

March 7, 2016 [View this email in your browser](#)



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

Now Accepting Applications:  
**NARC**  
**Achievement & Leadership Awards**  
NARC is excited to announce that submissions for the 2016 NARC Awards are now open.

## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Senate is in session. House is not in session and will reconvene the week of March 14.*

### Overview

The Senate meets today to debate the opioid addiction bill. Lawmakers will spend time honoring former first lady Nancy Reagan. On Wednesday, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will hold a hearing on *Cooperative Federalism: State Perspectives on EPA Regulatory Actions and the Role of States as Co-Regulators*. Witnesses have not been announced.

### Appropriations

Action continues on the 2017 federal budget and spending proposals. This week, Cabinet officials will testify in the Senate on the Administration proposals for FY2017 appropriations bills as discussions continue on whether lawmakers will agree to follow last year's budget spending deal or choose to make major cuts in discretionary programs to reduce the deficit. Last year's budget deal kept federal spending at current levels for most key local programs. The Senate is close to reaching agreement on spending levels for FY2017; however, House Republicans have not united behind the FY2017 budget plan.

The budget process begins with an overall spending amount of \$1.07 trillion that is allocated to various federal programs as part of the appropriations process. With all House members up for re-election and the added divisiveness of the Presidential campaign, Congress will have only a few legislative days to act on individual appropriations bills, even if lawmakers can reach agreement on spending totals.

As Congress moves into the decision-making phase on appropriations bills, it is important for you to weigh in on programs important to your community. Congress must act to provide funding for each federal program. Key federal programs important to regions need protecting in FY2017 appropriations legislation. Several of these programs are addressed by “**Dear Colleague**” letters **currently circulating in Congress**. If these programs benefit your organization or region, we urge you to contact your House and Senate members and ask them to sign on. Letter deadlines vary, but all are next week (except where noted below).

- Economic Development Agency
- Regional Job Creation
- Clean Water & Drinking Water
- Community Development Block Grant Program
- Older Americans Act - *deadline March 10*
- Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program
- Community Health Centers

## OTHER NEWS

### **New Solar Planning Game for Communities**

*Solar Powering Sunnyside* is a new participatory planning exercise in the spirit of the comprehensive planning “chip games” that many communities use to engage residents and other stakeholders in developing preferred growth scenarios. Through game play, participants take on the roles of different community stakeholders in the fictional Town of Sunnyside in order to help set and meet the town’s annual solar power production goal. Want to play? **Learn more** about bringing *Solar Powering Sunnyside* to your region.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### **How Open Data Can Encourage More Transit-Oriented Development**

Using open data, Chicago's Metropolitan Planning Council developed an interactive data visualization tool that has played a major role in helping shape local transit-oriented development rules and regulations. The success of the tool shows the power that effectively-used public data can have on policymaking and civic discourse.

### **Member Forums Now Available on NARC's Website**

NARC recently launched the beta version of our member forum platform. NARC members will now be able to use our forums to discuss regional planning issues and initiatives, share resources, collaborate on programs and projects, and more. Create a topic and join the discussion today! To register, visit [www.narc.org/forums/register](http://www.narc.org/forums/register) or follow the link on the top right of NARC's homepage. For more information on how to register, log in, and start using the forums, see our “**how to**” guide.

## FEATURED JOBS

*View full list of jobs!*

## FUNDING

*View full list of grants!*

### **Innovations in American Government Awards**

Deadline: April 15

Applications are now being accepted for the \$100,000 Innovations in American Government Awards. Offered by Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, the Innovations Award recognizes programs that demonstrate creative and effective government at its best. All units of government — federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial — from all policy areas are eligible to apply for recognition. This year, the Ash Center is also offering the Roy and Lila Ash Innovations Award for Public Engagement in Government, a special Innovations Award that will recognize government-led programs that demonstrate novel and effective

approaches to increasing public engagement and participation in the governance of towns, cities, states, and the nation. The winners of the Innovations in American Government Award and the Roy and Lila Ash Award will each receive a \$100,000 grant to support replication and dissemination activities in 2017. Top finalists will also receive monetary grants.

## EVENTS

*[View full list of events!](#)*

### **NARC Webinar! Lead, Drinking Water, and Regional Response: Regulation, Science, and Communication**

March 11, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ET

Media coverage of the Flint water crisis is raising awareness of environmental lead exposure and focusing attention on drinking water quality. Community leaders and water utilities are getting questions from citizens, the media, and public officials. This webinar is designed for NARC members to hear how other regional councils collaborate with water utilities, and how your region can better assess the questions and provide background to address the query, “Can Flint happen here?”

### **2016 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award**

Deadline: March 28 at 11:59 ET

The application period for the 2016 Individual and Community Preparedness Awards is open. Share program accomplishments that take place between January 1, 2015 and March 28, 2016. Winners will be announced in the fall of 2016 and will be invited as FEMA’s honored guests at a recognition ceremony. The awards highlight innovative local practices and achievements by individuals and organizations that made outstanding contributions toward making their communities safer, better prepared, and more resilient.

### **NARC Awards! Application Period is Open**

Deadline: April 15

NARC is accepting nominations for its 2016 Achievement and Leadership Awards, which will be presented at the Awards Gala Dinner during the 50th Annual Conference and Exhibition, June 26-29, in Salt Lake City, Utah. The awards provide an excellent opportunity for winners to promote their successes to a larger audience, as well as share best practices with their partners and peers. See [nomination guidelines](#) for details.

## CONTACT US

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