OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
Objective Research for Connecticut's Legislature

ResearchReport

Grants for Regionalizing Municipal Services

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January 13, 2026 | 2026-R-0021

Issue

Provide a list of the most significant state grants available to municipalities that encourage regionalizing service delivery.

Summary

With the help of the Office of Fiscal Analysis, in Table 1 below we provide a list of significant state grants available to municipalities and regional entities for regionalizing service delivery or participating in shared service arrangements. In some cases, the grant's purpose is not specifically to encourage regional services, but in practice, the grants have been used for these purposes (e.g., the Small Town Economic Assistance Program). We excluded grant programs that are (1) for schools in the Hartford area that are implementing school choice, as the programs are primarily aimed at fostering diversity, or (2) unfunded and inactive (e.g., the Intertown Capital Equipment Purchase Program).

The grant with the broadest allowable uses is the state's Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) grant. RPIP is a competitive grant program for regional councils of governments (COGs) and regional educational service centers (RESCs) and is designed to encourage municipalities to participate in shared services projects (e.g., regional code enforcement, regional firearms training facilities, and shared administrative services). There are also several notable grants and subsidies for municipalities and regional entities that collaborate to provide specific public services. For example, the state provides funding for various regional educational initiatives and incentivizes regional school construction by offering a larger reimbursement rate for these projects. The state

also provides incentives for municipalities to collaborate in providing 9-1-1 emergency telecommunications or public health services, as highlighted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Grants for Shared Service Arrangements

Service Category	Program	Grant Purpose
Broad Authorization	Regional Performance Incentive Program (CGS § 4-124s, as amended by PA 25-133, § 1)	Grants to COGs and RESCs for a broad range of municipal or education services (e.g., shared administrative functions)
	Small Town Economic Assistance Program (CGS § 4-66g, as amended by PA 25-174, § 52)	Grants for capital projects in municipalities that do not qualify for the Urban Action grant program; grants may be used for a joint project (e.g., regional senior center) serving eligible municipalities
	Responsible Growth and Transit Oriented Development Grant (PA 16-4, May Sp. Sess., § 2, and PA 17-2, June Sp. Sess., § 378)	Grants for projects that foster transit-oriented development or responsible growth (including planning and implementation or construction); grants may be used for a joint project (e.g., to extend a greenway) or by COGs (e.g., to develop a regional complete streets policy and plan)
Education	Competitive Grant to Support In-District or Regional Special Education Programs (PA 25-93, § 19)	Starting in FY 27, grant will support in-district and regional special education programs and services (e.g., create a regional program for students currently enrolled with private providers)
	Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Regional Bonus (CGS § 10-262f(19))	A component of the ECS grant is bonus funding to municipalities that send students to a regional school district
	RESC Grant (CGS 10-66j, as amended by PA 25-168, § 305)	Grants generally supporting RESCs' regional activities (including professional development, special education, early childhood initiatives, and organizational support)
	Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center Grants (CGS § 10-252a, as amended by PA 25-168, § 307)	Per-student grants to districts hosting regional agricultural science and technology centers in high schools
	School Construction Reimbursement Program (CGS § 10-285a(d))	Reimbursement rates for school construction costs are higher if the project serves a regional school district or multi-town cooperative arrangement

Table 1 (continued)

Service Category	Program	Grant Purpose
Health	Health District Per Capita Formula Grants (CGS 19a-245, as amended by PA 25-168, § 160; see also CGS § 19a-202, as amended by PA 25-168, § 159)	Per-capita grant is higher for regional health districts (serving at least three municipalities or at least 50,000 people) than for single-town departments
Public Safety	Various grants to regional public safety answering points (PSAPs) (CGS § 28-30a)	Multi-town and regional PSAPs are eligible for various subsidies, including grants for the costs of transitioning to regional service arrangements

Background

Authority to Regionalize Duties and Services

Many statutes allow municipalities to collaborate on different activities. Some give them broad authority to:

1. collaborate on any activity they can perform separately (CGS § 7-148cc),
2. jointly finance projects and activities (CGS § 7-136n), and
3. share tax revenue (CGS § 7-148bb).

Other statutes specify the activity and how municipalities may collaborate to undertake it. For example, the law allows municipalities to establish a regional entity to perform a specific municipal function (e.g., health, education, or waste management); join together to implement a regional property revaluation program; or operate a joint fair rent commission.

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