

Legislative Program Review and Investigation Committee

Connecticut General Assembly

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SCOPE OF STUDY

Public Higher Education Involvement in State Urban Issues

FOCUS

This study will identify and examine the ways in which the state's public higher education institutions, and in particular the University of Connecticut, actively participate and engage in addressing the challenges facing Connecticut's poorest cities.

BACKGROUND

According to an expert on university-community partnerships, "...today, higher educational institutions play crucial, multi-faceted roles in their cities and surrounding regions—including in education, research, service, housing and real estate development, employment, job training, purchasing, hiring, business incubation, and cultural development. Higher eds can play a critical role as anchor institutions, providing employment to many and serving as powerful collaborators in economic, educational and civic renewal efforts." This concept is echoed on the University of Connecticut (UConn) website for the Office of Public Engagement, which states that outreach, service, and public engagement are essential components of the mission of UConn.

The challenges to many of Connecticut's large cities in terms of poverty, homelessness, crime, and other factors affecting quality of life are well established, and appear to offer many opportunities for public higher education institutions to interact and engage in beneficial ways.

AREAS OF ANALYSIS

1. Identify all activities, programs, and grants with a focus on addressing urban challenges at all public higher education institutes, including the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut state universities, and the community colleges.
2. Assess the impact of these activities, programs, and grants, to the extent possible.
3. Research relevant activities and experiences in other states.
4. Develop recommendations if needed to improve the involvement of the state's higher education institutions in the problems facing the state's poorest cities.