

Introduction

The Ohio Legislative Service Commission (LSC) is pleased to present the 18th edition of *A Guidebook for Ohio Legislators* for the 135th General Assembly. This biennial publication is intended for use as a reference by members and staff of the Ohio General Assembly and by others who are interested in how the legislature and state government work.

The *Guidebook* primarily focuses on the legislative branch and the legislative process. After a brief overview of the constitutional framework of Ohio state government, the *Guidebook* summarizes the three legislative powers and the organization of the Ohio General Assembly. It describes in detail Ohio's law-making process, including how to transform an idea into a bill, how to read and understand a bill, how legislative committees work, and the resources, including both partisan and nonpartisan staff services, that are available to assist General Assembly members in their decision making. The *Guidebook* devotes an entire chapter to the Ohio budget process. Arguably, no legislation is more important to the operation of state government than the bills that compose the state budget.

To provide broader context for understanding the legislative branch, the *Guidebook* also provides short summaries of the executive and judicial branches of state government and briefly describes early Ohio history and the history of Ohio's capital city and Statehouse.

The *Guidebook* is available on the LSC website: lsc.ohio.gov. You may obtain a printed copy, subject to copying and binder charges, by contacting LSC at (614) 466-5312.

The *Guidebook* publication is a shared effort of many LSC staff members. In addition, several individuals from outside LSC provided helpful editorial assistance. LSC would like to express our gratitude for feedback provided by the House Clerk's and Administrative offices and the Senate Clerk's office.

Finally, it is the hope of LSC that you find the *Guidebook* to be a handy and useful resource. Please direct any questions or comments regarding this publication to our *Guidebook* editors: Karen Burkey, Kathleen Luikart, or Kristin Rhee at (614) 466-3615.