



National Association of Regional Councils

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April 7, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin:

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) is the voice in Washington for the nation's regional and metropolitan planning organizations. Our members range from the nation's largest metropolitan areas to rural areas and everywhere in between. Our planning organization members are themselves membership organizations, made up of local elected officials representing local governments from across an entire region, connecting urban, suburban and rural citizens. For this reason, the health and well-being of citizens and of city, town, and county governments are paramount concerns for our members as they navigate the challenges of COVID-19.

Their responsibilities, invested by their individual city, county and town members, include disaster planning response, workforce issues, economic development, infrastructure and, in many cases, human services.

In the CARES Act (S.3584) signed by President Trump, Sec. 5001 creates a Coronavirus Relief Fund. These funds are available to states and, in limited circumstances, units of local government to offset the additional expenses that arise from responding to COVID-19. We understand you are still working out the particulars of how the funds will be distributed.

As you work toward a resolution, we suggest the following:

- Provide funding directly to regional and metropolitan planning organizations that demonstrate they have the participation of member local governments with a collective population of greater than 500,000. This would meet the statutory threshold provided in the CARES Act while allowing many smaller communities access to funds as well. Many regional planning organizations are well positioned to work with the federal government to provide accountability for the expenditure of funds and to establish how to most equitably distribute funds to local governments within their regions.

Regional and metropolitan planning organizations are doing what they can to help communities respond to the public health impacts of COVID-19, and stand ready to play a role in helping to get necessary funds to counties, cities, and towns of all sizes.

I appreciate your consideration of our request and am happy to discuss this proposal further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leslie Wollack".

Leslie Wollack
Executive Director