



A State Perspective on State – Federal Relations

On April 8, 2021, CSG West’s director, Edgar Ruiz, participated virtually in a panel conversation for the [2021 Functional Federalism Academy](#). A two-day program hosted by Utah Valley University’s Center for Constitutional Studies, the Academy included several sessions and wide range of speakers. Titled *Roles and Resources for Effective Intergovernmental Relations*, the April 8 panel included presentations from representatives of CSG West, the National Conference of State Legislators, American Legislative Exchange Council, and former Utah Governor Gary Herbert.

During his presentation, director Ruiz provided an overview of the services and programs offered to policymakers by CSG at both the regional and national levels, as well as a highlight of recent efforts by the Western Policy Network (WPN) to strengthen the state – federal relationship. The WPN is a coalition of regional, multibranch and bipartisan associations representing legislators, governors, attorneys general, and county officials. This includes CSG West, the Western Governors’ Association (WGA), the Conference of Western Attorneys General (CWAG), the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER), and the Western Interstate Region of the National Association of Counties (NACO).

Director Ruiz informed participants of the WPN’s efforts that called for greater and meaningful state consultation of proposed federal regulations, rules, directives, and budget proposals that have substantial effects on states and local governments. This included the adoption of joint principles that, among other things, solicited greater consistency among federal agencies in reaching out to states and state officials, ensuring federalism principles are incorporated in



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legislative drafting, increasing flexibility for state and local waivers, and making the Unfunded Mandates Reform act relevant.

While Administration officials and members of Congress were receptive to the coalition's efforts over the past three years, director Ruiz stated that more needs to be done to strengthen the state – federal relationship. Among the lessons learned by the WNP is that federal agencies have different consultation mechanisms that present challenges and opportunities for state and local governments, the need for persistent advocacy of federalism principles, and building of regional coalitions. Additional information and resources on CSG West state – federal relations efforts can be found on our [website](#).

A special thanks to Dr. Andrew Bibby, Associate Director of the Center for Constitutional Studies at Utah Valley University, as well as the Center staff, for their invitation to the Academy.