



## Transcript: Introduction to State Legislative Oversight Masterclass

Thanks for watching this State Oversight Academy recorded virtual class. This is the first recorded virtual class in a series on state legislative oversight, titled *Introduction to State Legislative Oversight*. My name is Ben Eikey and I help to build the State Oversight Academy into the preeminent state oversight resource used by practitioners, academics, and the public.

The State Oversight Academy is within the Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy, headquartered at Wayne State Law School. Outside our state work, the Levin Center conducts oversight workshops for Congress and international legislatures like the European Parliament. Recorded virtual classes like this are just one of several resources available on the website. Visit [levin-center.org](http://levin-center.org) to explore virtual panels, committee testimony, and follow us on X and Facebook. You can find our state-specific resources at [stateoversight.org](http://stateoversight.org). These links, as well as our contact information, are also in the pdf available along with this video.

We'll begin by explaining legislative oversight, including the "six avenues." Then, finding oversight topics followed by some examples. Once finished with defining oversight and sharing how to find topics, several best practices including bill language and structural approaches are explored. Finally, an interactive exercise where together, an oversight plan is built using the content shared throughout this class. This master class is the first in a series that will be released this spring. The three classes to follow will explore specific topics in more detail – juvenile justice, Medicaid, and insurance fraud – using the nuts and bolts of oversight we discuss in this class. Let's go!

The U.S. Constitution does not mention oversight. However, Article II imposes a duty on the president to faithfully execute the law. This implies a right in the lawmaking body, in this case Congress, to conduct inquiries to ensure that this is happening. While we are discussing presidents and Congress for the next few minutes, remember that these decisions at the federal level apply to state-level oversight as well.

Presidents beginning with George Washington have cooperated (to varying degrees) with Congress's attempts to conduct oversight. A legislative oversight investigation is not a prosecution. There are different goals and authority. However, an oversight investigation can lead to referrals to law enforcement for prosecution, and vice versa, a prosecution can trigger a legislative body to conduct an oversight inquiry.

In the *McGrain v. Daugherty* case, the Supreme Court nearly a century ago established that Congress has broad latitude to investigate virtually any issue, provided that the probe serves a valid legislative purpose and does not otherwise violate the Constitution.

What is the difference between an oversight hearing and a legislative hearing? We get this question often. Think of an oversight hearing as information gathering, or when a committee's efforts are not necessarily focused on a pending bill or vote. An expert hearing on the

implications of AI, or a hearing to discuss a recent committee report on unemployment insurance, or even an appointee confirmation hearing are all examples of oversight hearings.

In serving as the “eyes and voice” of the people, lawmakers engage in oversight operate in a cycle of accountability that begins with recognizing a problem to be solved, conducting some kind of investigation, perhaps with hearings, reports, or letters of inquiry to executive agencies or private entities. Findings from the investigation should inform policies proposed in legislation, if necessary, which at some point becomes law. Usually, agencies issue regulations authorized by the new statute, with lawmakers using their oversight powers to oversee and add input. Executive agencies implement regulations and may issue contracts to private partners.

Ultimately, there are good, bad, and indifferent outcomes where lawmakers, as the eyes and voice of the people, must follow up. At this point, the cycle is back to the top on outcome, where lawmakers should be focused on conducting additional oversight to determine where the implementation is addressing the problem. Too often, there is insufficient attention paid to the outcomes of policy, including the quality of implementation. Most policies fail at implementation, so it is especially important that executive and legislative authorities pay close attention to implementation and share their findings with the public. This accountability isn’t just between the legislative branch and the executive branch, it is to the top the public.

In serving as the eyes and voice of the people, you are fostering the democratic conversation, between elections, in which the public gets information on whether, and how well, the government is keeping promises and effectively delivering essential services.

However, too often across this country there is a rush to introduce a bill. A problem arises, and the bill comes before the oversight. I understand the need to show to the public that the legislature is taking action, and introducing a bill is an easy step.

Yet, pursuing legislation before performing oversight can be precarious, and the legislature can show action by conducting oversight. Skipping oversight mitigates the chances that a bill achieves the desired policy outcome, limits the frame of inquiry, and potentially impedes bipartisan efforts to gather and investigate the facts, wherever they may lead. While more work, inclusion of oversight into the cycle of accountability results in better bills, better outcomes, and better governance.

Lawmakers typically engage in oversight that can be characterized either as routine or event driven. Routine oversight is analogous to the “cop on the beat” who walks a neighborhood to serve as a presence, responding to problems and ensuring compliance with the law but most importantly deterring people from breaking the law.

Similarly, lawmakers who conduct routine oversight during the budget process or fact-finding hearings to identify program outcomes or evaluate the state’s contracting practices are working to deter malfeasance as much as identify it.

On the other hand, event-driven oversight is more like a firefighter responding to a crisis. Here, a scandal or disaster or chronic problem that reaches a boiling point often triggers an in-depth investigation. The goal is to understand an urgent problem, get to the heart of the matter, and build the factual consensus that can lead to reform.

More than any other power, the lawmaker's ability to get answers provides the surest avenue for accomplishing the things that inspired so many of you to run for office. State legislators are uniquely positioned to pursue facts. Gathered in legislative chambers with people from every corner of the state, there is an opportunity to work together and leverage the power of the office, of the legislature to make your state a better place by wielding authority through more than just bills. Make calls, send requests, ask tough questions in hearings to encourage further research, reconsideration, and change on policy implementation and performance. Oversight can be as simple as a single phone call or as lengthy and complex as the Senate's investigation into Watergate.

How can you use oversight to have as much, or more, impact as legislation? Let's now turn to the six avenues of state legislative oversight.

In 2018, the Levin Center commissioned a lengthy study of legislative oversight in the 50 states which details each state's capacity to conduct oversight and its use of that capacity. The final report, which you can find on our website, focuses on six avenues – or dimensions – of oversight which include the following:

- Analytic bureaucracies which include offices where examination of government processes happens in states. This could include ombuds, fiscal, commissions, policy offices, and audit offices, among others.
- The appropriations process is where the budget is used to conduct oversight. Through appropriations oversight, legislators can require hearings and reports on agencies and others receiving public funds, so the legislature is better informed.
- Committees are where elected officials use their authority on a policy topic to work together and find facts through reports, hearings, and committee oversight plans.
- Administrative rule review is when departments and agencies are examined by the legislature to confirm potential and implemented rules are adhering to the intent of the law.
- Advice and consent oversight applies to the governor's appointees, executive orders including emergency declarations, and reorganization powers.
- Monitoring contracts is how the legislature can access contract performance through hearings, reporting, and even committees aimed at monitoring high risk, high dollar contracts.

Let's take a closer look at analytic bureaucracies, a fancy term for the offices helping equip legislators with facts essential for legislative action. Some types of audits for analytic bureaucracies include performance monitoring of governmental services, fiscal tracking of

spending, ombuds receiving inquiries from citizens and legislators, and dedicated policy offices with staff conducting inquiries on behalf of their committees or their partisan caucus.

Auditors come in several structural varieties and can include those housed in the legislature like Utah, elected as a statewide office in North Carolina, and within specific agencies like Oregon's Secretary of State. Auditors produce reports full of facts and at times recommendations for the legislature to consider when improving governmental services. In many states, legislators, specific committees, or leadership have the authority to request audits from these agencies – another superpower for oversight at your disposal.

Utah's Legislative Auditor released an initial audit in 2021 on their state's prison healthcare system. A follow-up audit in 2023 found only four of the 13 previous recommendations were implemented. Among the startling facts in the follow-up report was the emergency medical technician turnover rate of 97 percent in 2022. The Director of the Department agreed he made some mistakes. Resulting from this oversight, prison healthcare was transferred to the responsibility of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Ombuds offices can be dedicated to a specific policy arena like Michigan's Corrections Ombudsman, can take inquiry from legislators like in Nebraska, and can be their own independent agency like in Hawaii.

Legislative research staff can be partisan or nonpartisan legislative employees evaluating governmental programs for public or internal use. Idaho's Office of Performance Evaluation does performance evaluations of state agencies and programs, and California's Legislative Analyst Office provides fiscal and policy advice to the California Legislature. They even call themselves the "eyes and ears" for the Legislature, channeling the same authority I discussed earlier. Partisan staff across the country can also produce oversight reports and information for internal use on caucus priorities.

Commissions are used to further study an issue and then produce recommendations for improvement. Colorado does this through their interim studies, where a committee assigns a commission of appointed experts to study and produce a report on an assigned topic. The recommendations are often introduced as legislation in the following session. Alabama's Commission on the Evaluation of Services advises the legislature through evidence-based policymaking reports on topics including suicide prevention programs.

Of course, agencies can conduct oversight of their own programs and then present information to the legislature. This is done through auditors housed within agencies or a private third-party hired by an agency and is often used when presenting a summary of department operations in a budget hearing, or even when prepping to submit an agency rule for review by the legislature.

State legislators rely on analytic bureaucracies across the country to equip them with facts.

Appropriations oversight is using the power of the purse to ensure openness and accountability in government. States use this power through several different approaches.

In Michigan, boilerplate language is a section in the budget where further context is given on how funding can be spent. This language can also require data or a report from a department on any of their operations. Here is an example the SOA is monitoring: According to the Michigan House Fiscal Agency, Michigan had 6,070 corrections officers in 2020 and 4,752 in 2022. In response to this drop in total corrections officers, the Department of Corrections will report as required by fiscal year 2023-24 budget boilerplate language on total corrections officers plus utilization of available signing and retention bonuses. Information from reporting like this can help influence the budget process and legislation; for example, there was a recently introduced bipartisan bill to allow corrections officers to opt-in to the same pension options available to Michigan state troopers.

Pennsylvania has mandatory budget hearings for departments to face a legislative committee, offer a summary of department operations, and to defend the funding request for the upcoming fiscal year. Minnesota requires agency and program performance data in the governor's initial budget proposal, making the executive branch justify its funding request with data.

Take a moment to reflect on your own committee work and how your own service in your legislature could be enhanced through stronger committee oversight. State legislative committee oversight authority is more than just bills. Hearings, interviews, assigning interim charges and studies are all examples of committee oversight. There are many opportunities to obtain information to build consensus and to guide legislative decision-making.

An online committee archive is a great way to track oversight efforts within the committee and keeps testimony givers accountable for their responses. Plus, over time an archive reveals a timeline of how chronic problems have evolved or lingered in the state, giving committee members historical context to problems. It also provides transparency to the public.

There are many committees across the country conducting great oversight. Some have specific policy jurisdictions, while others more broadly have oversight as their defined scope. In New York, the Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee focuses on investigating and exposing waste, fraud, and abuse through hearings and reports. A recent investigation uncovered unfair and deceptive practices in the primary and secondary ticket marketplace for live events. The bill on live event ticket sales, Senate Bill 9461, was signed by the governor in 2022 and instituted civil penalties for utilizing ticket purchasing software and requires full ticket prices to be disclosed prior to a customer buying a ticket. No more surprises! In Mississippi, the Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review, or PEER, is a nonpartisan committee analyzing state agency programs and operations to help the Legislature make state government more effective, more efficient, and more accountable.

South Carolina's House Legislative Oversight Committee excels at several aspects of legislative oversight. In fact, Representative Wes Newton from South Carolina is a recipient of the Levin Center's Carl Levin Award for Effective Oversight. He received the award for his work as the chair of this Committee. This standing committee is comprised of 20 representatives. The Committee is 70 percent Republican, comparable to the full House partisan makeup, which is 71.5 percent. The full Committee met an average of 11 times per session over the last four sessions, while subcommittees, of which there are five, met more frequently.

There is extensive information available on the Committee's website, including a video archive of all meetings and meeting minutes, a form for the public to submit input, and information about how to provide testimony to the Committee. These efforts help the committee in their pursuit of public information to go beyond some underutilized tip lines common in oversight efforts across the country.

Further information is available online on subcommittee structure, Committee rules and standard practices, meeting minutes, and legislative authority. South Carolina's committee oversight authority states that every standing committee, including Legislative Oversight, has the ability to issue subpoenas, take depositions, and receive testimony and evidence. This information is available for every state on the State Oversight Academy Wiki – if you go on our website, it's on the Wiki. If you have any questions as you try to navigate it, just send us a message and let us know. We're always happy to help! Back on South Carolina -- the Committee does a seven-year review of all agencies in state government, and the schedule is available online. All studies of agencies and issues of concerns, status of these studies, agency restructuring recommendations, and agency feedback on the Committee's processes is all available on its website.

Every session, the Committee issues a transparency report to citizens. Further, extensive reports are issued online following all studies, which include oversight purpose, findings, and recommendations. As an archive, all information from the Committee's inception in 2014 to today is online.

For more information, be sure to check out the Levin Center's podcast, *Oversight Matters*, where I interview Rep. Wes Newton about his time on the oversight committee. Now that we've examined good examples of committee oversight work, let's move on to the next avenue of state legislative oversight.

Administrative rule review is when departments and agencies are examined by the legislature to confirm if potential and implemented rules adhere to the intent of the legislature and the law. Review may occur prior to or after adoption, and the approaches used by legislators across the country are varied.

Colorado automatically expires all rules in May. As a result, their legislature has an annual rule review bill which does two things. First, the bill postpones the expiration of rules adopted or amended from roughly the previous year. Second, the bill includes rules specified for

elimination. This year, there are three rules being considered for elimination because the rules conflict with statute. This annual rule review bill in Colorado is a strong example of routine legislative oversight.

Louisiana has a legislative veto where a majority vote of a committee can block a rule. The Governor has the power to override this veto within 10 days, but the action of a veto can send a strong message of disapproval on a course of action to the administration and can lead the administration to change direction on a policy. An example is the 2017 emergency rule review for the Louisiana Department of Health. In response to tight budgets, the Department created an emergency rule to eliminate psychosocial rehabilitation services for youth. In response, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare held a hearing and voted unanimously to reject the emergency rule, saying the rule was not in conformity with the enabling legislation, lacked merit, and caused imminent peril to the public health, safety, and welfare of more than 40,000 children with significant behavioral health needs.

Nevada has a detailed administrative rulemaking manual available online. Within the manual is a step-by-step explanation of their administrative rulemaking process and a regulation checklist which includes the need for new regulation, the statutory authority for new regulations, and if the regulation is permanent, temporary, or emergency.

New Hampshire has a Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (JLCAR) which has the power to approve, conditionally approve, or object to rules. On their website is a nice flow chart explaining their process. Taking no action within 50 days is equivalent to approving a rule in New Hampshire, except proposed interim rules, which must be explicitly approved by JLCAR. Existing rules expire every 10 years and must be re-authorized by the JLCAR.

Wisconsin has rules authority in both a Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR) and within their standing committees. A new rule is first sent to the appropriate standing committee for review, and then the rule must be sent to JCRAR with or without committee objection. JCRAR may then decide to either uphold or overrule the standing committee's action and can also request modification of the rule by the proposing agency.

Admin rule review action varies across the country and is an important component of legislative oversight.

Advice and consent is primarily for governor's appointees and the process they go through before being confirmed to certain department/agency positions, as well as for executive orders and reorganization powers.

Florida's Senate, in addition to its executive appointment authority, also oversees executive suspensions. The governor can suspend executive branch employees not subject to impeachment, but the Senate then must either remove the employee from office or reinstate them.

Minnesota's appointee process requires a committee referral and then a vote of the full Senate. These appointments are first submitted by the governor and require statements of economic interest, application, and resume. All committee and floor action are posted online. In 2024, the Office of the Legislative Auditor discovered that the Director of the Office of Cannabis Management had not been processed through Standard Operating Procedures for Executive Director Appointments. This resulted in missing unpaid tax liens, outstanding court judgments, and other concerns with the appointee. Recommendations shared by the auditor in the preliminary assessment include adding individual and business tax information, criminal history records, and outstanding court judgments to the appointment process background checks. The Governor responded that the appointment was not the "finest hour" of his administration. Further, his office said in a reply letter the recommendations have been incorporated into their appointee vetting process including an increase in the Governor's Office capacity for research about potential appointments.

Illinois' legislature has used public input to influence gubernatorial appointments. In 2011, following a claim that an appointment was a payoff for a controversial vote made by the prospective appointee while serving in the legislature, Illinois residents were urged to sign a petition in opposition and the appointment was withdrawn.

Governors can declare emergencies in certain situations. Across the country, legislative oversight of emergency declarations is under enhanced scrutiny because of the pandemic and recent natural disasters. Plenty of states have changed their laws to enforce more advice and consent in response to emergency executive action since 2020. With these changes being so recent, many have not been tested yet. Still, they are worth an examination because oversight of gubernatorial emergency powers is an important legislative power. Some state legislatures can end an emergency declaration by resolution, and others require a vote to continue the emergency declaration after a certain number of days. Here at the State Oversight Academy, we're monitoring changes in emergency powers oversight, and we'll examine the results when used.

Kentucky's reorganization powers require legislation to pass by the end of next session to make any executive branch reorganization of agencies permanent. In the 2023 Regular Session, in the Kentucky General Assembly, reorganization bills were passed for a range of state government offices including the Division of Electronic Services within the Kentucky State Police, the Office of State Veterinarian, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. The Juvenile Justice reorganization included adding a Senator and Representative as an ex officio nonvoting member to the Juvenile Justice Oversight Council, moved this Council from Justice and Public Safety Cabinet to their Legislative Research Commission, and required uniforms for correctional officers within juvenile detention facilities.

Advice and consent powers are wielded in a variety of methods across the country.

Monitoring contracts is how the legislature can access contract performance through hearings, reporting, and even committees aimed at monitoring high risk, high dollar contracts.



Maryland, in their Office of Legislative Audits found 6.7 million dollars worth of duplicate claims within the Maryland Department of Health's Medical Care Programs Administration's Managed Care Program through a fiscal audit. Recommendations were made to the agency on recovering improper claims, obtaining timely and accurate incarceration data, and procedural reforms. Follow-up is ongoing and includes personnel changes, a new contract bid where the underperforming current contractor did not re-bid, and further external reviews to gain an outside perspective on the problems within the program.

Alabama can delay adoption of a contract by 45 days. This allows continued scrutiny of a proposed contract, which is why the legislature in 2018 delayed a contract for mental health personnel in Alabama prisons to bring attention to the fact the contractor was allegedly involved in a bribery case with Mississippi's Department of Corrections. While the legislature is unable to rescind a contract, drawing public scrutiny can cause agencies to reevaluate the contracts.

Nebraska can hold agency and contractor hearings to increase pressure on the administration to change or terminate a contract. After an Office of Inspector General report found a state contractor for child welfare services failed to meet key terms of the contract, the Nebraska Legislature held a hearing to ask questions on responsibility for the controversial contract, bringing facts to light, including how the initial bid from the contractor factors in one case manager per 25 cases, despite state law limiting this case manager ratio to no more than one per 17. The contract was terminated in late 2021.

Idaho is among the stronger examples of contract oversight. All state entities, including ones exempt from competitive bid requirements, must report their contracts annually to the legislature on the first day of regular session including each contract amount, duration, the parties, and the subject. House Bill 538 from 2016 passed unanimously and was signed by the governor to update antiquated state procurement laws and to require training for state officers and employees with procurement-related duties.

This avenue of state legislative oversight is growing across the country as more essential government services are provided through contracts.

Now that we're familiar with the six avenues of state legislative oversight, let's explore where you'll likely find topics in need of oversight.

There are multiple places to look for investigation topics. Start by reviewing the routine oversight happening in your assigned committee jurisdiction or see if your leadership has a priority where oversight might help. Look at the news in your state and across the country. Maybe a scandal happening elsewhere reveals a topic worth further inquiry in your state. Visit the SOA Wiki for agency performance and fiscal reports to be inspired by how other states approached their oversight efforts. Maybe there is a recent influx of constituent concerns on a topic like applying for unemployment benefits where a closer look is necessary. Also, reflect on

your own personal experiences with government and where something did not work as intended or, a curiosity on a program or a process that just needs further exploration. There are many places to find topics.

Here are some examples of topics addressed through quality, bipartisan oversight in state legislatures across the country. These topics can be used as inspiration later on during the oversight planning exercise – make a note if any of them are of particular interest to you.

In 2022, Michigan introduced Joint Resolution O. If passed, the resolution would have created a constitutional, bipartisan oversight committee of equal membership. Further, the committee could recommend audit topics to Michigan's Auditor General. Based on research and observational evidence, we believe committees like this can strengthen state legislative oversight. A link to this resolution is available in the accompanying PDF.

The interim session is a great opportunity for oversight. Establish automatic mechanisms for reporting throughout interim and establish commissions of experts to study and release reports on topics.

Follow-up is an essential step for great oversight. Conduct more hearings. Do another report after some time has passed to see if things improved. Keep an archive of all oversight activity so the committee can build upon previous work, and to provide transparency to the public.

In Utah, their Legislative Auditor's website has an archive of published reports and a bar chart showing audits in progress. Information on expected audits can help legislators and the public anticipate new reports, and see what topics are being prioritized for auditing. Further, the Legislative Auditor publishes a high-risk list similar to the popular GAO report.

In Connecticut, a partnership with a university is gathering and sharing data on juvenile justice. This image is from an interactive graph available online showing total delinquent referrals by local municipality. This Juvenile Justice Equity Dashboard monitors and examines juvenile justice system involvement across the state for youth of different races, ethnicities, and genders. Connecticut's oversight of juvenile justice influenced policy reforms including raising the age of juvenile justice jurisdiction to 21, elimination of chronic absenteeism as a status offense, and a rise of community-based systems for youth offenders.

And this is kind of a big picture recommendation: Oversight is a team sport. Avoid the echo chamber and pursue a bipartisan approach. In a nation struggling with where to turn to for truth on controversial topics, a legislature conducting bipartisan oversight is among our best tools for vetting information and revealing what is and is not working in government and in broader society. And remember while doing this work, the importance of civility and building relationships with agency personnel, who can grow into a trusted part of the oversight process. Process cannot lose to personalities in oversight because the stakes are too high for those most vulnerable when the government fails to keep promises. The goal is to have agencies proactively come to you to solve problems, and a focus on the facts rather than who is at fault

will help to foster positive relationships. While it is at times true that oversight uncovers terrible truths about where government is either failing to do an adequate job or even worse, being abusive or breaking the law, just as often the root cause of ineffective government can be on burdensome processes focused on compliance rather than end-user experiences. Either way, performing oversight to find the cause and solve the problem is essential for successful state government performance.

What the Supreme Court said in 1953 about Congress and oversight applies equally to state legislatures. In carrying out oversight, you are the eyes and voice of the people. To fulfill that responsibility, you need an oversight agenda and a plan for carrying it out. You can build an oversight plan on any level, from a committee to the full legislature. As an example, look at this timeline for the Colorado Jail Standards Commission to publish written recommendations on assigned topics. A plan is crucial to an effective oversight pursuit.

An oversight plan can be intimidating at first but if you start small and work one row at a time, it will begin to take shape. Creating a plan for oversight enables an elected official, a committee, a caucus, even an entire legislature to maximize the effectiveness of its oversight power by engaging with the issues that most need oversight and using its staff and other resources strategically to effect positive change. You can download a copy of this worksheet alongside this video and do the exercise with me.

My example topic is reentry. What do I seek to prioritize within my inquiry? I chose economic opportunity. Now, I need to frame my subtopic into a factual question – a question with a tangible, preferably measurable answer. A question that will bring facts to light on what is or is not happening within a government agency. My example question is, “How does the state incorporate the previously incarcerated into the workforce?” I can imagine answers to this question revolving around process and job statistics. Now, how can the avenues of state legislative oversight help uncover answers? Is there an audit report? An upcoming budget hearing? A senate confirmation hearing for a corrections department director where I can seek information? All seem like plausible oversight approaches to answer my question. Now, is the impetus for this row of my oversight plan something that has been a chronic problem in my state, or was it inspired by a recent terrible news article about how impossible it is for the previously incarcerated to find jobs? Both approaches change what resources to use throughout the inquiry. Lastly, can I answer this question in a week? Do I want a quarterly report? How long do I wish to conduct oversight on this question? Once answered, one block of the oversight plan is finished, and I can move on to the next topic.

Please consider the following things while building your oversight plan. You don’t have a crystal ball to tell you what issue will be hot – but that’s the point. Oversight should not primarily be about short-term issues. Focus on the tough challenges that remain unsolved year-after-year and the policies and programs that should be held accountable for serving the needs of the people. Think not just about waste, fraud, and abuse – although they’re important – but also program effectiveness and the need for government to be transparent and accountable.

Don't just think about the public sector. Certain private sector actors, like hospitals and banks, hold a public trust under law or receive public benefits or serve the public – they, too, should be subject to oversight.

You might start with a high-level agenda of major issues you want to cover, then develop a plan that considers the institutional and staff resources you have for conducting the oversight by assessing: which committees would get involved, what might be the staff resources, and, without getting too far into the details, what basic question would you be seeking to answer in each investigation, and how in-depth and lengthy might the investigation be?

As you work row by row, refer to the six avenues, and if the oversight is routine or event driven. Your timeline should be a realistic framing of how long the inquiry will take, helping to establish urgency to the work in the face of limited budgets, limited terms, and limited opportunities to achieve the positive impact from inquiry results.

If you are particularly proud of your oversight plan, feel free to send us your table in a message at [levincenter@wayne.edu](mailto:levincenter@wayne.edu). You might even receive feedback from the State Oversight Academy on your plan!

Thanks for watching our Introduction to State Legislative Oversight recorded class. For questions, comments, and more information, contact me at [benjamin.eikey@wayne.edu](mailto:benjamin.eikey@wayne.edu), or visit our website for more resources and information on more virtual and in-person workshops. This spring, we'll be releasing three more master classes that delve into oversight of specific topics – juvenile justice, Medicaid, and insurance fraud – so be sure to tune in for those! You can sign up for our newsletter for alerts on when they are released. Thanks again!