



# NARC National Association of Regional Councils

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

BUILDING REGIONAL COMMUNITIES – LARGE, SMALL, URBAN AND RURAL – THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## ISSUE

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports sufficient and sustained funding for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) reauthorization, which is set to expire at the end of FY2008, at the FY2008 authorized level of \$500 million.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS

- Urge recognition of the contributions that EDA programs have made to economic revitalization by rewarding EDA with the FY2008 authorized funding level of \$500 million to sufficiently provide for programs and operations resources at all levels of the agency.
- Urge support of the continuation and reauthorization of the core programs of EDA and the agency's long-standing relationship with economic development districts.
- Urge to fully staff the EDA to ensure all essential regional economic development and planning needs are met.
- Promote the implementation of criteria for EDA programs that require development through a collaborative process with practitioners and stakeholders.
- Support increases in funding for ongoing EDA programs that promote regionalism through economic development.
- Support the consolidation of government programs within EDA that will make processes more effective and efficient.
- Support balance between public and private sector investment to raise planning funding.
- Ensure that EDA commitment continues in both urban and rural areas.

## BACKGROUND

EDA was established under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 to create and maintain jobs, as well as stimulate industrial and commercial growth in economically distressed areas, urban and rural alike. EDA programs have provided an invaluable resource to the nation's communities as they have moved to implement regional strategies that promote innovation and worldwide competitiveness. Continuance of these programs is critical to sustain the nation's posture in the world economy.

As part of President George W. Bush's Strengthening America's Communities Initiative, which was never fully implemented because of actions taken by NARC and other organizations regarding possible negative impacts on Economic Development Districts (EDDs), economic and community development programs under EDA were included for consolidation in the Administration's Fiscal Year 2007 Congressional Budget Request. The Administration's goal for EDA was to develop performance standards for economic development programs as a basis for implementation of the Strengthening America's Communities Initiative.

The FY2007 Budget Request – which was never passed by Congress – included an increase of \$43 million for EDA for a total budget request of \$327.1 million. However, the federal government is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution, which funds department programs at the FY2006 authorized levels; and, therefore, the increased EDA appropriations have gone unrealized.

For FY2008, the President requested approximately \$203 million. This is significantly under both the FY07 and FY08 authorized levels and will not provide adequate support for vital economic and community development programs throughout the U.S.