NADO on the Hill Preparation Webinar

National Association of Development Organizations

February 7, 2013

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About Craig Whitham, NADO’s New Director of Government Relations and Legislative Affairs

- Serves as Director of Government Relations and Legislative Affairs, where he is responsible for managing NADO’s advocacy efforts, and is the chief point of contact with Congress and the Administration.

- Before joining NADO, Craig served as Senior Appropriations Advisor for Congressman Frank Wolf. In that role, he handled a legislative portfolio of transportation, defense, homeland security, financial services, and housing issues.

- Whitham holds a Master’s Degree in Public Policy from George Mason University and Bachelor’s Degree from Elon University.
Presentation Overview

- Conference Preview
- Reasons for the new conference changes
- Benefits of the new conference changes
- How to effectively set up and conduct Hill meetings
- How NADO Staff can help you
MONDAY, MARCH 11

8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Registration

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. The Future of EDA

10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Communicating with Congress in DC and Back Home: Successful Models from NADO Members

12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. NADO Executive Committee Meeting (Executive Committee Only)

1:15 p.m. – 2:20 p.m. NADO Federal Legislative and Policy Overview

2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Advocacy 201 with Brad Fitch
Congressional Management Foundation

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Federal Agency Roundtable Networking Session
Network one-on-one with representatives from federal agencies and programs
(Co-sponsored by DDAA)
Featured Speaker: Day 1
Advocacy 201 with Brad Fitch

Presenter: Bradford Fitch is President and CEO of the Congressional Management Foundation. Fitch is a former radio and television reporter and worked on Capitol Hill for 13 years as press secretary, legislative director, and chief of staff.

Participants in Advocacy 201 will learn:
• The most effective tactics and strategies for influencing Congress
• Who lawmakers listen to and why
• What are the most effective tactics and strategies to use in the district or state
• How constituents build long-term relationships with lawmakers and their staff and use those ties at crucial points in the legislative decision-making process

TUESDAY, MARCH 12

7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration

8:00 a.m. – 8:50 a.m. NADO Regional Membership Caucus Meetings

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. The Regional Development Agenda: A Preview of the Administration’s FY2014 Policy and Budget Priorities (Co-sponsored by DDAA)

10:40 a.m. – 11:50 a.m. Congressional Leadership Outlook: Impact on Federal Regional Development Budgets and Policies (Co-sponsored by DDAA)

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Luncheon Keynote Address: NADO Champions on the Hill
Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) Invited
Rep. Mike Michaud (D-ME) Invited

1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. NADO ON THE HILL
Join us as we build and strengthen relationships with members of Congress and their staff!
(Transportation provided)

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Reception on the Hill with members of Congress and their staff
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.  2013 NADO Legislator of the Year Award (Breakfast)

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.  NADO Member Forum: Discuss Results of Your Hill Visits

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  NADO Board of Directors Meeting
(Open to all conference attendees)
Reasons for the Change

• The 113th Congress is unlikely to produce major policy changes with EDA or any of the other federal programs utilized by NADO members
• In the absence of major policy changes, NADO believes the Washington Policy Conference is the perfect opportunity to start and expand on relationships with Members of Congress and their staff
• Having a solid working relationship with your Member of Congress will pay dividends in future years when new policy is being formulated
• NADO on the Hill is designed to educate our members on the importance of advocacy and to assist in this process
Benefits of the Change

• Learn the importance of having a relationship with Members of Congress and staff

• Learn how to initiate contact and how to establish and maintain these important relationships

• Learn how these relationships can help lead to positive policy changes that benefit local development districts

• NADO on the Hill is designed to make our members comfortable with what may be a new process for many and dispel some of the myths surrounding Hill advocacy
Setting Up Meetings

• Call your Representative’s Washington, DC office. This information can be found at www.house.gov or by calling NADO legislative staff

• State that you have a meeting request and ask for the Representative’s scheduler or executive assistant

• Most offices have set procedures for scheduling requests which you will have to follow

• If asked to submit a written request (likely), this should be a short email or letter stating your group’s name, a brief description of what you do, a list of who will be attending and the date and time you are requesting

• Your request should clearly state that you would like to meet with the Representative, but that legislative staff would also be acceptable if the Representative is not available

• Most importantly, make it clear that merely want to meet the Member or staff to talk about the work your organization is performing in their district


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Who You Will Meet

• If available, you will meet with your Member of Congress
• For NADO members not familiar with their Representative, read the biography on their website. If you cannot find this, NADO legislative staff will be happy to provide one
• If your Representative is not available, you will likely meet with legislative staff (either the Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, or a Legislative Assistant). All of these individuals will be able to discuss the work your organizations perform
• Congressional staff are often from the Representative’s home district and have a working knowledge of local issues
• Congressional staffers are young. You will likely be meeting someone between the ages of 26 and 32. Do not be intimidated...they are there to help you!
Emphasize Relationship Building

• The Objective of NADO on the Hill is for you to build a working relationship with your Representative and their staff

• Emphasize that your goal is to let them know what work you are performing in their district

• Some of you will meet with newly elected members. This is the perfect opportunity to introduce them to your work!

• Invite your Representative and staff to tour a project you are performing in their district
No Hard Ask

• Congressional offices often expect people they meet with to ask them to take some specific action on your behalf, such as signing a letter or voting for or against a specific piece of legislation

• **This is not the purpose of your meetings!**

• Representatives and staff are used to being barraged with requests, so an informational meeting in which they can learn about things happening back home are valued

• **You do not have to discuss detailed policies or legislative issues**

• Your goal is for your Representative and their staff to know what work you are doing in their district

• If asked for your opinion on a topic with which you are familiar, give your honest answer

• If asked about a topic with which you are not familiar, tell them that issue isn’t one your work with frequently
What NADO Staff Will Do to Help

- Identify your Member of Congress
- Provide background on your Member of Congress
- Determine how to submit a meeting request
- Schedule meeting request
- Tell you how to get to the correct office on Capitol Hill
- Attend your meeting with you if that would make you more comfortable with the process!
Summary

• NADO on the Hill is an exciting new opportunity for our members

• Establishing relationships with your Member of Congress will provide many long-term benefits for your organization

• Inviting your Member of Congress to tour a project in their district will give them a positive picture of your organization

• NADO Legislative staff are here to provide information and support throughout the Washington Policy Conference and your meetings on Capitol Hill