



PROGRAM

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) &
The Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA)

2024 Washington Conference

March 10-13, 2024

The Crystal Gateway Marriott | 1700 Richmond Highway, Arlington Virginia

This draft agenda is subject to change.

Sunday, March 10, 2024

*NOTE: NADO and DDAA board members and advisory committee members are asked to participate in pre-conference meetings throughout the day on Sunday, March 10. All conference attendees are encouraged to attend the **opening reception** on Sunday evening beginning at 5:30 p.m. ET. DDAA members are invited to attend the DDAA Dinner Banquet that follows at 6:30 p.m. ET.*

10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Registration – All attendees

Arlington Foyer

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

NADO Research Foundation Advisory Committee Meeting

NADO Research Foundation Advisory Committee members

Crystal Boardroom

12:00-2:00 p.m.

NADO Executive Committee Meeting

NADO Executive Committee members

Crystal Boardroom

1:00-3:00 p.m.

DDAA Board of Directors Meeting – DDAA Board of Directors

Pentagon A

3:30-5:30 p.m.

NADO Board of Directors Meeting – NADO Board of Directors

Salons 5-6

5:30-6:30 p.m.

Opening Reception – All attendees

Arlington Foyer

6:30-8:00 p.m.

DDAA Dinner Banquet – *DDAA members*

Salons 3-4

Speaker:

- **Gayle Manchin**, Federal Co-Chair, Appalachian Regional Commission

Moderator:

- **Heather Feldman**, Executive Director, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Monday, March 11, 2024

NOTE: Concurrent breakout sessions on Monday are open to all participants, including both NADO and DDAA members. The “NADO track,” “DDAA track,” and “Joint track” labels denote which attendees may find the session content most relevant, but all attendees are welcome.

7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Registration – All attendees

Arlington Foyer

7:45-9:00 a.m.

DDAA Breakfast and Annual Business Meeting – DDAA members

Salons 1-2

9:15-10:30 a.m.

Opening Plenary Session - All attendees

Salons 3-4

Federal Programs, Priorities, and Opportunities

During this opening session, learn how administration officials are leading the charge in addressing some of the most pressing current challenges in the economic and community development realm. Leadership from various federal agencies will provide updates on key federal initiatives, available funding opportunities, evolving federal priorities, and innovative new programs and approaches to watch for in the year ahead.

Speakers:

- **Alejandra Castillo**, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration
- **Nadab Bynum**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development, Office of Community Planning and Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Keith Benjamin**, Associate Administrator for Highway Policy and External Affairs, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation
- **Laura Watson**, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor

Moderator:

- **Joe McKinney**, Executive Director, National Association of Development Organizations

10:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions (A, B, C, D)

Breakout (A): NADO track

Salon 1

A Federal Update on EDA Initiatives and Partnerships

During this session, staff and leadership from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) will present a series of brief overviews of current EDA initiatives, including ARPA initiatives, the Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs Program, the Recompete Pilot Program, and other key programs. Following these presentations, the audience will be invited to engage in conversation with EDA leadership to discuss their perspectives and experiences as practitioners utilizing EDA resources.

Speakers:

- **Craig Buerstette**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs, U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration

- **Cristina Killingsworth**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and External Affairs, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

Moderator:

- **Rick Hunsaker**, Executive Director, Region XII Council of Governments

Breakout (B): NADO track

Salon 2

Federal Transportation Program Updates

This session will feature U.S. Department of Transportation staff and leadership who will provide updates on programs, initiatives, and funding opportunities that can be utilized for transportation planning, rural transit, and other regional transportation activities.

Speakers:

- **Rob Hyman**, ROUTES Program Manager, U.S. Department of Transportation
- **Spencer Stevens**, Team Leader, Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program, FHWA Office of Planning, U.S. Department of Transportation
- **Marianne Stock**, Chief, Rural and Targeted Programs, Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

Moderator:

- **Kevin Adam**, Legislative Liaison, Rural Transportation Advocacy Council, Arizona

Breakout (C): DDAA track

Salon 5

What Data Says About the Housing Crisis

This breakout session will explore the origins and current implications of the unfolding housing crisis. Panelists will discuss examples of data sources that communities can utilize to develop their housing strategies.

Speakers:

- **Betsy McGriff**, Project Manager, Georgia Tech Center for Economic Development Research
- **Maggie Riden**, Senior Vice President of Advocacy, Fahe
- **Keith Wiley**, Senior Research Associate, Housing Assistance Council

Moderator:

- **Nathan Ramsey**, Executive Director, Land of Sky Regional Council

Breakout (D): Joint track

Salon 6

Strengthening Employers and the Workforce with Recovery-to-Work Ecosystems

During this session, learn how communities are building recovery-to-work ecosystems that coordinate and support service providers as they help individuals move from treatment into employment. Join this discussion to learn how regions are supporting substance use mitigation efforts across the country.

Speakers:

- **Brendan Buff**, Director of Rural Development, Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness
- **Peter Gaumont**, Senior Policy Analyst, US Office of National Drug Control Policy
- **Michelle White**, Senior Policy Advisor, Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice

Moderator:

- **Erin Sparks**, President, Sparks Policy Group

12:15-1:30 p.m.

Artificial Intelligence: Impacts on Businesses, the Workforce, and the Economy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been a prevailing topic of conversation in recent years. This session will address common questions about the emerging field of AI, and how it will affect regional economies in the coming years. This panel of AI experts and practitioners will also address how Regional Development Organizations can manage these impacts and take advantage of potential investments in their regions.

Speakers:

- **Denise Hall**, President & CEO, Smart Factory Institute, Operated by Peak Performance
- **Leigh Hopkins**, Assistant Director, Center for Economic Development Research, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Steven Lee**, Product Manager, McKinsey & Company

Moderator:

- **Heather Feldman**, Executive Director, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

1:45-3:00 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions (A, B, C, D)

Breakout (A): NADO track

Salon 1

Housing Planning for the Future

Housing affordability challenges have had serious community and economic development impacts on communities and regions. During this session, hear from successful regional housing planners on how their regions have created regional and local housing plans emphasizing practicality, project implementation, and community buy-in.

Speakers:

- **Anthony Starr**, Executive Director, Western Piedmont Council of Governments
- **Kevin Byrd**, Executive Director, New River Valley Regional Commission

Moderator:

- **Andrew Coker**, Regional Development Researcher, NADO

Breakout (B): NADO track

Salon 2

Equity and Place-based Economic Development

Join the team from the University of Michigan Economic Growth Institute, the New Growth Innovation Network, and the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration to learn more about equity in economic development programs and coalitions. This interactive session will include early findings on equity and inclusion practices from 53 federally-funded place-based economic development programs as well as an engaging discussion and opportunity to apply learnings to your region and programs.

Speakers:

- **Sarah Crane**, Director of Research, University of Michigan Economic Growth Institute
- **Yasmina McCarty**, President & CEO, New Growth Innovation Network
- **Bernadette Grafton**, Team Lead, Research & National Technical Assistance; University Center Program Coordinator, U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration

Breakout (C): DDAA Track

Salon 5

Ask Me Anything - Peer Sharing Session

Leadership and staff who work for Local Development Districts (LDD) are called on to address a wide array of pressing issues. In doing so, they face a variety of challenges in their daily work. Come to this session led by a team of experienced LDD professionals and ask them anything. There are no stupid questions!

Speakers:

- **Heather Feldman**, Executive Director, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
- **Randy Imler**, Executive Director, Catawba Regional Council of Governments
- **Michelle Jordan**, Executive Director, Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments
- **Dennis Stripling**, Executive Director, West Alabama Regional Commission
- **Jill Foys**, Executive Director, Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning & Development Commission

Breakout (D): Joint Track

Salon 6

How Artificial Intelligence is Changing the Community Development Landscape

During this moderated discussion, panelists will discuss how artificial intelligence (AI) is impacting community and economic development, public sector governance, service workers, and local economies. Panelists will also discuss public policy issues that policymakers should address in order to ensure that AI is a positive force on community economic and social well-being.

Speakers:

- **Akanksha Ray**, Global Policy and Programs for AI & Digital Readiness, Intel Corporation
- **Michael Zimmer**, Former Executive in Residence, Ohio University
- **Betty Young**, President, Hocking Technical College
- **Tom Johnson**, Mayor, Somerset, Ohio

Moderator:

- **Trace Johnson**, Co-founder, Builder's Club of Somerset

3:30-4:30 p.m.

NADO Regional Chapter Meetings - NADO and DDAA members

Central: Salon 1

East: Salon 2

Midwest: Salon 5

Southeast: Rosslyn

Southwest: Salon 6

West: Pentagon A

4:30-6:00 p.m.

Federal Stakeholders Networking Reception – All attendees

Salons 3-4

This reception provides an opportunity for federal agency staff and leadership and other national stakeholder organizations to interact with NADO and DDAA members.

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

NOTE: NADO member attendees are encouraged to participate in meetings on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, March 12. For those attendees who do not plan to attend Hill meetings, additional conference content is offered at the conference venue throughout the day.

7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Registration - All attendees

Arlington Foyer

7:45-9:00 a.m.

DDAA Breakfast - DDAA members

Salons 1-2

9:15-10:15 a.m.

Plenary Session – All attendees

Salons 3-4

Insights on the Political Landscape

Before you depart for meetings on Capitol Hill with your Senators and Representatives, hear from DC insider David Wasserman, who will provide his insights on the ever-changing political landscape, the upcoming 2024 election cycle, the balance of power in Congress, and forecasting on what to expect in 2024 and beyond.

Speaker:

- **David Wasserman**, Senior Editor & Election Analyst, The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter, NBC Contributor

Moderator:

- **Chris Brown**, Board Director, Ark-Tex Council of Governments

10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Capitol Hill Meetings (on your own) - NADO track

NOTE: Attendees are encouraged to spend this open block of time on Capitol Hill educating your members of Congress about your work. Hill meetings are self-directed. If you need help securing contact information for Hill staffers and schedulers, please contact Jamie McCormick at jmccormick@nado.org.

10:30-11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions (A and B)

Breakout (A): DDAA track

Salon 5

Using ARC's ARISE to Build Relationships Between Neighboring LDDs

How did two very small, very rural Local Development Districts partner to design a successful application for the Appalachian Regional Commission's Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE) funding? This session will focus on how to build a strong relationship with a neighboring LDD, and will also feature a brief discussion of the workforce development project that successfully received ARC ARISE funding as a result of this partnership.

Speakers:

- **Chelsea Robertson**, Executive Director, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning &

Development Board

- **Frank Thompson**, Executive Director, Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission
- **Jennifer Lench**, ARC State Program Manager, Pennsylvania, Appalachian Regional Commission

Moderator:

- **Kyle Wilber**, ARC State Program Manager, New York, Appalachian Regional Commission

Breakout (B): DDAA track

Salon 6

How GIS Mapping Helped Respond to EPA Regulations

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission utilized global positioning system (GPS) and other digital data technology in order to map all water, sewer, and stormwater features for a city. Leveraging this technology has had numerous benefits, including unexpected ones. Learn how this effort enabled the city to add needed information to water meters in response to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Revised Lead and Copper Rule.

Speakers:

- **Faith Bryan**, Director of Information Services, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
- **Sitney Day**, Physical Scientist, US Environmental Protection Agency

Moderator:

- **Heather Feldman**, Executive Director, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.

Lunch on your own

1:30-2:45 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions (A, B, and C)

Breakout (A): DDAA track

Salon 5

Building Capacity to Support Business Development Across Appalachia

During this session, learn how rural regions are leveraging their local community assets to support the growth and development of community makerspaces, in an effort to encourage business and export development across Appalachia.

Speakers:

- **Deacon Stone**, Director, Marshall Advanced Manufacturing Center
- **Leslie Wrenn Drake**, Director, West Virginia, U.S. Commercial Service

Moderator:

- **Jen Simon**, Program Manager, Business Development, Appalachian Regional Commission

Breakout (B): DDAA track

Salon 6

Tourism: Powering Local Economies and Empowering Workforce Development

The First Tennessee Development District, in partnership with Northeast Tennessee Tourism, are bolstering the local economic and workforce by helping high school students and emerging industry leaders learn about the rich career opportunities that exist in the hospitality and tourism industry. Learn how this partnership provides participants with hands-on experiences at day-long, industry-led, interactive events hosted at two of the region's premier tourism locations. This session will also highlight

an additional project that prepares graduates for entry or advanced promotion into a range of management positions in culinary, food and beverage, lodging, attraction, and tourism-related industries.

Speakers:

- **Lottie Ryans**, Director of Workforce & Literacy Initiatives, First Tennessee Development District
- **Alicia Phelps**, Executive Director, Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association

Moderator:

- **Mark Stevans**, Director of Communications, Special Projects & WIOA, First Tennessee Development District

Breakout (C): DDAA track

Salon 1

Strategies for Regional Transit Planning

Rural areas often face unique challenges related to transit planning. Services restricted to single counties can pose obstacles, given that key destinations in rural areas are remote. How are Appalachian communities beginning to work to comprehensively address regional transit planning? Join this session to learn about rural practitioners' strategies to enhance regional transit planning in their region.

Speakers:

- **Adam Hazell**, Planning Director, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
- **Mark Farley**, Executive Director, Upper Cumberland Development District

Moderator:

- **Carrie Kissel**, Associate Director, NADO Research Foundation

6:00-8:30 p.m.

U.S. Botanic Garden Reception - All attendees

Join us for a reception at the U.S. Botanic Garden. Refreshments and light food will be served.

100 Maryland Ave SW, Washington, DC 20001

[Capitol Hill map](#)

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

NOTE: Conference content for the NADO & DDAA joint conference concludes at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 13. Following the conference, there is a special post-conference training for the Economic Development District (EDD) Community of Practice (CoP). This post-conference training session is free, but separate registration is required.

8:00-10:00 a.m.

Registration – All attendees

Arlington Foyer

8:30-9:45 a.m.

Plenary Breakfast – All attendees

Salons 5-6

The Biden Administration’s Place-based Approach and Commitment to Energy Communities

Join leaders from the White House National Economic Council and the U.S. Department of Energy for a discussion on the Biden Administration’s approaches for fostering community prosperity and addressing regional inequality. This session will also include an overview of the efforts of the Interagency Working Group on Coal & Power Plant Communities (IWG) to support the revitalization of coal and power plant communities’ economies. The IWG was created through an Executive Order signed by President Biden and is charged with leading the Administration’s economic revitalization work in order to help mobilize the nation’s clean energy future.

Speakers:

- **Lael Brainard**, Director, White House National Economic Council
- **Alex Jacquez**, Special Assistant to the President for Economic Development and Industrial Strategy, White House National Economic Council
- **Brian Anderson**, Executive Director of the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization, U.S Department of Energy

Moderator:

- **Chris Fetzer**, Executive Director, Northern Arizona Council of Governments

10:00-11:00 a.m.

Closing Plenary Session – All attendees

Salon 4

Economic and Community Development: Aligning Innovative Solutions

This closing session will feature perspectives from key national organizations working to support practitioners in the community and economic development fields. Panelists will share their insights on how they are helping their stakeholders harness emerging opportunities; align strategic goals; navigate the evolving federal policy landscape; compete for federal funding resources; and navigate change. These thought leaders will also share their perspectives on what’s working in the economic and community development realms, versus what challenges continue to pose significant barriers for communities.

Speakers:

- **David Lipsetz**, President and CEO, Housing Assistance Council
- **Dell Gines**, Chief Innovation Officer, International Economic Development Council
- **Matt Josephs**, Senior Vice President, Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Moderator:

- **Kenneth Poole**, President and CEO, Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness

11:30 a.m.4:30 p.m.

Salons 5-6

An Afternoon with the Districts -- *Post-conference training. Separate registration required.*

An interactive half-day training and networking event for Economic Development District (EDD) staff hosted by the NADO Research Foundation (NADO RF) will follow the Washington Conference. This afternoon workshop will focus on data and metrics, and will include training and conversations on how EDDs can best incorporate data into their Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) and other regional planning efforts. This event is delivered through the Economic Development District Community of Practice, managed by NADO RF and funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. This event is free to attend, but separate registration is required. Contact Brett Schwartz at bschwartz@nado.org with questions.