

All Politics Is Local

A Guide to Grassroots Action



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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Training, information and representation for regional development organizations serving small metropolitan and rural America.

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An Introduction— Effective Grassroots Action

Despite daily media stories and newspaper articles about the influence of wealthy campaign contributors and political action committees, trade associations with committed, informed and organized grassroots networks remain among the most effective advocates in Washington.

In recent years, the members and staff of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) have underscored this important fact by achieving several landmark legislative victories. We played an instrumental role in securing the first major reauthorization bill for the Economic Development Administration and Appalachian Regional Commission in nearly twenty years. We teamed with our local government partners to strengthen the role of rural local officials in transportation planning as part of the 1998 TEA-21 bill, while also promoting a stronger rural development title within the farm bill.

However, the work of a grassroots advocate is never complete. There is constant turnover in congressional membership and staff, ever-changing shifts in political power and advancements in communication technologies. To be successful, grassroots advocates must constantly rethink ways to most effectively deliver their message, with the ultimate goal of impacting federal policies.

How Can Your Federal Lawmakers Help You?

- Introduce or Cosponsor Legislation
- Sponsor or Sign a Dear Colleague Letter on a Specific Issue
- Vote on a Bill or Amendment in Committee or on the Floor
- Send Letters to Federal Agencies on Specific Issues
- Send Letters in Support of Federal Grant Applications
- Talk with Committee Chairman or Leadership about Local Issues

The following guide is intended to help regional development professionals and local elected officials stay current on the latest grassroots techniques, while also reinforcing the fundamental building blocks of successful advocacy programs. The guide features sections on communicating with members of Congress, using the media to influence policy and understanding the different roles of congressional staff. It highlights key points in the legislative process, contains sample advocacy materials and offers links to useful Internet resources.

As part of the revised guide, a quick and simple self assessment tool is also included to help advocates evaluate their congressional relationships and knowledge of the federal legislative process.

Intergovernmental Participation—

The Role of Regional Development Organizations and Local Elected Officials

Our system of government is designed to be a partnership among the three main levels of government: federal, state and local. Because all three levels are inextricably linked, the full and active participation of state and local officials (including regional development organizations) is not only allowed in the federal policymaking process, but also essential.

The partnership among federal, state and local officials is called intergovernmental relations, and there has always been—and remains today—a system of privileged communications among these groups. This practice of education and cooperation between levels of government has been recently reaffirmed in three separate actions aimed at limiting the practices popularly regarded as lobbying.

Under the Lobbying Disclosure Act, which was signed into law on December 19, 1995, there is an explicit exemption for all state and local government officials and their representative organizations such as regional development organizations. Over 20,000 lobbyists are now required to register and disclose a wide range of information on their activities. However, public officials and their national associations are specifically excluded as they are considered intergovernmental entities.

In 1990, the Office of Management and Budget issued new lobbying regulations which established that there is no restriction prohibiting state and local governments from using appropriated federal funds to influence activities, seek or provide information, and influence legislation and/or regulations unless it is directly related to a specific contract or grant. All generic action affecting state and local governments, such as legislative and regulatory activity, is exempt from restriction. Regional development organizations can contact their members of Congress on legislative issues and they can join national associations which perform similar services.

Another clear reassurance that state and local participation in the federal policymaking process is considered different from other lobbying activities was outlined in the revised rules banning the acceptance of gifts to members of Congress and their staff in 1995. Under both the House and Senate rules, it explicitly states that, “anything paid for by federal, state or local government” is exempt.



Representatives of regional development organizations have a right to be heard and a duty to express their views on federal issues.

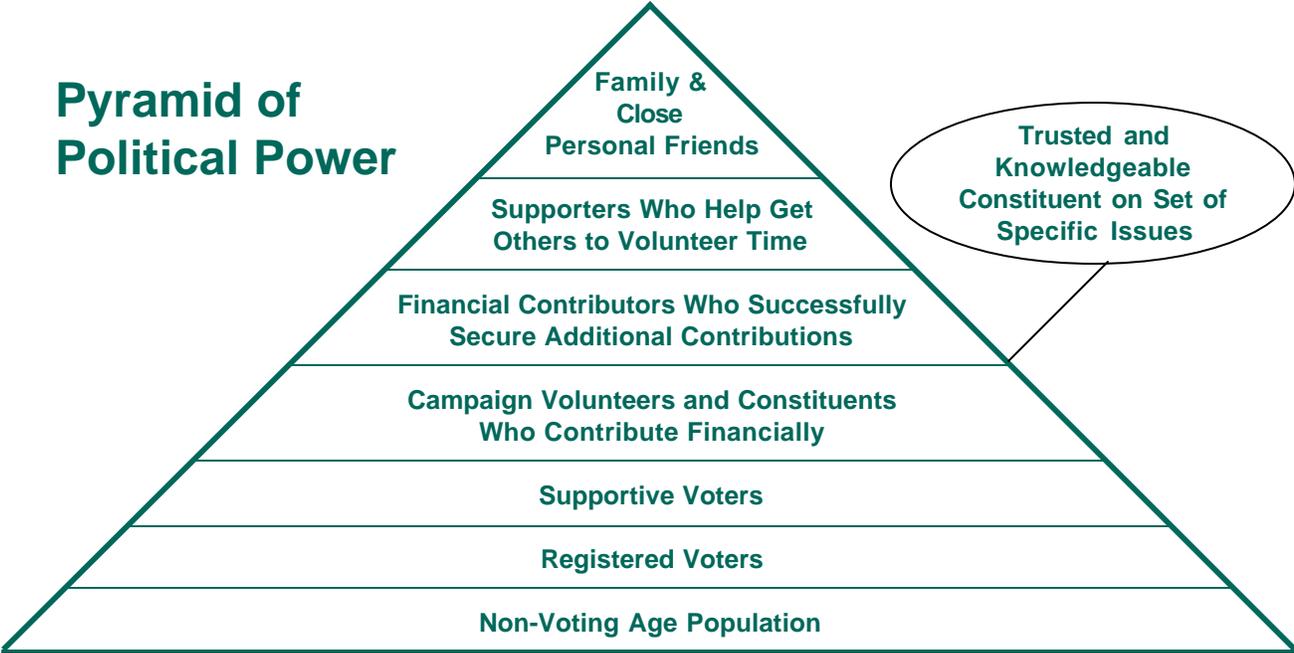
Establishing the Relationship—

As experts on federal economic development programs and leaders in the community, NADO members are uniquely positioned to become valuable resources for lawmakers and congressional staff. However, one must first establish a personal or professional relationship with the member of Congress and their staff.

Without an established relationship, it becomes exceedingly difficult to impact decisions during crunch time. As practical individuals, most members of Congress take action after hearing from individuals and groups they know and respect — especially when they know that the action is in the best interest of the community and their own political future.

Patience and persistence are often necessary traits in developing the relationship. Keep in mind that as a regional development professional, you have a pulse of the area and possess many important contacts. This is a valuable asset that you can offer when developing a relationship with your lawmakers and their staff. Regardless of the relationship level, the key is to establish and maintain regular contact and keep the channels of communication open.

As the chart below demonstrates, lawmakers generally give more consideration to the issues and priorities to those whom they share common goals and interests. The goal for every advocate should be to climb the pyramid, evolving from a grassroots advocate to a key contact known as a grasstops advocate.



** Average of 700,000 People per Congressional District **

In general, there are two basic methods that national associations use to influence federal action with local advocates. While organizations such as AARP and the National Rifle Association have enough members to generate stacks of letters, smaller groups like NADO must rely on key contacts, so it is essential for regional development professionals to develop strong relationships with lawmakers and their staff.

■ **Quantitative.** This means generating massive volume of calls, letters and faxes to Capitol Hill on an issue. This method relies on sheer numbers to impact the process. Often times, these campaigns lose effectiveness when local advocates send petitions, resolutions and scores of repetitive letters.

■ **Qualitative.** Better known as a key contact or grasstops program, this approach relies on fewer participants who typically have influential positions in the community or have a personal relationship with the lawmaker. This method is based on the premise that members of Congress and their staff respond best to people they know and trust.

While the average citizen may be intimidated or uninterested in the political process, regional development organizations and the local governments they serve must be actively engaged. Most importantly, the relationship should be developed and established before a problem or issue arises and action is needed. The following are basic techniques for building a sound professional relationship:

- **Attend town meetings sponsored by your lawmaker.** Lawmakers often hold forums in the district on local issues. Be sure to attend and introduce yourself as a representative of the regional organization. Follow up the contact with a brief note.
- **Invite lawmakers to visit your office and meet with staff and key policy members.** Try to schedule at least a half-hour or hour to allow staff to provide a brief overview of their programs and projects. The best time to schedule these meetings is during a congressional recess or on Mondays and Fridays.
- **Conduct a tour of project sites.** A powerful method for demonstrating the impact of federal assistance programs is to actually bring members of Congress and their staff to the project sites. This gives them a chance to talk with employees (meaning voters!) who work in the new facilities made possible with federal funds.
- **Make regular contact.** Repetition is essential. This includes adding lawmakers to mailing lists, inviting them to attend events and periodically making appointments.

Communicating With Members of Congress—

Know Your Legislators

Writing Letters and Making Phone Calls

Personal Visits

Project Site Tours and District Visits

The Art of Saying Thank You

There are many different ways to communicate with members of Congress and their staff. Some are direct, such as personal meetings, phone calls and letters. Many are indirect, like press coverage in the local newspaper. All can be potent, whether used individually or combined, and when properly implemented and timed. The following section outlines the basic ground rules for communicating with federal legislators and their staff by writing letters, making phone calls and conducting visits.

Know Your Legislators

Before meeting with a lawmaker, invest time in learning about their background, positions on key issues and current priorities. This information is essential in shaping an effective communications strategy. Basic information and actions include:

■ **Know their committee and sub-committee assignments.** This helps identify their primary areas of interest and influence.

■ **Research their voting records on key issues.** Floor votes are available in the *Congressional Record* and committee votes can be obtained by calling the

specific committee. NADO also compiles voting records on relevant issues.

■ **Find out which bills they sponsored and cosponsored in recent years.** This also helps identify their primary areas of interest.

■ **Follow local and regional press coverage of legislators.** The issues covered in the press are often the members' current and top priorities.

■ **Read their biographical information.** This information can typically be retrieved from the legislator's website and obtained by calling their office.

■ **Talk with district staff about the lawmakers positions and interests.** The additional information will help you shape your message.

Most Effective Means of Communication

1. Grassroots Activity	52 %
2. Lobbying by Executives	27 %
3. Campaign Contributors	5 %
4. Professional Lobbyists	4 %
5. Advocacy Advertising	2 %

Source: Public Affairs Council Survey

Writing Letters and Making Phone Calls

Letters are among the most effective tools in communicating with a member of Congress. They are read, circulated and counted. However, because of the massive amount of mail sent to Congress each day, it is important to develop each letter around three principles:

1. **Keep it local.**
2. **Keep it personal.**
3. **Keep it concise.**

Specifically, it is important to design each letter so that your lawmaker and their staff will notice and take action:

- **State the purpose of the letter in the first paragraph.** If writing about a particular piece of legislation, be sure to include the bill number in the first paragraph and state your position or request for specific action.
- **Use your own words and anecdotal information to support your position.** Avoid slogans or phrases from newsletters and form letters. NADO may sometimes provide a sample letter but please adapt it to your local circumstances whenever possible. Legislators frequently quote interesting constituent letters during speeches. Provide them with real stories and useful quotes.
- **Ask your legislator for a reply.** You are entitled to know how and why your legislators take a particular position.
- **Be sure to thank legislators for their time and effort on your behalf,** even if the outcome went the other way.
- **Use letterhead stationery.** Use regional organizational letterhead unless the letter is from an elected official, who should use their local government stationery and mention the regional organization in the letter.

- **Send NADO a copy of the letter and any correspondence.** This helps the association staff develop legislative strategies and track local lobbying efforts.

Addresses and Salutations

To A Senator:

The Honorable Jane Smith
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Smith:

To a Representative:

The Honorable John Smith
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

Note: When writing to a chair of a committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address them as Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman and Mr. Speaker.



Like writing a letter, there are some key points to consider when **calling** a member of Congress or their staff.

- **Use phone calls sparingly.** Phone calls are most effective when action must be taken quickly, such as the last days before a committee markup or a floor vote.
- **Before making the call, write down the purpose of the call and a couple of key talking points on the issue.** This tactic helps keep you on track and focused.
- **Leave a brief, clear message when calling.** If you cannot reach the legislator or staff assigned to the issue, leave a message with the person who answered the phone. Keep your message brief and include the topic, bill number and purpose of the call.
- **Follow the phone call** with a fax or letter to reinforce your message.

If You Receive A Noncommittal Response...

Do not be surprised if a reply is noncommittal. Many times, legislators will not take a position on an issue until the last minute. A “strong, neutral position” is the easiest posture for a legislator to assume because it requires no research and little thought, and is supposed to alienate the fewest voters. Thus, the best strategy is to try and educate your member on the implications of the legislation and how it will affect your region.

Write back if the reply neglects to answer your questions, is ambiguous or evades the question by claiming that the fate of the bill is in another legislator’s hands, such as a committee on which that legislator does not sit. (That may be true, but your legislators should still tell you where they stand.)

In your brief follow-up letter or phone call, make two or three good points and restate your position and request. Politely remind your legislator that you are following the issue closely.

Understanding the Power of Communications...



For every letter or phone call a legislator receives from a constituent, they assume there are at least 100 others who feel the same way.

Source: American Society of Association Executives

Personal Visits

Face-to-face meetings are another effective advocacy tool for educating legislators and staff. Meetings can take place in the district or in Washington, DC. If the legislator is unavailable or busy, it is still necessary to meet with staff. Staff members work on these issues every day and greatly influence the positions and votes of lawmakers.

Arranging the Appointment

- **Schedule a meeting in Washington or in the district office, whichever is most convenient.** The district office can provide a schedule of “district work periods” or other times when the legislator is expected to be in the district such as Monday and Friday.
- **When you speak to the scheduler, explain that you are a constituent,** the purpose of the meeting and who will be attending. If someone in your organization knows the legislator personally, make sure that person can attend, and let the scheduler know about the relationship. Confirm the meeting with a formal letter.
- **Unless you have an unusual problem, only request a half hour meeting.** Legislators are often overscheduled and will appreciate a well-organized and concise meeting. In reality, most meetings will only last **10-15 minutes** (unless the member of Congress is addressing a widely attended event).

Preparing for the Meeting

- **Do your homework!** Know exactly what you want to say and carefully review your message. Call the NADO legislative staff before the meeting for updates on the latest congressional and federal agency action and to obtain your legislator’s voting record on the issue.
- **Compile basic figures** about the impact of federal grants on your region. Avoid long lists of statistics and complex charts; they are difficult to remember and will lose their impact. Prepare a few dramatic numbers or anecdotes to illustrate your points. Like most people, legislators are more likely to remember examples conveyed in human and personal terms.
- **Know the counter-arguments** and be ready to respectfully answer any questions or disagreements. (NADO staff can help identify potential questions and appropriate responses in advance of the meeting.)
- **Make sure everyone in your group is prepared.** Brief everyone attending the meeting and make sure they have any written materials (biographical profile of legislators and their views, etc.) to review well ahead of time.
- **Be organized.** Agree ahead of time the role each participant will take, who will discuss the issues and in what order participants will speak.
- **If you are part of a larger coalition or group, meet ahead of time.** Be certain everyone agrees on the central message. It is unwise to have an internal debate in front of legislators and staff.

— Quick Tips —

- **Write down a one-line sentence before the meeting that outlines exactly what you need.**
- **Find out the name of the staff member responsible for the issue.**
- **Provide specific examples on how the issue impacts the state or district.**
- **Follow up the meeting with a brief thank you note.**

Making The Presentation

- **Be on time and make a simple and straight forward presentation;** you may have five minutes or less to make the pitch directly to the member.
- **Make clear the purpose of the meeting during introductions.** Additional points may include: thanks for previous support; outcomes of past projects; and timing of the action needed.
- **Leave time for dialogue; meaning do not monopolize the conversation.** Members and staff appreciate the chance to be heard. Ask follow-up questions.
- **Stay away from jargon.** Legislators deal with dozens of issues each day, each with its own language.
- **Thank supportive legislators.** Members of Congress get thanked far less than they get criticized. They will appreciate your recognition.
- **Be sure to ask your legislator for a specific action and support.** Action could include sponsorship of a particular bill or dear colleague letter, vote in committee or a general leadership.
- **Leave a one-page fact sheet. If it exceeds one page, it will not be read.** The fact sheet should offer a concise summary of the problem and the proposed action. Relate the impact of the program or legislation to the district and state. Attach your business card and contact information to the packet.

Follow Up After The Meeting

- **Send separate thank you notes to the legislator and staff members.** Briefly summarize the main points of the meeting. Follow-up immediately with answers to questions and information requests.
- **Keep the NADO legislative staff informed.** Grassroots reports are invaluable in developing legislative strategies and tracking the positions of members of Congress.

Project Site Tours and District Visits

Writing, calling and visiting legislators are all essential steps in building relationships and delivering messages, but the most effective method for educating members of Congress and staff is to have them visit your organization and project sites. The best time is typically during congressional recesses, when legislators are back home and more relaxed. Another prime time is when officials are first elected.

- **Invite your member of Congress to speak at annual meetings, board of directors meetings and other public forums sponsored by your organization.** Invite key congressional staff members if your senators and representatives are unable to attend.
- **Invite legislators and their Washington staff to visit your office or take a tour of a current project.** For example, invite legislators to tour projects they helped fund. It reinforces the benefits of the project to the community. It also gives the member an opportunity to meet people (meaning voters!) directly impacted by a project. Be sure to stay on schedule, develop a concise press packet and take quality photographs.
- **Recognize lawmakers for key accomplishments** at widely attended events such as annual meetings or community events. Issue a press release and invite the local press to gain additional exposure. Also nominate lawmakers for the biennial NADO Congressional Partnership Awards program.
- **Involve key contacts, such as a local elected official and business leaders, in the meetings.** It is a powerful technique to let others promote your efforts.

THE ART OF SAYING...

Thank You

The most common mistake of professional lobbyists and grassroots advocates alike is forgetting to say thank you! Whether sending a thank you card after a meeting or honoring a supportive legislator at a banquet, members of Congress remember those who express their appreciation. (*Appendix III: Thank You Notes*)

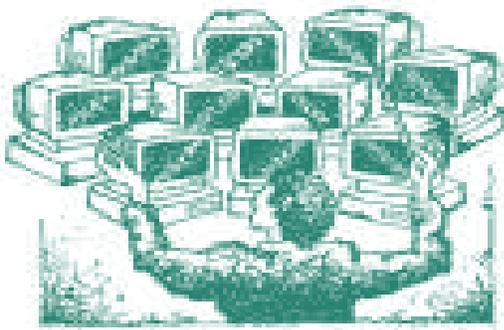
Reasons to thank or congratulate members of Congress include:

- Position taken on a specific floor or committee vote.
- Sponsorship or cosponsorship of important legislation.
- Taking the time for a personal meeting.
- Authoring a “Dear Colleague” letter on a specific issue.
- Election or reelection to Congress or leadership position.
- Support on local community and economic development issues.

Email: Is It Effective?

Almost 90 percent of congressional offices use email and 97 percent of staff use the Internet to gather information on pending issues, according to a comprehensive study on the Internet and lobbying by American University and the grassroots lobbying firm Bonner and Associates.

However, the more important question relates to the impact of email messages for advocacy purposes. Email generated from outside the state or district are treated with less political importance or no importance, according to 84 percent of congressional staff respondents. The study of 70 Senate and 200 House offices also found that an overwhelming majority of staff believe that email is good, it helps keep the member informed, encourages new people to get involved in the process and makes communication between the Washington office and district easier.



Members of Congress are informed about the email their offices receive. Typically, staff show the member a report of email communication on a daily or weekly basis. But, electronic replies to email messages are rare. The majority of offices still reply to electronic messages by mail and some reply with both an email message and letter. When using the Internet, 91 percent of legislative staff say they use it to gather substantive information such as bill text and reports, newspaper articles, background materials and other basic research.

Tips for Becoming an Effective Cyberadvocate

- **Think before you email a message.** Is email the most effective way to take action or would a phone call be more influential.
- **When sending an email message, be sure to include your name, organization and address at the top of the message.** This helps staff determine that the message is from the district or state.
- **State the purpose of the message in the first sentence.**
- **Be concise** and remember to reference the bill number and clearly state the action needed and timeline.
- **Follow up any email with a phone call or fax letter.** With the volume of email currently being sent to Capitol Hill, it may be days before a staff member reads and responds to the message.
- **Remember to proofread and spell check message. And only use email when absolutely necessary!**

Coalition Building—

Strength in Numbers

For decades, regional development organizations and local elected officials have understood the importance of joining together to influence federal and state policies, whether as members of NADO, the National Association of Counties, National Leagues of Cities or the US Conference of Mayors.

To remain effective and competitive, it is also essential for regional economic development professionals and local elected officials to build coalitions with other stakeholders at the local level. This may include local organizations such as chambers of commerce, homebuilders associations, industrial development agencies and financial institutions. Diverse coalitions are important as they demonstrate to legislators the importance of an issue.

Below are basic tips to establishing and maintaining an effective coalition:

- **Meet regularly.** Rather than waiting until an issue “heats up,” meet once or twice monthly to share information and strategies.
- **Coordinate.** Legislators need to hear from groups repeatedly, but when time and resources are limited, a “divide and conquer” strategy may work better than everyone focusing on the same lawmaker. Divide up responsibilities, rather than having everyone contact both senators and all area representatives, especially if time is limited.
- **Share resources.** Make sure that you are receiving the legislative alerts, newsletters and other material that your coalition partners are distributing. Put them on your mailing list.
- **Network.** You may not know anyone who can get your senators on the phone but maybe one of your coalition partners does. If you are working together, the “contact” can speak for the entire coalition (if everyone agrees), rather than just one organization.
- **Work together.** Visit legislators as a coalition to demonstrate a “united front.” When appropriate, you may want to draft a coalition letter that each organization signs.
- **Sponsor events.** Events shortly before an important vote can help get the coalition’s message across and demonstrate the breadth of support.

“The most important step is taking the initiative to reach out to both new and old partners alike with the goal of working together toward a common goal.”

Using The Media—

Press Releases

Press Conferences

Letters to the Editor

Opinion Pieces and Editorial Boards

Using the media to influence members of Congress is the most effective indirect advocacy technique. While big budget television ad campaigns and full-page ads in the *Washington Post* receive the most national media attention, there are numerous other media strategies that grassroots advocates can incorporate into a comprehensive legislative action plan.

Tips on Press Release

1. Keep releases short.
2. Focus on one issue.
3. Write concisely and check spelling.
4. Release in a timely manner.
5. Provide contact information.
6. Include photographs when possible.
7. Pick topics carefully.
8. Provide date on release.
9. Use active verbs.
10. Send a copy to NADO and your members of Congress.



Letters to the editor, opinion pieces in local newspapers and appearances on local radio programs offer excellent opportunities to shape public opinion and influence legislators. Lawmakers and their staff carefully read local and regional papers, and listen to local radio programs from their districts and state in order to monitor the pulse of constituents.

Even though there is never a guarantee that your publicity efforts will generate interest from the media, it is extremely important to try. In study after study, media related communications methods are among the most effective means to influence members of Congress. More importantly, they are techniques which do not require large sums of money or

a full-time staff. The following is a brief description of four basic media techniques that regional development organizations can use to enhance their advocacy programs.

Press Releases

A press release can be used to announce important and new information, such as upcoming events, winning awards such as a *NADO Innovation Award* or a new position on recently introduced legislation. It should be written precisely, with the most important information mentioned in the first paragraph. The first paragraph of the release should answer the “five w’s”—who, what, where, when and why. The information in the release should be ordered in priority of importance, since editors often cut paragraphs to fit available space.

Developing an accurate mailing list is an important part of any outreach effort. Media lists should contain current contact names, addresses, phone and fax numbers and, if appropriate, email addresses. The list should include daily and weekly newspapers,

magazines, newsletters, talk radio programs and television stations. Set up the list so that contacts can be identified by issue or topic. (See *Appendix V: Press Release*)

Press Conferences

Press conferences provide excellent opportunities to generate sound bites and live images for news programs. Unfortunately, it is usually difficult to get good attendance at press conferences, so they should be used wisely and only for the most important and timely issues.

In setting up the event, basics such as when are reporters most likely to attend, the location and backdrop, and how far in advance should the press be notified are all critical. You should also make available a well-written press statement and background materials, as reporters often pick up material and leave, and double check the audio equipment prior to starting the conference.

For the event, be sure to have an articulate spokesperson who is familiar with the topic. Keep the event brief, leave time for questions and always keep an attendees list for future follow-up.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are a cost efficient and effective method for influencing both legislators and the public. Readers often turn to the opinion section of the newspaper before any other section (with the sports section a close second). In addition, people often talk about letters to the editor in their daily conversations, which results in a multiplier effect.

Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. If responding to an earlier article, mention the title and publication date in the first sentence. Support your arguments with updated facts and use polite but convincing language. Address only one point per letter. Do not attack the opposition. And, always sign your name and include your address and telephone number. (See *Appendix VI: Letter to the Editor*)

Highest Ranked Sources of Communication



Rank	Method
1.	Spontaneous letters from constituents
2.	Telephone calls from constituent
3.	Congressional Research Service
4.	Articles in major daily newspapers
5.	Editorials in major daily newspapers
6.	Visits from constituents
7.	Articles in district daily newspapers
8.	Congressional Record
9.	Editorials in district daily newspapers
10.	Government publications
11.	Orchestrated mail from constituents
12.	Op-ed pieces in major daily newspapers
13.	Op-ed pieces in local daily newspapers
14.	Spontaneous letters from state officials
15.	Spontaneous letters from interest groups

Source: Burson Marsteller

Opinion Pieces and Editorial Boards

Media strategies that require more research and preparation include opinion pieces and meetings with editorial boards of newspapers. Op-ed pieces, which appear opposite the editorial page, offer an opportunity to present in-depth views on current issues. They should be authored by prominent members of the community such as elected officials and business leaders.

Meetings with editorial boards provide a unique chance to discuss issues with the decision makers of a newspaper. Like op-ed articles, editorials are among the most influential communication sources. The purpose and objectives of the meeting should be clear. Research and background materials should be made available, only after they have been checked and double checked. If bringing a group, a spokesperson should be identified and roles of each individual clearly defined. Remember, dealing with the media can be a double-edged sword if you are not prepared, as reporters are always looking for new angles and stories.

Sample Newspaper Article from NADO Press Release

National Group Honors Solomon

The Post Star -- Glens Falls, NY

Washington—Rep. Gerald B. Solomon (R-NY) has been recognized by the National Association of Development Organizations for his strong support of rural local governments during the reauthorization of the nation's transportation programs. Solomon was presented with the award May 19 in Washington by Glens Falls native Matt Chase, the association's deputy executive director.

"While the 1991 highway law provided urban elected officials with a strong role in the planning process, their rural counterparts were not extended this same right," Chase said. "Because of the efforts of Congressman Solomon and others, the new law will ensure that rural communities have a seat at the table and a way to raise awareness at the state level of local transportation needs and priorities."

Founded in 1967, the National Association of Development Organizations provides training, information and representation for regional development organizations in rural and small metropolitan areas.

NADO Action Alerts—

Time Sensitive Material
Action Needed Immediately

***“Things don’t just happen.
They’re made to happen,”***

-- President John F. Kennedy

As a member of the NADO grassroots network, you will be asked several times during the course of the legislative session to respond to legislative action alerts. These time sensitive memos provide specific information needed to take effective action. The alert usually provides a brief overview of the issue, a deadline for action and the preferred method of communication, whether it is a personal visit, letter, phone call or fax. It will also highlight key talking points and a sample letter.

Action alerts are only sent when it is absolutely critical for members of Congress and their staff to hear from people back home. When you receive an alert, take the time to read it carefully and follow the instructions. Your individual action will help determine the outcome. Like an individual’s vote in an election, a single letter or phone call could be the deciding factor in determining a lawmaker’s position.

In responding to an alert, be sure to follow the specific instructions outlined in the memo. Personalize any sample communications provided by NADO to reflect the local impact. Also remember to proofread each communication. Too frequently, grassroots advocates forget the basics, such as properly addressing members of Congress or citing the correct bill number.

Most importantly, pay particular attention to the deadline highlighted in the action alert. Communicating after the fact or when it is simply too late to influence the outcome is a waste of precious political capital. While there are certain steps to the legislative process that lobbyists can anticipate weeks or months in advance, such as the development of the president’s budget and annual appropriations bills, there are other times when action will be needed within hours or a day. The legislative process is often very fluid and unpredictable, so when you receive an alert be sure to take the appropriate action within the outlined time frame.

Grassroots as a Political Term

The political term “grassroots” originated in a speech by Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana to a delegation of the 1912 Bull Moose Convention. Beveridge remarked that theirs was the party of grass roots...“grown from the soil of the people’s hard necessities.”

Congressional Staff—

Understanding the Role of the Gatekeepers

Members of Congress are faced with hundreds of issues during each congressional session and must rely heavily on their staff to develop policy positions and meet with interest groups and constituents. Staff members often serve as gatekeepers for their member and their recommendations on policy are frequently followed. Developing a relationship with congressional staff in Washington and the district is not only beneficial but essential.

While district staff play a key role in casework and projects, the Washington staff are directly responsible for tracking legislation, developing policy positions and attending congressional hearings. They are the eyes and ears for their member, and regular communication with congressional staff, whether through a personal visit, phone call or email message, is a key component of any successful advocacy program.

Treat all staff equally. The staff who serve as case workers today are tomorrow's legislative directors and chiefs of staff.

In developing a relationship with congressional staff follow the same guidelines for members of Congress, but also take into consideration the tips outlined below:

- Treat all staff equally. The staff who serve as case-workers and legislative correspondents today are tomorrow's legislative directors and chiefs of staff.
 - When the member is unavailable to meet, take the time to visit with the staff who handle your issues.
- Invite key staff to “job shadow” in your office for a day or visit a project site.
 - Attach a personal note to letters, press releases and other communications.
 - Let members of Congress know that their staff members are courteous and helpful, and always remember to thank staff directly.

It is also important to learn about the different roles and responsibilities of each staff member. The following are the typical titles and responsibilities for each position.



When the member is unavailable to meet, take the time to visit with the staff who handle your issues.

Administrative Assistant or Chief of Staff:

The Administrative Assistant (AA) reports directly to the member of Congress. This person usually has overall responsibility for evaluating the political outcomes of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. The Administrative Assistant is usually the person in charge of overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of staff.

Legislative Director and Legislative Assistant:

The Legislative Director (LD) is usually the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In some congressional offices there are several Legislative Assistants (LA) and responsibilities are assigned based on their expertise. For example, depending on the responsibilities and interests of the member, an office may include a different LA for transportation, economic development, health, etc.

Press Secretary or Communications Director:

The Press Secretary is typically responsible for building and maintaining open and effective lines of communication between the member, constituents and the general public. The Press Secretary is expected to know the benefits, demands and special requirements of both print and electronic media, and how to most effectively promote the member's views and positions on specific issues.

Appointment Secretary or Scheduler:

The Appointment Secretary or Scheduler is responsible for allocating a member's time among the many demands that arise from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements and constituent requests. The staffer may also be responsible for arranging travel plans, speaking engagements and scheduling visits to the district.

Caseworker:

The Caseworker is the staff member usually assigned to help with constituent requests by preparing replies for the member's signature. The Caseworker may also be responsible for helping resolve constituents problems with federal agencies such as Social Security and Medicare issues, veteran benefits and passports. There are often several Caseworkers in a congressional office.

Other Staff Titles:

Other titles used in a congressional office may include Executive Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Executive Secretary, Office Manager and Staff Assistant.

Legislative staff often serve as gatekeepers for their member and their recommendations on policy are frequently followed.

The Legislative Process—

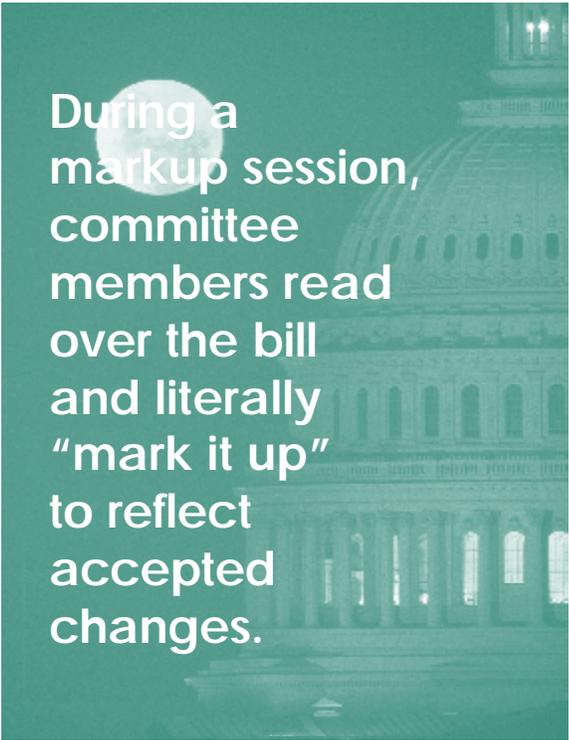
How Laws Are Made

The process of passing legislation can be daunting, but when broken down to its basic steps it becomes much more understandable. There are significant variations in the length of time that it takes to defeat or pass a bill. Some stages can take weeks, months or even years, depending on the issue. Perseverance is essential, because there are many opportunities throughout the sometimes lengthy process to influence policies, whether in committee, on the floor or during the conference committee.

Introducing A Bill

Anyone can offer ideas for a bill or draft a bill, but only a member of Congress can introduce a bill. The member who introduces the legislation is known as the sponsor. Congress employs technical drafters who put ideas into the required form, but the ideas may come from anyone.

When a member of Congress introduces a bill it is given an identifying number. Bills introduced in the House of Representatives are designated by the initials H.R. and bills introduced in the Senate are designated with the letter S. Because the Constitution requires that all spending bills originate in the House, all appropriations bills use the H.R. designation in both the House and Senate.



During a markup session, committee members read over the bill and literally “mark it up” to reflect accepted changes.

Committee Process

Once a bill is introduced, it is referred to a committee based on the subject matter. A bill may be referred to more than one committee, but in that case, a committee of primary jurisdiction will be designated and other committees may choose to accept the recommendations of the lead committee.

The committee chair then assigns the bill to a subcommittee. Normally, a subcommittee takes the first step in consideration of the bill by holding hearings. Hearings give the subcommittee members an opportunity to gather input from agency officials, interest groups and the public about the implications of the proposed legislation. Hearings are followed by debate, discussion and a process known as a “markup.” During a markup session, subcommittee members read over the bill and literally “mark it up” to reflect accepted changes.

If the subcommittee votes to report the bill for consideration to the full committee, the process begins again. The committee may choose to hold additional hearings or may move directly to the markup stage. If a majority of the committee votes in favor, the bill is readied for consideration by the full chamber.

Detailed reports usually accompany bills and reflect the intent of legislators. Report language is important as federal agencies, stakeholders and the courts later rely on them for interpreting the meaning of provisions, drafting regulations and resolving any conflicts that may arise. Federal agencies typically treat report language as the word of Congress, however it is actually non-binding congressional guidance.

The majority leadership typically determines how quickly, or if, a bill will be considered on the floor. However, in the House there is one additional step: all bills, except appropriations bills, must be considered by the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee writes a rule which determines the terms of the floor debate on the bill, including time limits for debate and which amendments to the bill will be considered.

Key Congressional Committees With Oversight Of Economic Development Programs

Appropriations Subcommittee	Authorization Committees
<p>Agriculture— USDA Rural Development</p> <p>Commerce-Justice-State— EDA, SBA and NTIA</p> <p>Energy and Water Development— ARC, Delta Regional Authority, and Denali Commission</p> <p>Labor-HHS-Education— Aging, Head Start, Workforce and Social Service Block Grant</p> <p>Transportation— FHWA and FTA</p> <p>VA-HUD and Independent Agencies— HUD CDBG, EPA, FEMA and CDFI</p>	<p>House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee— Highway and Transit Programs ARC, DRA and EDA</p> <p>Senate Environment and Public Works— Highway Programs ARC, DRA and EDA</p> <p>Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs— HUD CDBG and CDFI</p> <p>House Financial Services— HUD CDBG and CDFI</p> <p>House and Senate Agriculture Committees— USDA Rural Development</p>

Moving to the Floor

For a bill to become law, this entire process must be completed by both houses. The process may happen simultaneously or one chamber after the other. If the House and Senate pass different versions of legislation on the same subject, a conference committee is appointed with members drawn from the relevant committees of both houses. Confer-ees are responsible for reconciling differences between the two versions, and the results of their deliberation, known as the conference report, must then be approved by both houses of Congress.

It is only after both houses approve the same version of a bill that it is sent to the president for consideration. The president may choose to sign the bill, thereby making it a law, or veto the legislation. If the bill is vetoed, it is sent back to Congress with a message outlining the president's concerns with the legislation. Congress may amend the bill to address the president's concerns, abandon efforts to pass the legislation or attempt to override the veto. A two-thirds vote of each house is needed to override a presidential veto.

The legislative process relies heavily upon the committee system. Therefore, a member who sits on the committee with primary jurisdiction over a bill has the greatest opportunity to influence the shape of the legislation. Nevertheless, every member of Congress has an opportunity to influence every bill on the House or Senate floor through debate, amend-ment or vote. This means that every member is an important part of the process and should be kept well informed on issues of importance to your organization.

A more detailed look at the legislative process, designed to help citizens understand how Congress works, is available from the Library of Congress on the Internet at thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.html.

Key Dates of Federal Budget Timetable

Date:	Action to be Completed:
First Monday in February	President submits budget to Congress
Not later than 6 weeks after president submits budget	Congressional committees submit views and estimates to budget committees
April 15	Congress completes action on budget blueprint
May 15	Appropriations bills may be considered in House
October 1	New fiscal year begins

After the Bill Signing— Regulatory Action

After legislation is enacted, there is another critical stage for grassroots advocates to remain involved—the development of federal regulations to implement the program. The following are specific tips for influencing the regulatory process, which is often a slow and technical process.



■ **Send letters and lots of them.** Just like legislative process, letters often have a significant impact on the decisions ultimately reached on regulations. Encourage your board members, elected officials and other interested parties to write on their own letterhead. This shows a broader base of support for your position. Keep letters brief and clearly state your position.

■ **Distribute a draft letter among interested parties, but encourage personalized stories.** NADO will often provide a sample letter, which can be forwarded to other groups in your area. Providing a base letter can translate good intentions into solid action. However, letters are always more effective if they include personal interpretations or anecdotes relating to the issue at hand.

**Just like legislative advocacy,
the number of letters often has
significant impact on the decisions
ultimately reached on regulations.**

■ **Send copies of all correspondence to your members of Congress.** Legislators' interest can often induce the agency to more carefully examine your position. Contact your congressional staff and urge them to follow up with the appropriate agency.

■ **Submit comments in writing and by email.** With the current mail situation in most federal agencies, it is necessary to submit comments in multiple formats. In addition to the traditional hard copy format, most federal agencies are accepting information via email. Letters may be submitted electronically through the NADO Grassroots Online Center at www.nado.org.

■ **Read comments that are posted online in the public docket.** With new technology, most agencies now post comments on the Internet. Check the public docket periodically since comments are typically uploaded on a rolling basis.

■ **Monitor the *Federal Register* on a daily basis for agency notices.**

■ **Send copies of letters to NADO for additional follow-up with the agency.**

The following work sheet is intended to offer you, as a grassroots advocate, a tool for examining your relationships with members of Congress and their staffs. It is also designed to provide you with ideas for strengthening your advocacy efforts.

Questions:

1. **How would you rank your relationship with your US Senators.**
 Above Average Average Below Average Do Not Know

2. **How would you rank your relationship with your US House members.**
 Above Average Average Below Average Do Not Know

3. **List the congressional committees that your two US Senators serve on.**

4. **List the congressional committees that your House members serve on.**

5. **For each of your two US Senators, name the Chief of Staff.**

6. **For each of your two US Senators, name the Legislative Director.**

7. **For each of your US House members, name the Chief of Staff.**

8. **For each of your US House members, name the Legislative Director.**

9. **How frequently do you visit with your US Senators.**
 Annually Semi-Annually Quarterly Monthly Never

10. **How frequently do you visit with your US House members.**
 Annually Semi-Annually Quarterly Monthly Never

11. **How frequently have you taken your lawmakers on a tour of project sites.**
 Annually Semi-Annually Quarterly Monthly Never

12. **How frequently have you taken Washington staff on a tour of project sites.**
 Annually Semi-Annually Quarterly Monthly Never

13. How frequently do you send thank you notes after a meeting with a lawmaker or their staff.
 Everytime Sometimes Infrequently Never
14. How frequently do your lawmakers attend your annual meetings, monthly board meetings or other public events.
 Everytime Sometimes Infrequently Never
15. How frequently do your lawmakers staff from Washington attend your annual meetings, monthly board meetings or other public events.
 Everytime Sometimes Infrequently Never
16. How frequently do you include pictures of the meetings in your newsletter.
 Everytime Sometimes Infrequently Never
17. How frequently do you invite the media to cover events and meetings.
 Everytime Sometimes Infrequently Never
18. How frequently do your US Senators respond to letters and phone calls.
 Everytime Sometimes Infrequently Never
19. How frequently do your US House members respond to letters and phone calls.
 Everytime Sometimes Infrequently Never
20. How frequently do your US Senators or their Washington staff call you for information or advice on legislation, projects and other relevant topics.
 Very Regularly Regularly Not Very Regularly Never
21. How frequently do your US House members or their Washington staff call you for information or advice on legislation, projects and other relevant topics.
 Very Regularly Regularly Not Very Regularly Never
22. How frequently do you attend the NADO Washington Policy Conference.
 Each Year Every Other Year Every Couple of Years Never
23. How frequently do you read the weekly newsletter NADO News.
 Every Week Monthly Periodically Never

After responding to the above list of questions, how would you rank...

24. Your relationship with your US Senators.
 Above Average Average Below Average Do Not Know
25. Your relationship with your US House members.
 Above Average Average Below Average Do Not Know

Test your knowledge on the basic principles of grassroots advocacy and the federal legislative process.

1. **How many Senators represent each state in the US Senate.**
a) 8 b) 6 c) 4 d) 2 e) Do Not Know
2. **How many voting Representatives are in the US House of Representatives.**
a) 538 b) 535 c) 435 d) 100 e) Do Not Know
3. **When a member of Congress cosponsors a piece of legislation, they are:**
a) Opposing the bill b) Reviewing the bill c) Endorsing the bill
4. **“Dear Colleague” Letters are used by lawmakers to:**
a) Enter the Capitol b) Invite lawmakers to dinner c) Rally support for an idea
5. **When a Senator uses the “hold” procedure, they are.**
a) Preventing a bill from moving b) Holding a hearing c) Introducing a bill
6. **Which of the following best describes a congressional committee report.**
a) Explanation of legislative intent b) Law c) Minutes of floor proceedings
7. **When meeting with a member of Congress in a group, it is completely appropriate to call the lawmaker by their first name.**
a) True b) False c) Do Not Know
8. **The only congressional staff you need to know is back in the state and district.**
a) True b) False c) Do Not Know
9. **What is the approximate age of the average legislative staff member in the House.**
a) 65 b) 50 c) 30 d) Do Not Know
10. **What does the term “drop a bill” mean.**
a) Introduce legislation b) Withdraw legislation c) Pass legislation
11. **The Speaker of the House must be a member of Congress.**
a) True b) False c) Do Not Know
12. **The legislative term “College of Cardinals” refers to:**
a) Appropriations Chairmen b) Official Bird of Congress c) Baseball Team
13. **The Library of Congress website for detailed legislative information is:**
a) ESPN.com b) Thomas (thomas.loc.gov) c) Yahoo.com

Answers: 1) d 2) c 3) c 4) c 5) a 6) a 7) b 8) b 9) c 10) a 11) b 12) a 13) b

Appendices

- **Internet Resources**
- **Letter**
- **Thank You Note**
- **Legislative Fact Sheet**
- **Press Release**
- **Letter to the Editor**
- **Glossary of Legislative Terms**
- **NADO Legislative Services**
- **Map of Capitol Hill**

During recent years, there has been an explosion of legislative information available on the Internet. Advocates across the country now have access to new legislation, committee reports and press releases at the same time as high-powered lobbyists in Washington. Below is a description and address for useful legislative websites:

Thomas, Library of Congress

Developed during the 104th Congress, Thomas is the most comprehensive legislative website with bill status, summaries, text and cosponsors; committee reports; access to the *Congressional Record*; and links to federal resources.

thomas.loc.gov

United States House of Representatives

The US House of Representatives website contains links to individual member home pages, leadership and member organization information, current floor and committee activities, the annual congressional schedule and roll call votes.

www.house.gov

United States Senate

The US Senate website contains information similar to the House site in addition to background and historical information about the institution.

www.senate.gov

Government Accounting Office

The Government Accounting Office (GAO) is the investigative arm of Congress. Charged with examining matters relating to the receipt and disbursement of public funds, GAO performs audits and evaluations of government programs and activities.

www.gao.gov

Government Printing Office

The Government Printing Office (GPO) website contains most information printed by Congress and the federal government, including the *Federal Register*.

www.access.gpo.gov

White House

The White House website features copies of the latest press releases, issue briefs and federal government reports in addition to links to all federal agencies.

www.whitehouse.gov/WH/Welcome.html

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

Offers a comprehensive directory of federal programs, projects, services and activities. It is available online free of charge.

www.gsa.gov/fdac

Roll Call

Roll Call has been covering the inside politics of Capitol Hill since 1955. Published twice each week, the publication offers insights into the current legislative agenda, upcoming elections and more.

www.rollcall.com

US State and Local Gateway

An interagency project in collaboration with Vice President Gore's National Partnership For Reinventing Government that includes links to federal, state and local agencies.

www.statelocal.gov

Check out NADO's website at www.nado.org for more links.



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Publications

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Regional Transportation
Online Center

Links

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National Association of
Development Organizations
400 N. Capitol St, NW
Suite 390
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 624-7806
Fax (202) 624-8813
<http://www.nado.org>

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ACTION ALERT!

Congress Urges FHWA to Promulgate Final Planning Rules for Rural Official Consultation

Released August 14, 2001 [Click Here.](#)

Urge Senators to Support New Rural IMPAC Program in Farm Bill Rewrite

Released August 15, 2001 [Click Here.](#)



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Important issues, recent votes, current legislation, and more. [Click here.](#)



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CONGRESS TODAY - January 7, 2002

Today's House Schedule ([details](#))

Today's Senate Schedule ([details](#))

Committee Hearings Search ([details](#))

Search the House and Senate current committee schedules, projected schedule posted.

December 17, 1997

The Honorable William Daley, Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Daley:

On behalf of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, I am writing to urge your support of a \$8 million increase for the planning grant program as part of the Clinton administration's FY2000 budget for the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Our region is one of the network of 320 Economic Development Districts (EDDs) throughout the nation which are the backbone of EDA's program delivery system. Our staff provides vital professional economic and technical assistance to our membership which includes three counties and 26 municipalities in Southwest Alabama.

We also deliver a variety of services, especially to the rural areas of our region, under such programs as HUD's Community Development Block Grant program, Senior Aides and Medicaid Waiver and DOT's Metropolitan Planning Organizations, as well as federal and state supported Revolving Loan Funds.

Our EDD program plays an invaluable role in helping distressed communities develop and implement their own targeted strategies and programs for economic recovery and growth. As a designated EDD currently receiving EDA planning funds, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission has helped our local communities in recent years secure over \$15 million in EDA grants. These grants have leveraged approximately \$9 million from local, private and other sources, and have helped to preserve or create nearly 2,000 jobs in our local communities.

Secretary Daley, we appreciate your leadership in promoting economic development programs focused on helping economically strapped communities, and we strongly urge your support for increased funding levels for EDA planning grants. More than any other federal program, we firmly believe that EDA, especially through its planning program, is a great benefit to the communities of our nation.

Sincerely,

Donald Brady
Executive Director

December 10, 2000

The Honorable Robert Ney
US House of Representatives
1024 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Ney:

On behalf of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), I am writing to express our sincere appreciation for your untiring efforts to bring the issues of small metropolitan and rural America to the forefront during the 106th Congress.

We also wish to recognize your support of important rural development programs that help regional planning and development organizations and local communities develop the strategic plans, capacity and infrastructure necessary to sustain economic progress. Specially, we want to thank you for helping NADO and its members by:

- √ Becoming an active member of the bipartisan Congressional Rural Caucus.
- √ Voting in support of the Hinchey Amendment to increase the Economic Development Administration's FY2001 budget by \$49.5 million.
- √ Championing new language in TEA-21 that strengthens the role of rural local officials in transportation planning.

We also want to thank you for the professional and courteous assistance provided by your staff member, Joe Smith. He was extremely helpful to NADO representatives during the cycle and his efforts are greatly appreciated.

Thank you again for your support and we look forward to working with you in the future to promote the interests and needs of small metropolitan and rural America.

Sincerely,
Aliccann Wohlbruck
Executive Director

cc: Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley RDD
Ohio Mideastern Governments Association
Ohio Valley RDC

Appendix III:
Thank You Note

FEMA's Flood Map Modernization Program: Building Disaster Resistant Communities

Issue:

Support the Bush administration's \$300 million budget recommendation for the FEMA flood map modernization program, as part of the FY2003 VA-HUD Appropriations bill.

Background:

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the annual cost of flood damage has exceeded \$5 billion. In addition, the US Geological Survey estimates that floods claim the lives of 100 individuals per year. Outdated floodplain maps across the nation are contributing factors to these staggering statistics. Approximately 20,000 communities lack accurate flood hazard maps, according to FEMA, including 2,700 flood prone areas that are without any maps. FEMA estimates the cost of updating these important maps at \$750 million over seven years.

To perform the initiative properly, FEMA must have adequate resources to partner with regional and local entities capable of using the latest technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS). As part of the FY2002 VA-HUD Appropriations bill, Congress made a small downpayment of \$32 million with \$25 million in appropriations and \$7 million from unspent fees from previous years. While this funding can maintain the status quo, the \$300 million investment requested by the president takes a proactive step towards building disaster resistant communities.

A cost effective and proven medium for FEMA to accomplish its goal is to partner with regional planning and development organizations. These public entities allow FEMA to build on an existing network with close ties to local governments, community leaders and the public. They also have years of planning experience, including knowledge of land use and economic development issues. More importantly, they have extensive experience coordinating the activities of small metropolitan and rural local governments within a region and are the service delivery mechanism for a host of federal and state programs.

With assistance of the FEMA flood map modernization programs, regional development organizations and local communities will be better positioned to develop disaster preparedness campaigns and evacuation routes, enhance their comprehensive economic development plans, and modernize local building codes. Another important activity is the rehabilitation of existing structures to assure that they can withstand floods and other disasters.

Action Needed:

Urge House and Senate members to support a \$300 million budget for FEMA's flood map update program as part of the FY2003 VA-HUD Appropriations bill.

For more information, contact Joe Dunn of NADO at (202) 624-7806.



Contact: Matt Chase, Deputy Executive Director • (202) 624-7806 • mchase@nado.org
For Immediate Release: April 16, 2002

Senator Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas Receives National Economic Development Leadership Award

WASHINGTON, DC — US Senator Blanche L. Lincoln was presented with the NADO National Leadership Award today for her outstanding support of federal economic development programs aimed at helping small metropolitan and rural communities. The award was presented by Terry Sherwood, executive director of the Southwest Arkansas PDD in Magnolia, Arkansas, during the annual Washington policy conference of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO).

According to Terry Sherwood, a former board president of NADO, “Senator Lincoln has displayed an unwavering commitment to providing economic opportunities to our nation’s most distressed communities. NADO and its members are particularly grateful for her unflagging determination to establish the Delta Regional Authority, which will help areas of the Lower Mississippi River area transition into the nation’s economic mainstream. Senator Lincoln has also been a true champion of rural development programs in the farm bill, as well as a leader in securing funds to help local communities respond to natural disasters and downturns in traditional industries.”

“During her political career, Senator Lincoln has distinguished herself as a true leader for her state, as well as for all of rural America,” Sherwood stated. “With her energy and focus, rural citizens have a dedicated advocate who understands that small town America is not looking for a hand out, but only a hand up.”

The NADO National Leadership Award is presented annually to a member of Congress who has made significant contributions in helping build communities and create jobs throughout small metropolitan and rural America. Previous winners include Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle (D-SD), Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Representative Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), Representative Harold Rogers (R-KY) and Representative James Oberstar (D-MN).

#

Founded in 1967, NADO provides training, information and representation for regional development organizations in small metropolitan and rural America. NADO members provide professional and technical assistance to over 1,800 counties and 15,000 small cities and townships.

March 26, 1999

Letter to the Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Letter to the Editor:

I was disappointed to read in Commerce Secretary William Daley's March 24 op-ed column, "Census 2000: Leave It to The Pros," about the Census Bureau's strenuous opposition to reinstating the post census review program for local governments.

While the Census Bureau is arguing that the local review program would cause unnecessary delays and be too costly, thousands of local officials and economic development professionals strongly dispute these feeble claims. First, the Congressional Budget Office estimates the post census local review program, as outlined in Rep. Dan Miller's bill (HR 472), would cost between \$10-20 million. This is not an outrageous amount when considering it is only four-tenths of one percent of the projected \$2.78 billion budget for the decennial census in fiscal year 2000.

Second, there are too many consequences from inaccurate counts, in both urban and rural areas, for local governments to be prohibited from double checking their counts. In 1990, the program added 124,000 people, and more importantly, placed thousands more in the correct census block. This is important to the nation's 39,000 local governments since an estimated \$182 billion in federal aid will be distributed in fiscal year 2000 based on census data. Any mistakes or undercounts literally cost local governments thousands of dollars each year and hundreds of thousands over the 10-year period.

The Census Bureau's recent decision to change the population estimates for Charleston County, South Carolina from 284,815 to 316,482, provides an excellent example of why local governments should be allowed to perform a final quality check. For three years after the Charleston area naval base closure was announced, the Census Bureau incorrectly reported a declining population for Charleston County, despite all indications that the region was experiencing growth. Because the council of governments analyzes local economic indicators such as residential building permits, home sales, school enrollment and labor figures, they knew the federal estimates were erroneous.

I think the 28,000 undercounted residents of Charleston County would agree that the post local census review program should be reinstated for the 2000 Census.

Sincerely,
Aliccann Wohlbruck, NADO Executive Director
400 North Capitol Street, NW Suite 390, Washington, DC 20001
Work: (202) 624-7806

Act—A bill passed in identical form by both houses of Congress and signed into law by the president or enacted over his veto.

Adjourn—To end a legislative day.

Advice and Consent—The constitutionally-based power of the Senate to advise the president and give consent to proposed treaties and presidential appointments.

Amendment—A formal proposal to alter the text of a bill, a motion, an act or the constitution. Amendments are voted on in the same manner as a bill or other motions.

Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute—An amendment to replace the entire text of a measure.

Appropriation—A provision of funds for a specific purpose.

Authorization—A legislative action establishing or continuing a federal agency, activity or program for a fixed or indefinite period of time and recommending a general amount of funds for the program. An appropriation must be passed to set the actual funding level.

Bill—A proposed law.

Budget—A detailed statement of actual or anticipated revenues and expenditures during a fiscal year. The budget usually refers to the president’s annual proposal to Congress. Congress is not required to accept or even vote directly on the president’s proposal, and it often revises the president’s budget.

Cloture—A Senate procedure that limits further consideration of a pending proposal to 30 hours in order to end a filibuster. A motion to invoke cloture requires a three-fifths (60 senators) vote for passage.

Colloquy—A scripted conversation during floor debate which clarifies or expands on legislative language.

Committee of the Whole—Business is expedited in the 435 member House of Rep-

resentatives when it resolves itself to the “Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.” Rules are relaxed and a quorum is easier to obtain.

A minimum quorum of 100 members is required to comprise the committee.

Conference Committee—A temporary joint committee formed for the purpose of resolving differences between House and Senate bills on related measures. A committee decision must be affirmed by a majority of the conferees from each house.

Congressional Record—The printed, daily account of debates, votes and comments in the House and Senate published by the Government Printing Office.

Continuing Resolution (CR)—A joint resolution that provides funds to continue the operation of federal agencies and programs if their annual appropriations bills have not have not been enacted.

Dear Colleague—A letter from a member of Congress to other legislators urging support or opposition to legislation.

Discretionary Appropriations—Appropriations not mandated by existing law and therefore made annually in appropriations bills in such amounts as Congress chooses.

Earmark—To set aside funds for a specific purpose, use or recipient.

Filibuster—The use of obstructive and time-consuming parliamentary tactics by one member or a minority of members to delay, modify or defeat proposed legislation or rules changes. The Senate’s rules allowing for unlimited debate make filibustering a particularly effective tactic in that chamber.

Fiscal Year (FY)—A 12 month period for using federal funds, beginning October 1. It is identified by the year in which the period ends.

Germane—Pertinent. Bearing on the subject.

In the House, all amendments to a bill must be considered germane. In the Senate, only amendments to general appropriations bill and budget resolutions must be germane.

Hold-Harmless Clause—In legislation providing a new formula for allocating federal funds, a clause to ensure that recipients of those funds do not receive less in future years than they did in the current year if the new formula would result in a loss.

Majority Leader—Leader of the majority party in either the House or the Senate. In the House, the majority leader is second in command to the Speaker.

Mandatory Appropriations—Amounts that Congress must appropriate annually because it has no discretion over them unless it first amends existing substantive law.

Markup—The section-by-section review and revision of a bill by committee members.

Minority Leader—Leader of the minority party in either the House or the Senate.

Omnibus bill—A measure that combines the provisions of several disparate subjects into a single and often lengthy bill.

Point of Order—A parliamentary term used to object to alleged violations of a rule and to demand that the chair enforce the rule.

President pro tempore—The Vice President is President of the Senate but is present only for crucial votes.

Quorum—The number of members who must be present before business may be conducted. Under the Constitution, a quorum in each house is defined as a majority of its members (218 in the House and 51 in the Senate). By House rule, a quorum in the Committee of the Whole is 100.

Ranking Member—Reference to the minority member with the highest ranking on a committee or subcommittee. May also refer to the majority member next in rank to the chairman, known as the vice-chair.

Recess—Concludes legislative business and sets time for the next meeting for the body.

Reconciliation—A procedure for changing existing revenue and spending laws to bring total revenues and spending within the limits established in a budget resolution.

Report—A committee's written record of its actions and views on a bill. The committee "reports" its findings to the chamber.

Rescission—A provision of law that repeals previously enacted budget authority in whole or in part.

Resolution—A formal statement of a decision or opinion by the House or Senate or both. A simple resolution is made by one chamber and generally deals with that chamber's rules. A concurrent resolution is presented in both chambers and usually expresses a congressional view on a matter not within congressional jurisdiction. A joint resolution requires the approval of both chambers and the president. Simple and concurrent resolutions, including the budget resolution, do not require presidential approval.

Rider—A provision added to a bill so it may "ride" to approval on the strength of the bill.

Rule—A resolution by the House that provides methods and conditions for floor consideration of a measure.

Session—The annual series of meetings of a Congress. Congress is said to be in session during the period when it is meeting.

Speaker—Speaker of the House of Representatives. Presides over the House. Elected, in effect, by the majority party in the House. Next in line of succession to the president after the vice president.

Suspend the Rules—A motion in the House intended to quickly bring a bill to a vote. Requires a two-thirds vote to invoke.

Unanimous Consent—A time-saving procedure for noncontroversial measures whereby such measures are adopted without a vote. A member simply says "I ask unanimous consent for...," and states his proposal.

Whip—Member of leadership whose job is to marshal votes for the party position.

Since 1967, NADO has worked with members of Congress and federal officials to shape national policies on a variety of economic, community, rural and small business development issues. NADO has been successful in providing regional development organizations with the information and tools necessary to effectively communicate with federal policymakers.

Action Alerts

Members receive *Action Alerts* by fax and email that are strategically timed for impact when a priority issue nears a vote or action is required.

Advocacy

We do more than inform you! As the voice of regional development organizations, NADO maintains an active presence on Capitol Hill and in the administration. NADO representatives testify before Congress and regulatory agencies; develop and maintain relationships with congressional staff; track and monitor relevant legislation; and provide input on a variety of economic development and transportation issues.

Congressional Directory

Each year, association members receive an updated congressional directory. The directory contains information about each member of Congress, including contact information and a listing of staff members.

Grassroots Handbook

Designed to help NADO members make the best use of their time and efforts, the handbook offers valuable information that helps participants enhance their grassroots lobbying, legislative strategy and public affairs efforts.

NADO News

For members only, the timely publication covers current congressional and federal agency actions, association events and job opportunities. It is available via email and the NADO website.

Vote Watch

As a member service, NADO maintains an online database of how each member of Congress votes on important economic and community development issues. Vote Watch explains the outcome of the floor action and details how each member of Congress voted, making it easy for association members to monitor their lawmakers support on key issues.

Washington Conference

Participants in this annual spring conference benefit from interactive discussions with federal policymakers, valuable issue updates and networking opportunities. The conference also provides training on how to make your voice heard on national policies.

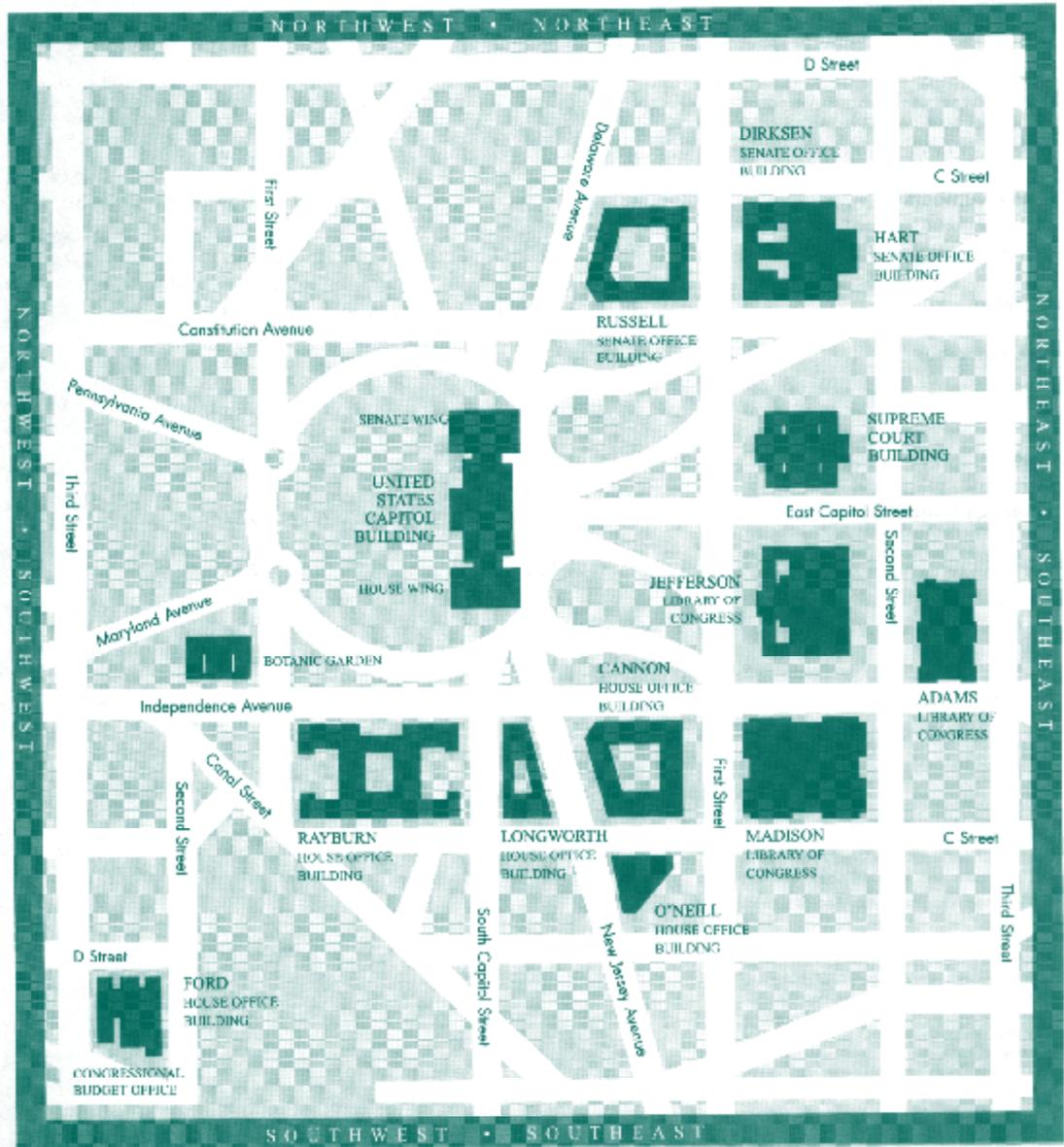
NADO's legislative priorities are established each year at the Washington Policy Conference and the association's general policies are set every two years at the Annual Training Conference.

Legislative Staff Assistance

NADO's legislative staff provides valuable support to association members; directs congressional and administration outreach efforts; maintains communications with association members, congressional and agency staff and coalition partners. Visit the legislative section of the NADO website for more information and issue updates:

www.nado.org/legaffair/

**Appendix IX:
Map of Capitol Hill**



Key Capitol Hill Numbers and Buildings

Capitol Switchboard	(202) 224-3121	Senate Office Buildings
Senate Floor Schedule		Russell Building
Democrat	(202) 224-8541	Dirksen Building
Republican	(202) 224-8601	Hart Building
House Floor Schedule		House Office Buildings
Democrat	(202) 225-7400	Cannon Building
Republican	(202) 225-7430	Longworth Building
		Rayburn Building

NADO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please complete and return with payment to:
NADO, 400 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 390, Washington, DC 20001.

If you have questions about membership or would like to know more about NADO, please call (202) 624-7806, or email info@nado.org. To learn about NADO's current programs, policies and priorities, or to submit an online application, visit www.nado.org.

Name: _____
Title: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____
Email: _____ Website: _____

Membership Categories

General, Sustaining and Platinum Membership is available to regional development organizations designated by a state as a multi-jurisdictional planning and development agency.

Sustaining Associate and Associate Membership includes state, county, city and town agencies; state rural development councils; educational institutions; tribes; consultants; private businesses; nonprofit organizations and individuals involved in community, economic and rural development.

Annual Membership Dues

Regional Development Organizations

- \$4,000 -- Platinum members** receive all publications, services, special recognition, additional discounts at conferences, additional free spouse registrations at the annual conference and other benefits.
- \$3,000 -- Sustaining members** receive all publications, services, special recognition, additional discounts at conferences and free spouse registrations at the annual conference.
- \$2,000 -- General members** receive all publications, services and conference discounts.

Associates

- \$1,000 -- Sustaining associate members** receive all publications, services, free spouse registration at the annual conference and additional conference discounts.
- \$500 -- Associate members** receive all publications, services and conference discounts.

NADO's 35th Annual Training Conference

September 28 - October 1, 2002

Reno, Hilton, Reno, Nevada



- √ Gather ideas to help your community become stronger and prosper.
- √ Network with hundreds of regional development organizations, staff and board members throughout the US.
- √ Learn how to make your organization more effective in helping distressed communities.

**Visit www.nado.org/meetings or call 202/624-7806
for more information about the meeting.**

NADO

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Training, information and representation for regional development
organizations serving small metropolitan and rural America.