



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS 2008 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

PROMOTING REGIONAL APPROACHES TO ADVANCING AMERICA'S LOCAL COMMUNITIES

**T**he members of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) support federal programs and policies that encourage regional approaches to improving the economic conditions and quality of life in America's local communities. This includes building upon the proven track record of the nation's 520 regional development organizations in fostering regional cooperation among local officials, leveraging limited resources to achieve economies of scale and implementing a broad portfolio of federal and state programs on a regional basis.

As multi-jurisdictional public entities governed by local elected officials, along with private sector, higher education and community representatives, the nation's regional development organizations serve as a key catalyst for strategic planning, public-private partnerships and regional initiatives that are designed to meet locally-identified community and economic development priorities and needs. Historically, our efforts have focused on public infrastructure improvements, business development finance lending, comprehensive planning strategies, transportation planning and other traditional building blocks for promoting local job creation and wealth generation activities.

In recent years, public sector leaders at all levels of government have turned to our regional entities to deliver, manage and coordinate an increasingly diverse portfolio, including: aging services, homeland security and emergency preparedness, brownfields redevelopment, Geographic Information System (GIS) services, public transportation and workforce development programs. This trend reflects the fact that regional development organizations are publicly accountable, achieve measurable results and provide efficient and high-quality services.

For the 2008 legislative session, the members of NADO place a priority on increasing intergovernmental cooperation among all levels of government, retaining and building upon the existing set of federal assistance programs, and enhancing the planning, delivery and administration of federal programs on a sub-state regional basis. Specifically, these priorities include:

- **Community and Economic Development** — Fully fund the existing portfolio of federal community and economic development programs, most notably the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA), HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, SBA's business lending programs and USDA Rural Development's portfolio of grant and loan programs.
- **Homeland Security Coordination and Preparedness** — Support enhanced federal guidelines, resources and incentives that build upon the experience, capacity and skills of the national network of regional development organizations to coordinate, plan and implement homeland security and emergency preparedness activities on a regional basis.
- **Rural Development in the Farm Bill Conference Report** — Promote the expansion of resources, flexibility and innovation within the Rural Development Title of the 2008 Farm Bill, including regionally-based initiatives to promote strategic planning and development, entrepreneurship, broadband and technology deployment, infrastructure upgrades and business development finance assistance.
- **Transportation** — Provide full and sustainable funding for the nation's aviation, highway and transit needs as outlined in the respective authorization laws, SAFETEA-LU and AIR-21. In addition, support the full implementation of the January 2003 federal rules requiring an enhanced role for rural local officials and regional development organizations in the statewide transportation planning and programming processes.

## ECONOMIC, COMMUNITY & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Fund EDA at the authorized level of \$500 million, including \$27 million for the economic development district planning program.
- Fully fund USDA rural development grant programs for infrastructure improvements, business development, community facilities, housing and broadband services.
- Urge members of the House to actively participate in the Congressional Rural Caucus, a bipartisan group dedicated to supporting federal policies and initiatives that improve the economic and social development of small town and rural America.
- Urge the U.S. Census Bureau to work with regions to ensure the participation of local governments and the collection of accurate data under the 2010 decennial census and the American Community Survey program.
- Fully fund EPA's brownfields cleanup and assessment programs and support the limited use of brownfields project funds for administrative costs.
- Support full funding of federal initiatives to assist state and local governments (including regional development organizations) in planning, developing and maintaining water and wastewater infrastructure systems.
- Expand the eligibility criteria for Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) program to include public entities such as regional development organizations.
- Support full funding and support for SBA's 504 Development Company and Microloan programs, as well as the Program for Investment in Microentrepreneurs (PRIME).
- Oppose any federal tax measures on electronic commerce that reduce state and local government authority and revenue. Support policies to promote affordable, advanced and accessible telecommunications and broadband services in underserved and rural areas.

## FEDERAL-STATE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

- Use existing regional development organizations as the local development districts for existing and proposed federal-state regional commissions, including the proposed Northeast Regional Development Commission, SouthEast Crescent Authority and Southwest Regional Border Authority and the authorized-but-unfunded Northern Great Plains Regional Authority.
- Fully fund the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and Delta Regional Authority (DRA) at the authorized levels, including support for the ARC and DRA local development districts.

## HOMELAND & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

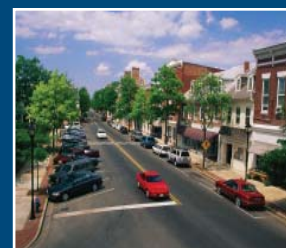
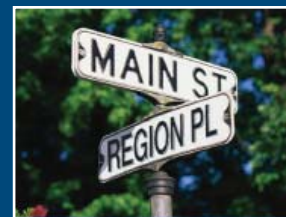
- Ensure small metropolitan and rural regions receive adequate resources and equitable access to the broad portfolio of homeland security and emergency preparedness programs, including first responder, pre-disaster mitigation and all-hazards mitigation resources. In addition, fully fund FEMA's flood map modernization and pre-disaster mitigation programs.

## SOCIAL SERVICES & WORKFORCE

- Maintain full funding and program flexibility for HHS' Area Agencies on Aging. Encourage the continued and expanded use of regional development organizations as the administrators and coordinators of workforce development programs.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Fully fund federal aviation programs that help maintain and enhance regular air service to underserved and rural regions, including FAA's Airport Improvement Program, Essential Air Service program and the Small Communities Air Service program.
- Support programs and policies to coordinate, rehabilitate, maintain and plan the development of services, including public transportation and short line railroads.



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