

ACIR 2024-24 Work Program

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR), for fiscal year 2025, has adopted an **Annual Work Program** setting out **two focus areas** for the year ahead. The work program informs the Governor, General Assembly, state agencies, municipal government, regional organizations and the public of ACIR's focus - which includes proposals to improve the delivery of needed governmental services.

- ✓ **Focus Area One: Municipal Workforce Development**
- ✓ **Focus Area Two: Special Education and Education Governance**

Focus Area One: Municipal Workforce Development

Connecticut's towns and cities are nearing a crisis point in their ability to recruit and retain qualified persons to fill positions to deliver essential municipal services. According to a recent report by the National League of Cities: "The current municipal labor shortage will negatively impact local governments' ability to deliver for their communities unless local leaders take the necessary steps to rebuild staffing capacity."

- ✓ ACIR will explore and recommend actions regarding non-education public-sector hiring challenges, training, diversity, and retention that have put local government's ability to deliver services at risk.
- ✓ ACIR will examine (expand on the Governor's Bill on Regional Services - House Bill 5056) opportunities and barriers for shared and regional approaches to address the public sector workforce challenge.

Subject matter experts, key legislators, and other guest speakers to assist ACIR: Governor's Workforce Council, Commissioner of Labor, Workforce Boards (perhaps a panel of the five regions), Executive Director of the Office of Higher Education, Connecticut Technical Education and Career System, President of Connecticut State Community College, Education Committee Leadership, Higher Education and Employment Advancement Leadership, Planning and Development Committee Leadership, Teacher Shortage and Retention Task Force Representative, Minority Teacher Recruitment Task force Representative, Municipal Labor Unions and the Labor and Public Employees Committee Leadership.

Completion Date: December 6, 2024 or December 5, 2025

Focus Area Two: Special Education, Education Governance and Workforce Development

Education is the major cost for cities and towns. A 2021 New England Public Policy Center Report concluded that Connecticut's heavy reliance on the property tax for funding public K-12 education systems creates a cost-capacity gap between the funding needed to provide public education and many towns' capacity to raise those funds. Added to this is Special education - which is by far the most volatile and costly burden on local taxpayers. Without a significant resolution, education costs - especially those driven by Special Education - will continue to play havoc with local budgets and drive the property tax.

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- ✓ ACIR will examine recent actions to address the varied needs of Special Education and make recommendations as warranted.
- ✓ ACIR will explore alternatives - including school governance, regionalization and shared services- to ease the cost-capacity gap for education.
- ✓ ACIR will explore and recommend actions regarding public-education hiring challenges, training, diversity, and retention that have put local government's ability to deliver services at risk

Subject matter experts, key legislators, and other guest speakers to assist ACIR: Department of Education, Education Committee Leadership, Special Education Task Force Representative, New England Public Policy Center, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Connecticut Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

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