



2023 NADO Executive Committee Advocacy Fly-In



In April, the NADO Executive Committee traveled to Washington, DC to participate in NADO's annual three-day advocacy fly-in. The Executive Committee met with leadership and staff from numerous federal agencies, House and Senate staff on Capitol Hill, leadership from other national associations, and officials at the White House. This report contains a summary of some of the key issues that were addressed during these meetings.

FEDERAL AGENCY MEETINGS

While in DC, the Executive Committee attended meetings with leadership and staff from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), among others.

EDA: <<<<<

The Executive Committee met with Alejandra Castillo, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development; Craig Buerstatte, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs; and others. Topics of discussion included EDA Partnership Planning funding, the [EDA Community of Practice for Economic Development Districts](#), EDA reauthorization, and new EDA initiatives such as the [Regional Tech Hubs](#) Program and the [Recompete Pilot Program](#).

USDA: <<<<<

The Executive Committee met with Steffanie Bezruki, Chief of Staff for the Under Secretary of Rural Development; Dewayne Goldmon, Senior Advisor for Racial Equity; and others. Topics of discussion included Farm Bill reauthorization, the [Rural Partners Network](#), USDA's commitment to equity, and successes and challenges related to implementation of USDA funding locally.

HUD: <<<<<

The group met with Claudette Fernandez, General Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Community Planning and Development, and Claudia Monterrosa, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Grants, Office of Community Planning and Development. Topics of discussion included the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the Community Development Block Grant Program, the [Community Compass](#) Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program, and other funding administered through the HUD Office of Community Planning and Economic Development.

USDOT: <<<<<

The group met with Mariia Zimmerman, Strategic Advisor for Technical Assistance and Communities Solutions Co-Director for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law implementation; Jamie Pfister, Associate Administrator, Office of Regional Services, Federal Transit Administration; and others. Topics of discussion included the need for increased support for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, and local transportation planning successes and challenges. USDOT officials encouraged utilization of the [DOT Navigator](#), a new online resource designed to help communities identify federal grant and technical assistance opportunities.

CAPITOL HILL MEETINGS

The NADO Executive Committee met with Capitol Hill staffers working for the committees with jurisdiction over EDA programs and reauthorization: the [Senate Environment and Public Works Committee \(EPW\)](#) and the [House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee \(T&I\)](#). Some Hill staffers expressed that EDA reauthorization remains a top priority, while others suggested alternative approaches such as prioritizing targeted EDA reforms. The Executive Committee emphasized the need for a full reauthorization of EDA, and for the inclusion of important provisions such as a higher authorized level for EDA Partnership Planning Grants and decreased local match requirements. Additionally, the Executive Committee met with staffers working for the [Senate Agriculture Committee](#), the committee with jurisdiction over Farm Bill reauthorization, which is anticipated to occur in 2023. During this meeting, the group discussed potential inclusions in the Farm Bill including authorization of the Rural Partnership Program, and reauthorization of Regional Commissions including: the Delta Regional Authority; the Northern Border Regional Commission; the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission; the Southwest Border Regional Commission; the Denali Commission; and the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority. Specifically, in the process of reauthorizing these Regional Commissions, the Executive Committee emphasized that it would be particularly helpful if all regional commission funding could be treated as a source of local match when applying for federal funding from other agencies.



WHITE HOUSE MEETING

The Executive Committee met with Luke McGowan, Senior Advisor for Economic Recovery, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs; Will McIntee, Senior Advisor, White House Office of Public Engagement; Kelliann Blazek, Special Assistant to the President for Agriculture and Rural Policy; and others. These White House officials provided the group with an overview of the Biden Administration's current priorities and initiatives, including the [White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities](#), and the Rural Partners Network. The Executive Committee discussed NADO's priorities for Farm Bill reauthorization and EDA reauthorization, as well as successes and challenges related to a wide array of federal programs and initiatives. The Executive Committee members highlighted the importance of Regional Development Organizations and the critical roles they play in supporting the planning and implementation of community development projects, and in helping local stakeholders access and navigate federal funding sources.

RESOURCES

- NADO members are encouraged to conduct outreach to your Senators and Representatives to help further amplify NADO's advocacy priorities.
- Advocacy resources such as fact sheets, handouts, talking points, and template letters to Congress [are available here](#). Additionally, advocacy updates [can be found here](#) and in [NADO News](#).
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