

# ANNUAL REPORT

## IOWA ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS (IACIR)

January 1994

### INTRODUCTION

The Iowa Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR) was created by the General Assembly in 1982 to foster communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local governments. Patterned after the United States Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, the IACIR was designed to provide a forum for dialogue and understanding of intergovernmental issues, study issues affecting Iowa governments, and make recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, state agencies, and local governments.

### ORGANIZATION AND CHARGE

The statutory basis for the Commission is provided in chapter 28C of the Code of Iowa. The Commission is composed of 21 members representing schools, cities, counties, regional councils of government, the state executive branch, and the General Assembly. Seventeen of the members are appointed by the Governor, two state senators are appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, and two state representatives are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Members are appointed for two-year terms.

The Iowa ACIR is charged with studying and reporting on the following:

1. The current pattern of local governmental structure.
2. Powers and functions of local governments, including their fiscal powers. The existing, necessary, and desirable relationships among local governments and the state.
3. The necessary and desirable allocation of state and local fiscal resources.
4. The necessary and desirable roles of the state as the creator of local governmental systems.
5. The special problems in interstate areas facing their general local governments, interstate regional units, and area-wide bodies. The studies, where possible, are to be conducted in conjunction with studies of commissions on intergovernmental relations of other states.

Primary staff support to the IACIR is provided by the Legislative Service Bureau.

## MEETINGS

The Commission held two meetings in 1993, the first of which was held March 26, 1993. At that meeting, the following persons made presentations on the legislative priorities of local governments for the 1993 Legislative Session:

- Mr. Mark Lambert, State Public Policy Group representing the Iowa Association of Regional Councils
- Mr. Kent Sovern, League of Iowa Municipalities
- Mr. Jay Horstman, Iowa Association of School Boards
- Mr. Paul Coates, Iowa State Association of Counties

Also, at this meeting, the Commission adopted a motion calling for the Commission to conduct a comprehensive study of state mandates on local governments.

The second Commission meeting was held October 27, 1993. The guest speaker was Professor Mark Edelman, Public Policy Economist, Iowa State University, whose presentation was entitled, "Principles for Reinventing Local Government." Professor Edelman spoke at length on the Governor's Committee on Government Spending Reform recommendations pertaining to local government and on local government consolidation, in general. This Committee, also known as the "Fisher Committee," after the Committee's chairperson, conducted a comprehensive review of state and local governments in the summer and fall of 1991.

Members' discussion at the meeting centered on the mandates study. The Commission members adopted the following definition of "mandates" for the study:

"Those statutes that require the locality to undertake an activity or to comply with some standard or procedure, even when the locality would have voluntarily undertaken the activity or complied with the standard or procedure, and those statutes which prevent the locality from undertaking an activity, even when the locality would not consider undertaking it in the absence of the statute."

The members, by consensus, agreed that work groups would be formed to analyze the mandates on local government identified by staff. The work groups are Environment and Natural Resources; Law Enforcement/Legal; Transportation/Public Safety; Human Services; Administration and Elections; and Finance, Taxation, and Other Revenue. The Commission has tentatively scheduled the completion of the study for December 1994.

The Commission members agreed that input from outside interest groups would be accepted only after the work groups had completed their work. The Commission also adopted a motion to include school districts in the study.