



Legislative Council Staff
Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

Memorandum

March 11, 2026

TO: Members of the Legislative Council
FROM: Natalie Castle, Director, 303-866-4778
SUBJECT: Legislative Council Staff FY 2026-27 Budget Request

Contents

Overview 1

Description of Incremental Changes 3

Request for Roll-forward Authority 6

Centrally Appropriated Line Items and Common Compensation Policies 6

Legislative Council Staff Agency Overview 7

Overview

This memorandum summarizes the request for the FY 2026-27 Legislative Council Staff (LCS) budget. LCS respectfully requests an increase of \$406,457 in total funds (2.2 percent) and \$406,457 General Fund (2.2 percent) for FY 2026-27. The appropriation includes funding for 109.6 FTE. Key components of the request include:

- **Flat employee compensation:** the request includes no increases to employee compensation, aside from annualizations for prior year legislation. See page 4 for more information.
- **Three primary cost drivers:**
 - 64.6 percent (\$262,475) of the increase is necessitated by rising employer premiums for **health, life, dental, and vision benefits**. See page 4 for more information.
 - 22.8 percent (92,739 and 1.0 FTE) of the increase is due to **adjustments for legislation passed in prior years** that specifically affects FY 2026-27. See page 3 for more information.
 - The remainder of the increase (\$127,236 or 31.8 percent of the increase) results from a **budget-neutral shift to centralize telephone service** funding in Legislative Council's



information technology operating budget. This has a net-zero impact on the total legislative branch budget because it is merely a reallocation of existing funds within the branch. See the bottom of page 4 for more information.

- **Operating and travel budget reductions:** the request reduces the general operating and travel budgets by \$34,120 (-5.4 percent) and the information technology operating budget by \$31,829 (-1.9 percent). See pages 5 and 6 for more information.

Table 1 summarizes the request by showing the FY 2025-26 appropriation, recommended incremental changes from the FY 2025-26 appropriation, and the resulting FY 2026-27 request. This memorandum includes descriptions of each incremental change and decision item, centrally appropriated line items, and an overview of the major functions of Legislative Council Staff (LCS). Table 5 on pages 10 through 12 provides further detail on the LCS budget.

Table 1: Legislative Council FY 2026-27 Budget Request Summary

	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reappropriated Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
FY 2025-26 Appropriation¹	\$18,439,779	\$18,298,779	\$0	\$141,000	\$0	108.6
Changes from the FY 2025-26 Appropriation						
PERA AED and SAED (Centrally appropriated)	-1,350	-1,350	0	0	0	0.0
Annualize prior year legislation	92,739	92,739	0	0	0	1.0
Employee compensation and benefits, existing FTE	-1,515	-1,515	0	0	0	0.0
Health, life, and dental benefits, existing FTE	262,478	262,478	0	0	0	0.0
1.5 percent personal services reduction	-7,272	-7,272	0	0	0	0.0
R1: Centralize telephone service operating	127,326	127,326	0	0	0	0.0
R2: General operating and travel budgets	-34,120	-34,120	0	0	0	0.0
R3: General IT operating budgets	-31,829	-31,829	0	0	0	0.0
Total FY 2026-27 Request¹	\$18,846,236	\$18,705,236	\$0	\$141,000	\$0	109.6
\$ Change from prior year	\$406,457	\$406,457	\$0	\$0	\$0	1.0
% Change from prior year	2.2%	2.2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.9%

1. Appropriation and request include centrally appropriated amounts for PERA Amortization Equalization Disbursements.



Description of Incremental Changes

This section provides brief descriptions of each incremental change, including decision items, listed in Table 1.

Annualized Legislation

As shown in Table 2, the request includes an increase of \$92,739 General Fund and 1.0 FTE for annualized legislation, including:

- a decrease of \$18,414 General Fund and 0.3 FTE to reflect the repeal of the Wildfire Matters Review Committee;
- an increase of \$47,453 General Fund and 0.6 FTE for staffing and travel expenses for two interim committees created in the 2025 legislative session: the [American Indian Affairs Interim Committee](#) and the [Legislation Inside Advisory Council Review Committee](#); and
- an increase of \$63,700 General Fund and 0.7 FTE for staffing and travel expenses for committees that were suspended in 2025 by [Senate Bill 25-199](#) but are set to be restored in 2026.¹

Table 2. LCS Prior Year Legislation - FY 2026-27 Budget

Legislation	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
SB 08-039 Continue the Wildfire Matters Review Committee	-18,414	-18,414	0	0	0	-0.3
HB 25-1057 American Indian Affairs Interim Committee	25,402	25,402	0	0	0	0.3
SB 25-155 Legislative Inside Advisory Council	22,051	22,051	0	0	0	0.3
SB 25-199 Suspend Legislative Interim Activities	63,700	63,700	0	0	0	0.7
Total FY 2026-27 Annualize Prior Year	\$92,739	\$92,739	\$0	\$0	\$0	1.0

¹ The following committees were suspended in 2025 by SB 25-199 and are set to be restored in 2026: Colorado Health Insurance Exchange Oversight Committee; Legislation Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Committee; Legislative Oversight Committee Concerning Colorado Jail Standards; Legislative Oversight Committee Concerning Tax Policy and Task Force; Pension Review Committee and Subcommittee; and Statewide Healthcare Review Committee. In addition, the Capital Development Committee’s authorization to travel was suspended in 2025 and is set to be restored in 2026.



Employee Compensation and Benefits, Existing FTE

The request includes an increase of \$253,692 General Fund for existing staff compensation and benefits, as further discussed below.

Salary

As of the date of this request, the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) has not made a decision about employee compensation. At the direction of the Executive Committee, this request includes a placeholder for employee compensation that results in flat compensation between FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27, recognizing that if the JBC moves forward with any compensation increases for the state, the request could be revised during the legislative process.

In addition, the request includes a reduction of \$7,272 General Fund to reflect additional savings from the continuation of a 1.5 percent personal services base cut. The base cut is applied to ensure flat compensation between FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27 consistent with the Executive Committee's direction.

Benefits

The request includes an increase of \$262,478 General Fund (17.0 percent) to fund health, life, and dental insurance costs. Consistent with direction from the Executive Committee, the estimate includes increases necessary to maintain an 88/12 employer/employee split for premiums, pending the Joint Budget Committee's common policy decision for FY 2026-27.

Decision Items

The request includes three decision items, which are summarized below.

Decision Item R1: Centralize Telephone Service Operating

The request includes a net increase of \$127,326 General Fund to centralize telephone service funding for the Legislative Branch. This adjustment moves individual line items from the six legislative agencies into a single line item in the LCS information technology operating budget. The Legislative Branch has transitioned its telephone service from the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) to Zoom. While OIT billed each agency individually, Zoom will issue a single invoice to LCS for the entire branch. The Zoom telephone service also provides, at no extra charge, Zoom meeting functionality to everyone in the branch.



As shown in Table 5 on page 11, the total requested for telephone service is \$165,878 General Fund, which includes existing funding of \$38,552 previously budgeted for OIT telephone service in the LCS general operating budget.

Decision Item R2: Reduce General Operating and Travel Budgets

The request includes a reduction of \$34,120 General Fund (-5.4 percent) in general operating and travel budgets, reflecting the following:

- a reduction of \$120 to eliminate funding for job recruitment advertising;
- a reduction of \$2,000 General Fund for purchased services and a reduction of \$4,000 for printing and postage, to align with actual expenditures;
- a reduction of \$8,000 for registrations and travel for staff professional development; and
- a reduction of \$20,000 for furniture and equipment.

Table 3. Requested Changes in the General Operating and Travel Budgets

Description	General Fund	Reason for Change
R2-A Advertising	-120	Eliminate job recruitment advertising
R2-B Purchased services	-2,000	Reduced to align with actual expenditures
R2-C Printing & Postage	-4,000	Reduced to align with actual expenditures
R2-D Training and registrations	-3,000	Reduction consistent with a decrease in travel
R2-D In-State & Out-of-State Travel	-5,000	Reduced travel opportunities for staff
R2-E Furniture & Equipment	-20,000	Less needed following moves in 2025
Total FY 2026-27 Appropriation	-\$34,120	

Table 3 excludes changes that are the result of annualizing prior year legislation (shown in Table 2) and the impact of moving \$38,552 for phone service funding to the Information Technology operating budget.

Decision Item R3: Reduce Information Technology Operating Budgets

The request includes a net reduction of \$31,829 General Fund (-1.9 percent) in the information technology operating budget, reflecting the following:

- a \$8,493 General Fund (2.5 percent) increase for digital accessibility software and services. The increase reflects needs related to document remediation and increased demand for accessible software, such as Adobe, branch-wide. While this appears as a line-item increase, it reflects a significant overall budgetary savings since LCS has eliminated a \$250,000 Cash Fund request for application contractors previously authorized for FY 2025-26.



- a \$40,322 General Fund (-3.2 percent) reduction for information technology software, maintenance, and purchased services. This line item funds essential software licensing (e.g. Google Workspace, Microsoft Office, WordPerfect) and services that support the Legislative Branch’s security, network, and data infrastructure. Although inflation typically necessitates a budget increase of at least 3 percent, this reduction reflects a strategic commitment by staff to consolidate services and eliminate lower-impact software licenses.

Request for Roll-forward Authority

Staff respectfully requests roll-forward authority for \$30,000 General Fund from FY 2025-26 into FY 2026-27, for activities that occur every other year, but are budgeted annually. The request includes \$9,000 General Fund for LCS official functions and \$21,000 General Fund for New Legislator Orientation.

Centrally Appropriated Line Items and Common Compensation Policies

The request includes adjustments to centrally appropriated line items and changes resulting from common compensation policies included in the Legislative Appropriations Bill, as detailed in the following table.

Table 4. Centrally Appropriated Line Items and Common Compensation Policies

	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reappropriated Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
Salary survey	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Health, life, and dental	262,478	262,478	0	0	0	0.0
Short term disability	-86	-86	0	0	0	0.0
Medicare tax	-139	-139	0	0	0	0.0
Paid family and medical leave	-553	-553	0	0	0	0.0
PERA AED and SAED	-1,350	-1,350	0	0	0	0.0
Total FY 2026-27 Appropriation	\$260,351	\$260,351	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0



Legislative Council Staff Agency Overview

The Legislative Council Staff (LCS) mission is to provide nonpartisan products and services to the legislature and the public to support and inform the policy making process, preserve the legislative institution, and promote transparency. Our team of more than 100 people, who have a diverse set of professional backgrounds, skills, and responsibilities, are dedicated to serving the legislative institution and providing exemplary services to legislators, staff, and the public. The LCS organizational chart for the 2026 legislative session can be found on page 9.

Legislative Council Staff Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Legislative Council Staff include, but are not limited to:

- Research services, including;
 - Constituent services;
 - Policy and fiscal research, including memoranda, handbooks, issue briefs, and interactive visualizations of tax and budget information;
 - Economic analysis, modelling, and forecasting;
 - School finance research and modelling;
 - Fiscal notes for legislative bills during the session and interim committee process; and
 - Demographic notes;
- Committee staffing, including remote public testimony management;
- Services related to ballot measures and the citizen initiative process, including:
 - Working with the Office of Legislative Legal Services (OLLS) to facilitate the Initiative review and comment process;
 - Preparing and distributing the ballot information (blue) book; and
 - Fiscal summaries and impact statements for the citizen initiative and blue book processes;
- Central accounting services for the House, Senate, OLLS, LCS, and Joint Budget Committee Staff including:
 - Payroll and benefits management;
 - Accounts payable and budget reporting; and
 - Financial statements, oversight, and audits;
- Analytical budget support for the Legislative Department, including the development of the annual legislative appropriation bill;
- Visitor services, including managing the gift shop, public tours, the museum, and the dome;

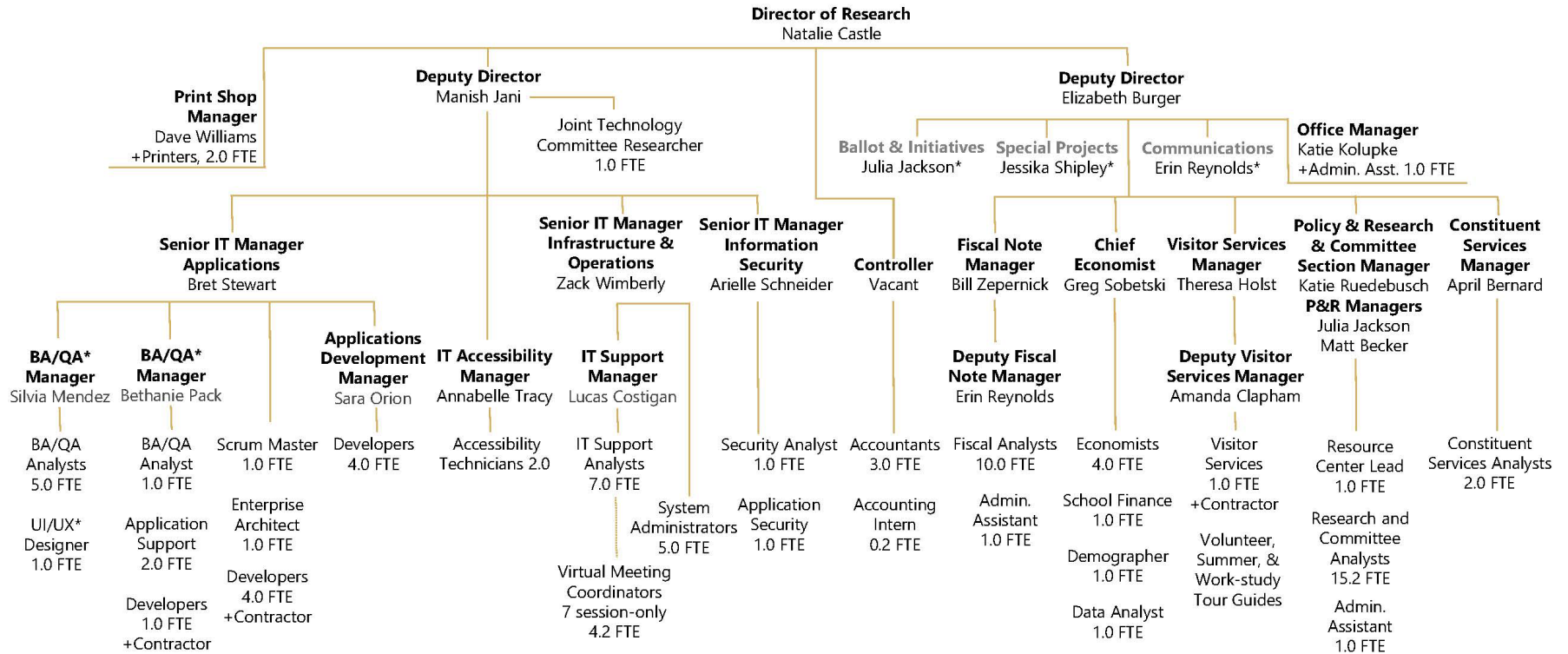


- Printing services, including introduced bills, calendars, journals, reports, and other products;
- Information technology (IT) for the legislative branch, including:
 - IT support and audio visual services;
 - IT procurement and contract management;
 - Information security;
 - Network infrastructure maintenance and administration;
 - Custom application maintenance and development; and
 - Digital accessibility compliance.
- Training services, including working with other agencies on new legislator and committee chair training programs; and
- Administrative services, including:
 - The legislative resource center and library;
 - Legislative databases, including the ballot, legislator history, boards and commissions, and required reports databases;
 - Construction project management and facility planning; and
 - Contract management as needed, including but not limited to contracts related to the PERA actuarial analysis; the Colorado Youth Advisory Council, the Cost of Living Study, and the Property Tax Assessment Study.

More information is available at <https://leg.colorado.gov/agencies/legislative-council-staff>

Colorado Legislative Council Staff, FY 2025-26

Total FTE: 108.6



*These roles represent part-time leadership roles. These individuals and their FTE are included elsewhere in the organizational chart.
BA = Business Analyst; QA = Quality Assurance Analyst; UI/UX = user interface/user experience

Table 5: Legislative Council Staff FY 2026-27 Budget Request

Description	FY 2024-25 Actual		FY 2024-25 Appropriation		FY 2025-26 Appropriation		FY 2026-27 Request		% Change
	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	
GENERAL FUND									
PERSONAL SERVICES									
Continuation salary	10,870,695	107.2	11,030,646	107.2	11,515,451	107.6	11,515,451	107.6	
2.5% across the board (placeholder)							0		
0.6% step-like increase (placeholder)							0		
PYL* Base salary, annualize prior year legislation							66,000	1.0	
Annual / sick leave payments	77,855		81,469		81,469		81,469		
Working expenses stipend	248,165		257,520		264,480		263,040		
PYL* PERA (11.65% FY27)	1,207,699		1,280,778		1,340,847		1,349,260		
PYL* Medicare tax (1.45%)	154,726		159,016		167,116		167,935		
Paid family medical leave	44,307		49,375		52,669		52,117		
Short term disability @ (0.06% in FY27)	15,385		16,693		8,193		8,107		
Health, dental, life insurance	1,405,498		1,290,282		1,541,836		1,804,314		
1.5 percent personal services cut	-		-		-\$165,460		-\$172,732		
Subtotal Personal Services	\$14,024,331	107.2	\$14,165,779	107.2	\$14,806,601	107.6	\$15,134,961	108.6	2.2%
LCS GENERAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES									
Unemployment compensation	13,333		10,000		12,000		12,000		0.0%
Work study tour guide wages	0		24,658		22,880		22,880		0.0%
Contract services	224,189		219,462		226,298		226,298		0.0%
Language access services	5,848		25,000		25,000		25,000		0.0%
Rental equipment & equipment maintenance	7,120		16,500		8,000		8,000		0.0%
Parking fees	41,190		38,935		38,935		38,935		0.0%
R2-A Advertising	0		1,000		120		0		-100.0%
R1 Communications	56,192		57,988		58,753		20,201		-65.6%
R2-B Purchased services	13,682		20,000		18,000		16,000		-11.1%
R2-C Printing and reproduction services	5,787		8,000		9,000		7,000		-22.2%
Books/periodicals/subscriptions	2,638		2,000		2,500		2,500		0.0%
Office supplies	17,900		18,039		18,889		18,889		0.0%
R2-C Postage	12,449		10,000		15,800		13,800		-12.7%

Description	FY 2024-25 Actual		FY 2024-25 Appropriation		FY 2025-26 Appropriation		FY 2026-27 Request		% Change
	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	
Dues and memberships	1,859		4,000		2,000		2,000		0.0%
RFWD* Official functions	26,993		19,610		19,610		19,610		0.0%
R2-D Registration and training fees	30,360		40,000		37,000		34,000		-8.1%
R2-E Equipment and furniture purchases	52,981		73,880		43,880		23,880		-45.6%
RFWD* New Legislator Orientation	25,235		21,000		21,000		21,000		0.0%
Subtotal Operating Expenditures	\$537,755		\$610,071		\$579,665		\$511,993		-11.7%
LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT IT EXPENDITURES									
R1 Centralize phone services							165,878		N/A
R3 Accessibility software and services	702,784		1,122,800		334,117		342,610		2.5%
R3 IT maintenance, software, & purchased serv.	1,039,804		1,111,046		1,240,760		1,200,438		-3.2%
Non capitalized equipment & IT supplies	172,943		131,729		128,079		128,079		0.0%
Legislative Department technology refresh	0		150,000		0		0		N/A
Subtotal Department IT Expenditures	\$1,915,531		\$2,515,575		\$1,702,956		\$1,837,005		7.9%
TRAVEL EXPENDITURES									
PYL* Committee travel (branch-wide)	22,609		24,281		9,562		27,633		189.0%
R2-D In-state travel (LCS only)	2,568		6,500		6,500		5,500		-15.4%
R2-D Out-of-state travel (LCS only)	34,269		48,000		34,000		30,000		-11.8%
Subtotal Travel Expenditures	\$59,445		\$78,781		\$50,062		\$63,133		26.1%
Total General Fund w/o PERA AED & SAED	\$16,537,062	107.2	\$17,370,207	107.2	\$17,139,284	107.6	\$17,547,092	108.6	2.4%
PERA AED and SAED (10%)	1,048,548		1,097,215		1,159,495		1,158,145		-0.1%
TOTAL GENERAL FUNDS	\$17,585,610	107.2	\$18,467,421	107.2	\$18,298,779	107.6	\$18,705,236	108.6	2.2%
REAPPROPRIATED FUNDS									
Introduced bill, calendar, & journals printing	129,456	1.0	141,000	1.0	141,000	1.0	141,000	1.0	0.0%
GRAND TOTAL	\$17,715,066	108.2	\$18,608,421	108.2	\$18,439,779	108.6	\$18,846,236	109.6	2.2%

*PYL indicates an adjustment for the annualization of prior year legislation (see page 3). RFWD indicates that roll forward authority from FY 2025-26 to FY 2026-27 is requested for all or some of the line item (see page 6).