



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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eRegions

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Colleagues,

The U.S. House returns today with just seven days left on the legislative calendar to complete their spending bills, pass the Farm Bill, and tidy up any other outstanding legislative action before recess for the year. The Senate returns the 9th. The big battle will be avoiding another funding fight and finally solving the sequester problem.

During the last government shutdown, the budget conference committee agreed to have its recommendation to Congress by December 13th in order to keep the United States government running beyond January

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2014 NATIONAL
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Building Regional Communities

PROGRAM UPDATE

U.S. DOT Requests Public Comment on Primary Freight Network, Extends Deadline for Comment: This week, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released a notice and request for public comment on the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) required designation of a Primary Freight Network. The draft network would consist of 27,000 miles of primary routes and a total of 41,000 miles in all. The designations of these routes were based on a series of eight criteria established in MAP-21 itself:

1. Origins and destinations of freight movement in the U.S.;
2. Total freight tonnage and value of freight moved by highways;

15th when funding expires. Congress may attempt to pass a short term continuing resolution and fund the government over the holidays. While almost everyone on the Hill agrees that the sequester needs to be fixed, there are no significant proposals to do so. The sequester would enter its second year of mandatory budget cuts totaling \$109 billion for FY14. NARC and our local government partners have adamantly called for the repeal of the sequester and will keep you informed of how we can support its roll back. Click [HERE](#) to visit NARC's sequester and federal budget resource website.

Cheers,
Fred

NARCLEADERSHIP

President

Hon. Penny Gross

Supervisor,
Fairfax County, VA

Chair Jim Hassinger,

Executive Directors
Council
Executive Director,
Southwestern
Pennsylvania Commission

3. Percentage of annual average daily truck traffic in the annual average daily traffic on principal arterials;
4. Annual average daily truck traffic on principal arterials;
5. Land and maritime ports of entry;
6. Access to energy exploration, development, installation, or production areas;
7. Population centers; and
8. Network connectivity.

You can find more information [HERE](#). **Comments are due on or before January 17, 2014.** (Note that this is later than originally reported, as the U.S. DOT extended the deadline based on significant stakeholder feedback.) NARC will be reaching out to members to discuss details. If you are interested in being part of the discussion, please send an email to Erich W. Zimmermann, erich@narc.org.

U.S. EPA Seeks Comments on 2014 Renewable Fuels Standards:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released the [2014 Renewable Fuels Standard \(RFS\) Proposal](#), and is asking for your input on how to encourage the production and use of renewable energy while balancing practical constraints on the pace at which the market is currently accommodating ethanol above a threshold known as the ethanol "blend wall." To provide comments, click [HERE](#).

Sign-up for NARC's Newest Newsletter: *Development Digest* is

NARC's new economic and community development electronic newsletter. This monthly email and online publication features a roundup of local and national news, federal policy, and agency updates, tools, cutting edge research, and NARC member best practices in the fields of community and economic development. Sign up [HERE](#) for this publication. If you have ideas or input for future issues, please contact Autumn Campbell, autumn@narc.org. Also, please take a few minutes to complete a short survey to weigh-in on the economic and community development membership services that you would like to see. The survey is available [HERE](#).

POLICYUPDATE

House is in session. Senate returns from recess December 9th.

Budget Agreement in the Works: The House and Senate Budget

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Committee chairmen are said to have the basics for a budget agreement, which would provide appropriators with top-line numbers for discretionary spending for FY14 and FY15. The deal would also partially alleviate sequester by \$30 to \$60 billion/year; from FY14 on, sequester cuts are at the determination of appropriators.

NARC Meets with Transportation Committee Staff: Last week, NARC met with a key majority staffer on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to discuss a number of issues around implementation of the last surface transportation authorization (The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act - MAP-21) and issues that will be important heading into the next authorization. It was a very productive meeting overall, and indicated a willingness on the committee's part to work with us on the issues that are most important to NARC's members. The big picture issues that we expect to be of greatest focus include funding and financing, freight, and project delivery (continuing the streamlining approach begun in MAP-21). The committee is also paying close attention to how provisions that were included in MAP-21 are being implemented by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), in case any tweaks or changes need to be made. The roll-out of performance management rules in the next few months remain top priority.

MEMBERREQUESTS

Request for Qualifications from EARPDC: The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC) is issuing a request for qualifications for a consultant to prepare an implementation plan for the CLEAR Plan 2030. The implementation plan will draw from the results of the CLEAR Plan public engagement process and from livability projects implemented in rural America. Sealed submissions will be accepted until 3:00 pm Friday, December 13, 2013. To download the Request for Qualifications scroll down to "News & Announcements" on the EARPDC homepage at <http://www.earpdc.org/> and click on "Implementation Plan Request for Qualifications."

Membership Dues Structure: The Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC) is reviewing its current membership dues structure, and is looking for examples of bylaws and dues for states that have regional council associations.

Members ask for your thoughtful reply. Please forward any feedback to Anna Rosenbaum, anna@narc.org, including which member assistance request to which you are responding.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

ArtPlace America – Creative Placemaking Funds Available

Deadline: December 6

ArtPlace America is seeking letters of inquiry for its Innovation Grants Opportunity. Supported through a collaboration of 13 national and regional foundations, awards of \$50,000 to \$500,000 are available to invest in creative placemaking projects that reach for new possibilities and involve a variety of partners who together are committed to increasing the vibrancy and diversity of their communities. More information is available [HERE](#).

Smart Growth America

Deadline: December 6

Smart Growth America, through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Sustainable Communities' Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program, is offering free technical assistance to help communities implement smart growth strategies to build stronger economies while protecting human health and the environment. Any unit or subdivision of local, tribal or regional government is eligible to apply. More information is available [HERE](#).

Economic Development Administration

Next Deadline: December 13 for funding cycle 2 of FY 2014;

Other Deadlines: March 14, 2014 for funding cycle 3 of FY 2014;

June 13, 2014 for funding cycle 4 of FY 2014

EDA is soliciting applications from applicants in rural and urban areas to provide investments that support construction, non-construction, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects under EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. Grants and cooperative agreements made under these programs are designed to leverage existing regional assets and support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities. EDA provides competitive, merit-based investments that support economic development, foster job creation, and attract private investment in economically distressed areas of the United States. The full announcement is available [HERE](#).

Wells Fargo Foundation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Deadline: December 16

Designed to support projects that link economic development and community well-being to the stewardship and health of the environment, Wells Fargo and the NFWF have launched a five-year, \$15 million initiative that will be used to leverage other public and private investments with an expected total impact of over \$37.5 million. Funding priorities for this program include supporting sustainable agricultural practices; promoting land and water conservation; facilitating investments in green infrastructure and energy efficiency; and encouraging broad-based citizen participation in project implementation. More information is available [HERE](#).

Department of the Treasury – Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI)

Deadline: December 23

Funding is available for the CDFI Program, which aims to use federal resources to invest in CDFIs and to build their capacity to serve low-income people and communities that lack access to affordable financial products and services. Through the CDFI program, the CDFI Fund provides two types of monetary awards to CDFIs - Financial Assistance awards and Technical Assistance awards. More information on this opportunity is available [HERE](#), and more information on the CDFI program is available [HERE](#). Funding for the Native American CDFI program is also available. More information can be found [HERE](#).

National Endowment for the Arts

Deadline: January 13, 2014

The NEA Our Town Program aims to support creative placemaking projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core. Our Town will invest in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, seek to improve their quality of life; encourage greater creative activity; foster stronger community identity and a sense of place; and revitalize economic development. More information is available [HERE](#).

Department of Energy

Deadline: Concept Papers due January 13, 2014; Final applications due

March 13, 2014

As part of a new \$19 million investment in solar energy, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced funding available under the SunShot Incubator 9 program. This program will focus on early-stage support for small companies, encouraging private-sector investment and seeking app and web developers from both inside and outside of the energy industry to zero in on reducing soft costs of solar adoption. More information is available [HERE](#).

Community Forest Program Grant

Application Deadline: January 15, 2014

The U.S. Forest Service's Community Forest Program (CFP) protects forests that are important for people and the places they call home. CFP provides funding to local governments, tribal governments and nonprofits to establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits. Click [HERE](#) for more information about available funding.

Health Resources Services Administration – Rural Health Network Development Planning Program

Deadline: January 16, 2014

Funding is available to develop and promote the planning and development of rural healthcare networks aimed at achieving efficiencies; expanding access to, coordinating, and improving the quality of essential health care services; and strengthening the rural health care system as a whole. This program brings together key parts of a rural health care delivery system, particularly those entities that may not have collaborated in the past under a formal relationship, to work together to establish and improve local capacity and coordination of care. This grant program supports one year of planning with the primary goal in helping networks create a foundation and focus efforts to address important regional or local community health needs. More information about this opportunity is available [HERE](#).

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Deadline: January 22, 2014

EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) has announced FY 2014 EPA funding for Brownfields Job Training Grants, Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grants, Brownfields Assessment Grants, Brownfields Multi-Purpose Grants, Brownfields Cleanup Grants, State Assistance Grant, Hazardous Waste Management Grant Program for Tribes, Tribal Solid Waste Management Assistance Project. More

information is available [HERE](#) and the National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals (NALGEP) will host a webinar on December 4th to discuss this opportunity. Sign up for the webinar [HERE](#).

Department of the Interior – Bureau of Reclamation

Deadline: January 23, 2014

Funding is available through the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART program to support new Water and Energy Efficiency Grant projects. Proposals are sought from states, Indian tribes, irrigation districts, water districts and other organizations with water or power delivery authority to partner with Reclamation on projects that increase water conservation or result in other improvements that address water supply sustainability in the West. More information is available [HERE](#).

Department of Labor – Employment Training Administration

Deadline: January 27, 2014

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), has announced \$100 million in grant funds for the Youth CareerConnect grant program. The program is designed to provide high school students with education and training that combines rigorous academic and technical curricula focused on specific in-demand occupations and industries for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers as well as the related activities necessary to support such training to increase participants' employability in H-1B in-demand industries and occupations. More information is available [HERE](#).

National Science Foundation (NSF) - Cyber-Physical Systems

Deadline: January 29, 2014

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have a shared interest in advancing basic and applied research in Cyber Physical Systems (CPS), which are systems in which physical processes are tightly intertwined with networked computing. For transportation, CPS will provide the foundation necessary for a safe, efficient highway transportation system connecting vehicles, infrastructure, people, and goods in a vibrant, competitive economy. More information is available [HERE](#).

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Deadline: January 30, 2014

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of \$181 million to develop commercial-scale biorefineries or

retrofit existing facilities with appropriate technology to develop advanced biofuels. Funding is available through the Biorefinery Assistance Program provides loan guarantees to viable commercial-scale facilities to develop new and emerging technologies for advanced biofuels. The announcement is available [HERE](#), more information about the program is available [HERE](#) and the full text of the Federal Register notice is available [HERE](#).

U.S. Department of Housing

Deadline: February 3, 2014

Funding is available for FY 2013 and FY 2014 Continuum of Care Program Competition (CoC) to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; to provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, States, and local governments to quickly re-house the homeless while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness; to promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by the homeless; and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness. Full text of the notice of funding availability (NOFA) is available [HERE](#).

NSF - Cyber-Enabled Sustainability Science and Engineering

Deadline: February 4, 2014

The Cyber-Enabled Sustainability Science and Engineering (CyberSEES) program aims to advance interdisciplinary research in which the science and engineering of sustainability are enabled by new advances in computing, and where computational innovation is grounded in the context of sustainability problems. More information is available [HERE](#).

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)

Deadline: February 5, 2014

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program seeks to develop nation-wide-community stewardship of local natural resources, preserving these resources for future generations and enhancing habitat for local wildlife. Projects seek to address water quality issues in priority watersheds, such as erosion due to unstable streambanks, pollution from stormwater runoff, and degraded shorelines caused by development. More information is available [HERE](#).

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Deadline: February 18, 2014

The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (CPS)

Cooperative Agreement Program provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and public health issues within an affected community. The CPS Program is designed to help communities understand and address exposure to multiple environmental harms and risks. More information about this opportunity is available [HERE](#).

Energy for Sustainability

Deadline: February 20, 2014

This program supports fundamental research and education that will enable innovative processes for the sustainable production of electricity and transportation fuels. Processes for sustainable energy production must be environmentally benign, reduce greenhouse gas production, and utilize renewable resources. Current interest areas in sustainable energy technologies are: Biomass Conversion, Biofuels & Bioenergy, Photovoltaic Solar Energy, Wind Energy, and Advanced Batteries for Transportation. Learn more about this program [HERE](#).

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Value-Added Producer Grant Program

Deadline: February 24, 2014

The USDA announced today \$10.5 million in carry-over funding from 2013 to help U.S. agricultural producers enter into value-added activities. Awards may be made for either economic planning or working capital activities related to the processing and/or marketing of valued-added agricultural products. More information is available [HERE](#).

NSF - Environmental Sustainability

Deadline: March 20, 2014

The Environmental Sustainability program supports engineering research that seeks to balance society's need to provide ecological protection and maintain stable economic conditions. Research in Environmental Sustainability typically considers long time horizons and may incorporate contributions from the social sciences and ethics. There are four principal general research areas which are supported: Industrial Ecology, Green Engineering, Ecological Engineering, Earth Systems Engineering. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

Climate Solutions University Accepting Applications

Application Deadline: Rolling

The Model Forest Policy Program is offering a special funding opportunity for qualifying U.S. urban and rural communities working

together addressing ecosystem services. Urban decision makers need to plan for climate impacts that result from land changes beyond their jurisdictional boundaries. To find out more about the Climate Solutions University, click [HERE](#).

UPCOMINGEVENTS

WEBINAR: Tips for Successful Brownfields Grant Proposals

December 4, 2:00 PM EST

The National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals (NALGEP), the Center for Creative Land Recycling (CCLR), and the KSU Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities Program is hosting a webinar on creating successful brownfields grant applications. The FY2014 EPA Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup (ARC) Grants guidelines were announced on November 22nd, and communities will have until January 22, 2014 to submit their applications. Registration is available [HERE](#).

WEBINAR SERIES: EPA Announces Webinar Series for State and Local Governments

The EPA's State and Local Climate and Energy Program announced a series of webcasts aimed at helping local governments as they explore and plan climate change and clean energy efforts. These regular webcasts highlight EPA resources available to local governments and present examples of successful climate and energy programs and policies implemented locally. More information on this series and links to register are available [HERE](#).

- December 4, 1:00-2:30 PM EST - Gaining Support and Attracting Participation through Communication
- December 11, 1:00-2:30 PM EST - The Role of Communication in Ensuring Sustained Behavior Change
- December 18 1:00-2:30 PM EST - Using Effective Communication to Showcase Program Successes

WEBCAST: The Brookings Institution: Fixing the Skills Gap – Getting Americans Back to Work via Workforce Development Programs

December 4, 2013, 2:00-3:30 PM EST

The Brookings Institution will hold an event and live webcast to highlight the importance of understanding the skills gap in order to create effective public policies aimed at creating equitable economic growth. A

link to register for the webcast is [HERE](#).

WEBINAR: Talking Freight Seminars

December 6, 2:00-3:30 PM EST

DOT will hold a webinar to discuss the newly released draft freight network. For more information on the webinar, go [HERE](#). You can register for the webinar [HERE](#).

WEBINAR: Environmental Protection Agency

December 17, 1:00 PM EST

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Green Power Partnership (GPP) will host a webinar to address effectively engaging allies across the enterprise. Particularly for on-site and utility-scale green power opportunities, sustainability and energy staff find that they need to coordinate or collaborate with multiple functions within their organization. Building the support of an internal network can make all the difference when it comes to making a purchase or installing green power on-site. The webinar will discuss how to build this network, how to leverage other stakeholders' key issues and address their challenges, and who needs to be involved. Register [HERE](#).

NARC's 2014 National Conference of Regions

February 9-11, 2014, Washington, DC

The National Conference of Regions is the forum that NARC uses to determine key policy issues and a legislative agenda on topics of relevance and importance to executive directors and local elected officials representing regional organizations and boards. Additional information will be available in late 2013.

NARC's 48th Annual Conference and Exhibition

June 6-11, 2014, Louisville, KY

The Annual Conference and Exhibition is the largest national event focused on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education. Held annually in June, NARC's Annual Conference is the premier place to learn how to engage in effective regional collaboration. Additional information will be available in early 2014.

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