

**CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COMMISSION ON
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**



***ANNUAL REPORT FOR
2015-2016***

A multi-jurisdictional agency of Connecticut state government

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ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Officers

Hon. Neil O’Leary, Chair, Mayor of Waterbury
Lyle Wray, Vice-Chair, Regional Planning Association of Connecticut

Members

Hon. Steve Cassano, Designee of the Senate President Pro Tempore
James O’Leary, Designee of the Senate Minority Leader
Jim Watson, Designee of Commissioner of Economic and Community Development
Kathleen Demsey, Designee of Commissioner of Education
Lee Sawyer, Designee of Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection
Martin Heft, Designee of Secretary of Office of Policy & Management
Hon. Leo Paul, First Selectman of Litchfield
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Hon. Marcia Leclerc, Mayor of East Hartford
Scott Shanley, Town Manager of Manchester
Maureen Brummett, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
Lon Seidman, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
John Filchak, Public Member appointed by Senate President Pro Tempore
Samuel Gold, Public Member, appointed by Senate Minority Leader
Carl Amento, Public Member, appointed by Speaker of House of Representatives
Ronald Thomas, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities
Hon. Barbara Henry, Designee of the Council of Small Towns

Vacancies

Designee of Speaker of the House of Representatives
Designee of House Minority Leader
Municipal Official, town of 60,000 or more, nominated by CCM and appointed by Governor
Public Member, appointed by Governor
Public Member, appointed by House Minority Leader

Staff

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. 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 - 2015

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/2015_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 December, 2015 (See Publications section of this report).

Twenty-five public acts enacted in 2015 included mandates as identified by the ACIR. That was five more than in 2014 and one more than in 2013, the previous odd-year long legislative session. It was noted that two of the mandates identified in 2015 made similar changes to the same statute, while a third eliminated a mandate from one section of statutes to recreate it elsewhere. There also were eight mandates that are not specifically directed at municipalities, which is two more than in 2014 and three more than in 2013, the previous long session.

A long-standing objective of the Commission is to encourage mandate reductions that can provide administrative and/or fiscal relief for municipalities. During 2015, the state enacted ten such reductions, which is five more than in 2014, but one fewer than the previous long session year of during 2013.

**MUNICIPAL BUDGET
ADOPTION EXPERIENCES IN
CONNECTICUT 2015-16**

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/2015_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 2015-16 budget year survey are the following: 76 municipalities adopted their budget by means of a referendum, a number similar to recent years. Two municipalities required more than three votes to adopt their budget, down from the 4-5 that did in recent years, while 149 municipalities adopted their budgets on the first vote, a slight increase from recent years.

Eight municipalities did not adopt their budget until after the July 1 start of the new fiscal year. That was similar to 2014-2015 but higher than the previous several years.

No regional school districts adopted their budget by means of a district meeting. That was two fewer than in 2014-2015, which had been only the third time since 2003 that as many as two districts did so. Fifteen of the seventeen districts adopted their budgets on the first ballot. The number has varied between fourteen and sixteen every year since 2009. Like most recent years other than 2013, all districts adopted their budget prior to the new fiscal year.

This was the twenty-sixth 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/2016_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 most recent full compendium was published in 2014, with compendium supplements 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.

The ACIR used to select annual topics for a major research project, but did not do so for a number of years because of the limited availability of staff to support such efforts. The ACIR is considering other possible approaches.