



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

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

Commerce to Add Citizenship Question to 2020 Census

Last week, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced that it will add a citizenship status question to the 2020 Census. This action has prompted concern among many state and local officials. They fear that adding this question will discourage participation from immigrants and naturalized citizens, altering the accuracy of the Census count. The George Washington Institute of Public Policy **reported** that about 300 federal programs allocate over \$800 billion a year based on the Census count, so American communities and states could feel the effects for more than a decade if their populations are undercounted in the 2020 Census. In February, over 160 mayors submitted a **letter** to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross rejecting the citizenship question.

EPA Submits Drinking Water Assessment to Congress

Last week, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) submitted its sixth *Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment* to Congress. The agency is mandated by the *Safe Drinking Water Act* to submit this report every four years. The survey results are used to calculate Drinking Water State Revolving Fund grants for states. Overall, the survey showed that \$472.6 billion is needed to maintain and improve America's drinking water infrastructure over the next 20 years (a 23 percent increase since the release of the last survey in 2013). This includes an estimated:

- \$312.6 billion to replace/refurbish aging or deteriorating pipes;
- \$83 billion to construct, expand, or rehabilitate infrastructure to reduce contamination;
- \$47.6 billion to construct, rehabilitate, or cover water storage reservoirs; and
- \$21.8 billion to construct or rehabilitate intake structures, wells, and spring collectors.

President Dismisses VA Secretary

Last week, Trump dismissed Veteran Affairs (VA) Secretary David J. Shulkin and replaced him with Physician to the President Ronny L. Jackson. If confirmed, Dr. Jackson will be walking into an agency that has faced major hurdles for years, including an outdated computerized records system, long VA hospital waiting lists, and a 360,000-person workforce. Robert Wilkie, undersecretary for defense personnel and readiness, will serve as acting secretary until the Senate can take up Dr. Jackson's confirmation consideration.

OTHER NEWS

Bridging the Divide Between Urban and Rural Areas

Last week, NARC held a webinar on the divide between rural and urban areas, and how strong urban-rural connections are crucial for creating prosperous and economically-vibrant regions. The webinar focused on ways in which rural communities significantly contribute to regional economics and the benefits that accrue when there is a strong economic relationship between urban and rural areas. NARC was joined by National League of Cities' Christiana McFarland and Sacramento Area Council of Governments' David Shabazian. You can find the recording on **NARC's YouTube channel**.

- If your organization is working on any projects to help bridge the urban-rural divide, NARC would love to hear about it! Please send a summary of your program, initiative, or project to Neil Bomberg at neil@narc.org.

Practical Playbook Launches ‘Find a Partnership’ Tool

Practical Playbook – a partnership between Duke School of Medicine, de Beaumont Foundation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Health Resources and Services Administration – provides resources to support collaboration between primary care and public health groups to achieve population health improvement. Their new Find a Partnership tool serves as a directory of current projects that improve public health at the community, city, and state levels. Public health departments, community-based organizations, and health providers can use this tool to identify local initiatives they wish to get involved with, see the status of projects in their area, and find community partners.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

Atlanta Regional Housing Task Force Tackles Key Issue of Affordability

Metro Atlanta housing costs are on the rise throughout the region and affordable housing options are limited. The Atlanta Regional Housing Task Force – a group of mayors, developers, and city planners – recently convened for a briefing led by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) on the growing need for affordable housing and potential solutions. ULI set an ambitious goal for the region: building 10,000 affordable housing units every year through 2028. The Atlanta City Council offered a potential solution: they recently adopted inclusionary zoning with a list of incentives to entice developers to build more affordable units. They hope that their action serves as a model for other communities in the region.

Eric Anderson Named New MAG Executive Director

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Executive Committee selected MAG’s new executive director, Eric Anderson. Anderson succeeds Dennis Smith, who will retire this Friday after 41 years of service to the organization. Anderson is currently MAG’s transportation director and has held that position since 2000. In that time, he has focused on regional and urban growth, economic development, and economic impact analysis. He is currently involved in several planning and research efforts related to technology, including autonomous and connected vehicles. Congratulations on your retirement, Dennis! Congratulation on your promotion, Eric!

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.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Principal Transportation Planner

Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, Manchester, NH

Executive Director

MetroPlan Orlando, Orlando, FL

Business and Operations Manager

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

Planning and Development Services Director

City of Winston-Salem, Winston-Salem, NC

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

2019 National Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program

Applications Due: April 30

The U.S. Forest Service anticipates that the statutory authority for the Fiscal Year 2019 Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program may provide approximately \$900,000 in grant funds to be awarded through the 2019 National Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Cost-Share Grant Program. Funds support national urban and community forestry projects on non-federal public land that have a national or multi-state impact and application.

USDOT R&E Grants Program

Applications Due: May 22

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Program provides operating assistance to initiate, restore, or enhance intercity passenger rail transportation. Eligible projects include operating expenses associated with intercity passenger rail service, such as staffing costs, diesel fuel or electricity costs, station costs, lease payments on rolling stock, routine planned maintenance costs, host railroad costs, train yard operation costs, and administrative costs. USDOT is expected to award one grant that could total \$4,796,500.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Accelerate Technology Adoption to Build Efficiency and Improve Water Service

April 4, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

The water industry is historically slower to adapt to technological innovation due to the innate risks of changing processes that affect public health. However, solving some of our most pressing water challenges requires investing in, developing, and deploying new technologies and processes that can transform water management. Establishing a more enabling policy and regulatory environment is essential for innovation to flourish in the water industry. Join the US Water Alliance for the final installment of a seven-part series diving into each of the Seven Big Ideas in the One Water for America Policy Framework.

Community Connect Grant Program Fiscal Year 2018 Webinars

April 5, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

April 10, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) will host webinars focused on the Community Connect Grant Program. These **webinars will inform participants about the major eligibility and regulatory requirements of the program** and provide detailed guidance on how to submit a successful application. There will also be time for participants to ask speakers questions about the application.

Get Your Public Meetings Back on Track! Tips and Tricks for Effective Meetings

April 12, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

Tired of public meetings that are disruptive, dominated by the same few people, or extend late into the night? Learn how to get your public meetings functioning effectively and efficiently again. This webinar will highlight best practices for holding effective public meetings, from how to successfully chair a meeting to how to enhance public participation.

Building Healthy Places: Strategies for Partnership Development in Rural Counties

April 12, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

Neighborhood structure and the built environment are both social determinants of health that play a critical role in the wellbeing and equity of a community. Forming strong cross-collaborative partnerships in the community development sector is key to building and maintaining a safe, healthy, and equitable community, especially in rural neighborhoods where human and capital resources are lacking. Join NACo and the Build Healthy Places Network for an informational webinar that highlights the importance of forming collaborative partnerships with community development sectors in rural communities and will explore strategies and tools to guide this process.

Fleets for the Future: Incorporating Electric Vehicles into Your Fleet

April 18, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

Fleets for the Future (F4F) is a national U.S. Department of Energy-funded partnership, led by NARC, Clean Cities coalitions, and industry experts tasked with coordinating regional and national procurement initiatives to consolidate bulk orders of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) and infrastructure. Please join the F4F team on April 18 to learn about electric vehicle (EV) opportunities available on the market today, how to assess the suitability in your fleets, and how incorporating EVs can reduce costs for your fleets. You can find the team's best practice guide for electric vehicle procurement on the [F4F website](#). Q&A will follow the presentation.

CONTACT US

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