



New Orleans, LA | October 21 – 24, 2024

Monday, October 21

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

NADO Research Foundation Advisory Committee Meeting

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Redevelopment through a Brownfields Lens

Join the Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields (KSU TAB) team, along with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) Brownfield staff and the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Brownfield staff to learn how to identify, prioritize, and tackle Brownfield sites in your area and leverage federal, state, and local funding to ensure successful redevelopment of a Brownfield property.

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Uncovering Opportunities and Identifying New Partners Through Value Chain Mapping

A wealth creation value chain is a network of people, businesses, organizations and agencies addressing a market opportunity to meet demand for specific products or services—advancing self-interest while building rooted local and regional wealth. In this interactive workshop, we'll be mapping value chains in a variety of sectors, identifying gaps, opportunities, and new partners to engage.

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

NADO Executive Committee and Research Foundation Board Meeting

12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Mobile Workshop: University of New Orleans Green Energy Lab

See how the University of New Orleans (UNO) is working with regional stakeholders through the H2theFuture Build Back Better Regional Challenge Coalition to develop a testbed and development center for hydrogen-fueled ships at their new EDA-supported Green Energy Lab. The UNO Green Energy Lab will further research into 'green hydrogen' as a fuel source for the shipping and maritime industries, reducing logistics costs and the carbon footprint of the global shipping industry. The workshop will include guided tours at the UNO Engineering facility and discussions with UNO research staff leading the project on what these technology advancements will mean for the local, regional, and national economies. ***This workshop is limited to 19 participants.*** ***Plan to meet in the lobby at 12:30 p.m. for a bus departure at 12:45 p.m. The group will return to the hotel by 3:30 p.m. This is a bus/walking tour, so plan to wear comfortable shoes. Pre-registration is required and there is an additional fee of \$50.***

12:30 – 3:45 p.m.

Mobile Workshop: Brownfields Redevelopment Tour

Join the National Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) team and other subject matter experts for an excursion to successful redevelopment projects in New Orleans. Participants in this Brownfields Bus Tour will visit former blighted sites being transformed into productive properties for the community. Invited speakers for the tour include the property developer and officials from the Brownfield Programs of both the Regional Planning Commission and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. These local experts will describe the use of brownfields resources as a component of the property revitalization. Note: The bus tour will include some walking at project sites. ***This workshop is limited to 40 participants. Meet in the lobby at 12:30 p.m. for bus departure at 12:45 p.m. The group will return to the hotel by 3:45 p.m. Pre-registration is required and there is an additional fee of \$50.***

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Navigating the Future: AI & RDOs

Technology is transforming every aspect of our lives, including the practice of regional economic development planning and artificial intelligence (AI) is emerging as a pivotal tool for regional development organizations. Join this session to explore how AI can enhance strategies, optimize decision-making, and drive regional growth and prosperity.

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

NADO Board of Directors Meeting

All NADO members are encouraged to attend to learn more about the governance of your Association.

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Conference Opening Plenary: Lessons in Resilience

As the number and intensity of disasters continues to increase, regions throughout the nation will be challenged like never before to maintain lives and livelihoods. David Dodd, the founding CEO of the International Sustainable Resilience Center, Inc., began his career in disaster recovery and resilience almost twenty years ago with Hurricane Katrina, and has since worked throughout the country and worldwide on increasing capacity for economic resilience in the face of all types of disasters. A native Louisianian and New Orleans resident, David will highlight how communities and regions have successfully implemented economic resilience through real-life examples and stories of innovation and courage, including his own, to both inform and motivate attendees to strengthen resilience wherever they call home.

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Opening Reception at the House of Blues

Gather in the Marriott lobby to partake in a unique New Orleans experience: celebrate NADO's 2024 ATC with a Second Line Parade to the House of Blues where you can renew friendships, meet new colleagues, enjoy food and beverages, while listening to wonderful music.

Tuesday, October 22

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Keynote Plenary: Building a Loveable Community

Thriving communities are populated by people who love living there. But what does a loveable community look like in practice? And what can regional development organizations do to build

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communities that inspire place attachment? Melody Warnick, author of *This Is Where You Belong: Finding Home Wherever You Are*, will share stats, stories, and strategies for boosting place attachment in a way that promotes well-being, economic growth, and talent attraction and retention.

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Mobile Workshop: Café Reconcile**

Take advantage of this opportunity to enjoy a delicious lunch at Café Reconcile while learning about the organization’s incredible workforce development training for young adults interested in seeking careers in the hospitality field. Founded in 1996, the program has three priorities: support young adults in the development of their self-confidence, help them attain financial stability, and earn education or employment opportunities suited to their skills sets. Café Reconcile’s workforce program has seen over 2,000 young adults (between the ages of 16 and 24) graduate. ***This workshop is limited to 15 participants. Meet in the lobby at 10:30 a.m. for bus departure at 10:45 a.m. The group will return to the hotel by 12:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided (shortly before the workshop, NADO will reach out to attendees with menu options). Pre-registration is required and there is an additional fee of \$60 which covers lunch and transportation.***

10:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Mobile Workshop: Lafitte Greenway**

Explore the Lafitte Greenway, a 2.6-mile-long linear park and multi-use trail in the heart of New Orleans, that features public art, recreational facilities, fitness and cultural programming, open green space, and innovative stormwater management features. The Greenway is New Orleans’ premier example of post-Katrina sustainable stormwater management known as “Green Infrastructure,” with features such as bioswales, permeable pavement, and bio-retention cells. The Greenway opened in 2015 after years of democratic, volunteer -led, community driven support to turn a formerly abandoned railroad corridor into a public green space that connects an array of diverse New Orleans neighborhoods. ***This workshop is limited to 20 participants. This is a bus/walking tour; wear comfortable shoes. Meet in the lobby at 10:15 a.m. for bus departure at 10:30 a.m. The group will return to the hotel by 12:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required and there is an additional fee of \$50.***

10:30 – 11:45 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions**

- Emerging Trends in Housing Planning

RDOs across the country have completed regional and local housing plans to provide their communities with the tools they need to address housing affordability issues. This session will present emerging trends in regional housing planning, how to work with member communities on regional and local plans, and how regional organizations can be agents of change in their regional housing markets.

- Unpacking the New OMB Uniform Guidance

After a public process that took more than a year and a half, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) rolled out a major revision to its “Uniform Guidance” (2 CFR 200) which become effective October 1, 2024. The governmentwide rules that mandate administrative, cost accounting and audit requirements affecting grants, cooperative agreements, and subawards contain important changes about how regional development organizations will conduct grants management going forward. To help

make the policy transition, this conference session will identify what's changed, what hasn't, and what's likely to happen next.

- Keys to Equity and Inclusion

Now more than ever, RDOs are exploring ways to better incorporate equity and economic inclusion principles into their plans, programs, and outreach efforts to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to be a part of shaping their community's future. This session will provide a foundational understanding and language for approaching equity and inclusion as an individual and an organization.

- Navigating Political Landscapes as an Executive Director

Do RDO executive directors get involved in the politics of trying to receive additional funding and programs? What is the role of local elected officials in that process? What if the executive director is a former elected official? Join this interactive session featuring an all-star panel of board members, elected officials, and executive directors to address the important political relationships and landscapes that RDO executive directors navigate while leading their organizations.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch on Your Own

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. SERDI Meeting

1:30 – 4:00 p.m. **Mobile Workshop: Claiborne Corridor Cultural Innovation District**
Claiborne Avenue, the main street in Tremé, one of the oldest African-American neighborhoods in the United States, was irrevocably changed in 1969 when the elevated Interstate-10 was constructed above the Avenue. The Claiborne Corridor Cultural Innovation District (CID) is a 19-Block transformation of Claiborne Avenue that supports local entrepreneurs and works to achieve equitable and sustainable community development goals. It is a resident-driven effort focused on providing direct pathways to business ownership, workforce development, and community capacity building. Join this tour to learn about the youth programming, health, environmental, and social services, community projects, workshops, and special events the District provides for neighborhood residents. ***This workshop is limited to 25 people. Meet in the lobby at 1:30 p.m. for a bus departure of 1:45 p.m.; the bus will return to the hotel at 4:00 p.m. This is a bus/walking tour, so plan to wear comfortable shoes. Pre-registration is required and there is an additional fee of \$50.***

1:30 – 4:00 p.m. **Mobile Workshop: "America's Rocket Factory": NASA Michoud Assembly Plant**

The countdown to liftoff begins in New Orleans. NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility is one of the largest manufacturing facilities in the world and has been the nation's premiere site for manufacturing and assembly of large-scale space structures and systems for more than 60 years. Join this tour to visit "America's Rocket Factory" and learn about the critical impact this facility has on the regional economy and the national space program. Attendees will also learn about innovative workforce training partnerships at nearby Nunez Community College—home of Louisiana's only Aerospace Manufacturing Technology program. ***Meet in the lobby at 1:30 p.m. for a bus departure of 1:45 p.m.; the bus will return to the hotel at 4:00 p.m. This is a bus/walking tour, so plan to wear comfortable shoes. Pre-registration is required and there is an additional fee of \$50.***

1:30 – 2:45 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

- RDOs in the Middle: Juggling the Roles of Grant Recipient, Subrecipient, and Pass-through Entity

RDOs occupy space at several key “cross-roads” of many federal grant programs. In some programs, an RDO is a primary grantee in a direct relationship with the federal government. In others, the RDO is a subrecipient of a federal award received from another organization, often a state government agency. And at either of these intersections, the RDO might itself be a “pass through entity,” awarding federal grant funds to a “lower tier” subrecipient. Relying on the recently revised OMB Uniform Guidance, this practical session will drill down on what’s required now—what to expect from pass-through entities that subaward to your organization, what’s required when you’re the ones making subawards, and maybe even how the Golden Rule should apply.

- Regional Climate Resilience Initiatives

Attendees will walk away with resources and lessons from industry experts on how small and rural communities are incorporating climate change in regional planning. This includes developing and prioritizing climate adaptation and resilience projects, climate-risk informed analyses, and regional initiatives in smaller communities

- Communications Strategy Workshop

Communications remains an invaluable part of RDOs' work, ensuring that their work both reflects and reaches community members. This workshop features three communications professionals who will share about their work and demonstrate to attendees how they approach communications problems. Attendees will then work through different communications scenarios and develop strategies to take home with them.

- Building a “Compassion It” Workplace

Join us for a session about the role of compassion in the workplace. During this highly interactive workshop you will explore compassion and self-compassion as personal practice. You will also brainstorm ways that you can apply these concepts to boost employee morale, cohesion, and retention in your workplace.

1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Nominating Committee

All NADO members are invited to attend and hear from the candidates for NADO’s Board of Directors Officer positions.

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

- Entrepreneurship and Placemaking: Building Better Places to Live, Work and Grow

Entrepreneurship and placemaking are two key pathways to creating better small places. Rural entrepreneurship is becoming an economic engine for revitalizing small towns. Effective ecosystem building can foster innovation, attract talent and investment, and create a supportive environment where startups and small businesses can thrive and scale. Rural placemaking is a collaborative process allowing for a variety of partners to help create places that people want to live, work and visit. Learn more from regional development organizations about ways they’re supporting their entrepreneurial ecosystem and/or working in creating better places in their regions.

- The ABCs of the CEDS

Are you working on your first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or looking for a quick refresher on the fundamentals? This session will cover what the CEDS is and why it matters, current best practices in writing and presenting the CEDS, examples from peers around the country, and training resources available to support your planning efforts. Come with your questions!

- Exploring Career Paths in Community & Economic Development

Retention of early-career and emerging leaders in the field of economic development is increasingly important, but what are the career pathways and opportunities to keep talented, passionate leaders within the practice of economic development? Join this interactive conversation to learn more about the opportunities for a career in community economic development.

- Conversation Café: Housing Finance – Making Deals Pencil Out

Come learn from other RDOs on how they are financing housing development in their regions including examples of building capital stacks using a variety of federal, state, local, private, foundation, and nonprofit funding sources.

- Federal Grants Management Office Hours

Description forthcoming.

4:15 – 5:15 p.m.

NADO Membership Chapter Meetings

Chapter Meetings offer an opportunity for you to connect with peers from your region, share solutions to challenges, talk about new funding opportunities, and provide NADO leadership with feedback and insights about particular topics. All NADO members are encouraged to attend their Chapter Meeting. (NADO Membership Chapters align with the EDA Regional Offices.)

Wednesday, October 23

5:45 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Community Service Option: Serving Hot Breakfast at Grace at the Green Light ([Separate pre-registration required](#))

7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

DDAA Breakfast

All attendees from a Local Development District located in the 13-state Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) footprint are invited to attend this breakfast and hear from ARC's leadership.

8:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Mobile Workshop: Old Algiers Downtown

Want to explore a charming neighborhood of New Orleans off the beaten tourist track? Join us for a trip on the ferry across the river to Old Algiers! We'll be accompanied by Algiers Economic Development Foundation staff who will take us on a walking tour of the downtown to learn about its revitalization, including changing demographics, supporting local small businesses, the 'food policy landscape', a high school student workforce program, and more. ***This workshop is limited to 19 people. This is a walking tour and will include a ferry across the Mississippi River***

to and from Old Algiers; participants should plan to wear comfortable shoes and clothes. Meet in the hotel lobby at 8:30 a.m. for an 8:45 a.m. departure. Pre-registration is required and there is an additional fee of \$25 to participate.

8:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Mobile Workshop: Tour of New Orleans' Cooperative Businesses and History**

What comes to mind when you think about New Orleans history and culture? You may not know that much of what people appreciate about New Orleans was either created, or heavily influenced, by their many mutual aid societies, which were often the source of cooperative business development. During this tour, you'll learn about the communities, businesses, people and struggles behind the city's food, festivities, and freedom. From the philanthropic work of a devout nun to the economic resurgence of a community devastated by the 1963 construction of a federal highway, to the ever-growing cultural and economic development on a street named for a civil rights pioneer, you'll hear accounts of innovation in philanthropy, education, mutual aid, entrepreneurship, and more. Join us for this session in National Cooperative Month! ***This workshop is limited to 28 attendees. Meet in the hotel lobby at 8:45 a.m. for a 9:00 a.m. departure. Pre-registration is required and there is an additional fee of \$50 to participate.***

9:15 – 10:30 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions**

- **Aging and Economic Development**

The social and economic impacts of population aging are being felt in regions across the country, and RDOs are increasingly looking to new strategies to help their growing number of older adults thrive. This session will discuss impactful programs across a variety of domains—food security, housing, and development planning—that are helping adults live full lives in their communities as they grow older.

- **Expanding Economic Development with Innovative Rural Business Models**

The old way of going into business doesn't fit today's economic realities. Entrepreneurs need new, more accessible business formats and new ways of doing business, including pop-ups, shared buildings, businesses inside of other businesses, and more. Learn the Innovative Rural Business Models and enjoy an interactive discussion around examples of the Models, sharing how your community is participating and brainstorming on ways to use these smaller-scale market tests to learn what works before making a huge investment. Learn how you can adapt them for any size of community and pull down the barriers to entry.

- **Resilient and Adaptive Regional Economies**

Seen in the past as two separate disciplines, climate resilience and economic development strategies can inform and strengthen each other. Come hear from federal agency representatives and economic development practitioners on how climate resilience strategies fit in with broader economic development resilience strategies and how regional organizations can help their communities adapt and respond to the changing economy and climate.

- **Not Your Momma's Development District**

What does it look like to become "Not your momma's Development District?" Staff from the First Tennessee Development District will cover several topics about taking your organization to the next

level, including how to push your organization into new areas of work, building connections, creating a brand, and identifying leadership to get you there. It will also cover overcoming challenges and making the most of new opportunities as well as how best to use or braid funding. This session will help you look at your region through a new lens and do more than just "talking about it."

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. *Concurrent Sessions*

- **Regions Working Together**

Regional organizations can work together on projects that have impact across regional boundaries. By working together, RDOs can bring more resources and funding to projects, have a larger impact in the state and national economies, and drive statewide action on issues relevant to their communities. Hear from successful RDO coalitions who have built these interregional relationships on how they have worked together and the impact this collaboration can have.

- **RLFs and EDDs: Common Challenges and Solutions**

Come hear from Grow America's Revolving Loan Fund Community of Practice on program updates from their past two years of work. Topics will include: best practices learned from experienced RLF loan managers, common challenges and trends from RLFs across the country, and how an EDD can use its RLF program to support the larger EDD mission and their communities.

- **Help Wanted and Doors Open: New Regional Workforce Development Strategies**

As the economic landscape of the United States changes one thing that remains constant is the central role workforce development plays in a successful regional economy strategy. Successful workforce development involves developing human capital in the region as well as unleashing the human capital that already exists. On this panel Michelle Slaton from the Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) will highlight the ways that a regional economic development team can successfully integrate workforce development into their operations while Kelsey Wu of Opportunity@Work will discuss how regions can remove barriers that stand in the way of workers that are Skilled Through Alternative Routs (STARS), and Carol Rayburn of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) will present on the WDB Training Trailer program NEGRC has implemented.

- **Practical Steps to Address Aging Populations in a Warmer World**

Many communities across the United States are facing the challenges and opportunities of having an aging population. At the same time, communities and this growing older adult population in particular, are also facing increased threats from heat, flooding, fires, and poor air quality. This training will provide an opportunity for regional economic development practitioners and partners to 1) better understand the connections between aging populations and changing environmental extremes; 2) learn from local public and private efforts to mitigate risks and build resilience in addressing these connections; 3) participate in a scenario exercise that will enable them to begin analyzing the links in their communities; and 4) enable regional councils to include these issues into various planning efforts for their regions (such as the CEDS, Area Plan for Aging, and transportation plans).

12:15 – 1:30 p.m. *President's Award Lunch*

NADO President Chris Brown will announce the recipient of the 2024 President's Award which recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to regional development. All attendees are invited to attend the luncheon.

1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

- **Equity in Agriculture and Aquaculture**

The prevalence and impact of inequities across the food system are well documented. Less clear is how government, particularly local and regional government, can take action to improve community food access, equity, and economic development opportunities related to food within their context and jurisdiction. Learn more from regional development organizations how they're tackling equity in agriculture and aquaculture.

- **Helping Communities Navigate Grants and Funding Opportunities**

RDOs know that many communities within their regions struggle with capacity to apply for and receive much needed grant funding. Central Pines' Grant Assistance Program, Centralina's Small Towns Thrive Initiative, and Colorado's Grant Navigator program were all created as a solution to help address this challenge. Join this session to learn how these programs are managed, funded, and how they support communities in their respective regions.

- **Planning for Energy Transition and Powering New Energy Economies**

As a transition to renewable energy emerges, planning is paramount to strategically position your community and region for future impacts and new investments. Join this session to learn regional case examples and how your region can capitalize on opportunities in the new energy economy and build regional resilience.

- **Conversation Café: Filling Empty Buildings**

Does your community have too many empty buildings and empty lots? Learn why owners keep buildings empty and the steps you can take to resolve those issues. Overcome common obstacles that keep buildings empty and see success stories from across the country. Learn how businesses can work together to fill those empty spaces. Start with 'just for now' ways to appear full, then work up to long-term solutions that fill empty spaces with dozens of new businesses.

3:15 – 4:00 p.m.

NADO Annual Business Meeting

All NADO members are encouraged to attend to learn more about the governance of your Association.

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Impact Awards Reception

All attendees are invited to attend this reception to learn about the 2024 Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award projects. This year's class of awardees includes 97 projects from 64 NADO members in 21 states. Many will be on hand to share the details of the project. Light snacks and beverages will be provided along with our annual raffle.

Thursday, October 24

8:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Conference Registration

8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Plenary Breakfast

RDOs work throughout their regions to help communities create and enhance locally driven approaches to economic development. The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)

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makes investments in RDOs to conduct planning that enables them to leverage additional assets to foster regional economic growth. Craig Buerstatte, EDA's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs, will provide updates about EDA over breakfast.

10:15 – 11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions:

- North Central Regional Food Business Center: A Case Study in Leveraging Local Food and Farms to Promote Economic Development

This session will be a panel discussion of technical assistance providers of the North Central Regional Food Business Center, facilitated by Teresa Bertossi, USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Regional Coordinator. The panel will consist of technical assistance providers from participating states: Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Technical assistance providers will share how their efforts in the North Central Regional Food Business Center promote community and economic development in their region and beyond.

- Conversation Café: Early Career Engagement

This session will serve as a facilitated networking opportunity for RDO staff members who have been with their organizations for 5 years or less. Participants will engage in guided discussions to share experiences, build connections, and explore common challenges faced by newer professionals in regional development.

- Conversation Café: Financial Leadership for RDO Executive Directors

Share with and learn from your peers the various approaches you have to be strong financial leaders: what kind of information do you provide your boards, how engaged are department heads in the annual budget process, what is your plan to manage cash flow, how do your different revenue streams impact your financial planning?

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Plenary Closing Lunch