



2023 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM NADO'S 2023 PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This year has afforded another 12 months of upward progress at the National Association of Development Organizations and our affiliate 501(c)(3), the NADO Research Foundation. NADO and NADO RF continue to work hard on new and existing programs, meet advocacy goals, and provide in-depth training and research on timely subject matters for our community of EDDs and RDOs.

We are humbled to be able to celebrate a growing list of accomplishments at NADO. Completing many of the action items in NADO's five-year strategic plan early, securing opportunities for NADO members to testify before Congress, connecting with new partners, and carrying out multifaceted in-person trainings are just a few successes of this past year.



We encourage you to review our 2023 Annual Report for a further look of the work our team, partners, and members helped accomplish. Most importantly though, we would be remiss to not mention how none of these successes would be possible without the support of our members and partners. You are the heart of our work and organization, and we thank you for being there for us throughout the year. As we look to the future, we hope you will continue to join us in this important work.

With gratitude,

Chris Fetzer
President, NADO, and Executive Director,
Northern Arizona Council of Governments

Joe McKinney
Executive Director, NADO and the NADO
Research Foundation



ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Who We Are

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) is a 501c4 membership association that represents the interests of regional community and economic development practitioners.

What We Do

NADO promotes regional development strategies, partnerships, and initiatives that strengthen economic competitiveness and quality of life within local communities across the country.





2023 MEMBERSHIP

NADO members have access to resources, tools, and information to enhance and support their work. Their NADO membership gives opportunities to network in-person and virtually with thought leaders, peer organizations, and important stakeholders in the regional development realm.

Total Members

377

General Members

322

Associate Members

55

NADO Membership by Dues Level

Diamond	2	General	233
Platinum Plus	11	Associate	11
Platinum	21	Partner	44
Sustaining	55		





Each year, NADO recognizes member organizations that demonstrate valuable and effective approaches to regional economic and community development. Since 1986, The Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Awards have recognized nearly 2,000 NADO member projects for their creative efforts in advancing regional economic development and improved quality of life.

107 projects from 71 members in 28 different states were awarded in 2023.



The Excellence in Regional Transportation Award, a program of NADO's RPO America and the NADO Research Foundation's Center for Transportation Advancement and Regional Development, recognizes noteworthy projects and practices in rural and small metropolitan transportation planning, programming, and service delivery.

18 projects from 17 organizations in 14 different states were awarded in 2023.



The NADO Member photo contest is an annual opportunity for our member organizations to tell the story of their regions through images that capture the people and places that make their communities interesting places to live, work, and play. Winners and runners-up are decided in these four categories, as well as a "People's Choice" winner that is selected by public votes through our [Facebook page](#).

More than 120 photo submissions resulted in nine winners in 2023.

WITH SUPPORT FROM THE US ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA), SEVERAL MILESTONE PRODUCTS AND EVENTS OCCURRED AS PART OF OUR EDD COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP):

- **Virtual EDD Map:** This map provides information about each EDD's service area, website, contact information, CEDS, and EDA regional office.
- **EDDs in Action Case Studies:** This growing library of short case studies is meant to inspire and demonstrate ways to leverage federal and state funding to support initiatives across the regions EDDs serve. Recent additions include case studies on data, equity, and housing.
- **Webinar Trainings:** Recordings from a wide-ranging mix of virtual trainings and webinars are available, covering topics such as CEDS-Hazard Mitigation Planning alignment; CEDS Content Guidelines updates; data tools from Argonne National Laboratory; electric vehicles; and cybersecurity.
- **In-person Training Resources:** Sessions organized through the EDD CoP were hosted at various conferences and events around the country on a variety of topics, including CEDS, economic resilience, wealth creation strategies, outdoor recreation, broadband, and RLF management (Afternoon with the Districts; EDA Seattle EDD Regional Roundtable; 2023 Economic Development Conference for the EDA Denver Region; 2023 Southwest Region Economic Development Association (SWREDA) Conference; MN-SD-ND Wealth Creation Training).



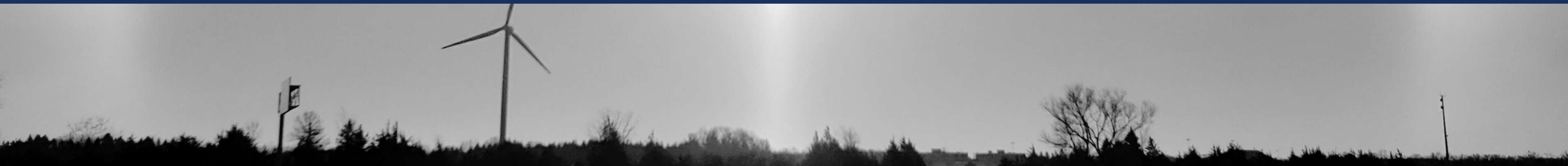
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE US ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA), SEVERAL MILESTONE PRODUCTS AND EVENTS OCCURRED AS PART OF OUR EDD COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP):

- **Research Reports:** Solving the Housing Puzzle provides EDD best practices from across the country in a variety of regional market contexts and implementable strategies for a variety of different roles that EDDs have taken including Planner, Financier, Land Manager, and Developer. EDDs and Military Installations highlights examples from EDDs successfully managing relationships with military installations and showcases specific, replicable strategies that can be used by EDDs across the country serving regions home to military bases and installations.
- **Virtual EDD Chapter Meet Ups:** Two rounds of Virtual EDD Chapter Meet Ups were held throughout the year, providing a space for EDD staff from across all six EDA regions to connect via small group conversations around topics important to EDDs.
- **Virtual Community of Practice:** EDD and RDO professionals looking to be part of an online networking community are encouraged to visit the portal and create an account to start engaging, leaning, and networking with peers in the field to ask questions, share resources, and learn together.
- **Desktop Consulting:** NADO RF responded to over 40 requests for information, best practices, and examples to support their work.



NADO RF ALSO PARTNERED WITH SEVERAL NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON VARIOUS PROJECTS RELEVANT TO EDDS AND THE REGIONS THEY SERVE:

- **New Growth Innovation Network** to support the EDA-funded project, “Inclusive Economic Development in EDDs’ COVID-19 Recovery.” The Inclusive Recovery Toolkit, an online resource intended to support EDDs in elevating equity within their organizations, the CEDS, and with project implementation efforts, [is available here](#).
- **Smart Growth America** to support the EDA-funded project, “Technical Assistance to Nuclear Communities.” Project materials, including the Community Economic Diversification Roadmap developed to demonstrate how communities can plan to strengthen and grow their economic base throughout the energy transition lifecycle, [are available here](#).
- **Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness** to support the EDA-funded project, “Enhancing State and Local EDD Engagement to Support COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency.” Webinar recordings, research materials, and more [are available here](#).
- **International City/County Management Association** to support the Department of Energy funded Solsmart program. The program helps local governments and regional organizations accelerate the growth of clean, affordable solar energy in their jurisdictions. Learn more the program on [Solsmart's website](#).



NADO RF AND PROJECT PARTNERS CREATED 18 REPORTS AND WORKSHOPS THROUGH RURAL TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION:

- With support from the Federal Highway Administration, NADO RF published two new issue briefs related to Planning and Environmental Linkages. These two briefs describe several different activities RDOs, RTPOs, and their partners are using to integrate transportation planning with environmental considerations and explores connections RDOs are making between transportation plans and projects and climate change.
- Technology change is occurring rapidly, affecting all sectors that RDOs work in. Transportation is no different, with increasing interest in rural implementations of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). NADO RF completed a research report, funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation's ITS Joint Program Office, examining rural transportation technology issues and case studies.
- Co-hosted the National Transportation Conference with the National Summit on Rural Road Safety.



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- Together with the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University, NADO RF provides transportation and community and economic development technical assistance to rural and tribal places through contracts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development. Through this program, the NADO RF team provided planning and research assistance, public outreach support, capacity building and training workshops, and other assistance to 12 rural regions. Many of these materials are available on NADO's online clearinghouse, Rural Transportation.org.
- In late 2023, NADO RF began to provide technical assistance on transportation issues through USDOT's Thriving Communities Program, including through a workshop on developing strong partnerships to support project development and implementation.
- The NADO Research Foundation provided research and writing support on the Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program Research Report 1059: Access to Jobs, Economic Opportunities, and Education in Rural Areas. This report includes case studies and guidance materials (such as worksheets) on enhancing mobility to improve access and connectivity.



VARIOUS EDD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY PROJECTS RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING EVENTS OR PRODUCTS:

- Under the EDA-supported Stronger Districts, Stronger Regions Initiative, the EDD Capacity Building resources webpage was launched on NADO.org. The content includes a peer knowledge exchange, and resources on leadership and governance, marketing and communications, project development and management, and grants management.
- The Training Program for Emerging Leaders, supported by the EDA Austin Regional Office, graduated another cohort of 10 EDD staff. NADO RF also collaborated with the Southwest Region Economic Development Association (SWREDA) to plan and conduct its annual conference.
- NADO RF collaborated with the EDA Denver Regional Office to plan and conduct its regional conference.
- The NADO RF team lead the effort in planning the 2023 Annual Training Conference in Cleveland, OH.





2023 ADVOCACY

During the 2023 calendar year, NADO continued to advocate for Regional Development Organizations and for the programs and funding that are most important to their work.

- NADO voiced support for programs that support community and economic development, transportation planning, workforce training, affordable housing, rural development, support for older Americans, urban and rural planning, and more.

- As a key component of NADO's advocacy efforts, NADO emphasized the importance of programs that provide direct funding to many Regional Development Organizations, such as U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) Partnership Planning Grants.





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- In March 2023, NADO held its annual Washington Policy Conference, which was attended by more than 400 participants. It was held as a joint event in conjunction with the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) Annual Conference. During this event, attendees had opportunities to hear updates from and engage with federal agency leadership and staff, and to participate in NADO on the Hill, a day of advocacy when NADO members are encouraged to meet with their Senators and Representatives in Washington DC.





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- In April 2023, 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 Committee staff on Capitol Hill, leadership from other national associations, and officials at the White House.

- In June 2023, Chris Fetzer, 2023 NADO President and Executive Director of the Northern Arizona Council of Governments testified during a U.S. Senate hearing focused on the reauthorization of the EDA.



Chris Fetzer



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During the 2023 calendar year, NADO continued to advocate for Regional Development Organizations and for the programs and funding that are most important to their work.

- Throughout the year, NADO continually updated advocacy resource materials on NADO.org, such as appropriations fact sheets and template letters that NADO members can utilize when conducting outreach to their Senators and Representatives. Learn more at nado.org/about-nado-advocacy.





STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES



Concluding the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan

Throughout 2023, NADO continued to implement its 2020–2024 strategic plan that the NADO Board of Directors adopted in 2019. During the 2023 calendar year, NADO staff and leadership addressed many of the action items identified within the strategic plan roadmap even earlier than the target dates specified in the original five-year plan. During plenary sessions at the 2023 NADO Annual Training Conference, the NADO Executive Committee reflected on NADO’s accomplishments to date, and a facilitator led the NADO membership through an exercise to help begin the process of identifying new goals and benchmarks for the next five years.

The next six pages take a look at some of the action items completed during the strategic plan.



STRATEGIC PLAN: INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION



**Redesigned website and
NADO rebrand**



**Secured new resources
and determined new
focus areas**



**Enhanced communication
with members through
new channels**



**Launched Future NADO
and a DEI Working Group**

STRATEGIC PLAN: CREATE NEW PARTNERSHIPS



Led the EDA Community of Practice (CoP)



Obtained new resource partners



Held joint conferences and events



STRATEGIC PLAN: PROMOTE ORGANIZATIONAL & STAFF CAPACITY



Created and filled new positions



Expanded office and remote operations



Enhanced our technology tools



STRATEGIC PLAN: BROADEN ADVOCACY & NETWORKING



Assisted in securing supplemental funding for members



Advocated for and achieved successful policy changes



Increased participation in congressional hearings



STRATEGIC PLAN: EXPAND ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES



**Adjusted membership
dues to enhance services**



**Increased grant funding
from \$3MM to \$12MM**



**Increased sponsorship
support for NADO events**

STRATEGIC PLAN: STRENGTHEN MEMBERSHIP BASE



**Extended reach beyond
Executive Directors**



**Created opportunities for
virtual member
connection**



**Established extensive
online resource library**



2023 NADO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chris Fetzer, President, Northern Arizona Council of Governments (AZ)

Chris Brown, First Vice President, Ark-Tex Council of Governments (TX)

Rick Hunsaker, Second Vice President, Region XII Council of Governments (IA)

Matthew Dolge, Treasurer, Piedmont Triad Regional Council (NC)

Charlie Baker, Secretary, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (VT)

Misty Crosby, Immediate Past President, Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OH)

The NADO Executive Committee also serves as the NADO Research Foundation Board of Directors.

NADO Board of Directors

In addition to the Executive Committee, NADO has a governing board of 56 individuals from member organizations — 50 are elected and six serve in their capacity as a past NADO president who works for a member organization. Visit nado.org/board for the 2022-2024 list of board members.



NADO STAFF

Joe McKinney, Executive Director

Katie Allison, Communications Manager

Bret Allphin, Senior Program Manager

Mirielle Burgoyne, Deputy Executive Director/Government Relations

Andrew Coker, Regional Development Researcher

Joe D'Antonio, Program Manager

Krystal DeLeon, Operations Manager

Karron Grant, Administrative Specialist

Carrie Kissel, Associate Director

Krishna Kunapareddy, Program Manager

Melissa Levy, Regional Development Researcher

Jamie McCormick, Legislative Associate

Jack Morgan, Senior Program Manager

Ciara Ristig, Senior Program Manager

Brittany Salazar, Meetings & Membership Manager

Brett Schwartz, Associate Director

Laurie Thompson, Deputy Executive Director/NADO Research Foundation

Dion Thompson-Davoli, Program Manager