

**CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COMMISSION ON
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**



***ANNUAL REPORT FOR
2014-2015***

A multi-jurisdictional agency of Connecticut state government

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ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Officers

Scott Jackson, Chairman, Office of Policy & Management

Members

Hon. Steve Cassano, Designee of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Hon. Frank Nicastro, Designee of Speaker of the House of Representatives
James O'Leary, Designee of the Senate Minority Leader
Lisa Roy, Designee of House Minority Leader
James Watson, Designee of Commissioner of Economic and Community Development
Robert LaFrance, Designee of Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection
Hon. Leo Paul, First Selectman of Litchfield
Joyce Stille, Administrative Officer of Bolton
Scott Shanley, Town Manager of Manchester
Lyle Wray, Regional Planning Association of Connecticut
Jeffrey Asher, Public Member, appointed by Governor
John Filchak, Public Member appointed by Senate President Pro Tempore
Carl Amento, Public Member, appointed by Speaker of House of Representatives
John T. Finkle, Public Member, appointed by Senate Minority Leader
Michael Stupinski, Public Member, appointed by House Minority Leader
Ronald Thomas, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities
Hon. Barbara Henry, Designee of the Council of Small Towns

Vacancies

Designee of Commissioner of Education
Municipal Official, town of 20,000 to 60,000, nominated by CCM and appointed by Governor
Municipal Official, town of 60,000 or more, nominated by CCM and appointed by Governor
Municipal Official, town of 60,000 or more, nominated by CCM and appointed by Governor
Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents

Staff

April Capone, Office of Policy & Management
Bruce Wittchen, Office of Policy & Management

ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

ACIR STATUTORY MANDATE

The Connecticut Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) is a 24-member agency created by the State of Connecticut in 1985 to study system issues between the state and its local governments, and to recommend solutions as appropriate. The makeup is designed to allow for open discussion across broad jurisdictional lines with a common interest in bettering local government.

As specified in [Section 2-79a of the Connecticut General Statutes](#) (CGS), the role of ACIR is to: (1) serve as a forum for consultation between state and local officials; (2) conduct research on intergovernmental issues; (3) encourage and coordinate studies of intergovernmental issues by universities and others; and (4) initiate policy development and make recommendations to all levels of government.

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The Commission has had active participants from all of its constituencies throughout its existence. Commission membership is made up of representatives from the state legislative and executive branches as well as representatives of local government, education and the general public who attend the meetings and fully participate in the deliberations and decisions.

The Commission Chairman is Scott Jackson, Undersecretary of the Intergovernmental Policy Division (IGP) of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). He is also the former Mayor of Hamden and Chairman of the South Central Regional Council of Governments.

Staff assistance is provided by OPM.

COMMISSION MEETINGS

Commission members have contributed many hours of volunteer time to the State, both at meetings and through advice and consultation with the staff. At full Commission meetings, staff work is reviewed, issues and potential recommendations are debated, and direction is given on future Commission activities. The Commission, furthermore, can establish subcommittees to address specific issues.

Commission membership is diverse in background and expertise, assuring lively debate with different viewpoints being analyzed and blended. The ACIR is the only ongoing entity where representatives of various levels of government and the public regularly meet together to discuss the governance issues that are so important to each.

COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

NEW STATE MANDATES ON MUNICIPALITIES REPORT - 2014

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/2014_ACIR_Mandates_Report.pdf

In accordance with [CGS Section 2-32c](#), staff reviewed every public and special act adopted by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor. Staff compiled a listing of acts that that created a new or reduced an existing mandate. This report was adopted by the Commission in August, 2014 (See Publications section of this report).

Twenty-one public acts enacted in 2014 included mandates as identified by the ACIR. That was four fewer than in 2013 and one fewer than in 2012, the previous short legislative session. There also were six mandates that are not specifically directed at municipalities, which is one more than in 2013 but three more than in 2012.

In comparing 2014's totals to previous years, it's important to note that the ACIR no longer attempts to distinguish between "mandates" and "minimal mandates" as was done through 2012. Classification as a minimal mandate was considered to be potentially misleading, because mandates do not affect all towns equally and it is difficult to predict the potential impact of new mandates.

A long-standing objective of the Commission is to encourage mandate reductions that can provide administrative and/or fiscal relief for municipalities. During 2014, the state enacted five such reductions, which is six fewer than in 2013 and nine fewer than in 2012, but two more than in 2010.

**MUNICIPAL BUDGET
ADOPTION EXPERIENCES IN
CONNECTICUT 2014-15**

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/2014_Municipal_Budget_Adoption.pdf

The ACIR continues to conduct annual surveys of all 169 Connecticut municipalities and 17 regional school districts to collect data and report on municipal budget adoption process. (See Publications section of this report).

Among the results of the 2014-15 budget year survey are the following: 73 municipalities adopted their budget by means of a referendum, a number similar to recent years. Five municipalities required more than three votes to adopt their 2014-15 budget, also similar to recent years, while 143 municipalities adopted their budgets on the first vote, similar to 2013 but a decline from the experiences of 2011 and 2012. Nine municipalities did not adopt a budget until after the July 1 start of the new fiscal year. While that continues the gradual increase of the previous five years, it otherwise is a smaller number than any other year since 2000.

Two regional school districts adopted their budget by means of a district meeting, only the third time since 2003 that as many as two districts did so. As in 2012 and 2013, fourteen of the seventeen districts adopted their budgets on the first ballot. Like most years, but not 2013, all districts adopted their budget prior to the start of the new fiscal year.

This was the twenty-fifth year that the Commission surveyed local governments. The compilation of such information might prove useful in a more comprehensive examination of the local budget adoption process than was previously possible.

**COMPENDIUM OF
STATUTORY &
REGULATORY
MANDATES REPORT**

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/2015_ACIR_Compendum_Supplement.pdf

CGS Section 2-79a requires the Commission, every fourth year starting in 1998, to submit to the General Assembly a report listing all state mandates on municipalities, categorizing them, providing their enactment dates along with a brief history, and describing the cost incurred by local governments in implementing these mandates. In the interim three years, the Commission must submit a supplement containing statutory mandates changed in the previous legislative session as well as any regulatory changes made during the year. The next full compendium will be published in 2018, with compendium supplements to be published in the interim.

OTHER ACIR ACTIVITIES

The Municipal Efficiencies Subcommittee of the General Assembly's Commission on Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (MORE Commission) has taken an interest in the ACIR's mandates reviews and invited ACIR staff to give a presentation at the subcommittee's 4/13/2015. Some members of that subcommittee are also members of the ACIR and participated in an ACIR work group formed in late 2013 to consider options for improving the ACIR's role in intergovernmental policy. That work group will be reconvened in 2015.

The ACIR used to select annual topics for a major research project, but has not done so since fiscal year 2008, when the Commission decided to do a major study concerning the future fiscal challenges facing both the State and the municipalities. The Commission intended to hold a symposium in Spring, 2009, but it was deferred due to budgetary considerations and, to date, has not been rescheduled. Given the limited availability of staff to support such efforts, the ACIR has not undertaken any further symposia or major research projects.