



NADO & NADO RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2020 – 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

PROGRESS REPORT

OCTOBER 18, 2021

PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

March 2018

Contract with Future iQ to lead the comprehensive strategic planning process

October 2018

Plenary session at ATC addressed process, built out priorities, refined description for the future

June 2019

Draft final plan presented to NADO Board; recommended changes made by staff

January 2020

Strategic Plan activities commence

NADO & NADO Research Foundation Scenario-based Think Tank Summit

June 2018

Validation of strategic action areas; 6 Pillars defined

March 2019

NADO Board approved the NADO & NADO Research Foundation 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan

August 2019

6 PILLAR ACTION PLAN

- **Pillar 1: Build Institutional Change**
- **Pillar 2: Create New Partnerships**
- **Pillar 3: Promote Organizational & Staff Capacity**
- **Pillar 4: Broaden Advocacy & Networking**
- **Pillar 5: Expand Organizational Resources**
- **Pillar 6: Strengthen Membership Base**

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PILLARS AND MILESTONES (PILLARS I – 3)

I. Build Institutional Change	II. Create New Partnerships	III. Promote Organizational and Staff Capacity	
Recognize innovative practice through member awards program	Strengthen relationships with national association leadership to expand or broaden partnerships	Board approval of NADO Strategic Action Plan	2020
Instill innovation through organizational culture	Create tool to facilitate NADO and NADO member partnerships	Identify staff skills and capacity gaps	2021
Identify emerging trends	Partner on topic areas through events, conferences, and trainings	Update job descriptions of all NADO staff	2022
Increase information about innovative practices	Develop collaborations with foundations	Ensure alignment of job descriptions, responsibilities, and compensation	2023
Convene innovator staff from like-minded organizations	Diversify funding streams through different partnerships	Support ongoing professional development opportunities for staff	2024

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PILLARS AND MILESTONES (PILLARS 4 – 6)

IV. Broaden Advocacy and Networking	V. Expand Organizational Resources	VI. Strengthen Membership Base	
Improve marketing and branding	Develop a plan for increasing organizational resources	Restructure NADO membership dues	2020
Explore new methods of communication with members	Promote and market NADO's strengths	Strengthen member outreach procedures	2021
Anticipate and harness opportunities for policy change	Promote speakers at other organizations' conferences and events	Develop emerging leaders training for RDOs	2022
Expand networking with other agencies and partners	Identify funding resources to cultivate relationships	Create internal member portal to share resources	2023
Promote NADO visibility outside its core membership	Seek expanded funding resources	Form a member Emerging Professionals group	2024

PILLAR I

Build Institutional Change

- **Recognize innovative practice through member awards program**
 - 2021 Impact Awards and Photo Contest in progress
 - 2020 Impact Awards: 79 projects from 48 members
 - 2020 Excellence in Transportation Awards: 7 projects from 5 members
 - 2020 Photo Contest: 11 winners out of 120 submissions
- **Instill innovation in organizational culture**
 - New virtual platforms: Microsoft Teams, Zoom, other remote work tools and virtual training platforms
- **Identify emerging trends**
 - COVID-19 Resource page on nado.org
 - 3 member surveys about COVID-19 impact
 - Research into innovative COVID-19 response action
 - Equity for regional economic development and planning resource page on nado.org
 - Broadband resource page on nado.org
 - Developing EDD capacity building curriculum page on nado.org
- **Increase information about innovative practices**
 - CEDS in Action Case Studies on CEDSCentral.com
 - Rural ITS Case Studies report submitted to FHWA (under FHWA review)
- **Convene innovator staff from like-minded organizations**
 - Engaged in ongoing communications with innovators in national organizations

PILLAR 2

Create New Partnerships

- **Strengthen relationships with other national association leadership to expand or broaden partnerships**
 - Rural Leadership Group
 - Beginning discussions with EAUC to forge UC – EDD partnerships
 - Working with Rural LISC and NACo on rural broadband issues
 - New grant collaborations with CREC, NGIN, Solar Foundation, ICMA
- **Create tool to facilitate NADO and NADO member partnerships**
 - Research Foundation Advisory Committee attracts impact from broader audience of members
 - Commence developing EDD mentoring program scheduled for Fall 2021
- **Partner on topic areas through events, conferences, and trainings**
 - Received presentation abstracts for National Regional Transportation Conference from other national organizations
- **Develop collaborations with foundations**
- **Diversify funding streams through different partnerships**
 - New partnerships with New Growth Innovation Network (NGIN), EBP (rural transportation accessibility), National Science Foundation, Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CREC), ICMA,
 - Secured additional funding from USDA for rural transit TA
 - New partnership with RCAP on rural wealth creation
 - New project with Smart Growth America (EDA grant) to support nuclear power plant closure communities
 - New private sector partner projects: Cambridge Systematics (part of an IDIQ with FHWA)

PILLAR 3

Promote Organizational & Staff Capacity

- **Board approval of NADO Strategic Action Plan**
 - Adopted 2020 – 2024 Strategic Action Plan
 - Relocation of office to accommodate growing staff
 - Pivot to virtual operations March 13, 2021 due to Global COVID-19 Pandemic
- **Identify staff skills sets and capacity gaps**
 - Hired two senior program managers for Research Foundation
 - Hired meetings and membership manager
 - Hired database and grants manager
 - Hired three graduate fellows to help with policy and advocacy efforts, research projects
 - Secured contracts with Ridge Group and Summit Strategies to work with legislative team
- **Update job descriptions of all NADO staff**
- **Ensure alignment of job descriptions, responsibilities, and compensation**
- **Support ongoing professional development opportunities for staff**
 - Training for staff involved with database management

PILLAR 4

Broaden Advocacy & Networking

- **Improve marketing and branding**
 - Published NADO and the NADO Research Foundation 2020 Annual Report
 - Working on improvements to external communications and marketing
 - Working on NADO News redesign
 - Working with Formation PR to develop communications strategy; new website
- **Explore new methods of communication with members**
 - Virtual legislative updates offered to NADO member organizations via Zoom and Microsoft Teams
 - Increased the frequency of direct member email blasts from Executive Director to NADO members when notable legislative developments occur
- **Anticipate and harness opportunities for policy change**
 - Successfully advocated for the inclusion of additional funding for EDA in the American Rescue Plan Act
 - Anticipated the need for COVID-19 relief funding and successfully advocated to include \$1.5 billion for EDA in the CARES Act
 - Successfully worked with EDA leadership to facilitate the provision of non-competitive funds for EDDs of \$400,000 each and the recapitalizing of EDA RLFs following the passage of the CARES Act
 - Successfully advocated for EDA RLF defederalization as outlined in the Reinvigorating Revolving Lending for the Future Act of 2020 (RLF Act)
 - Successfully advocated to maintain existing Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) population thresholds at 50,000 level (advocated against a proposed increase to 100,000 population)
 - Engaged the Ridge Policy Group and Summit Strategies to support NADO's advocacy efforts

PILLAR 4

Broaden Advocacy & Networking (continued)

- **Expand networking with other agencies and partners**
 - Engaging with the EDA Stakeholders Coalition to jointly advocate for EDA funding, EDA RLF defederalization, and other shared priorities. The Coalition is comprised of other national organizations including NACo, NLC, IEDC, and RCAP
 - Working with the Local Organizations in Transportation (LOT) Coalition to jointly advocate for shared transportation interests. The Coalition is comprised of national organizations including NACo, NLC, NARC, AMPO, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors
 - Working with the Aspen Institute and other think tanks, research institutions, and stakeholder organizations on policy recommendations to help mitigate economic impacts of COVID-19
 - Engaging with the Rural Prosperity Network comprised of numerous stakeholder organizations with shared interests in strengthening rural communities and economies
- **Promote NADO visibility outside its core membership**
 - Engaging with a more diverse group of outside stakeholders with shared interests in rural issues, regional development, and emerging policy trends in these realms
 - Outreach to other organizations through WealthWorks network and webinars
 - Participation in transportation events and forums as rural transportation experts
 - Research Foundation staff presentations at Automated Road Transportation Summit, Alaska Municipal League, American Planning Association Federal Planning Division, Southeast Resiliency Conference, Environmental Finance Center, Brookings Institute, Transportation Research Board, FHWA Highway Safety Partnership Venture, Institute of Transportation Engineers, Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness/Development District Association of Appalachia, University of Minnesota Rural Planning Graduate Class guest lecture
 - Research Foundation staff participate in monthly Communities of Practice convenings organized by EDA

PILLAR 5

Expand Organizational Resources

- **Develop a plan for increasing organizational resources**
 - USDA grants for rural and tribal transit TA
 - Partnership with RCAP on rural wealth creation
 - Smart Growth America (EDA grant) to support nuclear power plant closure communities
 - NGIN to address equity and regional economic development
 - CREC to identify examples of alignment of regional and state economic recovery plans
 - EBP/National Academies of Science to study transportation accessibility
 - FHWA to research examples of RPO/RDO incorporation of environmental & community values into transportation planning & decision-making
 - Cambridge Systematics (part of an IDIQ with FHWA) related to rural transit safety
 - The Solar Foundation (recent merge with IREC) for outreach related to DOE's SolSmart program
- **Promote and market NADO's strengths**
- **Promote speakers at other organization's conferences and events**
 - Engaging with a more diverse group of outside stakeholders with shared interests in rural issues, regional development, and emerging policy trends in these realms
 - Outreach to other organizations through WealthWorks network and webinars
 - Participate in transportation events and forums as rural transportation experts
- **Identify funding resources to cultivate relationships**
 - New grants for the Research Foundation; member dues increase
- **Seek expanded funding resources**
 - Building partnerships with Northern Border Regional Commission and ICMA on potential collaborations

PILLAR 6

Strengthen Membership Base

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- **Restructure NADO membership dues**
 - Membership dues increase passed by Association October 2019; began January 2020; final phase of increase started January 2021
 - **Strengthen member outreach procedures**
 - Started process of collecting additional contacts to receive key NADO communications, in addition to the NADO member primary contact
 - Staff devoted time to update membership database to assure point of contact accuracy
 - New EDD executive directors identified in database
 - **Develop EDD organizational capacity building curriculum**
 - Funding request to EDA headquarters submitted July 2020; funded effective January 2021
 - **Create internal member portal to share resources**
 - **Form a members Emerging Professionals group**
 - Work to commence in Fall 2021



NEXT STEPS