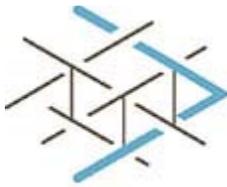


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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS**

VOL. XIV, No. 2, January 13, 2014

**eRegions**

## **EXECUTIVE BRIEF**

Colleagues,

Please register for your 2014 National Conference of Regions, February 9-11, here in Washington, D.C. Every year NARC brings together regions from around the country to prepare for the new legislative year, set policy, and discuss and share strategy for the future of the regional agenda. We hope you will join us at this premier event.

In preparation for this year, we will be working with you to urge Congress and the Administration to pass well-funded spending measures; prepare for and execute a new vision of a national

**PROGRAM UPDATE POLICY UPDATE**

**REGIONS 360**

**GRANT OPPORTUNITIES UPCOMING EVENTS**



## **PROGRAM UPDATE**

**New Healthy Communities Toolkit:** This new toolkit, produced by the Center for Disease Control and the American Planning Association, helps planners, public health professionals, and community members include health issues in local planning and decision-making. Click [HERE](#) to view the toolkit.

**U.S. Census Bureau's New Interactive Mapping Tool:** The U.S. Census Bureau released a new interactive mapping tool that gives users easier access to neighborhood level statistics, drawing on updated statistics from the American Community Survey. Click [HERE](#) to view the tool.

**Walkable Shopping Areas are Good for Business:** A new report from

surface transportation program; pass a comprehensive workforce bill; build a strong community services base in housing, aging, and economic development; continue to fund and promote robust energy programs; and, continue to consider regions in the public safety and emergency responses and planning programs. We will need active and engaged partners to accomplish this aggressive agenda.

I look forward to seeing and brainstorming with you.

Best,  
Fred

## **NARC**LEADERSHIP

### **President**

**Hon. Penny Gross**  
Supervisor,  
Fairfax County, VA

**Chair Jim Hassinger,**  
Executive Directors  
Council

Executive Director,  
Southwestern  
Pennsylvania Commission

## **NARC**STAFF

**Fred Abousleman**  
Executive Director

the Robert Wood Johnson's Active Living Research initiative examines the economic benefits to businesses of walkable communities. Click [HERE](#) to view the report.

**NACo Report Tracks Economic Recovery by County:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) today released an interactive, county-specific study that analyzes recovery patterns across the country through tracking four economic indicators: economic output (GDP), employment, the unemployment rate and home prices. The report titled, *County Tracker 2013: On the Path to Recovery*, includes case studies to illustrate how specific county economies fared during the recession, recovery and in 2013. The full report is available [HERE](#).

**Report Details Cost of Young Adult Unemployment:** Last week Young Invincibles, a nonprofit organization, and Congressional leaders unveiled a report assessing the economic impact of young adult unemployment on for each individual taxpayer. The research found the cost to the nation is \$25 billion annually or \$171 per taxpayer. Additionally, each unemployed young person cost the federal and state government over \$4,100 to \$10,000 annually stemming from revenue losses. Click [HERE](#) for the full report, and [HERE](#) for the interactive report.

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## **POLICY**UPDATE

*Congress is in session.*

**Congress Continues to Work on FY14 Appropriations:** Congress must pass a short-term extension of current FY14 funding, which expires on Wednesday, January 15, to avoid government shutdown and to allow additional time to finish FY14 omnibus efforts. The omnibus, scheduled for its unveiling today, would fund the government through September 30 at \$1.012 trillion and includes all 12 appropriations bills. The general schedule for activity is as follows, barring any challenges with policy riders or other points of contention:

- Pass short-term extension of current funding before Wednesday, extending funding through Saturday (House set for Tuesday; Senate for Wednesday);
- File FY14 omnibus bill (expected to happen today);
- Work omnibus bill through both chambers; and,

**Shannon Baxevanis**

Deputy Director

**Autumn Campbell**

Director of Community  
Programs

**Mia Colson**

Program Analyst

**Nathan Devers**

Intern

**Marcy Fritter**

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Program Associate

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Communications

**Anna Rosenbaum**

Communications

Associate

**Erich W. Zimmermann**

Director of Transportation  
Programs

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of *eRegions*, [visit our  
website.](#)

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homepage —  
[click here to learn how.](#)

- Send omnibus to President for signature (expected to happen this weekend).

**Dairy Policy Issues Stymie Farm Bill Progress:** House and Senate negotiators hammering out a compromise on long-term Farm Bill reauthorization are closer than ever to an agreement. Reports indicate conference committee consensus on previous sticking points, including nutrition assistance cuts, crop insurance and subsidy reform. However, dairy policy concerns are hindering final consideration, and House Speaker John Boehner has ardently opposed federal price supports and supply management proposed during dairy industry down-turns. If members can quickly resolve this roadblock, a conference package could be released for consideration before the end of the month. NARC and other rural development coalition members also have reason to be optimistic that language included in a conference bill would likely reflect priorities outlined in the Senate version of the Farm Bill.

**Administration Announces Promise Zones:** Last week, the Administration fulfilled the first phase of the President’s commitment, made during his February 2013 State of the Union, to designate target areas around the country for intensive and layered approach to revitalizing distressed communities. The inaugural group of “Promise Zones” include San Antonio, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Southeastern Kentucky and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Each have developed a plan to effectively leverage partnerships in exchange for priority access to federal investments. The Administration announcement is available [HERE.](#)

**House Introduces Older Americans Act Reauthorization Proposal:** Last week, two Republicans and one Democrat introduced a straight reauthorization proposal of the Older Americans Act (OAA) as a sign of support to achieve long-term reauthorization for federal aging programs. Bill HR 3850 makes no major policy or funding changes, but is a positive first step. NARC is working with aging industry partners to determine next steps for a reauthorization effort in the House. OAA reauthorization passed the Senate HELP committee last year, but members are still negotiating funding formula issues prior to bringing it to the floor for approval.

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**REGIONS360**

**San Antonio Proposes Streetcar:** San Antonio, Texas has proposed a

5.9 mile downtown streetcar system. U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx recently visited San Antonio where he received a briefing on the plans from local officials. Foxx noted that San Antonio is “probably the largest city in the country without some rail connection within its transit system.” Federal officials will keep that in mind as they decide whether or not to help fund the project as federal funding was not promised at the time. The streetcar system is set to open in 2017.

**Dallas News highlights NCTCOG:** *Dallas News* highlights the North Central Texas Council of Governments’ (NCTCOG) Solar Ready II project, which aims to implement solar best management practices in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Click [HERE](#) to read the full article.

**CMAP Releases Report Examining Economic Development Strategies Nationwide:** Last week, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) released a report assessing state and regional economic development strategies across the country. The report titled, *Reorienting State and Regional Economic Development: Lessons Learned from National Examples*, examines current challenges and opportunities in economic development policy and practices. The report is a scan of national practices, and includes three case studies from New York, Washington and Oregon states, and the Denver-area. It highlights efforts to use strategic planning, program coordination, and innovative strategies to foster national and international economic competitiveness. Click [HERE](#) for full report.

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

### **National Endowment for the Arts**

*Deadline: January 13*

The NEA Our Town Program aims to support creative placemaking projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core. Our Town will invest in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, seek to improve their quality of life; encourage greater creative activity; foster stronger community identity and a sense of place; and revitalize economic development. More information is available [HERE](#).

### **Institute Without Borders**

*Deadline for Expression of Interest: January 13*

The Institute without Boundaries (IwB) is seeking curriculum partners for Connecting Divided Places, a project that investigates social, economic, environmental and cultural divisions in cities. IwB seeks applications from municipalities, not-for-profit organizations, and companies interested in working to address the problems dividing cities and regions. IwB is looking for organizations interested in collaborating on design solutions that make for more balanced, healthier and resilient city-regions of the future. Read more [HERE](#).

**New! Georgetown Climate Center Offering Legal and Policy Support**

*Application Deadline: January 15*

The Georgetown Climate Center is offering legal and policy support to state and local governments to assist their adaptation to climate change. To learn more about the application process, click [HERE](#).

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

*Deadline: January 15*

As part of the Diesel Emission Reduction Program (DERA), the 2013 Construction Equipment Funding Opportunity will provide rebate incentives to selected eligible applicants to either retrofit or to replace their nonroad construction equipment engines. Applicants may submit only one application for up to five pieces of equipment and up to \$120,000 in rebate funds. Applications may be downloaded from the website. Completed applications and required documentation should be sent by email. More information is available [HERE](#).

**U.S. Forest Service - Community Forest Program Grant**

*Deadline: January 15*

The U.S. Forest Service's Community Forest Program (CFP) protects forests that are important for people and the places they call home. CFP provides funding to local governments, tribal governments and nonprofits to establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits. Click [HERE](#) for more information about available funding.

**Health Resources Services Administration – Rural Health Network Development Planning Program**

*Deadline: January 16*

Funding is available to develop and promote the planning and development of rural healthcare networks aimed at achieving efficiencies; expanding access to, coordinating, and improving the

quality of essential services; and strengthening the rural health care system as a whole. This program brings together key parts of a rural health care delivery system, particularly those entities that may not have collaborated in the past under a formal relationship, to work together to establish and improve local capacity and coordination of care. This grant program supports one year of planning with the primary goal in helping networks create a foundation and focus efforts to address important regional or local community health needs. More information about this opportunity is available [HERE](#).

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

*Deadline: January 22*

EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) has announced FY 2014 EPA funding for Brownfields Job Training Grants, Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grants, Brownfields Assessment Grants, Brownfields Multi-Purpose Grants, Brownfields Cleanup Grants, State Assistance Grant, Hazardous Waste Management Grant Program for Tribes, Tribal Solid Waste Management Assistance Project. More information is available [HERE](#) and the National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals (NALGEP) will host a webinar on December 4th to discuss this opportunity. Sign up for the webinar [HERE](#).

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

*Deadline: January 23*

As part of its Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program, EPA is seeking applications proposing research to improve understanding of the effects of climate change on indoor air quality and the resulting health effects. EPA is interested in supporting research that will explore the anticipated effects of climate change on indoor air quality directly through a variety of mechanisms, and indirectly through adaptations in building use and design. More information is available [HERE](#).

**U.S. Department of the Interior – Bureau of Reclamation**

*Deadline: January 23*

Funding is available through the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART program to support new Water and Energy Efficiency Grant projects. Proposals are sought from states, Indian tribes, irrigation districts, water districts and other organizations with water or power delivery authority to partner with Reclamation on projects that increase water conservation or result in other improvements that address water supply sustainability in the West. More information is available [HERE](#).

**New! Letters of Interest for Green Infrastructure Projects**

*Letters Due: January 24*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Wastewater Management is seeking letters of interest from communities for green infrastructure projects. Selected communities will receive assistance from contractors paid by EPA. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**U.S. Department of Labor – Employment Training Administration**

*Deadline: January 27*

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), has announced \$100 million in grant funds for the Youth CareerConnect grant program. The program is designed to provide high school students with education and training that combines rigorous academic and technical curricula focused on specific in-demand occupations and industries for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers as well as the related activities necessary to support such training to increase participants' employability in H-1B in-demand industries and occupations. More information is available [HERE](#).

**National Science Foundation (NSF) - Cyber-Physical Systems**

*Deadline: January 29*

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have a shared interest in advancing basic and applied research in Cyber Physical Systems (CPS), which are systems in which physical processes are tightly intertwined with networked computing. For transportation, CPS will provide the foundation necessary for a safe, efficient highway transportation system connecting vehicles, infrastructure, people, and goods in a vibrant, competitive economy. More information is available [HERE](#).

**U.S. Department of Agriculture**

*Deadline: January 30*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of \$181 million to develop commercial-scale biorefineries or retrofit existing facilities with appropriate technology to develop advanced biofuels. Funding is available through the Biorefinery Assistance Program provides loan guarantees to viable commercial-scale facilities to develop new and emerging technologies for advanced biofuels. The announcement is available [HERE](#), more information about

the program is available [HERE](#) and the full text of the Federal Register notice is available [HERE](#).

#### **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

*Deadline: January 31*

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has announced funding for the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program, which will support projects that reduce communities' vulnerability to the growing risks from coastal storms, sea level rise, flooding, erosion, and associated threats through strengthening natural ecosystems that also benefit fish and wildlife. The program will award more than \$100 million in grants to states officially declared a natural disaster as a result of Hurricane Sandy. Details available [HERE](#).

#### **Health Impact Project**

*Funding Announced in February*

The Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts, is planning to launch a call for proposals for funding in February 2014. Grants will support health impact assessment (HIA) demonstration projects as well as development of HIA programs to integrate health in decision-making. More information on this opportunity is available [HERE](#).

#### **U.S. Department of Housing**

*Deadline: February 3*

Funding is available for FY 2013 and FY 2014 Continuum of Care Program Competition (CoC) to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; to provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, States, and local governments to quickly re-house the homeless while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness; to promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by the homeless; and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness. Full text of the notice of funding availability (NOFA) is available [HERE](#).

#### **National Science Foundation - Cyber-Enabled Sustainability Science and Engineering**

*Deadline: February 4*

The Cyber-Enabled Sustainability Science and Engineering (CyberSEES) program aims to advance interdisciplinary research in which the science and engineering of sustainability are enabled by new

advances in computing, and where computational innovation is grounded in the context of sustainability problems. Read more [HERE](#).

#### **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

*Deadline: February 5*

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program seeks to develop nation-wide-community stewardship of local natural resources, preserving resources for future generations and enhancing habitat for local wildlife. Projects seek to address water quality issues in priority watersheds, such as erosion due to unstable streambanks, pollution from stormwater runoff, and degraded shorelines caused by development. More information is available [HERE](#).

#### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

*Deadline: February 18*

The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (CPS) Cooperative Agreement Program provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and public health issues within an affected community. The CPS Program is designed to help communities understand and address exposure to multiple environmental harms and risks. More information about this opportunity is available [HERE](#).

#### **Energy for Sustainability**

*Deadline: February 20*

This program supports fundamental research and education that will enable innovative processes for the sustainable production of electricity and transportation fuels. Processes for sustainable energy production must be environmentally benign, reduce greenhouse gas production, and utilize renewable resources. Current interest areas in sustainable energy technologies are: Biomass Conversion, Biofuels & Bioenergy, Photovoltaic Solar Energy, Wind Energy, and Advanced Batteries for Transportation. Learn more about this program [HERE](#).

#### **U.S. Department of Agriculture – Value-Added Producer Grant Program**

*Deadline: February 24*

The USDA announced \$10.5 million in carry-over funding from 2013 to help U.S. agricultural producers enter into value-added activities. Awards may be made for either economic planning or working capital activities related to the processing and/or marketing of valued- added agricultural products. More information is available [HERE](#).

### **U.S. Department of Energy**

*Deadline: Concept Papers due January 13; Final applications due March 13*

As part of a new \$19 million investment in solar energy, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced funding available under the SunShot Incubator 9 program. This program will focus on early-stage support for small companies, encouraging private-sector investment and seeking app and web developers from both inside and outside of the energy industry to zero in on reducing soft costs of solar adoption. More information is available [HERE](#).

### **U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration**

*Deadlines: March 14 for funding cycle 3 of FY 2014;  
June 13 for funding cycle 4 of FY 2014*

EDA is soliciting applications from applicants in rural and urban areas to provide investments that support construction, non-construction, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects under EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. Grants and cooperative agreements made under these programs are designed to leverage existing regional assets and support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities. EDA provides competitive, merit-based investments that support economic development, foster job creation, and attract private investment in economically distressed areas of the United States. The full announcement is available [HERE](#).

### **National Science Foundation - Environmental Sustainability**

*Deadline: March 20*

The Environmental Sustainability program supports engineering research that seeks to balance society's need to provide ecological protection and maintain stable economic conditions. Research in Environmental Sustainability typically considers long time horizons and may incorporate contributions from the social sciences and ethics. There are four principal general research areas which are supported: Industrial Ecology, Green Engineering, Ecological Engineering, Earth Systems Engineering. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

### **Climate Solutions University Accepting Applications**

*Application Deadline: Rolling*

The Model Forest Policy Program is offering a special funding opportunity for qualifying U.S. urban and rural communities working together addressing ecosystem services. Urban decision makers need to plan for climate impacts that result from land changes beyond their jurisdictional boundaries. To find out more about the Climate Solutions University, click [HERE](#).

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## UPCOMINGEVENTS

### **New! WEBINAR SERIES: NOAA SARP: Decision Making into Local/Regional Planning**

*January 15, 1:00-2:00 PM EST*

Brought to you by The NOAA Sectoral Applications Research Program (SARP), the next webinar in the series focuses on decision making into local/regional planning, uncertainty in stormwater adaptation, climate variability information for risk assessments, urban water policy and decision support. For more information, click [HERE](#).

### **New! WEBINAR: Energy Efficiency Cost-effectiveness Testing**

*January 16, 2:00-3:30 PM EST*

Cost-effectiveness is a commonly used criterion for assessing individual projects, as well as defining public and regulatory policies. This webinar will cover the differences between various cost-effectiveness tests, appropriate tests for energy efficiency screening, accounting for environmental benefits and use, as well as the impact of different discount rates. Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **WEBINAR: Planning for Green Infrastructure at the Landscape Scale**

*January 14, 1:00-3:00 PM EST*

Join the EPA's Healthy Watersheds Program for a webinar highlight planning for green infrastructure at the landscape scale, highlighting New York State's new green infrastructure guide. For more information and to register, click [HERE](#).

### **WEBINAR: Financing Energy Efficiency Upgrades with ENERGY STAR**

*January 16, 2:00 PM EST*

Learn how public sector organizations are improving energy efficiency with innovative solutions to financial barriers, financing projects in public and private sectors, basics of performance contracting, and how EPA's tools and resources can help you make the decision to improve your

facilities now or later. Register [HERE](#).

**New! WEBINAR: The Urban Forest- What Planners Need to Know**

*January 22, 2:00-3:30 PM EST*

As urban areas and communities expand, so do the urban and community forests and the need to manage these important resources. This webinar will explore a variety of concepts and tools that are important for land use planners to consider when planning for urban forest conservation and management. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**WEBINAR: Green Goods: How to Create Sustainable County Purchasing and Procurement Programs**

*January 22, 2:00-3:15 PM EST*

This National Association of Counties webinar will explore how local governments can develop an environmentally preferred purchasing program, navigate the myriad of product eco-labels and green purchasing guidelines, and hear success stories from counties that have established sustainable purchasing and procurement programs. Register [HERE](#).

**FREE Regional Solar Workshop: Detroit, MI**

*January 23, 8:30-12:30 PM EST*

Local governments interested in learning about how to make their community solar ready in Southeast Michigan are invited to a free workshop sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Solar Outreach Partnership, City of Lathrup Village, Southeast Michigan Regional Energy Office and NARC. The workshop will provide actionable information on creating local –level solar policies and permitting processes. Areas of focus include: (1) The benefits and barriers of solar development in your region; (2) Revising planning and zoning codes and ordinances; and (3) Streamlining the permitting processes to enable solar development in your community. For more information and to register for the event, click [HERE](#).

**NARC's 2014 National Conference of Regions**

*February 9-11, Washington, DC*

The National Conference of Regions is the forum that NARC uses to determine key policy issues and a legislative agenda on topics of relevance and importance to executive directors and local elected officials representing regional organizations and boards. Registration, hotel information and a draft agenda are available on the conference website [HERE](#).

**New Partners for Smart Growth Conference: “Are Your Building and Land Use Codes Ready for the Changing Climate?”**

*February 13-15, Denver, CO*

The New Partners for Smart Growth Conference fosters discussion on building safe, healthy, equitable and prosperous communities. The conference will feature a session that explores code changes that communities can make to better prepare themselves for climate change in addition to providing other benefits. Register [HERE](#).

***NARC's 48th Annual Conference and Exhibition***

*June 6-11, Louisville, KY*

The Annual Conference and Exhibition is the largest national event focused on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education. Held annually in June, NARC's Annual Conference is the premier place to learn how to engage in effective regional collaboration. Additional information will be available in early 2014.

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