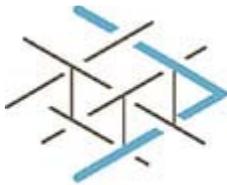


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## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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# eRegions

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### **PROGRAM UPDATE POLICY UPDATE REGIONS 360 GRANT OPPORTUNITIES UPCOMING EVENTS**

Dear Colleagues,

This is my last eRegions column and my last week with NARC. Thank you for all your support and friendship over the last fourteen years. I leave you with a strong association and the best possible staff who will continue to work for and represent you in Washington and across the country. The past fourteen years have been amazing – from starting as your Transportation Director to exiting as your Executive Director – I've built many friendships and enjoyed awesome opportunity. We've accomplished so much during this time. We upfunded metropolitan planning organizations; promoted workforce investment; ran programs in agriculture, energy, security and defense; created regional alliances; formed new partnerships; and welcomed new members. I expect NARC will continue this tradition of innovation and advocacy. I can be reached at [fabousle@ocwcog.org](mailto:fabousle@ocwcog.org) beginning next week when I assume the Executive Directorship of Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments.

Thank you for everything!

Fred

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## PROGRAMUPDATE

**EPA Launches New Tool on Emissions Benefits of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Policy Decisions:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) unveiled AVOIDed Emissions and geneRation Tool (AVERT), an online interface designed to help state and local energy stakeholders estimate the emissions benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy policies and programs. The tool will provide county-level assessments of reductions of electric power plant emissions due to efficiency and renewable energy activities. More information is available **HERE.**

**EPA Releases Series for Local Governments on GHG Reduction Strategies:** EPA releases *The Local Government Climate and Energy Strategy Series* to give a straightforward overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction strategies that local governments can use to achieve economic, environmental, social, and human health benefits. The document series covers energy efficiency, transportation, community planning and design, solid waste and materials management, and renewable energy. More information is available **HERE.**

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## POLICYUPDATE

*Senate is in session. House will resume session Wednesday.*

**Final Rule on Categorical Exclusions in Place:** On January 13, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a joint final rule in the Federal Register creating two new categorical exclusions (CE) for the agencies, pursuant to the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The rule added two new CEs for actions within the existing operational right-of-way and actions with limited Federal funding (projects with less than \$5 million of federal funds or projects less than \$30 million). These changes are effective as of February 12. For more information including the final rule text and explanatory webinar, go **HERE.**

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## REGIONS360

**Centralina Council of Governments Unveils New Tool to**

**Promote Economic Development and Job Growth:** The Centralina Workforce Investment Board unveiled their *Career Headlight*, an online tool to help job seekers in the region better identify local jobs and training opportunities. While still in the testing phase, according to Mike Manis, Centralina Economic Development Commission President, the new platform will enable regional workforce partners and job seekers "...to more quickly and effectively close the gap between what employers need and the skills, education, and training pipeline we have within the region." More information about the technology is available [HERE](#).

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

**Green Project Reserve Funding Available through CWSRF:** In fiscal year (FY) 2014, Congress and the President provided \$1.45 billion to capitalize the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program, and mandated that no less than ten percent of these funds be dedicated to the Green Project Reserve, approximately \$145 million nationwide. The state agencies that administer CWSRF programs have developed different methods to disperse Green Project Reserve dollars, but these projects address green infrastructure, water or energy efficiency improvements, or environmentally innovative activities. More information is available [HERE](#).

### **NARC - Regional Centers of Excellence**

*Application Due: February 28*

NARC, with support from the U.S. Forest Service, is seeking applications for the distribution of grants to regional organizations promoting the use of green infrastructure. One \$8,000 or two \$4,000 grant(s) will be awarded. Click [HERE](#) for details.

### **USDA – Conservation Innovation Grants**

*Deadline: March 7*

The USDA announced \$15 million in funding available for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to develop and accelerate conservation approaches and technologies on private agricultural and forest lands. Priority will be given to applications that relate to nutrient management, energy conservation, soil health, air quality, climate change, wildlife, economics, sociology, environmental markets, food safety, historically underserved groups, or assessments of past CIG projects. Click [HERE](#) for details.

**New! FTA – \$24.9M for Zero-Emission Buses Across America**

*Deadline: March 10*

FTA announced the availability of \$24.9 million through its brand new Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Program that will put a new generation of advanced, non-polluting transit buses on the road in communities nationwide. The funds are intended to encourage more widespread adoption of reliable “green energy” buses into transit fleets. Click [HERE](#) for the announcement, and [HERE](#) for related information.

**EPA – Regional Pollution Prevention Program Offices**

*Deadline: March 11*

Funding is available for Source Reduction Assistance Grants for projects that reduce or eliminate pollution at the source. Funded projects will reduce greenhouse gases; reduce hazardous materials; increase resource conservation; promote efficient business practices; and support pollution prevention integration. EPA anticipates having more than \$1 million in funding available in 2014. More information is available [HERE](#).

**DOE - SunShot Incubator 9 Program**

*Application Deadline: 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](#).

**EDA - Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs**

*Deadlines: March 14; June 13 for funding cycle 4*

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Economic Development Administration (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.

**Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Funding Opportunity**

*Proposal Deadline: April 2*

The Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts, has launched a call for proposals. HIA help to identify and address likely benefits and risks of a decision made in a field outside of the health sector. Eligible organizations include nonprofits, state, local and tribal agencies, and educational institutions. Click [HERE](#) to read the proposal letter and [HERE](#) for application details.

**New! ETA – Training to Work 2: Adult Reentry**

*Deadline: April 18*

DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) plans to award approximately 15 grants of up to \$2 million each, totaling up to \$30 million, to serve ex-offenders in work release programs (WRPs). Funding is available for organizations to develop and implement career pathway programs in demand sectors and occupations for adults enrolled in WRPs. More information is available [HERE](#).

**New! EPA – Brownfields Activities**

*Deadline: April 18*

EPA announced funding available to conduct research or provide

technical assistance to communities facing brownfields cleanup and revitalization challenges. Focus areas include technical assistance for workforce development, environmental justice, and financing strategies, as well as research on the benefits of brownfields redevelopment in brownfields-impacted communities. More information is available [HERE](#).

**New! ETA – YouthBuild**

*Deadline: April 22*

Approximately \$73 million to organizations to oversee the provision of education, occupational skills training, and employment services to disadvantaged youth in their communities while performing meaningful work and service to their communities. DOL hopes to serve approximately 4,950 participants during the grant period of performance, with approximately 75 projects awarded across the country. More information is available [HERE](#).

**New! USDA – Farm to School Program**

*Deadline: April 30*

USDA announced several funding opportunities for *The Farm to School Grant Program*, a cornerstone of USDA's *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative*, which coordinates the Department's work on local and regional foods. More information on these opportunities and a list of webinar dates about each program are available [HERE](#).

**New! ETA – Ready to Work Partnership**

*Deadline: June 19*

As part of President Obama's "Opportunity for All" Agenda announced during the State of the Union address, ETA announced \$150 million available to local workforce development providers and programs through the *Ready to Work Partnership Grant Program*. DOL expects to fund approximately 20-30 grants with individual grant amounts ranging from \$3 million to \$10 million. This grant program is designed to provide long-term unemployed workers with individualized counseling, training, and supportive and specialized services that lead to rapid employment in occupations and industries for which employers use H-1B visas to hire foreign workers. More information is available [HERE](#).

**DOE – Solar Manufacturing Technology 2 (SolarMat 2)**

*Application Due: March 14, 2015*

The U.S. DOE SunShot Initiative is providing funding to spur solar energy manufacturing and supply chain companies in the U.S., by aiding the development of innovative cost reducing and/or efficiency increasing technology into useable manufacturing equipment and processes. Click [HERE](#) for more information about available funding.

### **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**

### **WEBINAR: Stormwater Management Incentives and Public Private Partnerships in Philadelphia**

*February 25, 1:00-3:00 PM EST*

Learn more about the approaches the City of Philadelphia is taking to encourage green stormwater infrastructure on private property including stormwater billing credits, grant programs, and public private partnerships. There will be 2 Professional Development Hours offered for this webcast. Register [HERE](#).

### **WEBINAR: Urban Forestry - Toward an Ecosystem Services Research Agenda**

*February 25, 1:00-2:00 PM EST*

Last year the National Academy of Sciences convened a workshop to bring a diverse scientific community together with urban forestry and green infrastructure practitioners. This webinar will provide an overview of that workshop, focusing on an assessment of how we currently quantify ecosystem services associated with the urban forest. Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **New! WEBINAR: America Walks: Using Crosswalk Laws as a Framework for Pedestrian Safety**

*February 25, 2:00 PM EST*

When someone gets hurt or the police are urged to "do something," it is the traffic law that governs what can be done.

Pedestrian law advocate and lawyer Ray Thomas (Portland, OR) will present an overview of the nation's crosswalk laws. Ray's presentation will give attendees a better understanding of the legal framework that supports each pedestrian's rights. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**WEBINAR: DOE Tribal Renewable Energy Series - Strategic Energy Planning**

*February 26, 1:00-2:30 PM EST*

Attendees will learn about developing a strategic energy plan, identifying key aspects of successful energy planning, and using available information and resources. More information and registration is available [HERE](#).

**New! WEBINAR: Eno Center's Public Private Partnership Training Course**

Application Deadline: *February 26*; Webinar: *March 10 – April 4*

The Eno Center for Transportation has created an interactive online public-private-partnership (P3) course. This 40-hour, four-week online course will prepare mid- and senior-level managers to navigate the capital expansion and rehabilitation process in the P3 context, and features interactivity with other students and course mentors. Each week has a distinct lesson plan and assignments, although most course activities are flexible or available on-demand. The course fee is \$3,000. Click [HERE](#) to register, and [HERE](#) for more information.

**WEBINAR: Transportation and Livability, What's that Really Mean for Rural Transportation Systems?**

*February 28, 12:00 PM EST*

This webinar is designed to challenge transportation researchers and policy makers to consider the nature and severity of problems in the rural transportation system, where livability means something quite different than simply travel choices and "destinations close to home." Dr. Aultman-Hall will review the rise of livability as a concept in federal transportation policy between 2009 and 2012 and discuss lessons learned, specifically barriers that must be overcome, for both non-metropolitan and rural areas. Click [HERE](#) to register. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

**CONFERENCE: Freight in the Southeast**

*March 3-6; Tampa, FL*

The Institute for Trade and Transportation Studies, a regionally-focused organization that works on trade and transportation issues in the southeast, is holding its annual trade conference and might be of interest to the area's metropolitan planning organizations and other transportation planners. On the first night, there will be a working dinner with discussion on "Integrating local and statewide freight planning efforts." For more information, click [HERE](#) or contact Bruce Lambert at [bruce@ittsresearch.org](mailto:bruce@ittsresearch.org).

**New! WEBINAR: Best Practices for Collaborating on Data Sharing and Data Analytics**

*March 6, 1:00 PM EST*

The FHWA would like you to join them for the next *Let's Talk Performance*. The ability to collect, store, access, and analyze data to use for transportation performance management decision making is an area of great concern for several of FHWA partners. This webinar will focus on sharing best practices being implemented in Texas, California, and Maryland concerning data collection, storage, and access, while also analyzing concerns related to the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) performance provisions. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**New! WEBINAR: The Challenge of Transportation Planning for Resilience**

*March 11, 11:30 AM EST*

Join William Lyons, principal technical advisor in transportation planning at Volpe, for his talk on Transportation System Resilience Extreme Weather and Climate Change. Lyons leads Volpe support for the FHWA and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on regulatory reviews of transportation planning by states and metropolitan areas. The projects involve multi-disciplinary teams and significant collaboration with transportation planning and operating agencies at federal, state, regional, and local levels. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP: Solar in Western Kentucky**

*March 27, 10:00-3:00 PM CT*

Local governments interested in learning about how to make their community solar ready in Western Kentucky are invited to a free workshop sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Solar Outreach Partnership, Green River Area Development District, and NARC. The workshop will provide actionable

information on creating local –level solar policies and permitting processes. Areas of focus include: the benefits and barriers of solar development in your region; creating solar friendly planning and zoning codes and ordinances; and innovative financing options for solar projects. To register and learn more, click [HERE](#).

**CONFERENCE: 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.

**CONFERENCE: Ohio Conference on Freight**

*September 18-19, Hyatt Regency Columbus, OH*

This conference addresses the reality that economic growth will increasingly depend upon or be at the mercy of our freight infrastructure. Key goals of the conference include: building professional capacity in all aspects of freight transport by disseminating best practices in supply chain and logistics; strengthening the ability of the public and private sectors to effectively plan, build, and maintain an efficient transportation network; examining and informing state and federal policies that support freight related economic development. Also, professional engineers can claim professional development hours [PDH]. For more information contact Christine Drennen, Conference Director (419.241.9155 ext. 119 or [drennen@tmacog.org](mailto:drennen@tmacog.org)) or visit [www.ohiofreight.org](http://www.ohiofreight.org) for more info.

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