



BSCES Legislative Fellow Program **Frequently Asked Questions**

1. What is a BSCES Legislative Fellow?

A Legislative Fellow is a representative of the BSCES membership that functions as a technical resource at the State House. The Legislative Fellow works at the Massachusetts State House, usually with the staff of the Joint Committee on Transportation and comments on current issues relating to the engineering profession that the legislature has identified. This can be a very wide range of issues. To date, most of the Legislative Fellow's efforts have been on legislation in the transportation arena with some involvement on environmental project impacts. However, every session of the legislature is different, and the issues vary greatly from session to session. The Legislative Fellow position is a fantastic job with great visibility within BSCES and the State House! The prior Legislative Fellows love to talk about their experiences and would welcome questions. More information about the program is available on the [BSCES website](#).

2. Why should I apply and become a Legislative Fellow?

You get to go to the State House as often as you want and have an email address that allows you access to the State House news – you are always in the know! A Legislative Fellow can make a real difference by helping solve real world problems that the state is wrestling with. While serving as a Legislative Fellow, you come to really understand how state legislation is developed as well as have a definite impact on the shape of that legislation with your comments/expertise – you can affect the outcome. The Legislative Fellow is automatically the “expert” on many topics and your comments/input are sought after. It also provides an opportunity for public service and a means to give back to the BSCES and the civil engineering profession.

3. How much time is involved in being a Legislative Fellow?

Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, on average, two days a week was spent working at the State House. Some commitments, such as intermittent night meetings, committee meetings on an alternate day, or a critical time schedule, are beyond those two days. Assume approximately 20 hours per week.

Further, BSCES asks that you prepare a monthly Legislative Fellow Report for inclusion in the BSCES member newsletter, *BSCESNews*, and/or for posting on the BSCES website. This report should discuss pending and adopted infrastructure-related legislation and, to the extent permitted by confidentiality restrictions, describe your experiences in this role. Legislative Fellows are expected to make verbal presentations at BSCES meetings as requested. These written and verbal reports enable BSCES members to understand the value of the position and the interesting work Legislative Fellows are doing as a representative of BSCES and the civil engineering profession. After the completion of his/her term, the Legislative Fellow is expected to remain an active BSCES member, especially in government relations activities, for a three-year period.

4. How will I be assigned work?

You will be located in the area of the Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation. Upon your arrival, and sometimes in between, you will send out an “all State House” announcement that you have arrived, who you are, and that you are available for

assignments. The response will be enough to keep you busy. In addition, some Legislative Fellows have seen pending legislation, attended committee meetings, and sought out those involved to offer expertise. You may also help the committee staff in preparing for and during public meetings of pending legislation. Some time is spent writing articles for the BSCES newsletter.

5. I am not a transportation expert – can I still be effective?

Yes, you are still most likely the most knowledgeable person in the room even if not within your area of expertise. However, the beauty of BSCES is that with the help of the Legislative Fellow Committee chair you can call on other members to provide specific expertise in an area that you may not have strong knowledge of. This network of other available engineers allows the Legislative Fellow to be a technical resource to the legislators, provide the broad services that the position needs and gives the Legislative Fellow a “sounding board” for proposed ideas.

6. Why should my company agree to let me work a reduced schedule? What’s in it for them?

The overall experience of being a Legislative Fellow is so much more than attending a training course or commenting on legislation after publication as a member of a specialty technical group. To review and comment on materials in real time is an amazing growth experience. You get a “ring-side seat” during transportation funding legislations and get a better understanding of the transportation priorities of both the Executive and Legislative branches of government. This experience will stick with the employee and cause them to view the engineering profession (and current employer) as a more motivated employee – the upshot is that an employee will most likely stay with their employer longer. Even with the Legislative Fellow time commitment, you will still be able to provide at least 2 to 3 days of work with your current employer.

From the company’s perspective, a commitment to keep critical work flowing with your reduced schedule would be important to emphasize. You will also need to discuss the number of hours you will plan to work during your term, and whether there will be any impact on your benefits, projects/work assigned, etc. Your employer is required to submit a statement as part of your application to indicate their support of this endeavor.

7. Do I have to be an active BSCES Member?

Yes, your dues and membership must be current. Further, you must be a Registered Engineer in the Commonwealth.

8. Do I get paid?

Yes, the position comes with a stipend of up to \$15,000 for 12 to 18 months of service – the exact number of months is a bit dependent on the legislative schedule as well as assignments given. For example, some Legislative Fellows have served beyond their paid term to complete review of a report. The stipend will be paid in regular increments; some Legislative Fellows have chosen two to four payments, others monthly. The \$15,000 is prorated for 18 months of service.

9. What are other reasons to become a Legislative Fellow?

As a Legislative Fellow, you will make a difference! The work you will perform really matters and your expertise (in any engineering-related matter) is a highly sought-after skill by those in the State House.

In addition to an office space and availability of the State House news service, you will be able to take advantage of State House tours/orientation session, go to legislative conferences on a wide variety of current topics, sit in the Legislative Chamber, and meet the actual legislators and their staff in person or just roaming the halls. You will have a renewed appreciation for the backdrop of how the Commonwealth’s rules and regulations are prepared. For many Legislative Fellows this service has been a life changing experience.