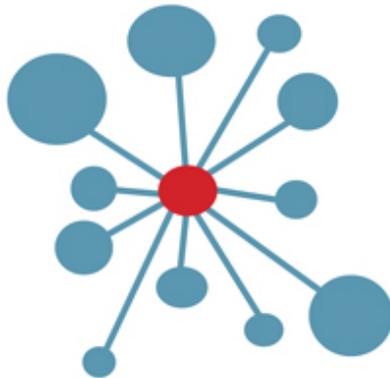




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eREGIONS



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As Hurricane Irma threatens the U.S. Atlantic and those living along the Gulf and East Coast, the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) has resources for those in the path of the potentially dangerous storm. Tropical storm conditions are expected in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico early Wednesday, with hurricane conditions arriving later that day. Destructive winds, storm surge, dangerous surf, heavy rainfall, and flash flooding are possible. Parts of Florida may also see impacts from Irma later this week.

- **Update your disaster kit.** Make sure to have a three-day supply of non-perishable food and bottled water, a battery-operated radio, a flashlight, extra batteries, cash, medicine, a first aid kit, pet food, and important family documents.
- **Know your evacuation routes and prepare options for overnight lodging.** Storm surge can sometimes cut off evacuation routes, so do not delay leaving if an evacuation is ordered for your area. If you encounter flooding, turn around so you don't drown.
- **Develop an emergency communication plan,** which includes the telephone number of a family member or friend outside the area—a point of contact—in the event of separation when a storm hits.
- **Download the FEMA mobile app** (available in English and Spanish) for a customizable checklist of emergency supplies, maps of open shelters and recovery centers, disaster survival tips, and weather alerts from the National Weather Service. The app also enables users to receive push notifications reminding them to take important steps to prepare their homes and families for disasters.

History shows that storm tracks can change quickly and unexpectedly. Residents and visitors in areas potentially affected by the severe weather should continue to monitor local radio or TV stations for updated emergency information, and follow the instructions of state, local, and tribal officials. Visit www.ready.gov (or www.listo.gov for Spanish speakers) for more severe weather and hurricane preparedness information and resources. Additionally, the National Hurricane Center has a very useful [link that dispels myths and provides facts](#).

Please see the *Other News* section for additional resources at your disposal.

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Overview

As Congress returns today for the 12 legislative days remaining in September there are a few things you need to know:

- Congress and the president must raise the debt ceiling by September 30 or the U.S. government will go into default, effectively lowering the country's credit rating and forcing the government to shut down. The U.S. Treasury is running out of money, and the various methods for paying its bills. Congress and the president need to act immediately to prevent financial catastrophe.
- Passing a bill to raise the debt ceiling will not be easy, unless a few compromises can be made. The administration has asked Congress to pass a clean bill that includes \$7 billion for Hurricane Harvey relief. Conservative House members have already raised objections and threatened to pull support from any debt ceiling bill that does not cut funding for domestic programs, including Obamacare. Democrats are adamant that they will oppose any bill that includes cuts to domestic programs.
- Congress and the president must find a way to fund the federal government by September 30. Without such an agreement, parts of the government will be forced to shut down. Odds makers are betting that Congress will pass a continuing resolution that will fund the government through December 15, postponing any chance of a government shutdown until the end of the year.
- The federal government must find \$7 billion immediately to help pay for Hurricane Harvey relief efforts. How that happens – as part of the debt ceiling increase, stand-alone bill, emergency funding, or funding that must be offset by cuts in other programs – will say a lot about how Congress will address its other immediate concerns. And now that Hurricane Irma is likely to make landfall in the southeast as a category 3 or 4 hurricane, Congress will need to make additional emergency appropriations – which could make the debt ceiling and appropriations processes even more difficult.

Unfortunately, there is no clear path forward. The next 12 legislative days will be interesting ones, and worth watching. NARC will keep you informed about government funding, the debt ceiling, and likely impacts any actions will have on your regions.

Attorney General Rescinds DACA Program

In a press conference earlier today, Attorney General Jeff Sessions rescinded the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. As of today, no new applications will be processed, and renewals under this program won't be available six months from now (to give Congress time to act). Implemented in 2012, the program allowed people who came to the U.S. as children to "request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal." The program also allowed DACA applicants work authorization eligibility. Attorney General Sessions declared the program as unconstitutional because the executive branch implemented the policy unilaterally amid legal concerns and after Congress rejected proposals to pass similar benefits into law. Eight hundred thousand undocumented immigrants previously protected under DACA could be affected.

Trump Infrastructure Plan Would Streamline Regulations, Reduce Federal Funding for State and Local Projects

Last Wednesday Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney spoke to 150 state and local transportation leaders about the Trump administration's vision for American infrastructure. He said that the administration wants to reduce the role of Washington in the approval process and streamline regulations around building infrastructure, like roads and bridges. While many of the attendees did welcome the faster approval processes, they were concerned about the amount of federal funding available for these projects. Under this plan, states and localities will have to shoulder more of the financial burden for building infrastructure. This accompanies the federal highway trust fund currently running at a deficit and budget cuts to transportation spending in fiscal year 2018.

DOL Seeks Information on Overtime Payment Regulations

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is requesting comments on the 2016 Obama administration overtime rule that was previously blocked by a federal judge. If implemented, the rule would

double the salary threshold (to \$47,476) under which virtually all employees are guaranteed time-and-a-half pay whenever they work more than 40 hours in any given week. This overtime rule would allow an additional 4.2 million workers to become eligible for overtime pay. **Submit your comments** by September 25.

White House Asks Congress for \$5.9 Billion for Hurricane Harvey Disaster Relief

On Friday, Politico reported that the Trump administration planned to send a formal request to Congress asking for \$5.9 billion for Hurricane Harvey emergency relief, with \$5.5 billion to go directly to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for disaster relief efforts. Four-hundred and fifty million dollars will be used for loans supplied by the Small Business Administration. This funding is only seen as immediate aid by the administration, with more funding expected to follow. The appropriations committees in both chambers have said they are prepared to quickly process additional requests for recovery. As of Thursday night, both committees already agreed to a \$500 million shift in FEMA funding.

Gas Supply Concerns After Hurricane Harvey

In cities across Texas, people are filling up at the pump amid concerns of gasoline shortages after Hurricane Harvey. Rumors that the state was running out of gas led to stock-piling, which in turn, caused gas stations to run out of regular unleaded gasoline, creating extremely long lines and higher prices for the public. Government leaders in Texas have been holding public conferences to dispel public fears about the gas supply.

Meanwhile, North Carolina has also declared a state of emergency amid fears that damaged Texas and Louisiana refineries will cause gas shortages in the southeast. The action followed the announced closing of the Colonial Pipeline, which carries over 100 million gallons of gasoline every day from Houston to New York City. This executive order will 1) lift restrictions for the maximum number of hours gas vehicles can travel in the state, and 2) activate the state's price-gouging law for 45 days.

NARC and NACo Letter Asks for Increased Census Funding

The 2020 Census is right around the corner, and the U.S. Census Bureau is starting to ramp up its efforts in preparation. NARC and NACo co-signed a letter with The Census Project urging Congress to increase currently proposed funding in the FY 2018 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill (**H.R. 3267**) to \$1.8 billion. This increase of \$300 million is necessary for the Census Bureau to put 2020 Census preparations back on track to ensure the accuracy of the count, which determines billions of dollars in federal assistance for states and localities. See the *Regions Lead* section for a blog about how regions can boost accuracy in the 2020 Census.

Governors Kasich and Hickenlooper Unveil Bipartisan Healthcare Plan

Led by Governors John Kasich (R-OH) and John Hickenlooper (D-CO), a small group of bipartisan governors released a set of proposals they believe will be helpful in the current healthcare congressional debates. Over the last few months, the governors have worked together to find a solution and help stabilize the troubled ACA markets. Here are some of their recommendations:

- Federally fund the cost-sharing payments that insurance companies have counted on.
- Create a "stability plan" for states.
- Cut insurers a break to spur competition in underserved counties - specifically, those counties in which only one carrier has agreed to offer ACA policies.
- Give residents of the underserved counties more choices by letting them get health coverage through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.
- Keep the individual mandate for now.

OTHER NEWS

Disaster Resources

September is National Preparedness Month and this year's theme is "Disasters Don't Plan Ahead. You Can." It's important to remember that emergencies can happen anywhere and without warning, and that just a little planning can make communities ready to cope when disaster strikes. Advanced preparation is especially important for older adults and people with disabilities because they have additional needs to consider.

The federal government has guidance and resources on emergency preparedness planning at **Ready.gov**, including information specifically for **older adults** and **people with disabilities**. For more tips and resources on emergency preparedness, read the **Administration for Community Living's latest blog**.

NARC's Corporate Partner, Esri, started their local efforts before Hurricane Harvey hit land. Esri's Disaster Response Team mobilized direct assistance to their users, including the Red Cross, Texas Department of Emergency Management, Texas Health Department, and FEMA – facilitating sharing between agencies and working with volunteer groups to provide the right level of support and professional services. Esri's program provides software, data coordination, technical support, and other GIS assistance to any organization that needs it, regardless of membership.

If you know of anyone who can benefit from their program right now, they can request assistance at <http://www.esri.com/services/disaster-response> or contact the Esri Disaster Response Program at disaster_help@esri.com.

Additional Esri resources include:

- **Tropical Storm Harvey: Current Conditions** provides tabs for tracking and forecasting, watches and warnings, rain forecasts, flood gauges, traffic and alerts, road closures, shelter locations, and crowdsourced photos.
- **Hurricanes and Tropical Cyclones Story Map** identifies the potential impact of the storm, and includes a public information map, impact summary map, and forecast precipitation map.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

Maine Using Creative Workforce Programs to Improve State Economy

The Maine unemployment rate hit a 40-year low of three percent this spring. While some were quick to applaud political actions, others were more convinced the success had to do with workforce programs. The state has grown concerned about its shrinking population and deep skills gap, so new workforce programs are underway to connect understaffed employers with current students and young adults. To prepare this specific population for joining the Maine labor force, many of these workforce programs have been tied to education. Here are just some of the initiatives Maine is working to implement:

- Investing in its public university system, creating cooperative educational programs and sharpening the focus of their key research and educational programs.
- Increasing access to college-level courses in high school.
- Educate Maine, a coalition comprised of businesses in the state, is encouraging its members to develop apprenticeship and internship programs.
- Project Log-In has also been created to prepare high schoolers, college students, and nontraditional learners for technology careers.

REGIONS LEAD

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

Making the Census Count: How Regions Can Help

by Maci Hurley

The groundwork that the U.S. Census Bureau is laying out today will affect the accuracy of the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau is up against a significant accuracy issue: past Census reports have historically undercounted certain groups in the U.S., including young children, minorities, and low-income communities. Read on to learn how regions can help.

The Opioid Crisis Was Declared a National Emergency: Here's How Local Governments Can Help

by Maci Hurley

Two weeks ago, the Trump Administration issued a statement that directed the executive branch

to “use all appropriate emergency and other authorities to respond to the crisis caused by the opioid epidemic.” This declaration couldn’t have come any sooner. The National Center for Health Statistics reported that in the third quarter of 2016, overdose deaths reached a record-breaking 19.9 people per 100,000. If this trend continues, our localities will need all the help the federal government can offer to battle this growing epidemic.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Manager – Bexar Area Agency on Aging

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

HUD Resident Opportunity & Self-Sufficiency Program

Applications Due: October 23

The Resident Opportunity & Self Sufficiency (ROSS) Service Coordinator (SC) program funds nonprofits, public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities, and Native American tribal government awardees with funds to hire Service Coordinators (SCs). SCs coordinate the use of assistance under the Public Housing program (with public and private resources) for supportive services and resident empowerment activities. SCs assess the needs of public and Indian housing residents and link them to supportive services that enable participants to increase earned income, reduce or eliminate the need for welfare assistance, and make progress toward achieving economic independence and housing self-sufficiency. In the case of elderly/disabled residents, the SC links participants to supportive services which enable them to age/remain in-place thereby avoiding costlier forms of care. Funds awarded to applicants may be used for (1) SC functions, (2) training and travel related to professional and/or program development, (3) and administration cost.

The Hearst Foundations Fund Culture, Education, Health, and Social Services Programs

Deadline: Rolling

The Hearst Foundations support well-established nonprofit organizations that address significant issues within their major areas of interests – culture, education, health and social service – and that primarily serve large demographic and/or geographic constituencies. In each area of funding, the Foundations seek to identify those organizations achieving truly differentiated results relative to other organizations making similar efforts for similar populations. The Foundations also look for evidence of sustainability beyond their support.

USDA Rural Business Development Grants

Deadline: Rolling

The USDA is currently accepting applications for Rural Business Development Grants. This competitive grant is designed to support targeted technical assistance, training, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and have less than \$1 million in gross revenue. Rural public entities including, but not limited to, towns, communities, state agencies, nonprofits corporations, federally-recognized tribes, institutions of higher education, and more are eligible to apply. There is no maximum grant amount; however, smaller requests are given higher priority. Generally, grants range from \$10,000 to \$500,000.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Taking the Long View: Asset Management for Water Systems

September 6, 1:00 - 2:00 PM ET

For many water utilities, a key part of managing system sustainability is thinking long-term and taking stock of how assets will hold up over time. With miles of pipes below ground and critical storage, treatment, and pumping assets above ground, getting a handle on the condition of these

systems is often easier said than done. Learn how leading utilities and cities are using sophisticated asset management practices and a risk-based approach to help address the issues of evolving regulatory requirements, growing populations, demand for improved service and reliability - all while simultaneously addressing the challenges of water scarcity, a highly variable climate, aging infrastructure, and limited state and federal funding.

What Can Congress Accomplish Post-Recess?

September 6, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Measures to avoid a default on U.S. debt and a government shutdown top a long list of must-pass bills awaiting lawmakers when Congress returns from its August recess. And time is short. The House has scheduled 12 legislative days in September, five fewer than the Senate. Congress will almost certainly have to pass a short-term continuing resolution to keep the government funded during negotiations over fiscal 2018 appropriations later in the fall. Lawmakers also will keep working on some of their top legislative priorities, such as overhauling the tax code and repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act. Join Bloomberg Government analysts on what we can expect from Congress when it returns from recess.

NARC Webinars! Trees, Stormwater, and Resiliency: An Opportunity for Local Communities

with National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA):

September 13, 2:00-3:00 PM ET;

with National Association of Development Organizations (NADO):

September 20, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Traditional 'gray' infrastructure systems – like roads, utilities, and water/wastewater networks – have long supported our cities and towns as they grow and develop. However, as leaders grapple with shrinking budgets and deteriorating local infrastructure, the resilience and multifunctionality of green infrastructure and trees continues to broaden its appeal as a fiscally responsible investment for the long-term health and vibrancy of an area. A new interactive tool developed by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Council of Governments in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, NARC, Davey Resource Group, and Centerline Strategies, LLC will enable community planners, engineers, stormwater managers, community foresters, and policymakers to better capitalize on trees when investing or reinvesting in their stormwater systems. This resource can help you unleash new and innovative approaches for realizing the full capacity of trees as a component of your community's infrastructure systems. Join one of these webinars to discuss regional resilience planning and how TreesandStormwater.org can assist you in maximizing the benefits of trees and green infrastructure in your community.

Transportation Innovation and Its Effects on Regional Economies in the US

September 13, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Technological innovation is transforming the automobile industry, and more change is in store. Advancements in automation and safety will have major economic effects on manufacturing regions. A REMI representative will discuss how these trends influence state and local economies - not just for the traditional base of automobile manufacturing in Michigan, but also for other parts of the country connected by the auto supply chain. I will demonstrate how to simulate the effects of industry-wide change using REMI's modeling software.

Webinar on Initial Findings from the Nutrition Services Program Outcomes Evaluation

September 14, 3:00 PM ET

A key component of America's strategy for ensuring that the health and social needs of older adults are adequately met is represented by the Title III-C Nutrition Services Program (NSP), which is administered by the Administration on Aging (AoA) under the *Older Americans Act* (OAA). NSP promotes access to nutritious meals, facilitates social contact, supports family caregivers, and helps older adults maintain dignity in their homes and communities. It also fits squarely within the strategic goals of AoA to rebalance long-term care provision away from institutionalization and toward home- and community-based services. The goal of the Title III-C NSP Outcomes Evaluation was to describe various components of NSP participants' lives in more depth and determine the impact of NSP meals and related services on the participants' overall wellness.

How the New Political Climate is Reshaping Site Redevelopment Opportunities

September 21, 1:00-2:00PM ET

A webinar hosted by EDR will offer a rare chance to hear Brownfield Listing CEO, Dan French, offering his unique perspective on opportunities arising in the rapid and robust recalibration of the U.S. real estate landscape. Dan will join Patricia Overmeyer, Land Revitalization Coordinator, U.S. EPA Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment, in a timely and substantive discussion moderated by Mary Ann Grena Manley, the Deputy Editorial Director, EHS Division, at Bloomberg BNA. Their first-person perspectives will distill the headlines into real-world intel about how the priorities of the U.S. EPA are taking shape in the Trump Presidency—and how the redevelopment market is responding in a period already marked by rapid change.

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