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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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eRegions

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Colleagues,

This week NARC will publish a special Budget and Sequester Report that aligns our web resources with information on where the sequester and federal budget discussions will take us. We've prepared historical data and an explanation of the remaining significant budget actions we face this year.

We will also launch our Annual Conference and Exhibition registration this week for our 47th event in Philadelphia, PA hosted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

Earlier today, I briefed the Fresno Council of Governments annual "One-Voice" gathering here in DC

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PROGRAM UPDATE

NARC's MAP-21 Implementation Meetings: NARC is hosting regional roundtables to examine and discuss the implementation of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) from the perspective of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and regional councils of government (COGs). Click [HERE](#) to register for one of the following roundtables or [HERE](#) for additional information and to access the agendas for each meeting: **Worcester, MA** - March 8, 2013; **Washington, DC** - March 14, 2013.

NARC's March Transportation Committee Webinar on Federal Budget and Transportation: On March 12, 2013, from 12:00-2:00pm ET, NARC's Transportation Funding and Finance Subcommittee will host its next, monthly Transportation Committee webinar. March is an important month in the federal budget process, with several transportation-related implications. This webinar will review the connection between the federal budget process, provide an update on the potential impacts of the federal sequester and review national level trends in funding transportation. Click [HERE](#) to register and [HERE](#) for the agenda.

HUD to Release Research Roadmap: The Department of Housing

on Monday and Erika concludes our fifth MAP-21 Implementation Roundtable in Tulsa, OK on Tuesday.

Finally, last week Autumn and I met with senior U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials on regional food hubs and regional food planning. We'll have more information on this work soon!

Best,
Fred

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and Urban Development announced this week that it plans to unveil 5-year guidelines for agency research efforts shortly after President Obama submits his plan for the 2014 budget. The Research Roadmap will identify 85 key research questions that HUD has identified as forward-looking, collaborative and unique opportunities for the agency. More information on the plan is available [HERE](#).

USDA Releases Report Highlighting the Importance of Regional

Food Hubs: Last week the USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced a report detailing a comprehensive evaluation of the economic value and future role of the nation's food hubs. Highlighting the agency's support of local food initiatives Merrigan stated, "At USDA we are committed to food hubs because we believe that they offer strong and sound infrastructure support to producers across the country which will also help build stronger regional food systems." The full report titled *The Role of Food Hubs in Local Food Marketing* is available [HERE](#).

USDA Proposes Updated Definition of "Rural":

In a report submitted to the House Ag Committee late last month, the USDA proposed updating the definition of "rural area" eligible for support through the agency's rural development programs. The proposed update would codify a rural area as any population anywhere under 50,000, which would expand eligibility to some locations not previously qualifying for support. Ag committee leaders expressed concern that an expanded definition will shift support from smallest rural communities. The full report is available [HERE](#).

POLICYUPDATE

Congress is in session.

Sequester Update: Sequester went into effect on Friday, March 1. Click [HERE](#) to access NARC's summary of sequestration reductions and implementation as issued by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In Congress, efforts are underway to either repeal or blunt the effects of sequester:

- A group of House Democrats, led by Rep. Conyers (D-MI), introduced the "Cancel the Sequester Act of 2013" to repeal it in its entirety.
- Rep. Issa (R-CA) sent a request to federal agencies to

Transportation Director

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identify unnecessary or wasteful programs within their agency that could be eliminated as an alternative to the spending cuts mandated by sequestration. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

- Republican leaders have indicated interest in a possible deal to lower the deficit, overhaul the tax code and rein in spending on entitlement programs.

Visit [NARC's sequestration webpage](#) for more information.

Continuing Resolution Update: Today the House introduced HR 933, a continuing resolution (CR) to maintain government funding through the remainder of fiscal year 2013. The bill does not include a fix for sequestration. However, it does include full-year Defense and Military/Construction/Veterans Appropriations bills, restoring \$7 billion and providing more latitude to shift money among defense programs. All other programs in the bill are funded at FY12 levels and are subject to sequestration. It is anticipated that the House will pass the bill later this week with the Senate planning to take it up next week. It is possible that Senate Democrats may push to give other domestic agencies flexibility for sequester. The current CR expires on March 27. Click [HERE](#) for a summary and text of HR 933.

House Committee to Markup SKILLS Act: On Wednesday the House Education and Workforce Committee will markup the Republican proposal to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act. The proposal would consolidate 35 existing workforce, education and training programs into a single \$6 billion Workforce Investment Fund to serve as a single source of support for program participants. The bill text is available [HERE](#). The Committee held a [hearing](#) last week on the legislation. Additional information is available [HERE](#).

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

RE.invest Initiative Funding

Application Deadline: March 15, 2013

The RE.invest Initiative was developed to create a shift in the way we design, plan, and invest in resilient infrastructure systems to attract large-scale private financing. For more information, click [HERE](#).

The U.S. Administration for Community Living Issues Request For Proposals

Application Deadline: March 20, 2013

Strengthening Inclusive Coordinated Transportation Partnerships to Promote Community Living is a new program seeking request for proposals for innovative inclusive transportation planning projects. These projects are a key component in the overall program's efforts to improve consumer involvement and ensure greater responsiveness to consumers' needs in the planning, design and operation of coordinated transportation systems. A teleconference with more information will be held March 5, 2013, at 2 pm EST. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

NOAA Climate Program Office Funding

Application Deadline: April 8, 2013

The NOAA Climate Program Office's Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) program supports research teams that conduct innovative, interdisciplinary, user-inspired, and regionally relevant research that informs resource management and public policy. For more information, click [HERE](#).

EPA's Smart Growth Achievement Funding

Application Deadline: April 12, 2013

The application period for the 12th annual National Award for Smart Growth Achievement is now open to public- and private-sector entities that have successfully used smart growth principles to improve communities environmentally, socially, and economically. For more information, click [HERE](#).

Health Resources & Services Administration: Rural Health Information Technology (HIT) Workforce Program

Application Deadline: April 15

The Rural HIT program supports formal rural health networks that focus on activities relating to the recruitment, education, training, and retention of HIT specialists and improve existing HIT training materials to develop formal training programs. These formal training programs will result in the development of a cadre of HIT workers that can help rural hospitals and clinics implement and maintain systems, such as electronic health records (EHR), telehealth, home monitoring and mobile health technology, and meet EHR meaningful use standards. For more information, please see [HERE](#).

USDA Farm to School Grant Program

Application Due: April 24, 2013

The purpose of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program is to assist implementation of programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. The program's grants help eligible schools foster sustainability by connecting with local agricultural producers and help improve the health and wellbeing of their students. For more information, click [HERE](#).

UPCOMINGEVENTS

NARC's MAP-21 Implementation Roundtable

March 8, 2013, Worcester, MA

Click [HERE](#) to register for one of the following roundtables or [HERE](#) for additional information.

FHWA Office of Innovative Program Delivery TIFIA Assistance Program

March 7, 2013, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Innovative Program Delivery will host Introduction to Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Federal Credit Assistance Program. The webinar will assist Transportation Professionals to understand TIFIA fundamentals, identify eligible projects that may benefit from TIFIA credit assistance, provide better guidance; and enable Transportation Professionals to provide better guidance to State and local partners. Click [HERE](#) to register.

NARC's MAP-21 Implementation Roundtable

March 14, 2013, Washington, DC

Click [HERE](#) to register for one of the following roundtables or [HERE](#) for additional information.

REMI 2013 Training Conference

May 8-10, 2013, Washington, DC

The conference will offer group presentations on the models and methodologies, as well as workshops and one-on-one technical support sessions from REMI economists; it is a unique opportunity for in-depth, focused analysis, connecting with peers involved in

economic impact analysis, and experiencing the sights and sounds of the capital in spring. There is no charge to attend, though registration is required. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

Brownfields Renewal: Bringing Stakeholders Together
May 15-17, 2012, Atlanta, GA

The National Brownfields Conference is the largest event in the nation that focuses on environmental revitalization and economic redevelopment. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

NARC's 47th Annual Conference and Exhibition
June 20-23, 2013, Philadelphia, PA

Save the Date for NARC's annual conference will focus on best practice and programming for regional and metropolitan planning organizations nationwide. Executive Directors and Staff of regional organizations should plan on attending!

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