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History – Legislative Finance Office/Office of Fiscal and Program Review

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Maine State Legislature and Office of Fiscal and Program Review, "History – Legislative Finance Office/Office of Fiscal and Program Review" (2014). *Office of Fiscal and Program Review*. 113.
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History – Legislative Finance Office/Office of Fiscal and Program Review

The position of Legislative Finance Officer was established on March 3, 1962 pursuant to PL 1961, Chapter 411 “An Act To Provide for a Legislative Finance Officer” enacted during a November special session of the 100th Legislature.

This legislation authorized the Legislative Research Committee to appoint a Finance Officer to hold office for a term of 6 years and receive a salary of \$9,000 per year. The position was to be chosen without reference to party affiliation and solely on the ground of fitness to perform the duties of the office. The present term of appointment is 3 years.

The duties of this position were primarily to provide information to the Appropriations Committee concerning the fiscal affairs of the State as well as to examine all requests for appropriations made by executive agencies of State Government and attend public hearings.

The Legislative Finance Office assumed responsibility for staffing the Joint Standing Committee on Performance Audit on October 24, 1977 with the enactment of the Maine Sunset Act, PL 1977, c. 554. PL 1977, c. 683 authorized 3 additional positions for the Legislative Finance Office beginning in fiscal year 1978-79. The name of the Joint Standing Committee on Performance Audit was changed to the Joint Standing Committee on Audit and Program Review by PL 1979, c. 663 effective March 28, 1980. The Joint Standing Committee on Audit and Program Review was eliminated during the 117th Legislature, 1st Regular Session. That Audit Division within the office was eliminated at that time.

The Legislative Council authorized one additional position in 1981 to provide financial assistance to the Transportation Committee and 2 additional positions in 1984 to provide additional assistance to legislative committees.

The name of the office was changed to the Office of Fiscal and Program Review in the 113th Legislature, PL 1985, c. 501 effective September 19, 1985 and PL 1985, c. 737 effective April 18, 1986. The name change was a recommendation of the National Conference of State Legislatures, who had conducted a survey of the legislative staff functions.

PL 1991, c. 591, Part QQ authorized 2 additional Legislative Analyst positions to assess the financial impact of proposed legislation and agency rules on municipalities.

PL 1995, c. 368, Part J established the Revenue Forecasting Committee, a 6 member group charged with projecting state revenues. The Director of the Office of Fiscal and Program Review and one other member of the nonpartisan legislative staff serve on the committee.

Mr. Frederick W. Kneeland served as the first Legislative Finance Officer beginning with the 101st Maine Legislature and worked the 102nd and 103rd Maine Legislature. Since Mr. Kneeland, there have been six others who have served in that capacity: William H. Garside (104th to 107th), Ronald H. Lord (108th to 110th), Bent Schlosser (111th to 114th), John D. Wakefield (115th to 117th), James A. Clair (119th), Grant T. Pennoyer (120th to 126th) and Christopher W. Nolan (127th - present).