



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

The Senate will return from recess on April 9; the House will return on April 10.

At Long Last, Congress and the President Fund FY 2018

After months of wrangling, five continuing resolutions, two short-term government shutdowns, and much argument over what funding levels and policy riders should make the final cut, Congress voted and the president signed an omnibus appropriations bill that will keep the federal government funded through the end of the current fiscal year on September 30, 2018.

The \$1.3 billion appropriation represents a significant success for our members! Many of NARC's 2018 legislative and funding priorities received substantially more funding than the president requested, and more than was appropriated in fiscal year 2017. Areas that saw significant funding increases include:

- Transportation and infrastructure, including TIGER Grants, AMTRAK funding, and autonomous vehicles;
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG);
- *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) state workforce formula grants;
- Economic Development Administration (EDA);
- Census Bureau;
- Opioid crisis relief, including funding for prevention, treatment, and law enforcement;
- Rural water and broadband programs;
- Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds;
- Aging programs;
- Low Income and Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP);
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program and other housing assistance programs; and
- Homelessness assistance.

Several policy riders and authorizations were also adopted as part of the omnibus, including:

- Reauthorization of the EPA Brownfields Program, including NARC supported language;
- Reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration is now extended through September; and
- Short-term reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is extended through the end of July.

For more information, check out our new blog post on the **FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill**.

Tips for Engaging Your Representatives During Recess

As spring begins in Washington and the cherry blossoms reach full bloom, congressional members head home for a two-week recess. From March 26 through April 6, we encourage you to engage with your representatives and their staff while they are in your region to share your priorities. Here are a few tips to help:

- *Make an introduction.* If you haven't met your representative(s) or their staff yet, now is a great time to engage. Reach out to their local office to set up a meeting. It only takes one phone call or email to start building a relationship.
- *Invite them to a site visit in your region.* The site can be anywhere, from a public park or senior center to the site of a needed water infrastructure project. Showing them the challenges and opportunities that are in your region will stick with them far beyond a meeting.
- *Invite them to a meeting.* If you have any board or community meetings coming up, ask them to attend. That way, they can see first-hand what you're working on and what matters most to your region.
- *Plan for future recess engagements.* If you can't meet with your local representative(s) or their staff this time around, you can schedule future trips when they are back home. If you meet during this recess, be sure to reach out during the next recess to show them your latest updates. Use this **2018 Congressional Calendar** to see when both chambers are in session this year.

FCC Ditches 2 Federal Reviews in 5G 'Streamlining'

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved a wireless infrastructure streamlining order last week to try to speed up American efforts in the race to 5G, exempting small cell deployments from federal historic preservation and environmental reviews. Now only states and localities that have their own review processes in place can mandate them. After a failed attempt to delay the vote for more input from tribal nations, environmental advocates, and local government officials, Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel noted that streamlining the installation of 5G networks for the wireless industry will not guarantee improved access to underserved communities, such as rural areas and urban deserts.

EPA Sides with Carmaker Calls to Ease Efficiency Rules, Sources Say

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reportedly concluded that the Obama-era effort to cut vehicle greenhouse-gas emissions is too aggressive and agrees with automakers that the standards should be revised. According to reports, the agency has completed a draft decision outlining the rationale for easing fuel efficiency regulations for model-year 2022-2025 cars and light trucks. While EPA has not yet determined the new tailpipe-emission standards, the likely result is weaker targets for automakers. This action would challenge the Obama administration's enacted tailpipe rules, which were aimed at decreasing carbon emissions from cars and light trucks by boosting fuel economy to an average of more than 50 miles per gallon by 2025.

OTHER NEWS

Healthcare Tops List of Americans' Worries

According to a new **Gallup poll**, healthcare is a top issue for Americans. Fifty-five percent of respondents said they worry "a great deal" about the cost and availability of healthcare in the U.S., while 23 percent said they worry about the issue "a fair amount." For five years in a row, this survey has found healthcare to be either the greatest concern or tied for greatest concern among issues in the U.S. Other top concerns included crime and violence, government spending, and the availability of firearms. Unemployment and energy availability/affordability ranked lowest among concerns that respondents care "a great deal" about.

Older Americans Month Materials

May is Older Americans Month, and it's around the corner. Get ready by visiting oam.acl.gov for materials, activity ideas, and resources to help you promote and celebrate this year's theme, *Engage at Every Age*. Use #OAM18 to spread the word. More materials, including Spanish products and shareable social media images are coming at the end of March.

Join NACo for a Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Social Media Day

Shine a spotlight on the work your counties are doing to build a culture of preparedness as part of the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Social Media Day. @NACoTweets will host a Twitter chat on Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness on April 11 at 2:00 PM ET using #ResilientCounties. Start collecting your top examples and participate.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

Washington Metro May Finally Fix its 40-Year-Old Funding Problem

Since it was founded in 1976, the Washington Metro in the D.C. area has had trouble finding a dedicated funding stream that it could rely on for long-term planning. The organization said that it needs another \$500 million of reliable funding per year to fix its aging and failing infrastructure. It appears that lawmakers from D.C., Maryland, and Virginia have come closer to earmarking dedicated funds for the transit agency, with each setting their own funding goals and deciding how their jurisdiction would meet it. Within the last few weeks, Virginia lawmakers approved \$154 million per year for Metro, Maryland lawmakers set the goal of \$167 million per year, and D.C. lawmakers proposed \$178.5 million per year.

The Heartland 2050 Winter Summit Held in MAPA Region

Heartland 2050 is a community-driven initiative by the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) to pull in stakeholders across the region to think big picture and work toward a common vision for the metro area. This past week Heartland 2050 held its winter summit, where stories were shared about how communities have come together to solve seemingly intractable problems through a new form of collaboration called Collective Impact. Paul Schmitz, CEO of Leading Inside Out and Senior Advisor at The Collective Impact Forum, explains the Collective Impact as “when you align all of the organizations that work on an issue, so they no longer do their work on their own serving people here and there, but rather collectively move to a population level result.”

REGIONS LEAD

Visit www.regionslead.org to read up on the latest NARC blogs. We invite members to submit blogs to the site too. Please send contributions to anna@narc.org.

2018 Omnibus Appropriations Bill Bolsters Many State and Local Programs

By NARC Staff

Since the release of the FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill on March 21, NARC staff has been combing through the \$1.3 trillion package to determine how localities will be impacted. Much of it is great news for regions, as the bill proposes additional funding for so many of the priorities NARC has advocated for over the last year.

President Releases Budget that Would Undercut Funding to Regions

by Neil Bomberg

On February 12, the president officially submitted his **fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget proposal** and **addendum** to Congress. If enacted, his recommendations would make significant programmatic and funding changes to federal programs in FY 2019. The result of these recommendations would include a noteworthy \$107 billion parity gap between defense and non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding levels.

MEMBER REQUESTS

MORPC Request: CRM Survey

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is exploring the integration of a new contact management system, also known as Customer Relationship Management (CRM). While there are hundreds of products on the market, MORPC is interested in finding out what is suitable for a regional council. They are also interested in learning if regional councils are using electronic archival and/or retrieval services. Please **participate in this survey**; results will be shared. Responses are due Friday, March 30.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Business and Operations Manager

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

Planning and Development Services Director

City of Winston-Salem, Winston-Salem, NC

Manager, Office of Travel Monitoring

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Funding Opportunity for Inclusive Transportation Planning Initiative

Applications Due: May 4

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to facilitate development of local inclusive coordinated transportation systems in which people with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers actively participate in both advisory and decision-making capacities. This project is administered by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) in partnership with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Institute for Community Inclusion of the University of Massachusetts-Boston. CTAA expects to award 20 organizations with grants up to \$35,000 each for a six-month period. Applicant organizations are invited to begin where they are, even if they have limited or no involvement in inclusive planning at this point.

Local Food Promotion Program

Applications Due: May 7

The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) offers grant funds with a 25 percent match to increase domestic consumption of and access to locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets. Two types of project applications are accepted under LFPP—planning grants and implementation grants. LFPP Planning Grants are used in the planning stages of establishing or expanding a local and regional food business enterprise. Activities can include but are not limited to market research, feasibility studies, and business planning. LFPP Implementation Grants are used to establish a new local and regional food business enterprise, or to improve or expand an existing local or regional food business enterprise. Activities can include, but are not limited to, training and technical assistance for the business enterprise and/or for producers working with the business enterprise; outreach and marketing to buyers and consumers; and non-construction infrastructure improvements to business enterprise facilities or information technology systems.

Farmers Market Promotion Program

Applications Due: May 7

The purpose of the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) is to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets by developing, improving, expanding, and providing outreach, training, and technical assistance to, or assisting in the development, improvement, and expansion of, domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. FMPP offers both Capacity Building (CB) and Community Development, Training, and Technical Assistance (CTA) projects. CB projects should demonstrate a direct benefit to farm and ranch operations serving local markets (including new and beginning farmers) and maximize the involvement of farmers and ranchers and community organizations. CTA projects should engage a diverse set of local and regional foods stakeholders, including farmers and ranchers, to illustrate a substantive effect on the local and regional food system and stakeholders.

AARP's 2018 Community Challenge!

Applications Due: May 16

The 2018 round of AARP's Community Challenge is now open. This opportunity provides funding for projects that build momentum for local change to improve livability for all residents. Proposed programs that fall into one of the following categories will have priority over those that support ongoing programming and events: permanent physical improvement in the community; temporary demonstrations that lead to long-term change; and new, innovative programming or services. Grants can range from several hundred dollars for small, short-term activities to several thousand for larger projects.

EVENTS

View full list of events!

NARC Webinar! Bridging the Divide Between Urban and Rural Areas

March 27, 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET

Strong urban-rural connections are crucial for creating prosperous and economically vibrant regions. This webinar will focus on the ways in which rural areas contribute significantly to regional economies and the benefits that accrue when there is a strong economic relationship between urban and rural areas. Join Christiana McFarland, NLC's research director, and David Shabazian, manager of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (SACOG-RUCS), for a discussion on the economic relationship between urban and rural areas, using SACOG-RUCS as a prime example of what happens when regions bridge the urban-rural divide.

Entrepreneurial Solutions for Local Government Challenges

March 28, 1:30-3:00 PM ET

Topics for this webinar: How can local governments innovate to boost their culture, strategy, available resources, and outcomes? What are examples of new ways of doing business and best practices to apply them? How can technology and other resources support these initiatives?

Public Life 101 Series: 101: What is Public Life? How Do We Measure It?

April 6, 3:00-4:00 PM ET

At Gehl Institute, "public life" is defined as the social activity that takes place in everyday public spaces. Supporting public life requires working across disciplines, city agencies, and power structures to achieve long-lasting change. In this webinar, Gehl Institute will discuss the importance of public life and describe the open source tools they develop to measure it, including examples of how public life studies have led to tangible public benefits in cities across the world. This session is part one of the Public Life 101 series, which covers an introduction to their tools for studying public life, the philosophy that inspires them, and methods for telling stories with the data you collect. Participants will learn how to carry out a survey of a public space and helpful tips for organizing volunteers.

Tariffs and the Economy

April 10, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

President Trump's plan to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports is driving a heated debate over the economic costs and benefits of trade restrictions. REMI CEO and Chief Economist Frederick Treyz, Ph.D. will review the economic debate over tariffs and discuss how dynamic economic modeling can be used to assess pros and cons of trade policies. Dr. Treyz will discuss a report by NERA Economic Consulting that analyzed the impacts of possible across-the-board tariffs on aluminum imports using the REMI model. The analysis results show potential effects from a 7 percent tariff and a 30 percent tariff on government revenue, income, output, and total employment resulting from these tariffs. He will describe the methodologies used to evaluate the policy and consider different approaches for evaluating tariffs. Q&A to follow.

Modernizing Public Health Preparedness

April 12, 2:00 PM ET

Join Esri as they discuss the challenges associated with public health preparedness and how agencies have successfully overcome those obstacles. Specifically, Esri will cover:

- Key resources and tools that will enhance or sustain work in planning for, responding to, and recovering from disasters and other public health emergencies.
- What other agencies have done to elevate public health preparedness in their work.
- How governments can use location data and visualization to more effectively respond to natural disasters and outbreaks.

CONTACT US

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)