

July 30, 2018 [View this email in your browser](#)



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

The House is on August recess. The Senate is in session.

The House is out through Labor Day but the Senate remains in session. A judicial confirmation, the defense spending bill, a second minibus that would fund agriculture, financial services, interior, environment, transportation and housing and urban development programs, and an extension of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through November 2018 are on the Senate's agenda. The latter is critical because the NFIP is set to expire on July 31 – just one day away.

Despite efforts in the Senate to pass bipartisan spending bills, the president on Sunday announced that he would be willing to shut the government down unless Congress agrees to fund his border wall and pass sweeping changes to current immigration laws.

House and Senate majority leaders have said they are opposed to a government shutdown and are planning to do everything in their power to prevent this from happening. Since the immigration issue has proven to be contentious in Congress, it is unlikely that the president's suggestions will be included in an omnibus appropriations bill or continuing resolution. If the president does follow through on this veto threat, it may prove stronger than the opposition of congressional leaders. It is often very difficult to garner the two-thirds votes necessary to override a presidential veto.

Congress has until September 30 to finish up the fiscal year 2019 appropriations, and we will continue to keep you informed of the latest updates from the process.

House Sends Career and Technical Education Legislation to the President's Desk

With the House's approval last week of the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (H.R. 2353)*, the bill is heading to the president's desk for signature. The legislation reauthorizes the *Carl D. Perkins Act*, helping ensure that America's students have the skills needed to join the ever-adapting workforce. A House Committee on Education and the Workforce **fact sheet** highlights several benefits of this bill, including:

- *Empowers state and local community leaders* by simplifying the application process for receiving federal funds and providing more flexibility to use federal resources to respond to changing education and economic needs.
- *Improves alignment with in-demand jobs* by supporting innovative learning opportunities, building better community partnerships, and encouraging stronger engagement with employers.
- *Increases transparency and accountability* by streamlining performance measures to ensure CTE programs deliver results, empowering parents, students, and stakeholders with a voice in setting performance goals and evaluating the effectiveness of local programs.
- *Ensures a limited federal role* by reining in the secretary of education's authority, limiting federal intervention, and preventing political favoritism.

Flood Insurance Awaits Action in the Senate

After passing the House last week by a vote of 366-52, the Senate has until tomorrow to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Before going on August recess, the House **approved a short-term extension of NFIP**, extending the program's funding until November 30. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-KY) **spokesman recently said**, "Now that the House has passed the extension, the Senate will pass it before our next State Work Period to ensure that the program does not expire." The reauthorization does face opposition from fiscal conservatives in the Senate, however; the **Congressional Budget Office has reported** that NFIP pays out an average of \$1.4 billion more than it takes in each year.

Farm Bill Conference Stalls in Senate

With the House out for the month of August, the first public meeting of the Farm Bill conference committee will not take place until September at the earliest. The Senate has yet to vote to start formal Farm Bill conference talks and appoint its conferees. The Senate is expected to vote this week – but only if Senate Agriculture Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) can come to an agreement on lingering issues that have been holding up the process. They are also tossing around names for the conference committee, having to choose carefully which nine senators can hold their weight against the 47 House members that have already been appointed.

USDA Invites Comments on the Implementation of the e-Connectivity Pilot Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking comments on the implementation of its e-Connectivity Pilot Program established by the fiscal year 2018 *Consolidated Appropriations Act (H.R. 1625)*. The department is developing this program to leverage private funds to increase broadband deployment in underserved rural areas. To submit your feedback, go to **regulations.gov**, select "Rural Utilities Service" from the "Search Regulations and Federal Actions," and select RUS-18-TELECOM-0004 in the Docket ID column. Comments on the following issues are sought by 5PM on September 10, 2018:

1. Ways of evaluating a rural household's "sufficient access" to broadband e-Connectivity at speeds of 10 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream, and how broadband service affordability should be factored in.
2. Best options to verify speeds of broadband service provided to rural households.
3. Best leading indicators of the potential project benefits for rural industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, e-commerce, transportation, health care and education, using readily available public data.

OTHER NEWS

California vs. Trump 'Will be a Giant Case' Over Air Rules, Could End Up in Supreme Court

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is expected to announce a rollback of national fuel economy standards for vehicles as soon as this week. This is to the disapproval of California and like-minded states, which the Trump administration believes is going too far to control greenhouse gases from vehicles. If the administration challenges California's longstanding autonomy to set its own emissions rules, the legal battle could reach the U.S. Supreme Court. In his first major action since becoming the acting EPA administrator, *Bloomberg News reported* Andrew Wheeler will seek to revoke California's regulatory authority over greenhouse gases and rollback Obama-era national rules on vehicle fuel efficiency.

Urban Broadband Needs Upgrading, Too

When thinking about broadband need, most people often think of rural areas. At last week's Next Century Cities' Regional Broadband Summit, local leaders were reminded that there are people in urban areas that lack access to broadband, too. Digital redlining – where service providers avoid low-income communities when investing in broadband infrastructure – is common in cities such as Detroit, Toledo, and Dayton. In Cleveland, the high cost of broadband and poverty in certain neighborhoods is preventing residents from e-connectivity. To help address this issue, former Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Commissioner Mignon Clyburn said that encouraging collaboration across sectors to make a business case for expanding in rural areas and urban deserts can help address this broadband inequity.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

SGVCOG Hosts Solutions to Homelessness Twitter Chat

The San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) hosted a Twitter chat last week, encouraging its stakeholders to talk about regional solutions to homelessness. They asked many conversation-inducing questions, including: what are the biggest challenge cities face related to homelessness, what must be done both locally and regionally to add more permanent supportive housing, and what are other sources of funding for agencies to look at to implement their city homelessness plans. This [#SolutionsToHomelessness](#) conversation was a great icebreaker for the upcoming San Gabriel Valley Homeless Plan Summit this Wednesday.

REGIONS LEAD

Visit www.regionslead.org to read up on the latest NARC blogs. We invite members to submit blogs to the site too. Please send contributions to cameron@narc.org.

2018 NARC Achievement Award Winners

By NARC

NARC Awards winners exemplify many qualities that a 21st-century regional council needs to be successful, including innovation, adaptability, collaboration, and hard work. Read our blog to learn more about the winning plans and programs.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Transportation Travel Demand Modeler

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pittsburgh, PA

Senior Quality Assurance Analyst

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

Parks and Recreation Director

City of Kinston, Kinston, NC

Clean Energy Coordinator/Planner

Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Boston, MA

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

FTA Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program

Applications Due: August 6

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has announced the opportunity to apply for approximately \$366.3 million in fiscal year 2018 competitive grant funding for transit bus projects nationwide. The Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program is authorized by Congress to improve the condition of bus infrastructure nationwide by funding the replacement and rehabilitation of buses and related facilities. Projects eligible for this funding opportunity include those that replace, rehabilitate, lease, or purchase buses and related equipment as well as projects to purchase, rehabilitate, construct, or lease bus-related facilities, such as buildings for bus storage and maintenance.

USDA's Rural Housing Preservation Grants

Applications Due: August 9

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Housing Service (RHS) is soliciting applications under its Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) program. The HPG program provides qualified public agencies and nonprofit organizations grant funds to assist very low- and low-income homeowners in repairing and rehabilitating their homes in rural areas. In addition, the HPG program assists rental property owners and cooperative housing complexes in repairing and rehabilitating their units if they agree to make such units available to low- and very low-income persons.

Gang Suppression Planning Grants Program

Applications Due: August 27

The U.S. Department of Justice's Gang Suppression Planning Grants Program is designed to reduce violent crime, gangs, and victimization and promote public safety in communities through planning support to eligible localities to build capacity for a multilateral data-driven strategy.

Funding will support

selected jurisdictions to undertake strategic planning and capacity-building work through multidisciplinary and community partnerships. The overall goals of the Gang Suppression Planning Grants Program are to:

- Understand the jurisdiction's gang landscape and be able to use data (gang intelligence) to develop effective gang control strategies;
- Reduce and sustain reductions in community youth violence, particularly gun and gang violence, and victimization;
- Prevent violence and promote healing from victimization and exposure to violence in the home, school, and community; and
- Increase the safety, well-being, and healthy development of children, youth, and families.

Public Humanities Projects

Applications Due: August 29

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Public Humanities Projects program supports projects that bring the ideas and insights of the humanities to life for general audiences through in-person programming. Projects must engage humanities scholarship to analyze significant themes in disciplines such as history, literature, ethics, and art history. NEH encourages projects that involve members of the public in collaboration with humanities scholars or that invite contributions from the community in the development and delivery of humanities programming. Applications should follow the parameters set out below for one of the following three categories:

- **Community Conversations:** Supports three-month-long to two-year-long series of at least six in-person public programs that are centered on one or more significant humanities resources, such as historic artifacts, artworks, literature, musical compositions, or films. These resources should be chosen to engage a diverse public audience.
- **Exhibitions:** Supports the creation of permanent exhibitions and single-site temporary exhibitions, as well as travelling exhibitions that will be available to public audiences in at least two venues in the United States.
- **Historic Places:** Supports long-term interpretive programs for historic sites, houses, neighborhoods, and regions that are intended to be presented to the public for at least three years. Such programs might include living history presentations, guided tours, exhibitions, and public programs.

Fiscal Year 2018 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program

Applications Due: September 17

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) **has announced** more than \$318 million in grant funding for its CRISI program. This grant program funds projects that improve intercity passenger and freight rail transportation safety, efficiency, and reliability. It also helps finance much needed critical investment to rural America, directing at least 25 percent of available funds towards rural communities. Selection preference will be given to projects with a 50 percent non-federal funding match from any combination of private, state, or local funds. The USDOT will also consider how well the project aligns with its key objectives, including supporting economic vitality; leveraging federal funding; preparing for life-cycle costs; using innovative approaches to improve safety and expedite project delivery; and holding grant recipients accountable for achieving specific, measurable outcomes.

HUD's Continuum of Care Program

Applications Due: September 18

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is making \$2.1 billion available in fiscal year 2018 for the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. The program is designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. It provides funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, states, and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals, families, persons fleeing domestic violence, and youth while minimizing the trauma and

dislocation caused by homelessness. It also strives to promote access and utilization of mainstream programs by the homeless, and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness.

RESTORE Act Direct Component - Construction and Real Property Acquisition Activities

Applications Due: September 28

Under the *Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act)*, the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund (Trust Fund) was established in the Treasury of the United States. Eighty percent of the civil penalties paid after July 6, 2012, under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act in connection with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will be deposited into the Trust Fund, invested, and dispersed. This notice is only for applications for eligible construction and real property acquisition activities, including projects with or without a non-federal share for another federally-funded project. Trust Fund amounts are available to carry out the following eligible activities described in the *RESTORE Act* (activities 1-7 must be carried out in the Gulf Coast region):

1. Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.
2. Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, and natural resources.
3. Implementation of a federally-approved marine, coastal, or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring.
4. Workforce development and job creation.
5. Improvements to or on state parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
6. Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.
7. Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure.
8. Planning assistance.
9. Administrative costs.
10. Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing.
11. Promotion of the consumption of seafood harvested from the Gulf Coast region.

Strategic Economic and Community Development

Applications Due: September 30

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Rural Development Strategic Economic and Community Development (SECD) is a Farm Bill provision that allows USDA to give priority for projects that support the implementation of regional economic development plans through the following four USDA Rural Development programs: Community Facilities Loans, Grants, and Loan Guarantees; Water and Waste Disposal Program Loans, Grants, and Loan Guarantees; Business & Industry Program Loan Guarantees; and Rural Business Development Grants. To be eligible for SECD, a project must: be eligible for the underlying program; be carried out solely in a rural area; and support a multi-jurisdictional strategic economic community development plan. To apply for SECD priority points, applicants must submit **Form RD 1980-88** by the application deadline of the program(s) you are applying for or September 30, 2018, whichever comes first.

EVENTS

View full list of events!

Energy Efficiency Federal Programs for Energy and Housing: A Lifeline for America's Low-Income Families

July 31, 9:00-10:30 AM ET

According to a 2016 study of America's largest cities by Energy Efficiency for All (EEFA) and the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), the median low-income household spent 7.2 percent of its income on energy, twice as much as the median for all households (3.5 percent). The energy burden is even greater for rural households. Hosted by EEFA and the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), a panel of experts on housing and energy policy will review federal energy efficiency services and programs that are serving the most vulnerable U.S. citizens. The event will be livestreamed at www.eesi.org/livecast.

Toward an Equitable Region: Lessons from Baltimore's Sustainable Communities Initiative

August 7, 1:00-2:30 PM ET

In many communities, local leaders and stakeholders are interested in helping residents access jobs, quality educations, affordable housing, healthcare, and other opportunities. This Enterprise webinar convenes a group of experts who have been working in support of these goals in Baltimore. Panelists will reflect on the process and lessons learned in the creation of Baltimore's 2015 Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, which aimed to improve the area's sustainability while decreasing social disparities. They will also discuss some of the challenges and opportunities of advancing cross-sector drivers for change which are highlighted in the new report ***Toward an Equitable Region: Lessons from Baltimore's Sustainable Communities Initiative***.

engAGED: Increasing Social Engagement for Older Adults

August 15, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Join the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) for the final installment in a five-part webinar series, engAGED: Increasing Social Engagement for Older Adults, focused on increasing the engagement of older adults to promote health and wellness. Older Adults Technology Services will be highlighting resources and focusing on best practices for engaging older adults through technology.

Opioids: Recovery, Prevention, & Hope: National Experts Equip Faith and Community Leaders

September 27, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

Live from Washington D.C., the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will convene national leaders and experts to talk about the opioid epidemic and other addictions to raise awareness, encourage compassion, reinforce the role of community and families in long-term recovery and prevention, and make a call to action. HHS encourages you to host a post-broadcast conversation in your community with local experts and discuss approaches that will foster healing for individuals and families and align regional efforts to renew wholeness in your community. This event will be livestreamed at **[HHS.gov/live](https://www.hhs.gov/live)**.

CONTACT US

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