



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Senate is in session; House will resume session tomorrow.

DHS Appropriations Bill: Today, the Senate will vote (for the fourth time) on a motion to limit debate on proceeding to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations bill ([HR 240](#)), which will fund DHS through September 30. The legislation includes provisions that prohibit DHS from implementing the President's Executive Orders on immigration, which Democrats in the chamber support. The current appropriation expires on Friday of this week. If today's procedural vote is approved, the Senate will debate the DHS appropriations bill for the remainder of the week. If the procedural vote fails, the Senate will need to develop a plan to prevent a shutdown of DHS, which will occur on Saturday absent an appropriations agreement.

This Week in the House: The House is expected to vote on a number of proposals this week, including the *Drinking Water Protection Act* ([HR 212](#)), the *Federal Communications Commission Consolidated Report Act of 2015* ([HR 734](#)), and the *STEM Education Act of 2015* ([HR 1020](#)), along with several K-12 education bills.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Changes to Nursing Home Rating System Announced: On Friday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services outlined changes to the federal rating system used to evaluate nursing homes that will require nursing homes to score higher on a formula to maintain their standing. Facilities receive stars based on the result of government inspections and self-reported staffing and quality data. This overhaul will make it more difficult for facilities to obtain the highest score on a five-star scale. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Paying for Green Infrastructure: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program Released two reports to help municipalities pay for green infrastructure initiatives.

- *Getting to Green: Paying for Green Infrastructure, Finance Options, and Resources for Local Decision-Makers* summarizes various funding sources that can be used to support stormwater management programs or finance individual projects. Click [HERE](#) for the report.
- *Coastal Stormwater Management through Green Infrastructure* is designed to assist coastal municipalities within the Massachusetts Bay and Cape Cod Bay areas to incorporate green infrastructure into their stormwater management planning, and can be useful to those in other states. Click [HERE](#) for the handbook.

REGIONS360

Five-Year Study on Senior Drivers: The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety directed \$12 million to a study that tracks the driving behavior and health of 3,000 senior drivers. Conducted by Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, the study will attempt to clarify the relationship between aging and driving safety, as well as guide community decision-makers in their efforts to mobilize their aging populations. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

MEMBERSHIP REQUEST

Please send responses to Anna Rosenbaum, anna@narc.org.

Annual Retreat for Elected Officials: Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG) in Yakima, WA is interested in holding an annual retreat for their elected officials. Does your organization hold a yearly retreat for its elected officials, to educate them on services/programs offered by your regional council? If yes, how do you structure your retreat? How long does the retreat last? Do you pay for all expenses (hotel, food, etc.)? How do you encourage attendance? Are you willing to share your agendas/handouts as an example?

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of grants still open!

USDA Funding for Community Food Projects

Applications due: March 17

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced the availability of \$9 million in funding to assist communities in developing local and independent food systems. NIFA is funding the grants through the [Community Food Projects program](#). Grants are intended entities (including nonprofits) in need of a one-time installment of federal assistance to establish and carry out multipurpose community food projects. Projects are funded from \$10,000 to \$300,000 and up to 36 months. All grants require a dollar-for-dollar match in resources. Click [HERE](#) for details.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of events still open!

WEBINAR: Using Solar Energy to Enhance Community Resilience

February 26, 3:00-4:00 PM ET

The American Planning Association and SunShot Solar Outreach Partnership will present a free webinar exploring how communities can use solar development to enhance resilience. As global temperatures and energy demand rise, energy and climate experts expect energy prices to escalate and the number of extreme weather events to increase. These results affect disabled, elderly, and low-income populations disproportionately. While the potential role of solar power in mitigating climate change is well established, the relationship between solar energy and community resilience deserves greater attention. Click [HERE](#) to register.

WEBINAR: Accessing Block Group Data with the ACS

April 30, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM ET

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that generates estimates on social, economic, housing, and demographic topics. This presentation will cover background information about the ACS, an explanation of the ACS Summary File, and a demonstration of accessing block group data using American FactFinder, the Summary File Retrieval Tool, DataFerrett, and FTP site. Click [HERE](#) for details.

WEBINAR: An Overview of Veteran and Related Statistics

May 21, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM ET

This topical webinar will help you in the search and navigation of the Census website, and in locating Veteran Statistics. It will include visual examples, tools to locate and access data, and a demonstration on how data can be used. Some familiarity with Census Bureau data would be helpful before viewing this webinar. Click [HERE](#) for details.

WEBINAR: ACS Content Review Update

June 23, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM ET

The Census Bureau is in the process of reviewing each question in the ACS to make sure the survey includes only those questions federal agencies need to accomplish their missions, and to minimize the reporting burden on the 3.5 million households that respond to the survey each year. This webinar will focus on the results of the first phase of the project, public comments received in response to a 60-day Federal Register notice published about the results, and next steps. The presentation will be followed by 10-15 minutes of questions and answers. Click [HERE](#) for details.

WEBINAR: Introduction to ACS

Aug 25, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM ET

Discover the detailed social, economic, and housing statistics that the ACS provides for every community every year. Learn the basics of the yearly estimates and datasets produced from the ACS, resources available on the [census.gov/acs](https://www.census.gov/acs) website, and how to access ACS data products through a variety of tools with an emphasis on American FactFinder. Click [HERE](#) for details.