in 2022. The Executive Director's Office is the office of record for Council minutes and staff serve as recorder, attending all Council meetings along with the Director. In addition to standard committee business, many meetings dealt with COVID-19 mitigation policies and the acquisition of the Assembly Building—the newest addition to the Capitol Complex.

With the convening of a new Legislature, the Executive Director and her staff oversaw and coordinated remote and in-person new legislator and staff orientation/training, including a multi-day legislator-only immersive training.

The Executive Director's Office tracks, edits, and produces legislative citations for all sixty offices. Staff edited, tracked, and produced 210 individual citations in 2020 (409 reserved), 385 in 2021 (521 reserved), and 392 in 2022 (512 reserved).

This interim, the Executive Director's Office undertook a massive scanning project to complete our transition to electronic filing.

Other statutorily required and general administrative duties included assignment of parking for both session and interim; creation and maintenance of web-based session housing list; editing, execution and administration of contracts that include professional services, legal services, and consultant contracts; issue and track Capitol press passes for regular and special sessions; maintain threat reports received by legislators and staff and submitted to the Alaska State Troopers, etc.

Over the past two years, we have been especially grateful to Agency staff whose hard work and dedication helped sessions, special sessions, and adjournments go smoothly given the extraordinary conditions during the pandemic. We are proud of our people and our work.

ACCOUNTING

Mindy Kissner, who has worked in finance for the past twenty years was hired as the Finance Manager in 2019. She brings a fresh look into processes and policies surrounding accounting functions, both of which have greatly benefited the Legislature. She has implemented many processes and procedures all designed to increase effectiveness and efficiency and strengthen internal controls. She oversees all aspects of Accounting while supporting the Executive Director.

Except for the Legislative Audit Division, the Accounting Section is responsible for processing all accounts payable and accounts receivable functions for the Legislature. This includes, but is not limited to: all payments for legislator and legislative staff travel and relocation; staff lodging stipend payments, office allowance accounts for all sixty legislators; Session Per Diem for legislators; by statute, the annual Salary and Business Expense Report must be audited and released by January 31; utility payments; leases; accountable property; credit card processing and acceptance; audit requirements; maintaining internal controls; reporting; interagency payments/receipts with other State entities; W-2 tax reporting for legislators; 1099 tax reporting for vendors; press inquiries; etc.

Despite the multiple special sessions and going through a pandemic, the Accounting office has taken on the following new projects aimed at improving efficiencies and process:

Electronic Filing

In 2020, the Accounting office lead the Agency in going paperless by developing a digital filing system. This began out of necessity due to working from home because of COVID and turned into a well-run system. The Accounting office created a system which included a key for filing, a process for workflow, and an electronic stamp. We worked with IT to create the electronic stamp and electronic inbox. We facilitated training for Agency staff on how to use the new electronic stamp, new electronic inbox, and proper documentation for documents. We continue to perform audits on the filing system to ensure accuracy and efficiently and records maintenance.

Redistricting Board

In 2020, the Accounting office took on the responsibility for policy development/review and all accounting and travel related to the Redistricting Board. This created a substantial amount of extra work for the Accounting team. It involved booking and reimbursing over one hundred additional trips, as well as countless meetings to establish guidelines and policies. The Accounting team provided training, weekly reports, monitored and paid invoices, reconciled P-card charges, and communicated with and set up new vendors.

Accounting Instructional Videos

In 2022, the Accounting team began a new project to create short videos (three-five minutes) designed for legislators and staff to watch at their leisure to gain knowledge on policies and procedures for all accounting related items. The goal is to provide a resource for legislators and staff to quickly and easily gain important information.

Updated Forms

In 2022, the Accounting team began a project using DocuSign to explore ways to streamline the flow of reimbursements through the allowance account. Because the Accounting office spends a great deal of time helping staff complete the Allowance Account Direct Vendor/Reimbursement form, we decided to create a system that allowed for clearer direction and workflow so that both the Accounting and legislative staff time was utilized more effectively.

Historically there have been multiple travel claim forms for travel that is funded through various sources. The Accounting office recognized that staff and legislators were having difficulty correctly completing the right form. This caused the Accounting team to take a closer look at the form and ultimately redesign it condensing it down to just one form and eliminating the unnecessary information that often caused confusion.

Relocation Impacts

Relocation efforts have been increasingly challenging due to the Alaska Marine Highway's inconsistency in scheduling and vessel load options. This creates more work for the Accounting staff when sailings need to be adjusted. In addition, traveling across the Canadian border during

COVID required countless meetings, creation of new forms, and informational emails to legislators and staff to ensure travel across the border was as easy and as safe as possible.

In 2021 the State of Alaska ended its long-standing rental car contract with Budget. The Accounting office worked to outline the new policies and procedures under the State of Alaska's National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO) contract in a way that was both easy and effective for legislators. The Accounting office created portals for Enterprise/National and Hertz on the Intranet so legislators could continue to book through the Agency with ease.

State Accounting System (IRIS) Upgrade

In the Fall of 2021 and into 2022, the State of Alaska implemented an upgrade to the State's accounting system. This upgrade included a completely new look to the accounting system as well as new processes and procedures. For four months we were required to participate in testing and training which took several hours a day. In February 2022 the new system was launched, and we were required to document and submit all errors we encountered, which were many. This took an enormous amount of time. The new system was clunky and did not work well in the beginning causing otherwise routine transactions to take two or three times longer to complete.

New Credit Card Processing

In 2020, the State of Alaska moved from using Elevation merchant services to Clover. The impact to the Accounting team was we were tasked with attending all the merchant services meetings for the Legislature and to learn the new requirements for implementation and processes. The Accounting team conducted training on how to use the new system and terminals.

Lodging Stipend Payments

In late 2019, Legislative Council approved paying staff who qualified for relocation a lodging stipend. This required Accounting to review and help create new policies, frequently asked questions, forms, and workflow to accomplish this. Initially the Personnel office issued all payments. In 2021, the Accounting office took over making all payments so there could be more flexibility when a staff member could be paid. This added approximately 150 transactions to our workload weekly.

Lounge

The Accounting team, in conjunction with Media Services, created an online point of sale system for the Lounge. We trained Lounge staff on new procedures regarding tracking of receipts and proper documentation for accounting backup, and provide continuous training and support to Lounge staff on use of new credit card terminals.

Wellness Center

The Accounting office identified a need for a better method for tracking Wellness Center memberships. We created a reference manual for Maintenance that outlined step by step how to sign someone up for membership, which included getting a signed waiver on file, accepting payment, and properly logging that payment. We worked with Media Services to create a new

Wellness Center tracking database that allowed members to sign the waiver electronically, and Accounting and Maintenance staff to record payment within the database. This saved time for LAA staff and eased the process for new members.

Desk Manuals and Sharing of Duties

In 2021, the Accounting team created desk manuals to ensure seamless transition when people go on leave. We created a team system where each team member was paired with another and tasked with learning each other's job duties. The objective was that when a person was on leave their teammate would pick up their workload so work continued and a team member could leave without feeling guilty and not come back to a pile of work. This benefited not just the Accounting team, but legislators and staff as they continued to get service regardless of who was in the office. The Accounting team has continued to update these as needed.

Annual Training

The Accounting staff has always conducted annual training in person. With COVID, we implemented an online option as well as an in-person option. This allowed for more staff to attend training from any location and or watch later if needed.

Property Management of the Anchorage Legislative Office Building

In 2022, the Legislative Affairs Agency ended its long-time property management contract with Colliers. Colliers had historically paid all invoices relating to the Anchorage Legislative Office Building. This task now falls to the Accounting office adding approximately fifty new invoices to pay each month. The building is now managed by an LAA employee. The Accounting team provided and continues to provide training to that employee on how to file, stamp and code all invoices. The Accounting office continues to serve as a resource for tracking documents, setting up new vendors, and answering questions or concerns.

New Legislative Travel and Business Expense Report Database

The Accounting office worked with IT to create a new Legislative Travel and Business Expense report database. This involved several meetings with IT to determine the look, flow, and function. The goal was to create a more user-friendly database while maintaining the visually appealing report look. We started testing the new database in January 2022 and plan to continue the testing phase throughout the year. We have identified and worked through several issues in the few months of testing.

Job Description Update

In 2021, the Agency worked with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) to complete a compensation study. This required the Accounting team to update their job descriptions, which had not been done in over ten years. This required a thorough review and rewrite of old descriptions.

Ongoing Training and Staff Development

The Accounting office implemented an internal ongoing training and development process that allows for training in areas of weakness to be identified and implemented. Examples include training on the State accounting reporting system (ALDER), Excel, and internal controls, etc.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY (IT) SERVICES

During the 2020-2022 timeframe, IT completed the following:

1. Helpdesk Requests
 - 5,478 email requests processed
2. Video Conferencing
 - Established desktop, conference room, committee room, and floor session video conferencing
3. Chamber and Committee Voting Systems
 - Developed new software/hardware to support remote voting for chambers and committees when required
 - Updated existing voting and data systems
4. Cyber Security
 - Advanced threat protection, artificial intelligence cyber-surveillance, automated threat detection, intrusion detection, response and ransomware prevention/mitigation
 - Enhanced email security
 - Network Access Control to restrict secure access to legislative networks
5. Disaster Recovery/Continuity of Operations
 - Implemented virtual servers and data storage to systems to support legislative business during major disruptive events
6. Legislative Application Replacements, Upgrades and Reprogramming
 - AKLEG “APP” – developed/programmed replacement AKLEG Smart-App (existing APP no longer supported)
 - Bill Action/Statute Update (BASU) modernized programming language
 - Hearing Scheduling (BILS800s) modernized programming language
 - Committee Aide Dashboard Upgrades – allows committee aides to directly enter committee information once. Chief Clerk and Senate Secretary staff review, approve and post to BASU and BASIS without having to reenter information
 - Legal Services Intake/Request system (ALDEX) – Legal staff can now import legislative bill drafting information submitted by legislators and staff directly into the legal system, eliminating a data reentry
 - Accounting Access Database (LBERS) re-written into modernized database
7. Network Enhancements
 - High speed network upgrades, servers, and inter/intranet connections
 - Retired outdated unsupported deferred maintenance server and network equipment

- Environmental Monitoring System for computer equipment and data rooms in the Capitol Complex and Anchorage Legislative Office Building
8. Cloud Storage Systems
 - Work-from-anywhere data storage and access
 9. Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) Power System Upgrades
 - Upgraded and replaced UPS systems/batteries in Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks and LIOs across the state
 10. Capitol Complex/ALOB Security Camera Improvements
 11. Docusign
 - Implemented electronic document/signature workflow system
 12. Hardware Refresh
 - Implemented the annual hardware phased refresh for computers, laptops, printers, and monitors
 - Replaced outdated LIO office computer equipment and printers
 13. Capitol emergency notification system
 - Automated/push-button notification system for chambers and locations throughout the Capitol
 14. Capitol Complex CATV/Cable Replacement
 - Deployed replacement satellite/Gavel TV system (GCI no longer provides traditional cable services)

LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Services receives work requests throughout the interim from legislators, staff, and LAA. Indeed, we received our first prefile requests before the Second Regular Session had even concluded. Therefore, our attorneys draft legislation, provide legal opinions, and conduct legal research during the interim. Of course, this means our professional support staff stay busy too. Last session, the office accumulated over 4,700 hours of overtime, so the interim is also used as a time to recharge.

The revisors, editors, and production staff enrolled 105 pieces of passed legislation after adjournment. Patricia (Trish) Boone and Rissa Teske have also spent several months receiving signed bills from the governor, figuring their effective dates, printing slip laws, and sending out status reports. As of September 15, 2022, all bills have been transmitted to the governor and either signed or returned. A Summary of Legislation will be produced, distributed, and available to view on BASIS in the coming months. The revisors are also working on instructions to the publisher for integrating the 2022 session laws into the Alaska Statutes. While there is still a lot of work to do with the publisher, Hilary Martin, our Revisor of Statutes, is hopeful that we will have new statute books by January 2023.

This interim, Megan Wallace and Emily Nauman have been asked to advise on several litigation matters involving legislators, and they continue to work alongside interim committees and outside counsel on other pending legal matters. Emily, Terry Bannister, and Susie Lemons have

also been occupied assisting in contract review. Several positions were added to our office during last session's budget cycle, so we are also busy recruiting. Attorney positions have been particularly challenging to fill this year, so we will be dedicating the Fall to exploring creative new ways to attract top talent to our office.

After being in session almost all of calendar year 2021, Legal Services has used this interim to work on annual and special projects and more time intensive "interim drafting." The interim allows our office longer periods of uninterrupted time to work on projects requiring large amounts of research and focus. Currently, our editing team is working on annual reports for the Summary of Legislation, revising the Drafting Manual, and ensuring internal manuals and instructions accurately reflect the processes that changed in our transition to electronic bill drafting and peer review. Alex Foote, Noah Klein, Claire Radford, and Linda Bruce are reviewing current year court cases and attorney general opinions for preparation of the Oversight Report. Once the review is complete, Rissa will edit, format, and finalize the report. The Oversight Report will be completed later this Fall and available to view on BASIS (it will also be delivered to the Chief Clerk and Senate Secretary). Trish is working on an overhaul of our work order intake process through an automated Legal Services Request Form, which we hope to roll out before next session.

In addition to our interim work and projects, several attorneys will be travelling to Anchorage this fall to attend the annual Alaska Bar Association Convention. Megan and Emily attended the Council of State Governments (CSG) West Legislative Service Agency/Research Directors (LSA/RD) Annual Meeting at the end of September, and, in October, several attorneys will attend the NCSL Staff Hub in Atlanta, Georgia.

Our librarians in the LAA Reference Library, Jennifer Fletcher (Jen) and Olga LijoSerans, have been busy preparing committee bill files to be archived. They have been answering numerous legislative information requests and assisting with legislative history research, in addition to completing routine library tasks. Jen and Olga are also working on an ongoing project to digitize committee bill files in their final form so that those files will be available on BASIS. They are grateful to have more time to dedicate to the project this interim after several years of shortened interims. Jen and Olga also spend the interim training others (including the public) on how to conduct their own research.

At Legal Services, the most rewarding part of our work is collaborating with one another and collectively celebrating joyful life events. This year, we've seen several staff get married, buy houses, and grow families. There is another office baby on the way. The interim also allows staff the flexibility to travel and spend time with family. We have several staff members spending quality time with ailing parents, which is also important.

As the interim comes to a close, we look forward to a restful few months before tackling prefile season and gearing up for another productive session.

INFORMATION & TELECONFERENCE

The LIO has remained steadily busy due to the significant increase in calls since 2021. Teleconference participation for committee meetings by phone has increased eighty percent since the beginning of the pandemic. Teleconference bridge operators have remained busy answering calls, while moderators staffed every committee and sub-committee meeting throughout session.

Staffing shortages throughout state government have also created many more non-Legislative calls for assistance. The LIO frequently fields requests for information related to permanent fund dividends, elections, Division of Motor Vehicles, Office of Children's Services, Medicare/Medicaid, etc. Many times, callers report that we are the first agency to answer the phone of several they have tried. LIO staff receive calls related to all branches of government: state, local, and federal. We are information generalists and help connect constituents to the proper agency/staff that can assist them. Calls related to non-Legislative matters have increased dramatically over the last three years.

Media Services performed major software and hardware upgrades to our teleconference server after session concluded. Our favorite new feature is the logging of name and affiliation for repeat callers. We can process callers more quickly when less data collection and entry is needed. Media Services also continued to work with KTOO to streamline processes for streaming committee meetings and floor sessions using our robotic cameras. We are also exploring the use of automated closed captioning with select broadcasts through YouTube.

We are also revamping how the Directory of State Officials is published. Using an online database and web portal, department staff will make future updates online. This eliminates excess data entry for LIO staff and will streamline formatting the document for publication.

MAINTENANCE

This section is responsible for maintaining the Capitol Complex Facilities.

Working with various Agency sections, the following major projects were accomplished around the Capitol Complex:

- New flooring - House Chambers;
- All new integrated fire alarm systems - Capitol Complex;
- Portico Columns refinished and sealed (2019);
- New system to deliver cable TV;
- New Capitol roof (2022);
- New windows and siding Terry Miller Legislative Office Building (TMLOB) (2020);
- Complete re-key Capitol Complex;
- Touchless Faucets Capitol Complex;
- Cornerstone monument in front of Capitol (2020);
- Chambers lock down button;

- New voting boards in House and Senate Chambers (2019); and
- Retaining wall TMLOB (2020).

The following upgrades/improvements were completed in the Capitol Complex:

- Conversion of lighting to LED (over 600 converted) project ongoing;
- Installation of hardwired air purifiers;
- Four new water filling stations;
- In floor electrical outlets Capitol Lobby;
- Replacement of antiquated wood working machinery;
- New water heater Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (laundry facilities);
- Key card system upgrade;
- Installation of snow stops on the Capitol;
- Replacement of parking signs;
- Exhaust fans have been added to the House/Senate Chambers data closets;
- Touchless soap dispensers installed Capitol Complex; and
- Touchless hand sanitizers installed Capitol Complex.

The following are current Maintenance projects not yet completed:

- New flooring and cabinets/sink bases House and Senate Page rooms kitchen areas;
- New flooring House Chambers Dias;
- New carpet - ground floor Capitol Building;
- Shadow boxes/displays for Baranof artwork; and
- Direct drive exhaust fan for Capitol Lounge.

Maintenance is tasked with various wood working projects from the fabrication and design of Legislative offices to special projects like the fabrication of display cases and custom desktops for raising desks. Individual work areas are designed for the user or are modified from what is existing to aid the current occupant. In addition to our regular builds, some notable builds in recent years were:

- Three pocket doors fabricated and installed as space saving items;
- Three split doors fabricated and installed to meet specific needs; and
- Three display cases fabricated.

Maintenance has added electrostatic sprayers to our cleaning regimen for the latest in what the custodial field has to offer for sanitation. This in addition to the purchase of two commercial grade carpet cleaning machines and updated commercial vacuums which help keep the Capitol Complex in tip top shape.

PERSONNEL

The last few years have seen massive challenges for the Personnel Office. The State of Alaska switched to a biweekly payroll on December 16, 2019. The Personnel Office has been transitioning to paperless filing and processing since July 1, 2020. There have been increasing recruitment challenges that the Legislature, and the entire state, have been facing. The

Department of Administration has processed an update to the IRIS-Human Resource Management (HRM) system that has again increased the workload for Personnel staff. The need to process special session staffing has become increasingly important over the last few years as well. On top of all of this, session 2023 will present challenges with all the new staffing as well as redistricting.

Switching from a semi-monthly payroll (twenty-four pay periods per year) to a biweekly payroll (twenty-six pay periods per year) has increased the number of payrolls for the Personnel Office each year by two. It has also decreased the turnaround time between payroll processing and made tighter deadlines to ensure employees receive timely and accurate pay. This change occurred on December 16, 2019, and is now understood by all our employees, but the changeover had many questions and challenges the Personnel Office needed to overcome.

The paperless transition was brought on suddenly with the need to process personnel and payroll actions remotely effective May 2020. It took a while to organize and create an electronic file transfer process, which at first increased the workload. We now can work the paperless process in about the same time as we did with the paper process. We are about halfway done converting all our active and inactive paper files to the electronic format. We are continuing the conversion process and expect it to be complete in the next two years.

Recruitment difficulties have been an issue for the last few years all over the state. Generally political staff are hired by legislators in the district. When needed, the Personnel office has historically had enough unsolicited resumes to satisfy the needs of legislators who want to augment their staff in Juneau. However, with recruiting difficulties, the 2020 session was the first where Personnel actively recruited for resumes for political staff positions. Personnel continued that practice of recruiting for political staff resumes during the 2021 and 2022 sessions, and we anticipate the need to recruit for resumes in the upcoming 2023 session.

On February 22, 2022, the Department of Administration went live with an update for IRIS-HRM. The update was created to make it easier for employees to access their information on the employee self-service page, but unfortunately it created several obstacles for processing payroll. These obstacles increased the number of payroll actions the Personnel Office needed to process bi-weekly payroll by several fold.

Over the last two Legislatures we have had six special sessions. Each special session is a mini transition between session funding and interim funding of political and nonpolitical staff. This includes bringing back seasonal employees from field office staff to floor staff. We also track the personal services budget for each special session for purposes of calculating the costs. The Personnel Office has successfully completed each of these transitions while maintaining the normal interim payroll.

This interim we are also gearing up for the redistricting. The payroll structure for the House and Senate are based on election districts. With redistricting all district numbers will change, which will mean a revamping of the payroll structure. This will be seen by employees starting in mid to

late December and into January. We ask for everyone's patience as we update employees to the new districts so that when session 2023 starts, payroll will be functional.

These changes over the last few years have increased Personnel's workload to the point where we have had to hire a new employee. The office has now changed from a four-employee office to a five-employee office. We are proud that with all the changes and challenges over the last few years, our office met all payroll obligations and employees never missed a paycheck.

PRINT SHOP

During the 2022 session our Print Shop experienced an increase in printing requests. Black and white printing requests totaled 2,138,000 pages compared to the previous year's 1,824,000. Color printing increased as well with 248,000 prints this year versus 225,000 last year. Overall, in FY22 we saw totals of 3,121,000 black and white and 488,000 color prints, an increase of 17% and 80% respectively.

Demand for copies at our staffed machines on the Capitol's second and fifth floors increased significantly this year too. Of the black and white prints we ran at our three locations in the Capitol, 30% were run on our second and fifth floor copiers, compared to 16% during the 2021 session.

A fair part of the services we provide during the interim, as well as the session, are printing, cutting, and folding of mailing materials for legislative offices. This year we assisted thirty-one legislative offices with 152 different mailing projects of assorted sizes. Typically mailing projects run from hundreds to thousands of pieces and vary in physical size from postcards to folded, mailable newsletters.

We continue to make good use of our booklet making machine acquired in 2020. This machine enables us to produce stapled booklets more efficiently than our old method and we see a cost savings of about 15% for each booklet we produce. Our most requested small sized booklets include our Alaska State Legislature Pocket Directory and the pocket-sized Alaska Constitution.

Of course, in addition to these projects we continue to help with printing and binding throughout the year, including but not limited to office guest books, notepads, and reports for meetings and research.

PROCUREMENT, SUPPLY, AND MAILROOM

This section of LAA oversees a large variety of duties and tasks that include but are not limited to:

- ensuring legislative procurement procedures are properly executed;
- ensuring equipment and supplies are well-maintained and inventoried;

- overseeing statewide lease procurement and management, along with procurement of supplies, equipment, professional, and construction services;
- overseeing session moves between the Capitol and district offices;
- providing maintenance and oversight of legislative vehicles;
- managing the Capitol Supply room; and
- providing Mailroom services that include: twice daily delivery throughout the Capitol Complex and State Office Building, x-ray scanning of packages to ensure recipient safety, special requests for air cargo and other delivery services, and tracking legislator postal accounts.

In addition to the regular tasks above, since session adjourned, we have been very busy with interim projects.

The Procurement office has been working with Legal to identify improvements and updates to the Legislative Procurement Procedures and has presented some of the initial changes to Legislative Council for consideration and adoption. The office stays busy throughout the year preparing and executing solicitations, service agreements, contracts, and leases for execution. With recent building acquisitions and changes in operations of the Anchorage Legislative Office Building, the number of service agreements and contracts administered by the office has increased significantly. Redistricting has ended, however, over the past two and half years, the Procurement office had been providing procurement assistance to the Redistricting Planning Committee and Redistricting Board as needed.

Supply room staff recently completed the annual inventory of the Capitol Complex and has been working with LIOs across the state to finalize their annual inventory reports. At the beginning of the 2022 session, the Legislature's Juneau warehouse collapsed which took several weeks of staff time to sort through, clean-up, and relocate salvaged items to various available storage facilities. Since the start of interim, Supply staff have been working on gathering information for items lost in the collapse for the insurance claim process. Over the last six months, Maintenance and Supply have been organizing and setting up a new storage facility to use as our storage warehouse. More recently, the Supply room staff have assisted Maintenance with furniture and equipment relocations during various office renovations and carpeting projects in the Capitol Complex. The Supply staff have also provided our partners at the Juneau-Douglas City Museum with any giftshop supplies, signage, and general information necessary for the museum's volunteers to provide Capitol tours over the summer. This summer's Capitol visitors have appeared to return to pre-pandemic numbers.

The Mailroom is still conducting business as usual by providing general mailing or shipping advice, outgoing shipping and mailing services, packaging material, and distribution of the incoming packages and mail. At the beginning of interim, the mailroom began working with our provider to update mailroom equipment to facilitate recent technologies and to be better equipped to handle the volume of mail and packages that are processed. The upgrade was a success and will help save valuable staff time in both sending mail and reporting on office usage.

During 2021, the Mailroom saw an increase in the number of incoming packages by 53% and outgoing mail by 48% compared to 2020. Based on usage estimates for the remainder of 2022 the number of incoming packages will increase approximately 5% and outgoing mail by approximately 17% compared to 2021. Below is a breakdown of the quantities.

	2019	2020	2021	2022 (through 8/22)
Incoming packages	2,141	1,594	2,442	1,709
Outgoing mail	42,824	31,649	46,730	36,401
Outgoing packages	879	1,206	1,041	772
Outgoing air cargo	31	117	71	53

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

Legislative Research, currently comprised of four analysts, provides nonpartisan, objective, and timely information and analysis in response to requests from legislators, their staff, and legislative committees. There are few policy issues outside the purview of the office, and we have a wealth of experience and information sources from which to draw.

In fiscal year 2022, staff built on substantial changes that began 2020 in response to the increased practice of legislators and staff working remotely. The office’s leaner, more efficient processes, and the production of fewer formal long-form reports, resulted in shorter average response times, which was met with broad approval from requesters. Further, this updated approach more closely aligns with the directive from Legislative Council for the office to, “assist legislators and staff in conducting their own research.”

Emphasizing function over form, last fiscal year the office produced 125 formal reports, and responded to roughly 150 additional requests by phone, email, or by locating source information and contacting issue-area experts to expedite the research process for requesters.

Research joined with the Legislative Finance Division in late-2020 to begin developing white papers on policy issues about which our offices receive frequent questions. Medicaid, K-12 education funding, municipal governance, and community revenue sharing are examples of subjects on which primers are now available. Legislative Research continued that effort independently in FY 2022 and expect to carry on identifying important, often complex, topics about which to produce summary reports that can be accessed immediately through our online public archives.

Long-time Legislative Analyst Tim Spengler retired in August and will be sorely missed. Although his institutional knowledge cannot be immediately replaced, Legislative Research remains ready to help legislators and staff examine and better understand the spectrum of policy issues the Legislature considers.

SECURITY

Security has been striving to make improvements based on the January 6, 2020, Washington DC incident and the latest trends in electronic and in person attacks against Legislative institutions. The Security training area has been increased. At the suggestion of the Legislative Council Security Subcommittee, a chemical eye irritant was added to the equipment carried by Security Guards to add a low level of force below those that might cause injury. Verbal conflict resolution and de-escalation has been added to the training curriculum as well as improved training records keeping.

Security, along with IT, Maintenance, and the ALOB Manager, met with Homeland Security representatives in Juneau and at the ALOB for onsite security surveys. Written reports are forthcoming, and suggestions made during the meetings are being implemented. Locks, doors, and alarms are being improved as function and budgets allow.

Along with Homeland Security, the FBI was asked to prepare a briefing of perceived threats to the Alaska State Legislature. A formal briefing is being prepared by the Anchorage Office of the FBI.