

Transforming the Legislative Branch Email Experience

In Short

To improve the Legislative Branch's communication and collaboration experience, your email address will change from name@**mt.gov** to name@**legmt.gov**.

Introduction

Many of you are familiar with the daily struggle of logging on to your computer, then logging in to your email. Most of you know this is because each of those use separate accounts – either your Legislature ID (LEGMT\C# or C#@legmt.gov) or your State ID (STATE\C# or C#@mt.gov). We realize how frustrating this has been and are working on changes that will make your life simpler.

For this to happen, we must make a fundamental change to our email that will affect how we communicate – with each other and people outside the Legislative Branch. Changing email addresses will bring management and administration of our email system under Legislative Branch control.



Below, we go into more detail on what's changing and why, as well as answer some frequently asked questions (FAQs).

Change can be unsettling, but with your help and understanding we can make this as painless as possible and ultimately end up in a less complex situation that will be easier on everyone.

Details

Because of decisions made in the best interests of the Branch around data security and integrity, and Branch independence, the Legislature has its own designated Microsoft 365 services in the Microsoft cloud (i.e., tenant). All product licensing, authentication, and Office 365 applications and data, including Teams, OneDrive, Power BI, and SharePoint, reside in this cloud with one important exception: Exchange, or Outlook email. As Microsoft has changed its service delivery model more and more to the cloud and because we continue to use these cloud-based services at ever increasing levels, our living in separate clouds has proven ever more challenging.



Without going in to too much technical detail, our current circumstances requires our systems to track two separate sets of credentials; one for email (mt.gov) and one for licensing or permission to use Office applications (legmt.gov). Normally, the credentials for both these actions are the same. But, since we get our email from the Executive Branch, our situation is abnormal and in fact, Microsoft does not support operating in this way.

The solution is to normalize our situation by combining all our Microsoft services, including email, into one place. After carefully considering our options, we decided to migrate our email service out of the Executive Branch and into our own cloud. This will provide a clear distinction between the two identities and dramatically reduce the chances of confusing the two and causing problems. This will also enable our OLIS team to better serve the needs of the Branch since all services will be under our direct administrative control.

OLIS has partnered with an IT services company called Cerium Networks to help research how best to perform this migration and ensure that it goes smoothly. We are meeting with them regularly to determine the schedule and order of events, communications to the stakeholders, and managing the myriad technical details that come with this change. We expect to complete our pre-migration work by the end of June and begin the migration itself in July. Be on the lookout for more information on scheduling and impacts in the coming weeks.

FAQ

Below are a few Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that will help explain how this change will affect you.

Q 1. What is happening?

- A** OLIS – in partnership with SITSD and Cerium Networks – will migrate your mt.gov email mailbox from the Executive Branch’s email service to the Legislative Branch’s email service.

Q 2. Will my email address change?

- A** Yes. Your email address will change from your current mt.gov address to an address based on your first and last names in the legmt.gov domain. For example, if the current address for a person named Janet Miller is jmiller@mt.gov, then their new address will be Janet.Miller@legmt.gov.



Q 3. What will happen to my old address?

- A** Your existing mt.gov address will still be listed in the Executive Branch’s email system and emails sent to that address will be automatically forwarded to your new address. This will be the case for a while after the migration, but we have not settled on exactly how long yet. We expect this will be many months from now, certainly through the next legislative session. When a decision has been made on a sunset date, we will be sure to share it with everyone.

This will give everyone time to update contacts with the new address and change business cards, letterhead, etc.

Q 4. I use my mt.gov address to sign on to external websites, applications, or services. Will I lose access to those after this change?

A No, not right away. Your old address will still be around for a while, but it would be best to change your logins to the legmt.gov address sooner rather than later.

Q 5. Can I request a different address?

A For simplicity and consistency's sake, we will initially use the standard Firstname.Lastname naming convention described above. If, after the migration is complete, you still wish to request a change, you may open a ticket with the Service Desk by emailing OLIS-ServiceDesk@mt.gov

Q 6. The Service Desk address is an mt.gov address. Will that change?

A Yes. In fact, it already exists. You can email ITSupport@legmt.gov with any questions, requests, or problems. In fact, if you use that address, a ticket will be automatically created for you in our eHelpDesk system and send you an immediate response with a ticket number you can use to follow up on your case. This is part of our continuing efforts to improve our customer service through technology.

Q 7. What about other addresses that members of the public use to contact us, like LADHotline@mt.gov, LEGMEPA@mt.gov, LegLSDPubSales@mt.gov, and LEGLFDRequests@mt.gov?

A Rest assured, we are working diligently to account for those addresses. They will be replicated in the legmt.gov domain, but the old address will continue to work, and emails sent there will be forwarded to the new mailbox. After the migration, we will need to update references to that address (on the website, in mailings, letterhead, etc.). You can help in that process by taking stock of every place we refer to an mt.gov address and send that list to OLIS-ServiceDesk@mt.gov (or ITSupport@mt.gov).

Internal group addresses like [LEG ALL](#), [LEG LSD ORPA](#), and [LEG LAD PERF](#) will also be replicated in the new email system.

Q 8. What about calendars? Will my Outlook appointments and meetings be migrated over?

A Yes. Any meetings or appointments in your current mt.gov calendar will be migrated over to your legmt.gov calendar. Certain aspects of those meetings like Teams links, resource/room reservations, etc. might have dependencies or prerequisites that need to be revisited during or after the migration. We're working closely with the experts at Cerium to minimize any impact this may have. Stay tuned!

Q 9. Will I still be able to find people in the Executive Branch in the address list and see what their calendar availability is?

A As far as the address list goes, we are working with SITSD to make sure we can continue to look up people in the Executive Branch. There are several ways to do this from a technical perspective and we are committed to finding a way that works for both us and the Executive Branch. We are also working to find a solution for sharing calendar availability. We will update you as soon as we know more on that front.

Q 10. Does this mean I won't have two logins now?

A No. You will still have to use your STATE domain account to access to things like VPN, SABHRS, and other systems, services, and databases maintained by the Executive Branch, but this will reduce how often you'll have to log in using those credentials. Instead of every day to get your email, it will only be when you need to access one of those services, like entering your timesheet or accessing the network remotely through VPN.

Q 11. Will legislators be included in this migration?

A Yes. After we finish migrating Legislative staff, we plan to move the legislators' mailboxes from MindCentric to our own email server. They will also be given legmt.gov addresses but will continue to receive emails that are sent to their mtleg.gov addresses. Once they are migrated, legislators will show up in the Outlook address book like everyone else in the Branch.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this change will make all our lives better. It will improve your experience signing on in the morning by reducing the number of logins you have to do in a day. It will normalize our use of the Microsoft Office 365 environment and make sure that applications operate as they're expected to. It will also let OLIS respond better to Legislative Branch needs and interests by giving us operational control and responsibility of the email system.

Please bear with us as we make this transformation and as always, reach out if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

OLIS

