

DRAFT - Meeting Notes

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
<https://portal.ct.gov/acir>

Municipal Workforce Development Subcommittee

Thursday, August 15, 2024

Agenda: <https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/26299>

A recording is available at: https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2024-08-15_ACIR_Workforce_WG_Video.mp4

Present: Drew Baklik, Matt Hart (Chair) Jim O’Leary, Cara O’Sullivan, Troy Raccuia, Peter Sousa, Steve Stephanou, Ron Thomas (Co-chair)

Not present: John Filchak, Bridget Fox, Matt Fulda, Betsey Gara, Kevin Mercik,

Other participants: Christopher Gilson CCM, George Rafael CCM

OPM staff: Christine Goupil, Bruce Wittchen

1. Review Charge

Ron Thomas called the meeting at 9:02AM and invited subcommittee participants to introduce themselves. Recording commenced.

The subcommittee reviewed the scope of the Municipal Workforce Development [2024-25 Work Program](#) with a focus on Connecticut’s towns and cities need to recruit and retain qualified persons to fill positions to deliver essential municipal services. The subcommittee will explore and recommend actions regarding public sector hiring, challenges, training and retention that have, put local government’s ability to deliver services at risk and to examine opportunities and barriers for shared and regional approaches to address public sector workforce challenges.

2. CCM presentation on Municipal Careers

Ron Thomas introduced Christopher Gilson, Communications Specialist and Public Relations Associate CCM, who outlined the Municipal Career Center presentation which is to encourage people to consider municipal service as a career.

The [CCM Municipal Career Center](#) website includes:

- Current Opportunities for career listings in town and cities around Connecticut. CCM is looking for partnerships to promote it more as well as including internships.
- Career Resources with background on municipalities and their structure, getting started on a municipal career path and types of compensation packages, as well as resume building and degrees and/or skills requirements.
- Videos including 14 individuals from around the state and a variety of jobs from fire chief, building assessor, human resource professions speaking on their career satisfaction.

One segment of the [CCM Municipal Career Center](#) video was played for the subcommittee.

The videos are pushed to social media platforms such as Instagram. The resource is also shared directly with teachers' organizations, *Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS)* and *Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)* with a push to showing the videos in civics classes.

CCM will be rolling out podcasts to talk about workforce development and the municipal Career Center with guest such as Matt Hart – Executive Director CRCOG and Micheal Freda – First Selectman, Town of North Haven and other member towns.

Recommendations and further investigation which came out of the subcommittee discussion:

- Partnerships with state agencies such as the Department of Transportation to create apprenticeships. We need to build the infrastructure for proper training to fill the career pipeline.
- Establishing an apprenticeship track for local government similar to the process of firefighter academy trainee for paid fire departments and CT POST for law enforcement.
- With municipalities struggling budgets looking for state for support in creating and financing programs.
- Having all the recruitment information in one location such as the CCM website.
- Longer term goal of targeting the youth pool via other social media outlets, forums and parents. Need to address the platform challenges – spectrum of legal issues, lifespan, access. Municipalities are not keeping up with the dynamic shift. Platforms such as LinkedIn require active participation. Eg. Plainville building out their social media presence with two recent college graduate hires.
- Consider the critical infrastructure careers which require certification and apprenticeships. Review existing requirements to fill these positions Eg. Water treatment plants, building inspectors.
- Look at federal allotments for training programs and the Federal Department of Labor is advocating for nationwide apprentice programs. Eg State Department of Transportation receives federal funding for apprentice programs.
- Need to be paid apprentice programs. Eg. UConn Storrs water treatment plant.

3. Data Collection Inventory

Matt Hart and George Rafael discussed the progress of the Public Sector Workgroup which was initiated out of a CCM effort and workforce development conference November 2022 sponsored by CRCOG, UCONN School of Public Policy and Capital Workforce Partners. The focus was on workforce development in the public sector looking at state and local government. The Workgroup formed three groups: pre K through 12 education, state employment and municipal employment. Most of the attendance on the municipal employment side are human resource professionals focusing on key occupations such as building official and assessor recruitment and retention.

Moving forward the group would like to focus more on trainee programs to sponsor on the municipal and regional level. Additionally, the roadblocks to certification. They would like to tackle vacant positions for municipal boards and commission, and volunteer and paid firefighters. The shortage of EMS personnel was raised.

CRCOG has joined with DAS on an application to support and strengthen the building code inspection field. Awards should be announced in October. CRCOG would receive funding and needs to provide a 20% match, to hire a program coordinator, a program coordinator who would really serve as a liaison between the trainee and the host municipality(s) to become an assistant building official. The coordinator would be responsible for overseeing the training, performance reviews, and recruitment.

The subcommittee came back to the topic of civility impacting recruitment for both volunteer and paid positions. [CCM Civility Pledge](#) is a step in the right direction as well as the work of the Rell Center for Public Service. Another avenue to consider is currently there is a [code of ethics for public official and state employees](#), but not mandated on the municipal level. Municipalities have the option to adopt an ethics ordinance and review board. The Connecticut Secretary of State is working on project to illustrate for the larger municipalities the structure of boards and commissions as a method to educate and engage people. CCM is hosting and

annual training called [Representation Matters](#) to get more people of color interested in running for office and serving on boards and commissions.

An additional related topic is how childcare shortages impact municipal workforce. There was a significant loss of daycare centers and providers due to COVID. The subcommittee would be interested in data on the current state of childcare options in the state from impact on the various types of municipal positions, availability to cost and the impact on municipal workforce. More data exists for larger workforce, private, public and nonprofit sectors.

Other data points for the subcommittee to consider gathering are housing, transportation along with flexible schedules, remote work, and work life balance options. Additionally CCM provided their [DRAFT: Summary of Survey on Recruitment and Retention Challenges](#) which was released in March 2024.

The contract or collective bargaining specifics such flexible schedules, uniform allowances, other benefits are challenging to capture. CCM has conducted a salary survey with on approximately 60 respondents of the member municipalities. The survey request will open again this September. The subcommittee would like to look at this information and compare it to employment in the private sector -- and if the data points to more stability and benefits in one sector over another.

4. Assign workgroups and leads and determine data gaps or additional collection of relevant data:

- **Municipal positions in the highest demand and other sector competition**
 - Eg engineers, accountants, town managers
- **Barriers to employment**
 - Eg. housing, transportation, childcare
- **Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention**
 - Steven Stephanou, Matt Hart, and Drew Baklik volunteered to work on best practices for recruitment and retention. CRCOG and CCM, NVCOG can dedicate research resources
 - Wages and benefits, work/life balance 4-day work week, flextime, hybrid schedule
 - Recruit speakers from municipalities and human resource professionals
- **Researching training:**
 - Peter Souza and Cara O’Sullivan volunteered to work on researching training.
 - How do we develop training and apprentice programs at the local and regional level.
 - What do we need for resources? Is there funding and existing structure available.
 - Recruiting guest speakers on the topic.
 - Work with contacts at CTDOL
- **Workplace Climate**
 - Is this a discussion for the full ACIR?
- **Shared Services:**
 - OPM staff. Cara O’Sullivan, Troy Raccuia volunteered to provide antidotal information from municipalities represented.
 - Best practices at the municipal level school districts, regionally and outside Connecticut.
 - CRCOG is planning a conference for October.
- **Labor challenges and opportunities**
 - The second chance population and lower level offenses.

By December the subcommittee will make preliminary recommendations to the full ACIR group. If they receive an endorsement by the ACIR then they can be presented to the General Assembly as key recommendations for our state legislators to consider beginning next session. For examples recommendation could include trainee apprenticeships, potentially recommend a new state grant to subsidize trainee initiatives or apprenticeship initiatives, that fall outside RPIP farmwork.

5. Review progress of Regional Performance Incentive Program grants (RPIP)

- Tabled until September 19th Workforce Development Meeting

6. Future guest speakers

- CTDOT apprentice program with an update on the use of federal funding
- Best practices from municipal leaders

7. Discussion items for the next meeting

- Status of Regional Performance Incentive Program grants (RPIP) program on and recent grants awarded.
- Best practices Recruitment and Retention and guest speaker(s)

Meetings will be held on the 3rd Thursday of the month, 9:00AM – 10:30AM

- September 19th
- October 17th
- November 21st
- December 19th

2. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:24AM

Minutes notes prepared by Christine Goupil, OPM