

To: Larry Oaks
From: Gail Glasser
Subject: Staff Support of Legislative Branch
Date: 10/17/07

The attached outline attempts to summarize some communities' processes for data gathering when information is requested by council members. The question asked was "What support or services are provided to council members when they ask for information or a research project?"

Questions of quality or level of research were most often answered by the response to the basic question: Levels of support varied from "We don't get many requests" to a significant commitment to data gathering and analysis, and from city attorneys to clerical staff.

Jim Owczarski, Deputy City Clerk of the City of Milwaukee, describes a system that grew out of a legislative reference library and is now a research staff of 12 full-time employees hired from a wide range of backgrounds: All have "Master's Degrees or better," with studies and experience that include urban planning, libraries, health care, journalism, and law. Austin provides a private office, staff office and conference room for each council representative, and a budget to be used for hiring staff (typically an executive assistant and one other full-time position at lower pay, so that money can be used for a part-time intern or other additional staff person). Lincoln, Nebraska had currently budgeted for a researcher position based on an agreed-on need, but has historically had problems providing for it: There were competitive requests from council members when there was a staff position; when the position was eliminated and discretionary funds provided to council members over 10-12 years, there were incidents of funds being used for political purposes. The current request for one position was dropped in the face of a \$9 million budget shortfall.

The outline includes all the communities from which I solicited information. Communities were selected from an informal group of cities with some elements of comparability to Madison's.

City, Form of Government	Council	Staff	Services
Akron OH: Mayor, Council	13-member council	Law Department of city: Three attorney positions	Prepare legislation, provide services including research on topics of interest
Ann Arbor MI: Council-Manager blended system, Strong Mayor, City Mgr reports to Council	10-member council	City Attorney staff Mayor's office Assistant	Attorney staff: All levels of research for council. Mayor's Office Assistant may also prepare reports.
Austin TX: Council-Manager	7-member council (Mayor + 6 at-large members) appoint Manager	Each council member has offices (more than one) and money for full-time staff (often Exec. Assistant and secretary, may have PT aide)	City Clerk, Deputy City Clerk, City Records Mgr, Management Analyst, 20 support employees (city records). City staff may support special projects (e.g., community meetings re: banning plastic bags)
Chattanooga TN: Strong Mayor, Council	9-member council	Council office has Clerk, Asst. Clerk, Management Analyst (budget) and Secretary	Most requests referred to departments
El Paso TX: Council-Manager	8-member council, appoint Manager; elected Mayor can veto	Each council member has two staff (Admin. Assistant, Legislative Aide) and an office budget.	Additional requests to city staff submitted to city manager or by council agenda
Fort Wayne IN: Mayor, Council	9-member council	1 FT Council Research Assistant, 1 PT (40%) assistant; 2 PT council attorneys	All requested services. Additional City Attorney staffs are 1 FT and 2 PT.
Green Bay WI: Mayor, Council	12-member council	1 Assistant to Mayor/City Grant Writer (of 2 Mayor's Assistants)	Most requests to departments; if politically sensitive or special topic, Mayor's staff position. Use Wis Alliance of Cities and League of Wis Municipalities membership to request info
Huntington Beach CA: City Council/City Administrator	10-member council includes 3 elected department heads (Attorney, Clerk, Treasurer), 7 council reps, rotating Mayor	Clerk's Office; Council Office one FT Administrative Assistant	Would handle any request, but few are received
Lincoln NE: Mayor, Council	7-member council	Council staff. Requested Researcher position, dropped due to budget shortfall. (Want to model Omaha—Assistant to City Council, three other staff assistants)	Any research on legislation coming to council
Milwaukee WI: Mayor, Council; Strong Mayor	15-member council	12 FT Legislative Fiscal Analysts	All requested research, levels of reporting
Spokane WA: Mayor, Council; Strong Mayor	7-member council	Dept heads make up Mayor's cabinet, accept requests directly	If request for info or project too time-consuming the department would bring to Mayor, cabinet
Syracuse NY: Mayor, Council	10-member council (5 district, 5 at-large, including president of council)	Vacant Research Analyst position; 2 (of 3) Council office staff work for council members, one for council president	Fulfill all requests, any scope