



A National Survey of Advisory Commissions on Intergovernmental Relations

by

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Advisory Commissions on Intergovernmental Relations

PREFACE

The **Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations** was established by the General Assembly in 1995 to provide a forum to work through the problems that naturally will arise as greater demands are made on state and local governments. The Indiana legislation was based upon federal and other states' enabling statutes.

The Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations is launching an effort to improve intergovernmental decision making and partnerships by serving as a forum for discussion and resolution of intergovernmental problems and concerns. The mission of the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations is to create affective communication, cooperation, and partnerships between the federal, state, and local units of government in order to improve the delivery of services to the citizens of Indiana through:

- ❖ A better understanding of the process of government and the intended and unintended outcomes of policy decisions;
- ❖ Improved communication between all levels of government and citizens;
- ❖ The promotion of long-term planning between all levels of government; and
- ❖ Applied research on policy areas in order to better understand the impacts of mandates and policy changes.

Section 12 of the statute establishing the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations names the **Indiana University Center for Urban Policy and the Environment** to administer the commission.

The mission of the Indiana University Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, as a part of the **School of Public and Environmental Affairs**, is to work with state and local governments and their associations, neighborhood and community organizations, community leaders, and business and civic organizations in Indiana to identify issues, analyze options, and develop the capacity to respond to challenges. The Center's expertise is available to provide research and analysis of policy issues, develop community consensus, offer implementation assistance, and evaluate outcomes and outputs.

For more information on this survey or other IACIR publications and reports, contact:

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ADVISORY COMMISSIONS ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

INTRODUCTION

In April 1996, the staff of the IACIR developed a survey to identify other advisory commissions and those issues being addressed by other state ACIRs. In an effort to learn from their experiences, the IACIR staff developed a questionnaire that requested information on successful and not so successful work plans, forms of communication, and legislative and budgetary approaches utilized by other ACIRs. While trial and error is also an important learning tool, the knowledge that will come from veteran ACIRs' practices may promote additional efficiencies.

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations provided IACIR with a directory of 22 intergovernmental contacts across the nation. The profiled state and local organizations, similar in purpose, structure, and function to the U.S. ACIR, received the 18-question survey (Appendix A). Massachusetts and Wisconsin informed us that their ACIRs were no longer in existence, however, of the 20 remaining organizations, 12 responded to our survey, providing us with a 60 percent return rate. Most of the states responding expressed an interest in receiving the results of our survey.

MISSIONS

The majority of the responding ACIRs were created and defined either through

state statute, resolution, or executive order. Some of the commissions and committees were originally established many years ago and were recently redefined or incorporated into another staff agency. For the most part, all the organizations were charged with similar tasks:

- ◆ To serve as a forum for the discussion and study of intergovernmental problems and concerns.
- ◆ To enhance coordination and cooperation between federal, state, and local governments.
- ◆ To provide research, information, and recommendations regarding policies to be developed or modified.

MEETINGS

In general, ACIRs meet on an average of six times per calendar year. Some states, such as New York, hold only one annual commission meeting, preceded by periodic work sessions between the commission's chair and individual members, while Maryland holds commission meetings approximately 15 times a year.

One-half of the responding commissions and committees set short-term goals at each meeting. Generally, specific topics are identified for discussion or presentation at each meeting, thus often resulting in additional activities for the group. The

remaining six ACIRs stated that they do not set short-term goals at each meeting.

ISSUES FACING COMMISSIONS

Each state responding to the survey detailed different issues facing their commission, as well as what specific action or activities have been successful and not successful in addressing the identified issue. Despite the fact that individual states have their own unique concerns, commissions and committees across the country face several similar issues:

- ◆ Devolution of federal program and authority;
- ◆ Federal and state mandates;
- ◆ Fiscal policy;
- ◆ Taxation;
- ◆ Interlocal and intergovernmental cooperation;
- ◆ Federal aid and block grants;
- ◆ Impact of federal and state legislation and proposed legislation; and
- ◆ Home rule.

Appendix B lists the ACIR's individual responses and more fully describes specific tasks or actions that have been either effective or ineffective in addressing each of the issues facing the commissions. For instance, one issue of importance to the Illinois ACIR was federal aid to the state. Their commission created the first and only federal aid tracking system in Illinois.

IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The survey asked organizations to describe the most important accomplishment(s) of their ACIR in its initial two years of existence. In general, the states responding

specified research publications and studies. Some of the common topics included: home rule, mandates, elections, and fiscal responsibility.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Ten of the twelve responding ACIRs make recommendations to the legislature. Several commissions receive testimony and conduct research in areas of interest for debate and discussion. As a result, the staff prepares draft reports and/or proposed legislation for consideration and commission approval.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is imperative for a productive and successful commission. While some states indicated direct one-on-one meetings to be the best form of communication, other found fax and the mail to be most effective. Reports, letters, and telephone contact were most often mentioned as ineffective modes of communication.

CONSTITUENT GROUPS

It appears that all the ACIRs responding have developed partnerships with a multitude of community groups, associations, and government bodies. The commissions have frequent communication with their respective General Assembly, as well as their local associations for counties, city and towns, and townships. Additionally, several ACIRs mentioned an alliance with school boards and superintendents.

THE INTERNET

Four commissions, other than IACIR, have found their way onto the information super highway. Florida, South Carolina, and Utah all have home pages on the Internet, while North Dakota can be viewed through their Legislative Assembly home page.

BUDGETS

In most states the legislature sets and defines the ACIR budget. Of the ACIR's with budgets, the majority have line-item appropriations. The budgets for the ACIRs varied from zero to \$1.2 million. This variance in budgets reflects differences in staffing agencies, operations, and

personnel, in addition to commission and staff sizes. The majority of the commissions did not believe that they would need to ask for increased appropriations in the near future, however, if an increase was needed they would approach their legislature or ask legislative members to act on their behalf.

CONCLUSIONS

While the IACIR can model its future actions around the successful practices among other ACIRs, the IACIR's current operating model seems to fit many of those described as effective in accomplishing the ACIR's mission.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS SURVEY

Organization Name: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Fax/E-Mail: _____

1. Please attach a copy of your Mission Statement.

2. Who defined and created your mission statement?

3. How many times do you meet in one calendar year?

4. Do you set specific short term goals at each meeting?

No Yes (please give examples)

5. What are the five most important issues facing your commission?

Issue 1: _____

Issue 2: _____

Issue 3: _____

Issue 4: _____

Issue 5: _____

6. What specific actions/activities have been successful in addressing the above issues?

Issue 1: _____

Issue 2: _____

Issue 3: _____

Issue 4: _____

Issue 5: _____

7. What specific actions/activities have NOT been successful in addressing the above issues?

Issue 1: _____

Issue 2: _____

Issue 3: _____

Issue 4: _____

Issue 5: _____

8. Describe the most important accomplishment(s) of your ACIR during the first two years.

9. Does your ACIR make recommendations to the legislature?

No Yes (please describe how your commission develops these recommendations and what resources are used)

10. What method(s) of communication have you found to be most effective when communicating with your commission members?

11. What method(s) of communication have you found to be least effective when communicating with your commission members?

12. What other constituent groups or individuals have you included in your communications?

13. Do you have a home page on the World Wide Web?

No Yes (please explain how it has been beneficial and provide the address)

14. What is the size of the ACIR budget (if available, please attach a copy of your budget)?

15. Who sets the ACIR budget?

16. How is your budget defined (i.e., line item)?

17. What is your strategy for requesting increased appropriations?

18. Additional comments and/or suggestions:

APPENDIX B

SURVEY RESULTS

Table B1
State Intergovernmental Contacts

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Colorado Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations Geoff Withers 1313 Sherman Street, Room 521 Denver, CO 80203 Phone: 303-866-4660 Fax: 303-866-2251</p> | <p>Connecticut Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations Office of Policy and Management David W. Russell, Director 450 Capitol Avenue-MS#54SLP P.O. Box 341441 Hartford, CT 06134-1441 Phone: 860-418-6385 Fax: 860-418-6493</p> |
| <p>Florida Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations Marsha Hosack, Executive Director c/o House Office Building, Suite 4 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300 Phone: 904-488-9627 Fax: 904-487-6587</p> | <p>Illinois Commission on Intergovernmental Cooperation Leroy Whiting, Executive Director 707 Stratton Office Building Springfield, IL 62706 Phone: 217-782-6924 Fax: 217-524-2219</p> |
| <p>Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations John L. Krauss, Staff Director Center for Urban Policy & the Environment 342 N. Senate Avenue, Suite 300 Indianapolis, IN 46204 Phone: 317-261-3006 Fax: 317-261-3050</p> | <p>Iowa Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations Thane R. Johnson, Senior Research Analyst Legislative Service Bureau, State Capitol Building Des Moines, IA 50319 Phone: 515-281-3048 Fax: 515-281-8027</p> |
| <p>Louisiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations Tammy Cohn P.O. Box 94183 Baton Rouge, LA 70804 Phone: 504-342-9818 Fax: 504-342-9021</p> | <p>Maine Governor's Municipal Advisory Council The Honorable Valerie Landry, Commissioner of Transportation Statehouse Station #16 Union Street Augusta, ME 04330 Phone: 504-342-902 Fax: 207-287-5292</p> |
| <p>Maryland Joint Committee on Federal Relations Karen D. Morgan, Principal Analyst 90 State Circle Annapolis, MD 21401-1991 Phone: 410-841-3736 Fax: 410-841-3778</p> | <p>Missouri Commission on Intergovernmental Cooperation Lois Pohl, Director Truman Building, Room 760, P.O. Box 809 Jefferson City, MO 65102 Phone: 314-751-4834 Fax: 314-751-7819</p> |
| <p>Montana Local Government Policy Council Dr. Kenneth L. Weaver, Director-Local Gov. Center, Montana State University Bozeman, MT 59717 Phone: 406-994-6694 Fax: 406-994-1905</p> | <p>New York Legislative Commission on State-Local Relations Arthur B. Porter, Executive Director Agency Building 4, 14th Floor, Empire State Plaza Albany, NY 12248 Phone: 518-455-5035 Fax: 518-455-5396</p> |

Table B1 - cont'd
State Intergovernmental Contacts

| | |
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| <p>North Carolina Local Government Partnership Council Sara Stuckey, Chief of Local & Regional Affairs 116 W. Jones Street, Suite 5106 Raleigh, NC 27603-8003 Phone: 919-733-7232 Fax: 919-733-7232</p> | <p>North Dakota Legislative Council-North Dakota Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations John D. Bjornson, Counsel Office of Legislative Counsel, State Capitol 600 East Boulevard Bismarck, ND 58505 Phone: 701-328-2916 Fax: 701-328-3615</p> |
| <p>Ohio State and Local Government Commission Kristi Spears, Executive Director 77 South Street, Room 714 Columbus, OH 43266-0535 Phone: 614-466-2108 Fax: 614-466-9150</p> | <p>Oklahoma Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations Penny Christ, Project Manager State Capitol Building, Room 307 Oklahoma City, OK 73105 Phone: 405-523-3533 Fax: 405-521-5507</p> |
| <p>South Carolina Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations Dan B. Mackey, Director P.O. Box 12395 Columbus, SC 29211 Phone: 803-737-1975 Fax: 803-737-1707</p> | <p>Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations Dr. Harry A. Green, Executive Director 226 Capitol Boulevard Building, Suite 508 Nashville, TN 37219 Phone: 615-741-3012 Fax: 615-532-2443</p> |
| <p>Utah Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations Lee King, Executive Director State Capitol Building, Room 116 Salt Lake City, UT 84114 Phone: 801-538-1571 Fax: 801-538-1547</p> | <p>Virginia Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations Adele MacLean, Secretary Eighth Street Office Building, Room 702 Richmond, VA 23219 Phone: 804-786-6508 Fax: 804-371-7999</p> |
| <p>Washington Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations Joe McGavick, Deputy Director, Community Development 906 Columbus Street, SW, P.O. Box 48300 Olympia, WA 98504-8300 Phone: 360-753-7426 Fax: 360-586-3582</p> | |

**Table B2
Who Defined and Created Your Mission Statement**

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|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Colorado | Senate Joint Resolution 1993: Duties of the state-local forum shall include discussing issues pertaining to state-local relations which the members find relevant, and making such reports as may be necessary to the General Assembly and the Governor regarding policies which may need to be developed or altered. |
| Connecticut | State legislation, Sec. 2-79a (b): The Commission shall: (1) serve as a forum for consultation among state and local government officials; (2) conduct research on intergovernmental issues; (3) encourage and coordinate studies of intergovernmental issue by universities, research and consulting organizations, and others; (4) initiate policy development and make recommendations for consideration by all levels and branches of government. The commission shall, from time to time, publish reports of its findings and recommendations and shall issue, annually, a public report on its activities. |
| Florida | Statutes enacted in 1977: Paraphrasing the statutory provisions in Part VI, Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, the Council was established to: (1) serve as a forum for the discussion and study of intergovernmental problems; (2) evaluate the interrelationship among local, regional, state, interstate, and federal agencies in the provision of public services and prepare studies and recommendations to improve organization structure, operational efficiency, allocation of functional responsibility, and the delivery of services; (3) analyze the structure, functions, responsibility, and the delivery of services; (4) examine proposed and existing federal and state program; (5) review the research and recommendations of national commissions, such as the federal Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, that study local government relationships and problems; and (6) analyze the fiscal impact of new state programs or amendments to existing programs on municipalities and counties. |
| Illinois | The Illinois General Assembly prescribed the duties and purposes of the Commission. The Commission staff defined and created the mission statement. Our mission is to facilitate communication and cooperation between the state of Illinois and other levels of government and provide legislative support services to the Illinois General Assembly. |
| Iowa | Iowa General Assembly |
| Maryland | Maryland Legislature: The Maryland ACIR was established by Ch. 90 Laws of 1995 and duties assumed by joint committee. |
| New York | Statute Authorizes: a legislative commission on state-local relations is hereby continued to examine, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning the state's system of aid to localities, the division of state and local responsibilities, state mandates on local governments and limits on the ability of local governments to raise revenue, incur debt, and manage resources. The commission shall make such recommendations as it may deem necessary to provide an equitable system of state aid to local governments, to encourage the most effective use of state and local resources, to preserve the fiscal integrity of both state and local governments, and otherwise to strengthen the partnership between the state and its local governments. |

Table B2 - cont'd
Who Defined and Created Your Mission Statement

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| North Dakota | The 1989 Legislative Assembly created the ACIR and prescribed its duties and functions. The legislation was a result of an interim study during the 1987-88 interim. The advisory commission on intergovernmental relations shall: (1) Serve as a forum for the discussion of resolution of intergovernmental problems. (2) Engage in activities and studies relating to the following subjects, (a) local governmental structure; (b) fiscal and other power and functions of local governments; (c) relationships between and among local governments and the state or any other government; (d) allocation of state and local resources; (e) interstate issues involving local governments, including cooperation with appropriate authorities of other states; and (f) statutory changes required to implement commission recommendations. (3) Present reports and recommend legislative bills to the legislative council for consideration in the same manner as interim legislative council committees. (4) Prepare model ordinances or resolutions for consideration by officials of political subdivisions. |
| South Carolina | The SCACIR, originally created by Executive Order of the Governor in 1979, was established as a state agency by the General Assembly in 1984, and was incorporated into the State Budget and Control Board in 1995. Its mission is to improve coordination between the state and local governments and to provide research, information, and advisory services to public officials and citizens of South Carolina. |
| Ohio | The commission staff approved by commission members. |
| Utah | Legislative State and Local Affairs Standing Committee directed the Utah ACIR to study the relations between state and local government. To the extent that these relationships affect federal-state intergovernmental relations, the council shall coordinate and cooperate with the Executive Office of the Governor, the Legislature, and local officials on matters affecting relations at various governmental levels. The purposes of the council are: (1) To serve as a common forum to identify, discuss, and study challenges and opportunities involving intergovernmental relations. (2) To provide a continuing exchange of information and insure effective communication between all levels of government. (3) To foster better relations among state and local governments. (4) To draft and disseminate legislative bills, constitutional amendments, and model local ordinances necessary to implement recommendations of the council. (5) To encourage and, where appropriate, coordinate studies relative to intergovernmental relations conducted by universities, state, local, federal agencies, and research and consulting organizations. (6) To review the recommendations of national commissions studying federal, state, and local government relationships and problems and assess their possible application to Utah. (7) To review and make recommendations to appropriate agencies to insure that state and federal programs serve the interest of local governments. (8) To act as an advisory body to insure that federal aid programs pertaining to local affairs integrate with local needs and to assist in the formulation and adoption of general policies between state and local entities. (9) To maintain communication, support, and cooperation between state and local government. In fulfilling this purpose, the council recognizes the statewide role of the Utah League of Cities and Towns, and the Utah Association of Counties and similar organizations serving local governments. (10) To study funding requests to the Governor's budget and submit priority recommendations. (11) To identify and seek to eliminate unnecessary mandates from state legislation. |

Table B2 - cont'd
Who Defined and Created Your Mission Statement

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| Virginia | Virginia General Assembly states the commission shall act as a forum for identifying areas of mutual concern to local and state officials, discussing and offering recommendations on issues affecting local governments and, in particular, those issues affecting the relationship of the Commonwealth with its various local governments. The commission shall, in addition to the above-mentioned duties: (1) Advise on state and federal programs and policies. (2) Identify, discuss, and bring into focus statewide opportunities and issues regarding local government. (3) Arrange conferences between officials of local governments and state agencies, when appropriate. (4) Formalize proposals for coordination and cooperation between the commonwealth and its local governments. (5) Discuss state assistance to local governments, including financial technical, and policy issues. (6) Review services and shared programs between state and local governments, such as constitutional officers, health, welfare, and corrections. (7) Provide information on and assist in soliciting federal grants. |
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Table B3
How Many Times Do You Meet in One Calendar Year

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|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Colorado | Approximately 10 |
| Connecticut | Approximately 6 |
| Florida | 5-6 |
| Illinois | 2 |
| Iowa | A minimum of 4 |
| Maryland | Approximately 15 |
| New York | 1 annual commission meeting and periodic work sessions with commission chairman and individual members as required. |
| North Dakota | North Dakota Century Code Section 54-35.2-01 requires the ACIR to meet at least semiannually. Currently 4 have been scheduled for 1996. |
| Ohio | Approximately 4 per year |
| South Carolina | 4 |
| Utah | 12 |
| Virginia | a minimum of 4 per year, by statute |

Table B4
Are Short-Term Goals Set at Each Meeting

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Colorado | No |
| Connecticut | No |
| Florida | Yes—We have an agenda at each meeting and stick to each item. |
| Illinois | Yes—Goals are set annually through a strategic planning process. Oftentimes these meetings result in additional activities. |
| Iowa | Yes—Speakers on specific topics such as tax increment financing or underground storage tanks. |
| Maryland | No |
| New York | Yes—Short-term goals/projects to be completed within a period of one year are included in a proposed work plan presented for the approval of Commission members at the annual meeting. Modifications to the work plan are made from time to time by the Commission's executive committee. |
| North Dakota | Yes—ACIR attempts to identify one or two topics on which to focus for each meeting. |
| Ohio | Yes—The commission staff told commission members they would meet with local government associates to discuss their unfunded mandate priorities. This would then be reported on at the next commission meeting. |
| South Carolina | No |
| Utah | No |
| Virginia | No—not routinely. Once a year the Program Committee recommends a program for the ACIR. Once endorsed by the ACIR, the program guides meeting content for subsequent meetings. The Chairman sets the agendas in consultation with staff. Otherwise, goals may be discussed at the time. |

Table B5

What Are the Five Most Important Issues Facing Your Commission

- + What specific action/activities have been successful in addressing the above issues?
- What specific actions/activities have NOT been successful in addressing the above issues?

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| Colorado | <p>Issue 1) Fiscal policy for state and local governments. + Fiscal policy study underway.</p> <p>Issue 2) Devolution of federal programs and authority. + Monitoring of activity in Congress.</p> |
| Connecticut | <p>Issue 1) Mandates on municipalities. + Identification of all statutory and regulatory mandates. Annual report on new mandates coupled with required hearings. - ACIR recommendation for changes in existing mandates.</p> <p>Issue 2) Inter-local cooperation. + Publication of "success stories" of interlocal cooperative ventures. - Any kind of legislation viewed as coercive on municipalities.</p> <p>Issue 3) Urban distress/property tax burdens. + Publication of paper on financing local government.</p> |
| Florida | <p>Issue 1) Ensuring the relevance of the commission to policy makers. + Enactment of legislation to revise the structure and name of council to Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations.</p> <p>Issue 2) State/Local government administration with limited resources. + A proposed project to identify the methods for enhancing local government revenues.</p> <p>Council is currently voting on their 1996-97 Interim Projects from the following list: Review of constitutional reform issues associated with local government; Effects of devolution/issues of federalism; Intergovernmental aspects of school district governance; Enhancement of local government revenues; Municipal incorporation and annexation; Community work squads; District juvenile boards and county juvenile justice councils; Mandates catalogue; Deleting substantially complete and construction work in programs in ad valorem taxation statutes; and Quasi-judicial proceedings.</p> |

Table B5 - cont'd
What Are the Five Most Important Issues Facing Your Commission

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| <p>Illinois</p> | <p>Issue 1) New federal block grant proposals and existing block grants. + Report annually on existing block grants reports and held a public hearing on new federal block grant proposals.</p> <p>Issue 2) Federal aid to the state. + Established the first and only federal aid tracking system in Illinois. Each year the commission publishes a report on funds received from the federal government in <i>Federal Funds to State Agencies</i>, a perennial sellout.</p> <p>Issue 3) State aid to local governments. + Every two years the commission publishes a report on state aid to local governments in the publication <i>State Assistance to Local Governments</i>. Legislators have found this publication very useful for their constituents.</p> <p>Issue 4) State Mandates to local units of government. + The commission is statutorily required to hold hearings to review the recommendations and information collected by IL Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) on state mandates. DCCA must collect and maintain information on state mandates, review applications by local governments for reimbursement of funds associated with implementing state mandates, hear complaints or suggestions from local governments and other affected organizations as to existing or proposed state mandates, and report each year to the governor and legislature regarding the administration of the provisions of the State Mandates Act and proposed changes to the Act.</p> <p>Issue 5) Welfare reform. + The commission cosponsored with the University of Illinois a series of public conferences on state welfare reform programs and federal welfare proposals and analyzed the fiscal effect on Illinois of proposed federal legislation.</p> |
| <p>Iowa</p> | <p>Issue 1) State and Federal mandates. + House Bill 2256—enacted in 1996 to outline requirements for the implementation of new or revised block grants. - Reducing voting poll hours by one hour from 13 hours to 12 hours.</p> <p>Issue 2) Home rule issue. + Support for U.S. ACIR study of the role of federal mandates in intergovernmental relations. - Attempting to remove certain officers from the general election ballot—i.e., library trustee, hospital trustee, and soil and water district commissioners.</p> <p>Issue 3) Economic development. + Chapter 25B, 1995 Iowa Code—identify and address new state mandates in state legislation. - Attempting to remove the property tax freeze funding county budgets.</p> <p>Issue 4) Vertical infrastructure needs. + Supported legislation to reform funding of mental health costs—greater share by state appropriations.</p> <p>Issue 5) Local government budget restrictions.</p> |

Table B5 - cont'd
What Are the Five Most Important Issues Facing Your Commission

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| <p>Maryland</p> | <p>Issue 1) Federal budget reductions. Issue 2) Preemption. Issue 3) Telecommunications regulation. Issue 4) Federal mandates. Issue 5) State mandates. *It's difficult to identify <i>successful</i> actions as we are currently dealing with issues. The commission holds hearings on issues and communicates with the legislature about the findings. If the subject is complex, staff may be asked to do a special study.</p> |
| <p>New York</p> | <p>Issue 1) What type of assistance should the state provide to local governments experiencing fiscal distress? + The legislature has dealt individually w/ localities experiencing financial distress, including approving debt financing legislation specific to a locality authorizing liquidation of cumulative/projected deficits; state oversight at advisory level. - Attempting to pass general legislation creating a distressed local government support program to assist municipalities in financing accumulated deficits that provides a state oversight board at advisory, supervisory or control level.</p> <p>Issue 2) What state imposed mandates on local government can the state now eliminate? + Identification of the numerous state mandates and development of a mandate database; the legislature conferencing on small, select list of mandates targeted for elimination and to be included in a bill providing "mandate relief." - Attempting to pass legislation that eliminates a large number of unrelated mandates or all mandates in the broad functional areas of state mandate imposition, with high fiscal impact (relief) projections for local governments.</p> <p>Issue 3) What state government functions or services can be consolidated for reasons of economy and efficiency? + Commission analysis and commission-developed proposed legislation have elevated the discussion on consolidation in the legislature. - Having the Legislature wait for the governor to take the initiative to implement or, where necessary, to recommend substantial steps for consolidation.</p> <p>Issue 4) What is the impact of Governor's budget proposals on local governments? + Following the submission of the executive budget to the legislature, the commission provides statewide and regional analysis of the impact of Governor's budget proposals on localities. The analysis is updated as the various parts of the budget are negotiated throughout the legislative session. A final analysis of impact is provided on the agreed-to budget.</p> <p>Issue 5) What is the nature and fiscal impact on local taxpayers of the "special district?" + Commission analysis on "special districts" is in progress. Report should provide legislature with a greater understanding of the nature and finances of special districts, and should insert special districts into the ongoing discussion on local government fiscal management. - This is a new issue area. Commission activities have been limited to research and compilation of information to be included in an internal report.</p> |

Table B5 - cont'd
What Are the Five Most Important Issues Facing Your Commission

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| <p>North Dakota</p> | <p>Issue 1) Mandates and the state fiscal note process for bills affecting political subdivisions. + The ACIR is considering methods to improve the fiscal note process so that political subdivisions and legislators are aware of the fiscal impact of bills on political subdivisions. - Finding feasible and suitable methods of preparing accurate and timely fiscal notes.</p> <p>Issue 2) Consolidation of local government mill levies. + Studying the possibility of combining all or most local government mill levies to provide local officials with flexibility in budgeting. - The ACIR has not yet been able to develop a consensus regarding whether consolidation of levies is desirable.</p> <p>Issue 3) Intergovernmental cooperation. + The ACIR acts as a clearinghouse for the filing of cooperative agreements between and among local governments. Also, the ACIR acts as a forum through which local officials can discuss problems in working with state officials and departments. - Many officials are not aware of the resources available to them.</p> <p>Issue 4) The continued existence of the ACIR. + Because an interim legislative committee is considering abolishing the ACIR, the ACIR is evaluating its structure and its effectiveness. - Opponents of the ACIR believe that is not necessary. Others believe that the structure of the ACIR should be changed to make it more effective.</p> <p>Issue 5) Devolution. + Monitoring the process of devolution. - There is not much that can be done other than monitoring the process.</p> |
| <p>Ohio</p> | <p>Issue 1) Unfunded mandates. + Creation of the mandate task force.</p> <p>Issue 2) Outreach. + Hosting regional forums for local officials in conduction with the chair of the commission Lieutenant Governor Nancy P. Hollister.</p> <p>Issue 3) Monitor legislation. + Mass mailings to local officials.</p> <p>Issue 4) Publish various resources regarding state government information.</p> <p>Issue 5) Liaison between officials and state agencies.</p> |
| <p>South Carolina</p> | <p>Issue 1) State and local government relations.</p> <p>Issue 2) Developing a state growth policy.</p> <p>Issue 3) Completion of state "infrastructure" study.</p> <p>Issue 4) Strengthen home rule capacity.</p> <p>Issue 5) Continuing education for elected and appointed officials.</p> |

Table B5 - cont'd
What Are the Five Most Important Issues Facing Your Commission

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| Utah | <p>Issue 1) Improving the working relationship between the legislature and local government elected officials—the trust level does not exist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Adopting a set of “Principles of Intergovernmental Relations” that the governor and legislature can use. - Sending letters of reports that are critical of the legislature. Also, taking a position on a specific piece of legislation has caused problems. <p>Issue 2) Getting the legislature to accept the fact that their actions cause serious repercussions for local governments (state mandates).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + As part of the fiscal note process outlining the impact on local government, this is frequently used in committee and floor debates. <p>Issue 3) How best to serve the needs of local government and the legislature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Annually provide written reports and briefings to the legislative management committee. Invite legislature to all special meetings and encourage active participation of cabinet officials. |
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Table B5 - cont'd
What Are the Five Most Important Issues Facing Your Commission

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| <p>Virginia</p> | <p>Issue 1) Relevance—The advisory nature of the ACIR and lack of enforcement powers seems to diminish the ACIR’s importance in the minds of some. The low rate of attendance on the part of some members seems to indicate a low level of commitment to the ACIR’s mission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The 1995-96 program blended projects, which seems to have reinvigorated the body to a certain degree. A close working relationship with the local government associations has been critically important. - Letters from the chairman asking the intentions of ACIR members who had failed to attend at least three consecutive meeting and pleas for attendance to help ensure a quorum were of minimal value. <p>Issue 2) Program constraints—A variety of factors limits the types of programs that are appropriate for the ACIR. the fact that the ACIR meets infrequently and has a small staff means that lengthy or complex projects are generally not well suited to the ACIR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The ACIR’s 1995-96 program blended projects of varying length and complexity, political sensitivity, and overlap with other entities. A list of program ideas was circulated to representatives of the local government associations, who either meet with the program committees or communicate their reactions to staff members before the program committee adopts its recommendations. - Confining the ACIR’s program to noncontroversial and smaller projects did not prove effective. <p>Issue 3) Continuity of membership—Three vacancies currently exist on the ACIR as a result of election losses in November. Two additional vacancies are likely in the near future due to members’ health problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Timely recommendations were sent to the appointing authorities followed by reminders, in an effort to accelerate the member appointment process. In the meantime staff have created a Member Manual to help orient new members once they do join the ACIR and to rekindle the interest of long-term members. - Confining the ACIR’s program to noncontroversial and smaller projects did not prove effective. <p>Issue 4) Visibility—Although in its six years the ACIR has undertaken several significant initiatives, few people credit the ACIR for its accomplishments or are even aware of them. Several ACIR initiatives were later adopted by other entities that have been identified with them instead of the ACIR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Staff have been taking advantage of all public relations opportunities to help inform more individuals and groups about the ACIR’s work. Other more routine PR measures include notice in the local government associations’ newsletters concerning the ACIR’s program and activities and calls before regular meetings to interested staff members of other state agencies. <p>Issue 5) Limited staff and resources.</p> |
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Table B6

Describe the Most Important Accomplishment(s) of Your ACIR During the First Two Years

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| Colorado | Study of state sales tax exemptions and federal mandates on local governments. |
| Connecticut | The publication of a major report on home rule in Connecticut and the establishment as a forum for "level playing field" discussion between state and local officials. |
| Florida | The Florida ACIR published several notable reports in 1978 and 1979, the most important were the <i>Fiscal Capacity of Local Government in Florida: An Informational Report</i> and two reports on the <i>Double Taxation Issue Transcript Testimony</i> . |
| Illinois | The commission was established in 1937. The most important accomplishment at this early stage was the assignment of the commission to carry forward the participation of the state as a member of the council on state government. |
| Iowa | Review of state mandates on counties, cities, and school districts. |
| Maryland | The commission was created in 1937. But, among the most important accomplishments was the completion of a catalog of state mandates and a year-long investigation (1994) of federal mandates. |
| New York | <u>Publications:</u> <i>New York's System of State Aid: Perspectives on the Issues</i> ; <i>New York's Local Government Structure: The Division of Responsibilities</i> ; and <i>New York's Limits on Local Taxing and Borrowing Powers: A Time for Change</i> . <u>Internal Analysis:</u> <i>Analysis of Impact of 1980 Census Population Counts on State Aid Distribution Formulas</i> . <u>Conferences for Government Officials:</u> <i>New York's Fiscal System—Reviewing the Blueprint, Strengthening the Partnership and New York's Service Delivery System—Managing Today, Planning Tomorrow</i> . |
| North Dakota | The ACIR recommended a bill that consolidated most local elections with the statewide primary election. The ACIR also extensively studied cooperation between and among local governments and the authority under law of local governments to enter cooperative agreements. |
| Ohio | N/A |
| South Carolina | Superb research, publications, and recommendations regarding mandates in South Carolina and need for a planning process. |
| Utah | Unknown |
| Virginia | Reorganization and program planning. Official action taken since reorganization 1990 includes Resolution to all local governments in Virginia urging them to establish E-911 emergency response services in their localities, a statement to the Governor's Advisory Commission on the Dillion rule and local government, recommending additional home rule authority for Virginia's local governments, two reports on Town-County Fiscal Relations: The Issue of Double Taxation, and a letter of support to the department of housing and community development endorsing draft legislation designed to expand local governments' authority to enter into long-term voluntary revenue-sharing agreements. |

Table B7
Does Your ACIR Make Recommendations to the Legislature

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| Colorado | No |
| Connecticut | Yes—Recommendation are proposed in draft reports, debated by the commission, and if approved, forwarded to the appropriate agencies. |
| Florida | Yes—Legislature members serve on the council. The staff researches areas of interest, the council considers options, and recommendations may result in proposed legislation sponsored by the chair and vice-chair. |
| Illinois | Though infrequent, recommendations have been made to the legislature as a result of monitoring federal legislation by the office in Washington, DC |
| Iowa | Yes—Receive testimony, research, etc. on issues, develop recommendations from commission discussions, and prepare proposed legislation. |
| Maryland | Yes—issue reports twice a year (after session and after interim). Staff drafts the reports and committee approves. |
| New York | Yes—The commission makes recommendations as it may deem necessary to provide an up-to-date system of state aid to local governments, encourage the most effective use of state and local resources, and assure the communities effectiveness in the state aid system. Through staff research, the sponsoring of conferences and hearings, dialogue with state and local government officials, and the ongoing monitoring of the activities of the legislature, information is compiled and used by the proposals. The commission maintains a full-time support staff to make policy recommendations and conduct research. |
| North Dakota | Yes—The ACIR is set up like other interim legislative committees. It has the use of the Legislative Council staff services and the authority to draft and recommend to the Legislative Council bills for consideration by the Legislative Assembly. |
| Ohio | Yes—The commission reports annually to the governor and general assembly. This year the commission will be making recommendations to the governor and the legislature (12-96) regarding the repeal and modification of existing state mandates. |
| South Carolina | Yes—Often our final reports contain “proposed” legislation to implement suggested changes. |
| Utah | No |
| Virginia | Yes—based on research conducted by ACIR staff and others, on the outcome of ACIR forums with representatives of local government associations and other invited experts and guest, on ACIR discussions in regular meetings, and on comments from staff of other state agencies and the public. |

**Table B8
Communication**

- + What method(s) of communication have you found to be MOST effective when communicating with your commission members?
- What method(s) of communication have you found to be LEAST effective when communicating with your commission members?

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| Colorado | + Fax and mail - None |
| Connecticut | + Fax and mail - N/A |
| Florida | + Meetings - Reports |
| Illinois | + Direct contact by telephone has been the most effective - Memorandum or letters |
| Iowa | + Direct mail or telephone - N/A |
| Maryland | + Sending short written memos or letters - Phone contact—it is difficult to get members on the phone when the legislature is not in session |
| New York | + One-on-one discussions with members - Formal proceedings or meetings tend to be least effective for communication between staff and commission members, although highly effective for communication between the commission and external agents |
| North Dakota | + Most communication is limited to discussion at ACIR meetings - Most non-legislative members of the ACIR have little contact with the Legislative Council staff |
| Ohio | + Holding commission meetings - Sometimes by phone and sometimes by mail—it depends on the nature of the meeting of business at hand |
| South Carolina | + Personal, both individually and in groups - Memo and reports |
| Utah | + Fax and E-mail (regular mail is used to formally transmit agendas and reports) - Telephone |
| Virginia | + Both by mail and telephone - Reliance on either one method or the other exclusively |

Table B9**What Other Constituent Groups or Individuals Have You Included in Your Communications**

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| Colorado | A variety of people who are interested in agenda minutes, etc., are on our mailing list. |
| Connecticut | Regional agencies, the CT Policy & Economic Council (business-financed government watchdog group); and press. |
| Florida | We have local officials on the council and five ex-office members representing Florida League of Cities, Florida Association of Counties, and School Districts and Superintendents. |
| Illinois | We communicate frequently with the leadership of the General Assembly, the membership of the General Assembly, local governments, universities, and private voluntary agencies. |
| Iowa | Iowa Sate Association of Counties, Iowa League of Cities, and Iowa State Association of School Boards. |
| Maryland | Local Government Representatives, interested legislators, and anyone who requests to be on the mailing list. |
| New York | The major organizations for local government officials, such as the NYS Conference of Mayors, the NYS Association of Towns, the NYS Association of Counties, the NYS School Boards Association. |
| North Dakota | The ACIR works closely with the North Dakota Association of Counties, the North Dakota League of Cities, the Township Officers Association, the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association. Each of these entities has at least one representative on the ACIR. |
| Ohio | Local officials, state of Ohio agencies, legislators, cabinet officials, and public citizens. |
| South | Government officials, General Assembly, Legislative staff, Association of Municipalities, Association of Counties, Councils of Government, universities, and the Chamber of Commerce. |
| Utah | Utah League of Cities and Towns, seven regional government associations, County Association, and the School Board Association. |
| Virginia | Routinely include representative of the local government associations, planning district commissions, and clerks of the Virginia House and Senate (by request). Also notify selected state agency staff members who have expressed an interest. |

Table B10
Do You Have a Home Page on the World Wide Web

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| Colorado | No |
| Connecticut | No |
| Florida | Yes—(http://fcn.state.fl.us/acir/). Helped educate the public about our committee and the work we do. Provides immediate access to some reports. |
| Illinois | No |
| Iowa | No |
| Maryland | No |
| New York | No |
| North Dakota | No—although ACIR is included with the other interim legislative committees on the North Dakota Legislative Assembly home page at: (http://www.state.nd.us/lr/). |
| Ohio | No |
| South Carolina | Yes—still very new, but expanding. |
| Utah | Yes—(http://www.state.ut.us/planning/acir.htm) Is a new item, so do not know how effective it will be in the long term. |
| Virginia | No |

Table B11
What is the Size of the ACIR Budget

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| Colorado | Zero |
| Connecticut | Commission is staffed by the State Office of Policy and Management. |
| Florida | N/A |
| Illinois | The commission budget for its offices in Springfield and D.C. is approximately \$1.2 million. |
| Iowa | None |
| Maryland | The joint Committee has no budget. Legislative members are individually reimbursed for expenses and staffing is provided by Centralized Department of Fiscal Services. |
| New York | \$518,423 for SFY 94-95 (1994-95 was the last SFY that the Commission budget was a separate item within the state budget with funds appropriated by line-item for both Assembly and Senate purposes. Effective in SFY 1995-96, the "appropriation" for staff and the day-to-day operation of the Commission is no longer separately listed and is included in the overall budget for the Legislature. |
| North Dakota | The ACIR does not have a separate budget. |
| Ohio | FY'96—\$226,920 and FY'97—\$234,416 (this included four staff, one intern, program, commission member expenses, and operating budget). |
| South Carolina | Approximately \$230,000. |
| Utah | The \$17,000 is not a separate budget but is rolled into the state and local planning section budget. |
| Virginia | All expenditures for the ACIR come from the appropriations for the CLG. The personnel of the CLG also serve as staff to the ACIR. We estimate that in FY'97 approximately \$101,360 and one full-time equivalent staff positions will be devoted to the work of the ACIR. The CLG does not produce, nor does the legislature appropriate, a distinct line item budget for the ACIR. |

**Table B12
Who Sets the ACIR Budget**

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| Colorado | N/A |
| Connecticut | OPM makes budget allocation determinations. |
| Florida | The legislature. |
| Illinois | The Commission budget is set by the Illinois General Assembly and appropriated by line item. |
| Iowa | Commission is primarily staffed through the Iowa Legislative Council—Legislative Service Bureau. |
| Maryland | See previous question. |
| New York | The Commission budget had been prepared annually by Commission staff, approved by legislative leadership, formally recommended as an appropriation in the Governor's executive budget, and finally approved by a vote of the Legislature. It is now allocated within the budget appropriation for the Legislature. |
| North Dakota | The ACIR does not have a separate budget. |
| Ohio | The Ohio General Assembly |
| South Carolina | The Ex-Director of the State Budget and Control Board and the ACIR Director. |
| Utah | N/A |
| Virginia | The ACIR budget is developed by the CLG, reviewed and approved by appropriate executive officials, and subsequently included in the Governor's proposed budget. The Governor's budgetary proposals submitted to the General Assembly include only a general budgetary request for the CLG and do not specify a precise amount for the ACIR. |

**Table B13
How is Your Budget Defined**

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| Colorado | N/A |
| Connecticut | Not at all. |
| Florida | Line item as part of legislative branch. |
| Illinois | See previous question. |
| Iowa | N/A |
| Maryland | See previous question. |
| New York | Through SFY 1994-1995, the Commission appeared as a two-line item appropriation for Assembly and Senate purposes in the Legislative part of the State Budget. Effective in SFY 1995-1996, the "appropriation" for support staff and day-to-day operations in included in the overall annual budget for the Legislature. |
| North Dakota | It is included within the Legislative Council budget. |
| Ohio | Line item for personnel and maintenance. |
| South Carolina | Personnel, operation, funds, and contractual services. |
| Utah | N/A |
| Virginia | The CLG does not develop a specific line item budget for the ACIR. |

Table B14
What is Your Strategy for Requesting Increased Appropriations

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| Colorado | N/A |
| Connecticut | We sought increased appropriations in the past five years. |
| Florida | We do not. |
| Illinois | Appropriation increases are requested when additional activities by the Commission require additional funding. |
| Iowa | N/A |
| Maryland | See previous question. |
| New York | We do not anticipate such a request in the near future. |
| North Dakota | There is no such strategy. |
| Ohio | Appearing before the House and Senate budget committees. |
| South Carolina | We have never needed additional dollars, but if we did, we would simply ask our legislative members to act on our behalf. |
| Utah | N/A |
| Virginia | The CLG has not requested a specific increased appropriation for the ACIR since staffing responsibility was shifted to the CLG in 1985. It has simply shifted agency priorities and personnel to the work of the ACIR as needed. If the Legislature significantly expanded the role of the ACIR and assigned it additional specific tasks to be accomplished within a certain period, the CLG would be confronted with the necessity of seeking an increased appropriation. |

Table B15
Additional Comments

- “The greatest value of the ACIR is in serving as a “level playing field” for discussions among governmental officials. There is also significant value in developing non-partisan, non-advocacy data on issues of public concern. There is somewhat less value (or success) in achieving policy recommendation objectives.”—Connecticut
- “The council recently revised its structure and name in an effort to bring more attention to its activities and existence.”—Florida
- “The State and Local Government commission of Ohio provides a service to both other state agencies and constituents that no other state of Ohio agency provides—that service is a local officials database with contact information on all county, municipal, and township local elected officials.”—Ohio
- “We have operated for 15 years—13 as a state agency, two years (since 1994) as a Division of the State Budget and Control Board—our new arrangement gives us much greater opportunity to serve the state and its local governments and much greater resources.”—South Carolina
- “The ACIR should confront issues of consequence if it is to be vibrant and not avoid volatile and contentious issues altogether. While an ACIR might take each year an issue or two of limited significance in order to complete a task successfully, it should concurrently attack issues of fundamental significance to governmental entities is the state (e.g., modifying/expanding the taxing authority of local governments, broadening their discretionary authority, changing the distribution formulas for state aid programs, etc.).”—Virginia