

Executive Director Peer Learning Lab



2009 NADO Annual Training Conference

Co-Sponsored by Development District Association of Appalachia

Chicago, Illinois



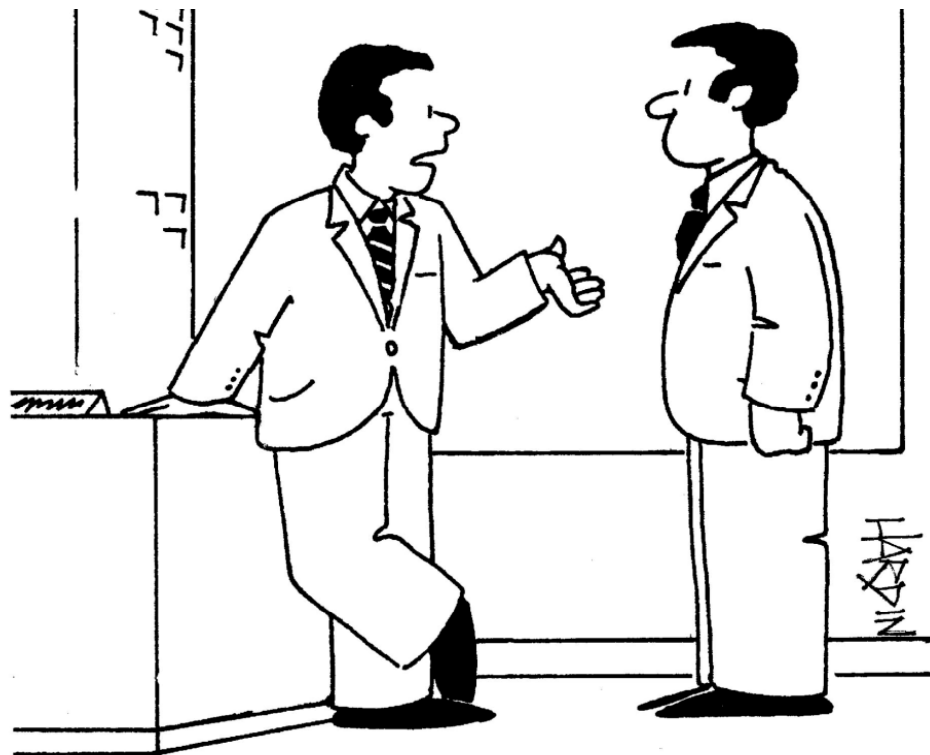
Workshop Overview

- **Back to the Basics:** Founding Principles and Purpose
- **Your Organization's Role** in Era of New Regionalism
- **Seven Significant Issues** Facing Regional Councils
- **Managing an Effective Policy Board**
- **Statewide Associations** of Regional Councils



Positioning Regional Councils for the Future

"The organizational structure is pretty simple: We do the work; they take the credit."





Workshop Overview

I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.

-Albert Einstein

I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.

-Mark Twain

I have never in my life learned anything from any man who agreed with me.

-Dudley Field Malone



Workshop Overview

➤ **Regional Council Self-Assessment Toolkit**

*Project of NADO, Missouri Association of Councils of Governments
and the Development District Association of Appalachia*

❖ NADO developed new guidebook based on
Peer 500 Review program, SERDI research on
Seven Significant Issues, focus groups and interviews,
and other training and research

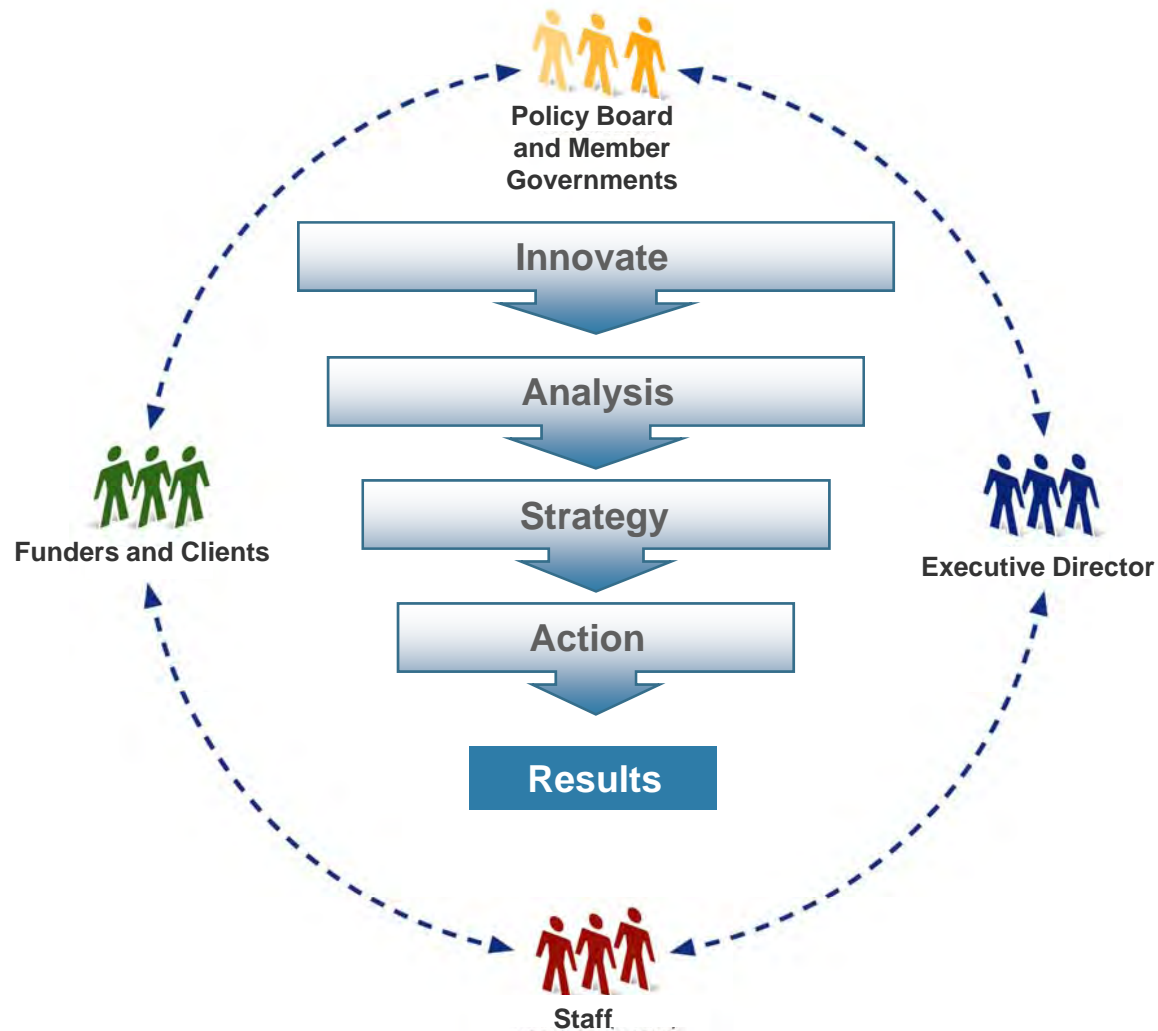


Regional Council Self-Assessment Toolkit

- 1. Defining Today's Era of Regionalism**
- 2. Evaluating Your Role in Modern Era of Regionalism**
- 3. Seven Significant Issues Facing Regional Councils**
- 4. Managing an Effective Regional Council Policy Board**
- 5. Regional Council Executive Director Checklists**
- 6. State Associations of Regional Councils**
- 7. Regional Council Snapshots: Innovations and Practices**
- 8. Peer Resource Exchange: Food for Thought**
- 9. Concepts of Leadership**



Fundamentals of Regional Councils





Fundamentals of Regional Councils

➤ “Regional councils are sometimes less bold in structure and authority than a region’s needs might warrant, yet more advanced than area politics comfortably accept.”

– James Ray, Texas Association of Regional Councils (1978)



Fundamentals of Regional Councils

- Regional councils are political entities that must function politically to be highly effective, yet they must also act in a non-partisan manner.

– Regional Council Self-Assessment and Resource Toolkit (August 2009)



Fundamentals of Regional Councils

- Serve as forum to **craft regional solutions for areawide** needs and opportunities
- **Prepare plans and strategies** for broad range of regional and local issues
- Strengthen and **assist local governments**
- **Advocate for locals** at federal and state levels

Era of New Regionalism: The Shifting Landscape

Based on Research and Writings
By Professor Allan Wallis,
University of Colorado at Denver





Why Regions Matter?

- 1. Rapid expansion and interconnectedness** of global markets
- 2. Increased wealth, education and capitalism** of emerging and developing nations
- 3. Modern mobile lifestyle** of American businesses and residents
- 4. Natural flows and patterns** of vital resources, such as air, land and water
- 5. Significant budget cutbacks and demands** at all levels of government



Why Regions Matter?

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 11, 2009

M-09-28

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Peter R. Orszag, Office of Management and Budget
Melody Barnes, Domestic Policy Council
Adolfo Carrion, Office of Urban Affairs
Lawrence Summers, National Economic Council

SUBJECT: Developing Effective Place-Based Policies for the FY 2011 Budget

This guidance memorandum outlines policy principles meant to advance the Administration's domestic and fiscal priorities and to increase the impact of government dollars by leveraging place-conscious planning and place-based programming.

The guidance outlined here is preliminary. It supports an important interagency process focused on investing in what works by evaluating existing place-based policies and identifying potential reforms and areas for interagency coordination. Our immediate objective is to develop proposals for the FY2011 Budget that advance this Administration's policy priorities in the most effective ways whether by improving place-based strategies already operating or by adopting such strategies where there is significant potential for impact on a problem(s).

Place-based policies leverage investments by focusing resources in targeted places and drawing on the compounding effect of well-coordinated action. Effective place-based policies can influence how rural and metropolitan areas develop, how well they function as places to live, work, operate a business, preserve heritage, and more. Such policies can also streamline otherwise redundant and disconnected programs.

1. The Need for Review and Reform

In the last 30 years, America's population has grown almost 40 percent, placing new stresses on old programs and policies, infrastructures, and strategies. These years have been marked by the evolution of interdependent and interconnected regions and ecosystems. Yet, the Federal government only once has examined the best use of its policy as a lever for regional development. A systematic review of how a wide range of Federal policies affect the development of urban, suburban, and rural America is long overdue.

This is a major opportunity to modernize the federal government's place-based policies and programs. There is also an unprecedented opportunity. Between now and 2050, the expected population growth – of nearly 140 million people – will require, among other things, the construction of more than 200 billion square feet of new housing, business space, and retail

White House Memo to All Agencies for FY2011 Budget:

“Many important challenges demand a regional approach. The Nation is increasingly a conglomeration of regional economies and ecosystems that should be approached as such. Federal investments should promote planning and collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries.”



Key Principles of New Regionalism

- **Visioning for Region**
- **Regional Benchmarks and Indicators**
- **Leadership development** of advocates and champions of regional issues
- **Network formation** of formal and informal networks for social interaction
- **Collaboration and conflict resolution** to reduce inter-jurisdictional disputes, including today's "coop-etition"
- **Regional capacity** to foster regional dialogue, mobilize financial and human resources, and implement plans



Evaluating Your Organization

- **Visioning for the Region**
 - **Establish an identify** for the region (i.e branding)
 - **Establish governance structures** and collaboration framework to advance quality of region
 - **Strive to transform** region's economic competitiveness
 - **Build from the distinguishing features** and natural boundaries



Evaluating Your Organization

- **Regional benchmarks and indicators**
 - **Identify and set** regional performance benchmarks and indicators
 - **Use data to map assets** of the region to serve as foundation for future regional collaboration and partnerships
 - **Measure progress** toward achieving regional goals and objectives



Evaluating Your Organization

- **Leadership Development**
 - **Develop training forums and resources** aimed at nurturing and assisting regional champions
 - **Support regional leaders** working to build bridges across sectors and jurisdictions
 - **Host forums** for formal and informal networking – including public, private and nonprofit sector leaders
 - **Recognize that regions rich in networks** often thrive!



Evaluating Your Organization

- **Conflict resolution and collaboration**
 - **Remember that local jurisdictions** will cooperate on some issues and compete on others
 - **Develop dispute resolution techniques** and processes to resolve inter-jurisdictional conflict
 - **Balance the difference being a “consultant”** to local governments and being a key resource for local governments



Evaluating Your Organization

- **Key Questions for Group Discussions**
 - **How is your organization viewed by external leaders** within your region? What is your role?
 - **How have you expanded your networks** and partnerships to address areawide issues?
 - **What organizational expertise, resources and skills** do you bring to the table?
 - **How does your organization balance** being a regional visionary vs. service/program provider?



Group Exercise



- **Scenario:**
Governor plans to fund new regional alliances of public and private sector leaders to promote economic competitiveness within state.
- How do you approach the issue and what role(s) can you play in the new initiative?

Seven Significant Issues Facing Regional Councils

Modified from research by the
SouthEast Regional Directors Institute
(SERDI)





Seven Significant Issues

1. **Relevance**
2. **Convener** of the Region
3. **Ownership** and Governance
4. Relationship with **Local Governments**
5. Relationship with **Federal & State Officials**
6. **Statewide Uniformity** / Capacity
7. **Public Relations** / Image



Relevance

- **Does your phone ring?**
- **Are you asked to the table** on major regional and local initiatives with public, private and non-profit sector leaders?
- **Are you the convener or forum** for public officials, along with private and non-profit leaders, to work together on problems and solutions for the region?



Convener of the Region

- Are you **proactive** in providing leadership and a vision for the region?
- Are you providing a forum for regional and local leaders to **develop and implement a blueprint** for the region's future?
- Are you **fostering regional collaboration** between local officials, plus public, private, non-profit, civic and philanthropic leaders?



Ownership and Governance

- **Is it clear who owns your regional council?**
 - Local governments
 - Federal, state and local funders
 - General public
 - All of the Above
 - ***Note: It isn't the Executive Director!***
- **Is your organization** board-driven, customer-driven, staff-driven, program-driven or a mix?



Ownership and Governance

- **Does your enabling legislation and/or executive order limit your role and functions?**
- Is your board structured to attract the **“movers-and-shakers”** of the region?
- Is your regional council structured to take a **“holistic” approach** to regional development and overcome *program stovepipes* and *turf battles*?



Relationships with Local Officials

- Most regional councils, by law or executive order, are established as voluntary **councils owned and governed by local governments**
- **HOWEVER, in many cases local officials:**
 - Are unaware of regional council functions & programs
 - Do NOT realize regional councils are set-up to serve them
 - Do NOT consider themselves as owners and operators



Relationships with Local Officials

- As executive director, do you:
 - **Dedicate significant time to personal outreach** to local elected and appointed officials, both county and municipal?
 - **Encourage your local officials** to use your regional council for services, rather than outside consultants?
 - **Participate in statewide and regional associations** of county and municipal officials, as well as interest groups?
This includes serving on task forces and working groups.



Relationship with Federal and State Officials

- More than **70 percent** of the **typical regional council budget** originates from federal or state resources, according to NADO research



Relationship with Federal and State Officials

- **THEREFORE, regional councils must improve relationships and outreach with:**
 - **Governors, state legislators and senior staff**
 - **State departments and agencies**
 - **Congressional and agency officials** at the federal level, including political and career staff in the field and in Washington, DC



Lack of Uniformity / Capacity

- Perceived by outside world as a statewide network and held accountable together. ***So, might as well start acting like a statewide network!***
- **Identify and pursue common programs** and skill sets, yet also maintain local flexibility, initiatives and accountability



Lack of Uniformity / Capacity

- Is your state association tackling issues:
 - **Common skill sets** and staff capacity
(including sharing staff expertise)
 - **Peer accountability** and mentoring
 - **Multi-region collaboration**, including
joint program delivery among regional councils
 - **Statewide outreach** and branding
 - **Professional development** training and
mentoring, including financial management



Public Relations / Image

Regional councils are essentially knowledge workers.

Presentation of data, concepts and ideas are our lifeblood.

We are driven by ideas, innovations and solutions.



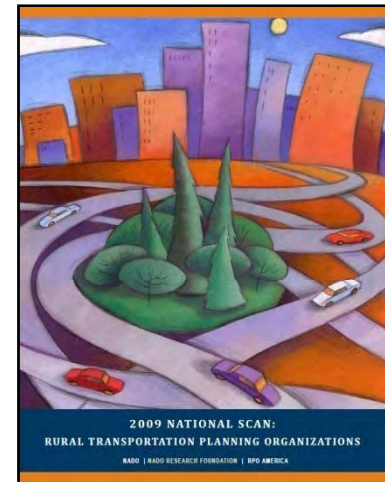
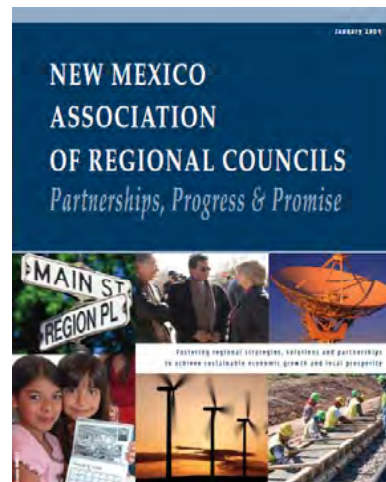
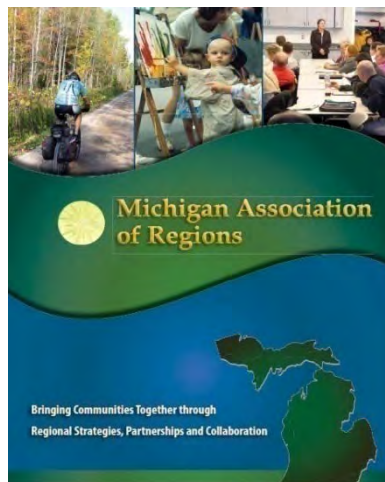
Public Relations / Image

- Tradition of “**behind-the-scenes**” player
- **Can NO LONGER** afford to be “**silent partner**”;
Still put elected officials in public view, but also
market accomplishments, resources and roles
- **Image is/can be a real impediment** for
regional councils at federal, state and local levels
 - *Too often, we let others define who we are!*



Public Relations / Image

- **You must make the effort and set standards**
 - Place a high priority on **professional image**
 - Develop **internal capacity** or outsource for expertise
 - Focus on “**real world**” **outcomes**, not process
 - Conduct **focus groups** to gain feedback





Public Relations / Image

- **What is the external image of your council?**
 - **Respected and valued visionary** for the region
 - **Place to bring together** public, private and nonprofit leaders to advance regional goals
 - **“Go to” resource** for understanding, tapping into and securing public investments and resources
 - **Reliable program administrator** of public funds
 - **Valued technical assistance provider** /
issue expert on broad range of issues



Group Exercise



- **Scenario:**

New federal block grant for energy conservation and planning at local level

➤ How do you build support at federal, state and local levels for using regional councils as primary grantees?



Executive Director Skills



MIKE SHAPIRO

"I used to lead by example, but it was too much work."



Executive Director Skills

- Innovator
- Public Entrepreneur
- Jack-of-All Trades
- Air Traffic Controller
- Statesmen



Executive Director Skills

- **Innovator**

- Creative administrator who can invent new approaches and new methods as the needs arise



Executive Director Skills

- **Public Entrepreneur**
 - Ability to develop and implement new concepts and ideas for the greater good of the region



Executive Director Skills

- **Consensus Builder**
 - Must influence progress and change without traditional powers, authorities and funding resources of federal, state and local government officials



Executive Director Skills

- **Air Traffic Controller**
 - **Ability to shift gears at any given moment to deal with diversity of the region and the regional council,** including aptitude to understand the agendas, perceptions and interests of each major constituency group (public officials, private sector leaders, funding agencies, media, staff and the public)



Executive Director Skills

- **Statesmen**

- Must balance immediate needs and agendas of political leaders with long-term interests and investments for the region

“A politician thinks of the next election – a statesman, of the next generation.”

► Hubert H. Humphrey



Executive Director Skills

- **Foster culture of innovation and performance**
 - **Invest in policy officials and staff:** travel, professional development & peer exchanges
 - **Break down staffing “stove pipes”** by program; Staff must be cross-trained and informed
 - **Encourage collaboration** and leveraging of programs and resources (*legally!*)
 - **Facilitate** strategic planning to gain input and buy-in, plus set regional priorities and action plans



Executive Director Skills



“You don’t have a clue what really goes on around here. That’s why you need a grapevine!”



Group Exercise



- **Scenario:**

New executive director hired to replace founding director after 40 years. Financial problems, lack of regional identity and low staff morale.

➤ How do you start to rebuild the organization – finances, staff, board and partners?



Managing an Effective Regional Council Policy Board



Managing an Effective Policy Board

- **Goals**
 - **Become a priority appointment** for local officials
 - **Attract top level talent** from private, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors to board or working groups
 - **Build culture** of board and member government involvement, ownership and leadership
 - **Earn loyalty**, trust and respect from board members and leaders within the state and region



Managing an Effective Policy Board

- Why does your board matter?
- Is your board an asset, impediment or non-factor?
- What strategies are you using to engage, reward and motivate your policy board?
- Is your board operating at policy level, operations/micro level or as a networking club?



Managing an Effective Policy Board

- **Basic Roles of Board and Individual Members**
 - **Establish organizational policies** and priorities
 - **Nurture** a vision
 - **Conduct regular assessments** of priorities and progress
 - **Ensure financial integrity** of organization
 - **Participate responsibly**, knowledgably and ethically
 - **Maintain partnerships** with CEO and staff



Managing an Effective Policy Board

- **Board Development**
 - **Action-oriented board meetings**
 - **Involve key federal, state and local officials,**
including funding partners, in meetings
 - **Host regional forums and events** with high-profile national, state and regional leaders & move board meetings around the region to showcase local innovations
 - **Off-site strategic planning board retreats**



Managing an Effective Policy Board

- **Resource Toolkit**
 - **Basic Governance Practices** of Effective Boards
 - **Action Checklist** for Individual Board Members
 - **Sample Job Description** for Board Members
 - **Orientation Ideas** for New Board Members
 - **Due Diligence Checklist** for New Board Members
 - **Tips for Keeping** Your Board Energized



Managing an Effective Policy Board

- **Orientation Ideas**

- Meet with new elected officials and board members
- Ask board chair and key leaders to attend
- Share goals and mission of organization, *including explaining how RCs differ from local government*
- Stress importance of being a regional leader
- Talk about ownership of regional council
- Outline primary roles of policy board members
- Provide overview of key programs and services



Group Exercise



•Discussion Issues

➤ Board has low attendance, limited involvement in programs and marketing, and still micromanages organization's operations.

❖ What are your specific strategies and tactics to tap into your policy board to take advantage of your assets and overcome challenges?

Statewide Associations and Networks of Regional Councils:
*Don't ever forget that progress is achievable and that the
only constant in this world is constant change!*



Face of Our Global Competition:
Suburb in Former Rust Belt City in China

Photograph by George Steinmetz



State Associations

- **Purpose of Statewide Associations**
 - **Face common** needs, challenges and issues
 - **Improve** consistency, quality and delivery of services
 - **Develop new partnerships**, programs and funding
 - **Share best** practices, peer exchanges and test ideas
 - **Practice what we preach** about working across jurisdictional boundaries and overcoming traditional turf barriers



State Associations

- **State Associations Can:**
 - **Serve as central point of contact**
 - **Facilitate consensus** of opinion and priorities
 - **Establish clearinghouse** of ideas and issues
 - **Act as a negotiating arm** with fed and state officials
 - **Communicate unified voice** on issues
 - **Develop statewide templates** and quality control
 - **Test pilot programs** and projects
 - **Maintain peer accountability** and peer mentoring



State Associations

- **State Associations Require:**
 - **Significant time** and energy commitments
 - **Substantial investment** of financial resources
 - **Significant willingness** to compromise with peers
 - **Readiness to pursue new opportunities**, hold peers accountable and share resources with peers
 - **Setting realistic expectations** and goals



State Associations

- **Core Focus Areas:**
 - **Outreach and relationship building**
with external partners, policy makers and funders
 - **Program development** of new ideas and programs
 - **Quality controls** and performance accountability
 - **Peer networking** and professional development
 - **Marketing** and branding of common statewide mission, services, impact and potential



State Associations

- **Monthly meetings** of executive directors, along with working groups of senior staff and policy officials
- **Pro-active agendas** with federal and state officials
 - *Specific tasks for local policy officials, ex dirs and staff*
 - *Peer accountability for follow up and deliverables*
- **Program accountability**, including quality controls, training and financial monitoring



Group Exercise



- **Scenario**

Identify noteworthy practices and innovations of your statewide association:

- Statewide projects
- New programs and services
- Special events and training
- Peer accountability
- Outreach to feds and state



Workshop Overview



**“Your proposal is innovative.
Unfortunately,
we won’t be able
to use it because
we’ve never tried
something like
this before.”**



Workshop Overview



**“We are a
not-for-profit
organization,
but we didn’t
plan it that
way.”**



Special Acknowledgement

**Special thanks are extended to the
Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA)
for co-sponsoring the Executive Director Peer Learning Lab
through the ARC Regional Training Program.**

**Special thanks are also extended to the
Missouri Association of Councils of Governments
and the four-state EDA EDD Midwest Working (Iowa, Kansas,
Missouri and Nebraska) for supporting the development of
the Regional Council Self-Assessment and Resource Toolkit
through an EDA technical assistance grant.**



National Association of Development Organizations

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