



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### FEDERAL BUDGET & NATIONAL DEFICIT

**The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC)**, representing regional planning organizations and their local elected officials, recommends that Congress and the Administration determine federal policies, strategic plans and program funding that increase the effectiveness of federal dollars while reducing the nation's debt and creating a path for fiscal responsibility.

#### GENERAL PRIORITIES

- Difficult economic times require a re-examination of federal program success and effectiveness, but a balanced approach is required to tackle the nation's debt and funding concerns. Reforms to and consolidation of federal funding and programs should be looked to in order to save money and increase government efficiency, while decreasing the national debt.
- Vital local and regional programs that provide economic opportunity, create jobs and make our communities safe must continue to receive a strong federal commitment and sustained funding.
- State and local governments receive roughly 40 percent of all annual non-defense discretionary dollars (\$188 billion of \$500+ billion), covering dozens of critical program accounts from education to transportation. Discretionary spending is already set to drop by, at a minimum, 10 percent over the next ten years which will dramatically impact these core programs.
- Domestic, discretionary programs, which are only 12 percent of the federal annual budget, are critical to the ability of local governments and regions to carry out their responsibilities as service providers for both the federal and state governments.
- Due to economic challenges, local governments have experienced reduced revenue streams due to decreased taxes (primarily property and sales) and major reductions in state financial assistance, while at the same time are facing an increased demand for services. As a result, local governments of all sizes and in all parts of the nation have been forced to institute significant layoffs, furloughs and service reductions, which could continue for several years to come.
- Federal assistance to state and local governments and regions will help mitigate further layoffs.
- Federal investment in state, local and regional infrastructure produces jobs and promotes local economic development.
- Deficit reduction should not be accomplished by shifting costs to states and local governments, imposing unfunded mandates, or pre-empting local government programs or taxing authority.
- Local governments working regionally through regional Councils of Government (COGs), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) have proven success in saving money, increasing efficiencies and providing streamlined processes.

#### CONTACTS

**Executive Director**

Fred Abousleman, [fred@NARC.org](mailto:fred@NARC.org)  
202.986.1032, x216

**Deputy Director**

Shannon Baxevanis, [shannon@NARC.org](mailto:shannon@NARC.org)  
202.986.1032, x217