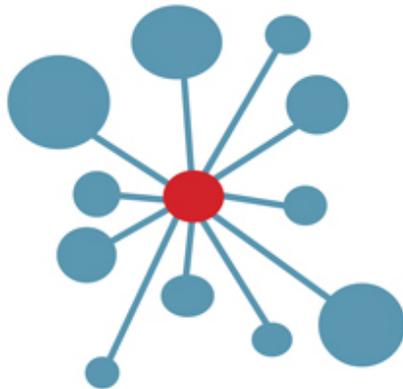




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



converge ■ learn ■ share

**2017 executive directors conference
october 22 - october 24
san antonio, tx**

save the date!

Conference Planning Committee: NARC and MetroPlan Orlando are putting together an Annual Conference Planning Committee and would like your help. If you are interested in helping shape the content of the Orlando agenda, please send your name to anna@narc.org today!

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress returns September 5th.

Overview

With the House and Senate on break and the president out of Washington for the next two weeks or so, things are quiet in Washington. When Congress returns after Labor Day, their most pressing obligations will include: passing legislation to fund the federal government after September 30; raising the debt ceiling so that the government can continue to borrow money to pay its bills; and adopting a budget agreement so that Congress can use the reconciliation process, to allow the Senate to adopt certain types of legislation by 51 votes rather than the 60-vote majority. With only 12 legislative days between Labor Day and the end of the fiscal year on September 30, Congress may not avoid a shutdown.

Behind the scenes, however, there is a lot of discussion taking place concerning tax reform. A proposal to end the state and local tax deductions remains at the top of the list. This deduction, which homeowners have come to expect, would provide the federal government with an estimated \$13 trillion over ten years. Another popular deduction on the chopping block is a limit on mortgage deductions, which is also very popular with middle class homeowners. Once again Congress also is considering an end to the tax-exempt status for municipal bonds which local governments use to fund infrastructure projects. Elimination of the tax-exempt status for municipal bonds would bring in about \$200 billion over ten years. Municipal bonds finance close to 75 percent of local infrastructure investment.

Also concerning to many local governments is a provision in the *Building America's Trust Act* introduced in the Senate last week that would withhold Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Economic Development Assistance funding from cities, counties, or states that choose to implement policies that protect immigrants.

NARC Advocates for Job Training and Workforce Programs

NARC participates in the Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce coalition, a collection of national organizations that advocate for federal investment in skills-building programs to improve our national workforce. On Friday the coalition submitted a letter to the chairman and ranking members on the Senate Appropriations Committee urging them to pass a Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill that would fund job training and adult education programs at current funding levels or higher. Emphasis was placed on saving the programs under the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA), which the House cut drastically in their appropriations proposals. NARC and the coalition will soon be following up with a visit to appropriations committee members on the Hill, to stand up for the workforce programs important to the growth of our regions.

EPA Setbacks Re: Obama Administration Regulation Rollbacks

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt has been working quickly to repeal a list of environmental regulations from the last administration. States and environmental groups have taken EPA to court multiple times in the last few months to block deregulations, leading to some setbacks for the agency. Last Monday the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit struck down EPA's 90-day implementation delay and ordered them to enforce the Obama-era regulation to limit the amount of methane in oil and gas wells. **According to *New York Magazine***, EPA has also backed down on its decision to delay requirements to reduce ground-level ozone to 70 parts per billion by one year. This decision followed immediately after 15 states and the District of Columbia filed a lawsuit on the grounds that the delay violates the *Clean Air Act*.

Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Holds Hearings On Water and Wildfires

Last week the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held two hearings. The first hearing **examined an increase in water security and drought preparedness through infrastructure, management, and innovation**. Arizona Department of Water Resources Director Tom Buschatke and Sonoma County Water Agency Board Chairwoman Shirlee Zane and other stakeholders discussed how the federal government could support opportunities to improve community resiliency as it relates to droughts and floods. They requested increased federal investment in state revolving funds, and technologies and tools to improve mapping, forecasting, and predictive analytics. They also touched on the importance of collaborating with the federal government on investments in green infrastructure and renewable energy to reduce the cost of desalination. The witnesses highlighted the importance of water and wetland conservation, and why diversifying water portfolios is necessary to support growing populations.

The second hearing **examined federal and nonfederal collaboration, including the use of technology, to reduce wildland fire risks and enhance firefighting safety and effectiveness**. In testimony, City of Wenatchee, Washington Mayor Steve King provided a first-hand account of wildland fires burning through the heart of his city to illustrate the importance of having preventative measures in place before a natural disaster strikes. He could not stress enough the need for partnerships between cities, counties, states, and the federal government for planning prevention and response strategies. He also highlighted the value of investing in technology and tools, such as risk mapping and modelling, to better understand how to manage at-risk forest areas.

A Bipartisan Fix to the Housing Crisis?

The devastating and slow-moving 'affordable housing crisis' is expected to peak by 2025 and affect more than 15 million Americans. A couple of illuminating statistics of this crisis include: a record-setting 25 percent increase in the number of people who rent, and the fact that 25 percent of those renters (over the past ten years) pay more than half their income toward rent. Recently, the Senate Finance Committee held a **hearing** that highlighted the need to explore the role of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (Housing Credit) as a solution to increase affordable housing options in the U.S. The *Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2017 (S.548)*, introduced by Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) last year, was a large part of the discussion. The legislation, which would expand and restructure the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, has support from over 2,000 housing organizations in all 50 states as well as bipartisan support. In this article, CityLab covers the hearing, follows up with a one-on-one

interview with Cantwell, and helps shed some light on how to use these funds to correct this growing problem.

OTHER NEWS

Cybersecurity for Public Agencies

Last week, NARC held a webinar with the Public Technology Institute (PTI) on the importance of cybersecurity in local government. Today's public officials must be aware of threats such as ransomware, cyber extortion, hacktivism, attacks on critical infrastructure, cyber risk, breaches, and operational failure. During the webinar, PTI Executive Director Alan Shark discussed some of these threats, as well as some of the actions municipalities are taking to secure and protect their data and technology. Visit NARC's [YouTube channel](#) for a recording of the presentation.

Toyota and Mazda to Develop Electric Vehicle Tech, Building Assembly Plant in US

On Friday Toyota Motor Corp and Mazda Motor Corp announced they are teaming up to develop electric vehicle technologies and automated driving functions. They are also planning to build a \$1.6 billion assembly plant in the U.S. that will create 4,000 jobs. This comes at a time when European countries are doubling down on their promises to shift to zero-emission vehicles within the next two decades. The UK and France are planning to stop sales of fossil-fuel powered vehicles by 2040. Norway, Germany, and the Netherlands have proposed even earlier deadlines for the transition to alternative fuel vehicles.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

Coast-to-Coast Trail Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Commission (TBRPC) attended a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the completion of the first five miles of their Coast-to-Coast recreational trail. Ultimately, this project will yield a 250-mile multi-use trail that connects a network of pre-existing trails from downtown St. Petersburg on the west coast to Titusville on the east coast of Florida. Working with transportation partners around the state, TBRPC has been involved in the development and planning of this trail. The completed Coast-to-Coast recreational trail is expected to bring in tourists from all over the world for the opportunity to explore the state's natural beauty.

MEMBER REQUESTS

Financial Managements Systems

The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) is assessing their financial management system, and would benefit from knowing how other NARC members structure their financial management. What financial software package does your regional council use? GPCOG would like to talk to some great Finance Directors to understand what they do and how they do it. If you have the answers to these questions or want to have a conversation with GPCOG directly, please send your responses and/or contact information to anna@narc.org.

REGIONS LEAD

Visit www.regionslead.org to read up on the latest NARC blogs. We invite members to submit blogs to the site too.

Guest Blog: Implications of Southeast Michigan's 2045 Forecast

by Dr. Xuan Liu, Research Manager, SEMCOG

Demographic and socio-economic trends discussed in the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' (SEMCOG) 2045 Regional Forecast will necessitate some lifestyle changes in the greater Detroit, Michigan region. The biggest of these trends is the aging of the population and the lack of incoming young people. These trends will create a labor shortage that can impact a regional economy.

To Sell or Not to Sell? Small Local Governments Look at Privatizing their Public Water Systems

by Maci Hurley

The Washington Post highlighted that the idea of water privatization has left small and mid-size communities, many of which are already struggling with budget deficits, with a tough choice. Should these local governments continue to manage and maintain their own public water systems? Or is selling their water system to a private corporation a more reasonable option?

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Transportation Planner

Calaveras Council of Governments, San Andreas, CA

RFP: Regional Corridor Analysis

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, OH

Senior Planner

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Cleveland, OH

Planner III

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Cleveland, OH

Accountant III

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Cleveland, OH

Associate Accountant

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Deputy Director, Metropolitan Transportation Planning

Metro, Portland, OR

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

A Grant for Safety First!

Applications Due: September 4

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is looking for applications for its Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration Community Safety Grant Program. Nonprofit organizations that are awarded this funding will be expected to conduct national outreach and training programs to assist communities in preparing for and responding to accidents and incidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials. The awardee will also train state and local personnel responsible for enforcing the safe transportation of hazardous materials.

Funds Available through the Foundation for Rural Service

Applications Due: September 15

The Foundation for Rural Service is providing grants to help improve the quality of life for rural communities served by the Rural Broadband Association (NTCA). These grants, ranging from \$250 to \$5,000, are awarded to projects that fit into one of the following categories: business and economic development, community development, education, or telecommunications. Priority is given to projects that are broadband enabled and technology focused. The projects should also have a long-term impact on the rural community and improve their quality of life.

Help Increase Outreach and Education Initiatives to Fight for Fair Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is offering \$7,450,000 in grants to public and nonprofit organizations to inform the public about their rights and obligations under the *Fair Housing Act*. Applicants may be funded under a national-based program or a regional/local/community based program.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

NACo Webinar: The Power of Regional Food System Investments to Transform Communities

August 8, 3:00 – 4:00 PM ET

Communities across the country challenged by the changing conditions in the coal industry are exploring innovative revitalization and diversification strategies to build stronger, more resilient economies. Investing in agriculture and regional food systems has emerged as a leading

diversification strategy that can be replicated across coal-reliant communities from Colorado to Kentucky. Join us for this educational webinar to learn about practical tools and strategies outlined in a new book by USDA and the Federal Reserve support stakeholders in developing regional food systems as a part of their economic development plans. Additionally, this webinar will feature current examples of how traditionally coal-reliant communities in Colorado are integrating agriculture into their economic diversification roadmaps.

NARC Conference Call on Appropriations

August 9, 3:00-3:45 PM ET

Call Details: +1 (872) 240-3212 / Access Code: 295-830-653

RSVP to Neil Bomberg, neil@narc.org, so he can provide you with materials for the call!

Always complicated, and always impactful, this year's appropriations process is shaping up to be one of the most complicated and impactful in years. The threats to reduce or eliminate funding for many programs important to regional councils -- including funding for CDBG, TIGER Grants, WIOA programs, Administration on Aging, water infrastructure, and other environmental programs, to name just a few -- are real.

Join NARC, NLC, and NACo for a conference call designed to bring you the most up-to-date information on the status of federal appropriations. Our goal is to inform you, and also provide you with effective strategies for letting your representatives and senators know just how you feel about potential cuts.

Opioid Crisis Webinar

August 9 & 16, 12:00-1:00 PM EST

This webinar is a two-part series hosted by Partners for Good, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). SAMHSA and the CDC will be sharing the data and science about opioid addiction and dispel misconceptions about treatment and recovery. The webinars will also educate faith and community leaders how they help our national opioid addiction crisis.

Data User's Guide to the U.S. Census Bureau's Economic Data Webinar

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

Dial-in: 1-888-566-7701/ Passcode: 8627504

In this webinar, you will have the opportunity to learn about the availability of economic data by sector and the release schedules for Census data products. This session will feature economic data in action in everyday life through various social media promotions and other tools. It will include information on how to access economic data using Census Business Builder. No registration is required.

How to Compete for INFRA Grants

August 14, 2:00-4:00 PM EST

USDOT is hosting a two-hour seminar discussing the Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) grants. This grant program will provide \$1.5 billion to projects that help rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure. This funding is available to projects that have national or regional significance. This webinar will instruct the attendees how they can apply for INFRA funding.

Small Business Administration Loan Guarantee Program Webinar

August 22, 12:00 - 1:00 PM

This webinar reviews Small Business Administration business loan guarantee programs with an emphasis on Express Loans, which are in the range of \$5,000 to \$350,000. Content will cover the details of selling to the federal government, including: understanding the marketplace, contract and procurement spending, analysis of prime contractors, industry trends and spending, procurement vehicles, subcontracting, federal government regulations and assistance, and selling/finding federal business opportunities.

CONTACT US

Copyright © 2017 National Association of Regional Councils, All rights reserved.

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