

March 4, 2019 [View this email in your browser](#)



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

The Appropriations Process is Underway

In early April, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees are expected to set the maximum spending levels – known as 302(b) allocations – for each appropriations subcommittee for fiscal year (FY) 2020 to fund all discretionary defense and domestic programs. The president is also expected to release his FY 2020 budget proposal next week, which is likely to include significant cuts to domestic discretionary programs.

Efforts are underway to counter the president's proposal and any congressional effort to cut Labor-Health and Human Services (HHS)-Education appropriations. Without a substantial increase in the Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee's allocation, it will be virtually impossible to increase funding in some programs such as the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act* (WIOA) without deep cuts in other equally important initiatives. Congress must increase the caps on domestic discretionary programs and equitably divvy up those funds across the various appropriations subcommittees that fund domestic discretionary programs under areas including transportation, housing, and economic and community development.

NARC, along with its national partners in the Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce and other human services coalitions, is working hard to ensure that the House and Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee gets the largest FY 2020 302(b) allocation possible to reverse the impact of chronic underfunding. We will be meeting with appropriators in both chambers and on both sides of the aisle and will be working closely with other advocates to ensure that our message is clear and well heard.

If your region is interested in joining with us and about 1,000 other national, state, and local organizations in support of increasing the 302(b) allocation to all Labor-HHS-Education programs, please [sign on here](#) by close of business on March 15.

Congress Poised to Reject Trump Border Emergency

Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) announced this weekend he will vote to block Trump's national emergency declaration, becoming the critical fourth Republican vote needed to pass the **resolution**. The Senate is expected to vote on the resolution before leaving for a break on March 15. If the resolution passes, Congress will head towards its first veto showdown with the White House and set the stage for broader conversations about separation of powers. The House has already voted to pass the resolution by a 245-182 vote.

House Democrats Poised to Pass Sweeping Election Reform Bill

The House is scheduled to vote on a sweeping election reform bill (**H.R. 1**) on Wednesday. The legislation aims to expand voting rights through the creation of automatic voter registration, increased election security, and making Election Day a national holiday for all federal workers. The bill also looks to tackle campaign finance reform by increasing transparency in campaign

donations and prohibiting coordination between super PACs and candidates. Even if Democrats get the legislation through the House, it's considered dead on arrival in the Republican-controlled Senate, where Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has already made the bill a target of public criticisms.

Secretary of Commerce and Ivanka Trump Announce Members of the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board

Earlier this week, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump announced the members of the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board. The new board will provide information and recommendations to the National Council for the American Workers, which was **established under executive order** by President Trump last year. The board's 25 members come from diverse backgrounds and will use their varied perspectives to ensure that America's students and workers have access to the resources they need to succeed in the global economy.

Senate Confirms Wheeler to Lead EPA

The Senate on Thursday voted to confirm Acting Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler as the permanent head of the agency in a 52-47 vote. Wheeler has led the EPA in an active capacity since former Administrator Scott Pruitt resigned on the heels of ethics controversies last July. Trump nominated Wheeler to permanently take over the role of EPA administrator in early January.

Democrats Lay Down a Marker on Drinking Water and Sewer Funding

House Democrats have introduced the ***Water Affordability, Transparency, Equity and Reliability (WATER) Act***, a new water infrastructure funding proposal that would create a water trust fund by increasing the corporate tax rate from 21 to 24.5 percent. The rate hike would send an expected \$35 billion into the trust fund annually, with 90% of trust fund money going to state revolving funds (SRFs). Provisions include funding to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination and the dedication of \$1 billion a year for water infrastructure in public schools.

OTHER NEWS

Finding the Flaws in the Federal Broadband Maps

Today, the National Association of Counties (NACo) launched TestIT – a mobile app that will help crowdsource broadband speed maps to pinpoint flaws in the Federal Communications Commission's maps. Created in partnership with the Rural Community Assistance Partnership and Rural Local Initiatives Support Coalition, the app will have users identify areas with low or no internet connectivity by testing speeds where they're located. This collected data will then be aggregated and used to advocate for broadband infrastructure federal funding in underserved areas.

Despite Economic Growth, Governors Worry About Skills Gap and Unemployment

While governors are generally feeling good about America's current fiscal climate, they remain concerned about longterm trends. The skills gap – the gap between millions of available jobs and the lack of proper education for those positions among the unemployed – remains a critical issue. To prepare for new technology and innovation, increased globalization, and middle-class stagnation over the next decade, former U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker says that collaboration between schools, job trainers, and the business community must be ongoing. CEO Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan Chase said that states and localities need to take the lead in ensuring workers have the proper education they need.

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Miami and Cleveland Regions Participate in Transit-Oriented Peer Exchange

Last week, representatives from the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA), the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), and the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) participated in a technical peer exchange workshop. At the event, the Cleveland organizations highlighted the success of the development of transit-oriented developments along the Cleveland's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) HealthLine project. Miami-Dade TPO organized this workshop to exchange knowledge with their Cleveland peers and discuss possible replications of successful strategies for Miami Dade's SMART Plan.

MEMBER REQUEST

Request for Information on CRM Selection

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is looking to purchase Constituent/Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software and requests information on the process other MPOs have used to acquire and implement CRM software. Specific questions include: Did your MPO select a software company first, and then put out a competitive bid to a consultant/vendor to procure the software and transition the organization? Or did you bid out a consultant to help select the software?

Please respond to eli.spang@narc.org to pass information along. NARC will compile the results and share with anyone interested at a later date.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Planner II

Posted: 3/01/2019

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Cleveland, OH

Principal Planner

Posted: 3/01/2019

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Principal Analyst

Posted: 3/01/2019

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Associate Analyst/Modeler

Posted: 3/01/2019

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Director of Marketing & Community Outreach

Posted: 2/26/2019

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Lansing, MI

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Distance Learning & Telemedicine (DLT) Grants

Applications Due: April 15 for Opioid DLT Program; May 15 for Traditional DLT Program
Two funding opportunities have been published for Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant windows. One is for the program as has been operated annually (referred to as "Traditional DLT"), which helps rural communities use the unique capabilities of telecommunications to connect to each other and to the world to overcome the effects of remoteness and low population density. The other is for projects related to prevention, treatment, or recovery for opioid use disorder in rural areas (referred to as "Opioid DLT").

Improve Quality of Life for Military Families

Applications Due: April 25

Newman's Own, Fisher House Foundation, and Military Times will join together in presenting \$200,000 in grants to nonprofit organizations for the most creative military quality of life improvement plans. Complete the online application and tell them about your innovative idea to improve the quality of life for military families, and your organization could be awarded up to \$50,000 in funding.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Show, Don't Tell: Using Data for Storytelling in Economic Development

April 16, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Storytelling techniques are effective ways to turn data into content that resonates. Learn during this joint Council for Community and Economic Research and LMI Institute webinar how to source and mine the data for your community in effective ways, and then turn it into powerful stories to be used in presentations, responses to RFPs, in e-newsletters, at trade shows, and in social media content and blog posts online.

Retooling Workplace Culture to Thrive in 21st Century

May 16, 1:00-2:30 PM ET

This International City/County Management Association (ICMA) webinar will be covering three topics:

1. Where do local governments need to retool their cultures to attract, retain, and grow talent to serve their communities more effectively?
2. What are examples of practical, high-payoff initiatives that local governments have completed successfully?
3. What resources are available to support agencies in their efforts?

Encouraging Inclusive Communities

June 12, 12:30-2:00 PM ET

This ICMA webinar will be covering three topics:

1. How are local governments encouraging inclusive communities?
2. What are effective ways to engage diverse segments of the community?
3. What innovations are local government applying to be inclusive internally and externally?

CONTACT US

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