

March 14, 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

The House and Senate are in session this week.

Overview

The House Energy and Commerce Committee will take up an FCC-related bill (**HR 2666**) that would prohibit the commission from regulating rates charged for broadband Internet access service, as well as a measure (**HR 4725**) that would cut spending on Medicaid. The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation will mark up reauthorization measures for the Federal Aviation Administration (**S 2658**) and the FCC (**S 2644**). Budget appropriations hearings continue this week including Labor Secretary Perez, Transportation Secretary Foxx and Homeland Secretary Johnson testimony on the 2017 Administration budget proposal.

Budget Negotiations

Lawmakers in the House are working behind the scenes to win approval for a FY 2017 budget resolution providing the outline for spending for the year. Conservatives continue to oppose any plan which holds to the \$1.07 trillion budget agreed to last year. Two House Committees are in the process of cutting tens of billions of dollars in spending in the current spending bill to satisfy conservative House members. Last year's budget protected many of the key local programs important to NARC members, so we encourage you to speak to your Congressional representatives about what these programs mean to your community and how the dollars are invested in your citizens. Key decisions are being made on spending bills and the Older Americans Act (see below).

Older Americans Act

NARC urges you to contact your House members and urge them to sign onto the Older Americans

Act letter authored by Reps. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Patrick Murphy (D-FL) to the House Appropriations Committee recommending a \$10 million boost in Older Americans Act funding for FY 2017. The deadline for signing on is this Friday, March 18. The letter echoes the \$10 million boost requested by the President and details the value of OAA III B funding in developing and delivering a wide ranging Home and Community-Based Supportive Services (HCBS) program that provides flexible funding for supportive services that help older adults live in their own homes and avoid costlier care.

Support Funding for Local Priorities

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, including the Older Americans Act. Congress must act to provide funding for each federal program. Key federal programs important to regions need protecting in FY 2017 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
- Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program
- Community Health Centers

President Obama Announces ConnectAll Broadband Initiative

Last week, President Obama announced the **ConnectALL** initiative which would boost access to broadband for low-income Americans under the Federal Communications Commission Lifeline program. The Lifeline program provides \$9.25 per month to subsidize telephone service. The new proposal would allow Lifeline customers to use the subsidies on broadband and cellular data plans. The FCC will vote on March 31st and hopes to connect 20 million more people to the Internet by 2020. The President’s announcement continues the Administration’s promise to make broadband deployment a priority, including a **study** by the Council on Economic Advisors on the impact of broadband to economic development.

The broadband initiative will include a National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) **Community Connectivity Initiative**, which "will create a comprehensive online assessment tool to help community leaders identify critical broadband needs and connect them with expertise, tools, and resources for overcoming the challenges to expanded broadband deployment and adoption." In the coming weeks, NTIA will hold workshops and webinars to solicit feedback and bring more stakeholders into the process. A **workshop** is planned for March 22 in Seattle as part of BroadbandUSA’s "Digital Northwest" regional summit, and **two webinars** are planned for March 24 and April 12.

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.

Community Resilience Building Workshop Guide

The *Community Resilience Building Workshop Guide* is designed to provide clear instructions on how to lead your community towards improved resilience and adapt to extreme weather and hazards. This guidebook carefully illustrates the essentials of the Community Resilience Building Workshop process as well as the “before” and “after” workshop considerations to help ensure

immediate goals, outcomes, and strategic direction are realized within a community. For further guidance, support, and coaching please contact Dr. Adam Whelchel and visit the Community Resilience Building [website](#) for more materials and examples.

NARC Webinar on Lead and Drinking Water

Last week, NARC hosted a webinar on drinking water contamination, as well as on actions a regional council can take to address water quality, such as using current media attention surrounding Flint, MI to raise awareness for copper and lead exposure. Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments' (OKI) Travis Miller and Bruce Koehler gave an overview of their water quality program and their work with local water utilities in the Greater Cincinnati Region. Steve Via, from the American Water Works Association, provided a brief history of national efforts to manage lead in drinking water and offered opportunities for regional councils to get involved. Lastly, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (MWCOC) Lisa Ragain gave an overview of the history of lead piping and discussed MWCOC's and D.C.'s regional collaboration on drinking water. Presentations available [HERE](#).

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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 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!](#)

Transit Planner

Michiana Area Council of Governments, South Bend, IN

Administrative Assistant- Alamo Local Authority

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

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.

USDA Strategic Economic and Community Development Funding Opportunity

Deadline: June 30

A new section of the 2014 Farm Bill allows for the priority of projects that support strategic economic and community development plans. The result is a provision called Strategic Economic and Community Development (SECD) with \$300 million in set-aside funds for FY 2016. The

purpose of SECD is to advance projects which support long-term community and economic growth strategies that reflect both multi-jurisdictional stakeholder collaboration and capitalize upon the unique strengths of the rural area. The goal is to create a regional focus and increase collaboration across Rural Development agencies and programs. To be eligible for the priority consideration, a project must be eligible under a current Rural Development program such as the Community Facility Direct Loans and Grants, be carried out in a rural area, and support a multi-jurisdictional strategic economic and community development plan.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Sustainable Affordable Housing: Saving Energy, Saving Lives

March 21, 2:30 - 4:00 PM ET

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) is hosting a briefing and live webcast about energy efficient, "green" affordable housing and how it is improving health and safety in distressed communities while providing economic and environmental benefits to states. This is the second in a series of EESI briefings examining environmental justice as it relates to the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan. Speakers will showcase sustainable affordable housing developments in Pittsburgh, PA, as well as a retrofit in Washington, DC, and will discuss the national movement to "green" affordable housing.

Transportation and Health Tool: Demonstrating Health Impacts of Transportation Decisions

March 22, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

The Transportation and Health Tool gives practitioners a way to examine the health impacts of transportation systems. Released in the fall of 2015 by USDOT and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the tool uses 14 transportation and health indicators to measure how the transportation environment affects health. The tool also proposes strategies, interventions, and policies to improve health outcomes. Join this webinar to learn about how the tool was developed, what information is in the tool, how to apply the information you can learn from the tool, and the value of the tool.

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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