

## Subcommittees

A subcommittee is designed to do in-depth work for the parent committee. However, its functions are purely advisory, and a subcommittee reports only to the committee from which it was appointed, not to the full body. In most legislative chambers, a subcommittee is created by the committee chair but, as table 96-4.12 illustrates, this is not the only method used to establish them.

Table 96-4.13 shows that the “life expectancy” of subcommittees varies considerably. Some subcommittees—called standing committees—are established that remain in place for an entire biennium. Thirty-eight chambers reported that they use standing subcommittees. Usually, however, subcommittees are far more temporary in nature, being created to deal with a single issue or bill. Fifty-three chambers commonly use this type. Respondents from 18 legislative bodies indicated that they have created issue subcommittees that remained in existence for an entire session.

A subcommittee may consist only of members from its parent committee. The average subcommittee size is three to seven members (see table 96-4.14). The committee chair typically has responsibility for appointing subcommittee members; this is true in 60 percent of the legislative chambers (see table 96-4.15). Sometimes, however, the presiding officer or another leader makes the assignments. In the California Senate and Assembly and the Pennsylvania House, a committee on committee or a rules committee appoints subcommittee members. In Connecticut, the selections are made by the ranking member of the committee. Seniority is the determining factor in the Arkansas Senate.

**Table 96-4.12 Creation of Subcommittees****Subcommittees are created by the president of the Senate or the speaker of the House:**

Delaware House	North Carolina House
Florida Senate and House	Ohio House
Hawaii Senate and House	Oklahoma Senate and House
Maine Senate	Oregon Senate and House
Maryland Senate	South Dakota House
New Jersey House	Texas Senate
New Mexico House	Virginia House
New York Assembly	Washington House

**Subcommittees are created by another legislative leader:**

Michigan Senate	South Dakota Senate
New York Senate	Washington Senate
Rhode Island Senate	

**Subcommittees are created by the committee chair:**

Alaska Senate and House	Nebraska Senate
Arizona Senate and House	Nevada Senate and Assembly
Arkansas Senate	New Hampshire House
California Senate	New Jersey House
Colorado Senate	New Mexico Senate
Connecticut House	North Dakota Senate and House
Florida Senate	Ohio Senate
Georgia House	Oklahoma House
Idaho Senate and House	Oregon Senate and House
Indiana House	Pennsylvania Senate
Iowa Senate and House	Rhode Island Senate
Kansas Senate and House	South Carolina House
Kentucky House	Tennessee Senate and House
Louisiana Senate and House	Texas Senate and House
Maine Senate and House	Utah Senate
Maryland Senate	Vermont Senate
Michigan House	Virginia Senate and House
Minnesota Senate and House	Washington Senate and House
Mississippi House	West Virginia Senate and House
Missouri Senate and House	Wisconsin Senate and House
Montana Senate and House	Wyoming Senate and House

**The subcommittees are set by rule:**

Alabama Senate	Indiana Senate
Arkansas House	New Jersey Senate and House
California Senate	Pennsylvania House

**Another method is used to create the subcommittee:**

- California Assembly (rules committee)
- Connecticut Senate (vote by entire body)
- Illinois Senate and House (standing committee members)
- Wisconsin Senate (approval of the Senate organization committee)

**Table 96-4.13 Commonly Used Subcommittees**

<b>State (1)</b>	<b>Standing subcommittees that remain in place for the entire biennium</b>	<b>Subcommittees, created around an issue, that remain for the entire session</b>	<b>Subcommittees, created around an issue, that exist only temporarily</b>	<b>Subcommittees created to deal with a specific bill</b>	<b>Other</b>
Alabama	B				
Alaska	B		B	B	
Arizona	H	H	H	B	
Arkansas	B				
California	S	B			
Colorado			S		
Connecticut	B				
Delaware	H				
Florida	B		S		
Georgia	H				
Hawaii			B		
Idaho			B	H	
Illinois	H		B	B	2
Indiana	S			H	
Iowa	H	H	H	B	
Kansas			B	B	
Kentucky	H		H	H	
Louisiana			B		
Maine			B	S	3
Maryland	B	B			
Massachusetts					
Michigan	H	H	B		
Minnesota	H	S			
Mississippi	H				
Missouri			B	S	
Montana	B		B		

Table 96-4.13 Commonly Used Subcommittees, cont'd.

State (1)	Standing subcommittees that remain in place for the entire biennium	Subcommittees, created around an issue, that remain for the entire session	Subcommittees, created around an issue, that exist only temporarily	Subcommittees created to deal with a specific bill	Other
Nebraska			S		
Nevada			H	B	
New Hampshire	H	H	H	H	
New Jersey	H	S			
New Mexico	H	S			
New York	H	S			
North Carolina	H			H	
North Dakota				B	
Ohio	H			B	
Oklahoma	B				
Oregon	H	S		S	
Pennsylvania	H		S	S	
Rhode Island	S	S	S		
South Carolina	H				
South Dakota				B	
Tennessee	H		S		
Texas	S		H	B	
Utah					
Vermont			S		
Virginia	B	B	B	B	
Washington			B		
West Virginia	H		S		
Wisconsin		B			
Wyoming			B		

**Table 96-4.13 Commonly Used Subcommittees, cont'd.**

<p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>S=Senate</li><li>H=House or Assembly</li><li>B=Both chambers</li></ul> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The following chambers did not respond to the survey: Delaware Senate, Georgia Senate, Massachusetts Senate and House, Mississippi Senate, North Carolina Senate, Rhode Island House, South Carolina Senate; nor did any legislatures from the U.S. territories respond.</li><li>2. Illinois House: Subcommittees can be created to deal with amendments only.</li><li>3. Maine Senate: Subcommittees can be created to represent a policy committee before the Appropriations Committee.</li></ol>
---

**Table 96-4.14 Average Subcommittee Size**

<b>State (1)</b>	<b>Senate</b>	<b>House</b>
Alabama	3	
Alaska	3	5
Arizona	3	3 or 5
Arkansas		8
California	3-5	6-7
Colorado	varies	0
Connecticut	varies	varies
Delaware		3-5
Florida	3-4	6-9
Georgia		
Hawaii	3	varies
Idaho	3	3
Illinois	5	3-5
Indiana	5-6	3
Iowa	3	5
Kansas	3	3
Kentucky		varies
Louisiana	3	4-5
Maine	3-5	3-5
Maryland	6	
Massachusetts		
Michigan	3	3-7
Minnesota	8	8
Mississippi		4
Missouri	3-5	5
Montana	6	6
Nebraska	3	NA
Nevada	3-4	varies
New Hampshire	NA	3-5
New Jersey	3	3
New Mexico	4-6	10
New York	5	varies
North Carolina		12
North Dakota	3	3
Ohio	3	13
Oklahoma	7-15	
Oregon	3	3-7
Pennsylvania	3-5	6
Rhode Island	6	
South Carolina		3-5
South Dakota	3-5	3-5

**Table 96-4.14 Average Subcommittee Size, cont'd.**

<b>State (1)</b>	<b>Senate</b>	<b>House</b>
Tennessee	3-5	6
Texas	8	3
Utah		
Vermont	3	
Virginia	3-4	8
Washington	5	5
West Virginia	3	5-6
Wisconsin	3	5
Wyoming	3	3

## Note:

1. The following chambers did not respond to the survey: Delaware Senate, Georgia Senate, Massachusetts Senate and House, Mississippi Senate, North Carolina Senate, Rhode Island House, South Carolina Senate; nor did any legislatures from the U.S. territories respond.

**Table 96-4.15 Appointment of Subcommittee Members**

<b>Subcommittee members are appointed by the committee chair:</b>	
Alaska Senate and House	Nebraska Senate
Arizona Senate and House	Nevada Senate and Assembly
Arkansas House	New Hampshire House
California Senate	New Jersey Assembly
Colorado Senate	New Mexico Senate and House
Connecticut Senate and House	North Carolina House
Florida Senate	North Dakota Senate and House
Georgia House	Ohio Senate
Idaho Senate and House	Oregon Senate and House
Illinois Senate and House	Pennsylvania Senate
Indiana House	South Carolina House
Iowa Senate and House	Tennessee Senate and House
Kansas Senate and House	Texas Senate and House
Kentucky House	Utah Senate
Louisiana Senate and House	Vermont Senate
Maine Senate and House	Virginia Senate and House
Maryland Senate and House	Washington House
Minnesota Senate and House	West Virginia Senate and House
Mississippi House	Wisconsin Senate and House
Missouri Senate and House	Wyoming Senate and House
Montana Senate and House	
<b>Subcommittee members are appointed by the president of the Senate or the speaker of the House:</b>	
Alabama Senate	Ohio House
Delaware House	Oklahoma House
Florida Senate and House	Oregon Senate
Hawaii Senate and House	South Dakota House
Maryland Senate and House	Texas Senate
New Jersey Senate and House	Virginia House
North Carolina House	
<b>Subcommittee members are appointed by the president pro tem or the speaker pro tem:</b>	
Indiana Senate	Oklahoma Senate
New York Senate and Assembly	South Dakota Senate
<b>Subcommittee members are appointed by the majority or minority leader:</b>	
Illinois Senate	New York Senate and Assembly
Michigan Senate and House	Rhode Island Senate
<b>Another method is used to appoint the subcommittee members:</b>	
Arkansas Senate (seniority system)	
California Senate and Assembly (rules committee)	
Connecticut Senate and House (ranking member of the committee)	
Pennsylvania House (committee on committees)	