ADVOCACY TOOLKIT FOR COUNTY CAPITOL HILL DAY OF ACTION

Engaging with the 118th Congress to Achieve Key County Priorities and Strengthen the Intergovernmental Partnership

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COUNTY ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

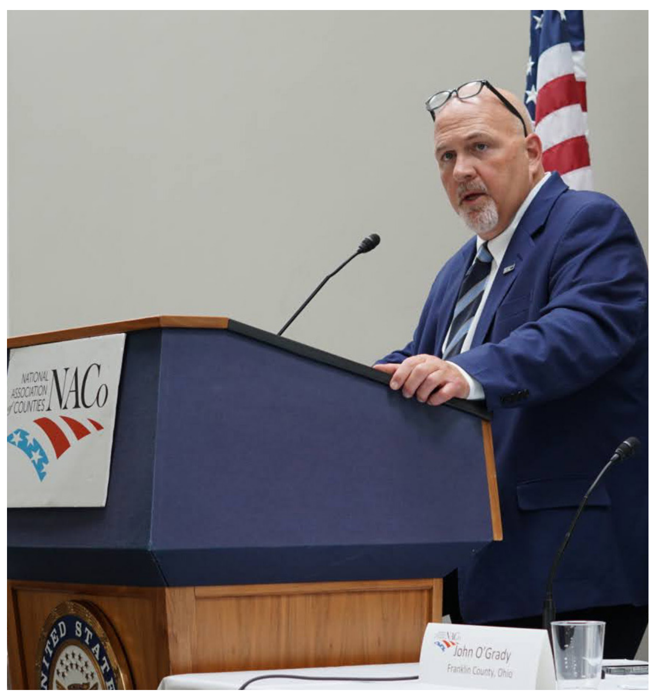
Eighty former county elected officials will serve in the 118th Congress: 67 in the U.S. House, including 12 first-term Representatives, and 13 in the U.S. Senate. This will provide county leaders with a unique opportunity to leverage existing relationships and institutional knowledge to advance county priorities in Washington, D.C.

These early months of this congressional session are a key time for county leaders to build relationships with members of Congress, demonstrate the impact of your county's efforts in your communities and advocate for the federal programs that help to strengthen local programs and initiatives. These opportunities to interact with your Representatives and Senators are especially critical because they coincide with the development of the policy priorities that Congress will work to achieve over the next two years. With a split Congress and the slim majorities held by both Democrats in the U.S. Senate and Republicans in the U.S. House, bipartisan compromise will continue to be necessary to advance county priorities through legislation.

During the 117th Congress, counties worked hard with our intergovernmental partners to secure historic investments in our communities through key pieces of legislation like the American Rescue Plan Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act. It is important for counties to tell our story and demonstrate that we are key intergovernmental partners in successfully implementing these and future laws. Counties will continue to have the opportunity to advocate for our priorities before the 118th Congress, especially as Congress works to reauthorize the Farm Bill and other critical legislation this year.

As these programs continue to be implemented and negotiations begin progressing in Congress, NACo has created this Federal Advocacy Toolkit to support county leaders in advocating for legislation that matter most to your communities here in Washington D.C. This toolkit features in-depth information, talking points, media guides and other exclusive NACo materials on county priorities ranging from infrastructure and public lands to health and public safety issues.

For additional legislative advocacy materials, including individual policy briefs and presentations, scan the QR code.



Franklin County, Ohio Commissioner John O' Grady highlights critical county investments using ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

ARPA CORONAVIRUS STATE & LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUND STORYTELLING

> *Tell the county story by highlighting key investments your county has made using Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and other American Rescue Plan Act investments.*

BACKGROUND

Enacted in March 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) authorized the $350 billion Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (Recovery Fund) which provided $65.1 billion in direct, flexible funding to every county, parish and borough in America to respond to the public health and negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. Department of Treasury's (Treasury) Final Rule, which NACo worked closely with our federal partners on, provided counties with even more flexibility to invest these funds through the $10 million standard allowance that counties may now opt to utilize for a broad range of government services. To learn more about Recovery Fund eligible uses and the Final Rule, visit NACo's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Resource Hub by scanning the QR code below.

Since the enactment of ARPA, counties have been working diligently with our state and federal partners to invest these funds to address the unique needs of our communities and spur equitable, long-term economic recovery.

COUNTY IMPACT

America's nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees continue to be on the frontlines of the nation's response to the coronavirus pandemic. As the country emerges from the pandemic, counties are tirelessly working to continue to respond to the negative public health and economic impacts and rebuild our communities to the benefit of our residents. Still, many counties are confronted with workforce shortages at a time when our residents are facing critical needs. With this historic investment in our communities through American Rescue Plan funds, counties are strengthening America's workforce, addressing the nation's behavioral health crisis, expanding broadband access, improving housing affordability and building prosperous communities for the next generation.

TALKING POINTS

- Counties are leading our nation's recovery through strategic investments of American Rescue Plan resources
    - **[Highlight strategic investments your county has made using ARPA Recovery Funds]** related to: COVID-19 mitigation (vaccines/testing); Addressing the behavioral health crisis; Resilience and preparing for future health emergencies; Strengthening America's workforce; Assisting small businesses; Reducing homelessness; and Investing in critical infrastructure (water, sewer, broadband)

- Congress authorized the Recovery Fund to respond to COVID-19, and its detrimental public health and negative economic impacts
    - The flexible aid provided to counties through the ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund ensures counties can continue to provide important services to residents
    - Congress and the U.S. Treasury understand that county leaders are close to the people and know the unique needs and opportunities within our communities
    - By investing in counties, the American Rescue Plan Act invested in our nation
- The widespread impacts of global pandemic require a federal-state-local response with counties as key leaders in our nation's intergovernmental system
    - **[Highlight your county's role in mitigating pandemic impacts]**
    - Nationwide, counties support 1,900 public health departments, nearly 1,000 hospitals and clinics, 800 long-term care facilities, 750 behavioral health centers, and coroners/medical examiners

Orange County, Fla. Mayor Jerry Demings announces a new program to provide training to local non-profits funded by ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

- Each year, counties invest over $600 billion in our nation's infrastructure, justice system, public health services, schools and local economies, alongside other investments that provide key human services to our most vulnerable residents
  - Counties are pursuing thoughtful, responsible approaches to, ensuring coordination with state and local partners
  - The partnership between counties and the federal government, states and cities drives our government system and enables the most effective responses
- The flexibility (up to $10 million) provided by the U.S. Treasury Final Rule and a unanimous, bipartisan vote of the United States Senate recognized the diversity of needs for America's counties and our residents
  - Counties are using ARPA Recovery Funds for strategic, short-term and long-term investments to meet the needs of residents
  - Not only are counties responding to the immediate needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but counties are using this opportunity to look ahead and build a stronger foundation for long-term social and economic prosperity

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

Enacted in March 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act authorized the $350 billion Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund that provided $65.1 billion in direct, flexible aid to every county, parish and borough in the nation.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY FINAL RULE

Published on January 6, 2022, Treasury's Final Rule allows counties to use up to $10 million of ARPA Recovery Funds as "lost revenue" for the provision of general government services without needing to use the Treasury revenue loss formula and expanded flexibility for broadband and water infrastructure projects. In addition to claiming a $10 million standard revenue loss allowance, Treasury's Final Rule provides broad flexibility for how counties can invest these dollars.

STATE, LOCAL, TRIBAL AND TERRITORIAL FISCAL RECOVERY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND DISASTER RELIEF FLEXIBILITY ACT

This bipartisan bill, led by Senators John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and Reps. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) and (now former) Rep. Carolyn Bordeaux (D-Ga.) in the 117th Congress, would expand Recovery Fund eligible uses to include transportation infrastructure and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-eligible projects, disaster relief efforts and would unlock unobligated administrative funds for the U.S. Treasury to provide technical assistance and oversee the Office of Recovery Programs. **The bill passed as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 omnibus appropriations package.**

Franklin County, Ohio Commissioner, and NACo Housing Task Force co-chair, Kevin Boyce, provides opening remarks at NACo Housing Task Force kickoff event.

INCREASE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

> ***Urge your members of Congress to increase funding for key federal housing programs such as the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investments Partnership Program that promote access to affordable rental housing and pathways to affordable homeownership.***

BACKGROUND

Housing is one of the basic needs for healthy, safe and vibrant communities. Authorized in 1990, the HOME program assists state and local governments in providing affordable housing for low-income families, helping families to improve the quality of life in local communities. Sixty percent of HOME funds are allocated to 650 participating jurisdictions in counties and cities, and 40 percent are allocated to states. HOME funds can be used for the acquisition, reconstruction and rehabilitation of housing. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program assists urban, suburban and rural communities in improving housing and living conditions and expanding economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. CDBG also helps create jobs by expanding and retaining businesses and is an essential tool for helping local governments tackle serious challenges facing our communities.

COUNTY INTEREST

Counties are instrumental in community planning, land use, zoning and enacting policies and other regulations that affect housing. Counties distribute federal relief for emergency rental assistance, evictions and foreclosures, and provide temporary housing solutions to individuals with disabilities, low-income populations, veterans and those experiencing homelessness. Regardless of specific county functions and responsibilities, all counties have the potential to establish and enhance partnerships with public, private and nonprofit sector stakeholders to address their underlying housing issues. Recently, NACo launched a Housing Task Force to produce original research and examine the role of county governments in providing residents with more housing, a greater variety of housing, and better housing affordability and value.

TALKING POINTS

- Depending on specific structures and authority, county governments can play a leading role in tax policies, financing and lending, down payment and closing cost assistance, building permits and code enforcement, land use and zoning, infrastructure development, workforce housing, public safety and emergency management, and community planning.
- CDBG is often combined with other funding to accommodate projects and services; it has a great return on investment with every dollar of CDBG leveraging on average $3.64 from other public and private sources.
- Since 1992, HOME has constructed and rehabilitated more than 1.35 million units of affordable housing; the program has also supported over 372,000 low-income households with rental assistance – while leveraging $4.69 for every dollar invested.
- Counties invest $12.8 billion annually in the construction, operation and support of housing and redevelopment projects.
- Greater funding is needed to keep up with the rising costs of construction and the increased needs of communities. Local governments are becoming more efficient and creative with these important funds, but in order to create effective public-private partnerships using these programs, more public resources are needed.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The CDBG program, which was established in 1974, provides opportunities for elected county officials to plan, implement, and evaluate local community development and housing assistance programs. CDBG allocation continues to decline, falling by over half a billion dollars since FY 2010. Funding for the CDBG program should be maintained or increased at $4.2 billion in FY 2024. CDBG was funded at $3.3 billion in FY 2023.

The HOME program assists state and local governments in providing affordable housing for low-income families, helping to improve the quality of life in local communities. Funding for the HOME program was cut by 50 percent between FY 2010 and FY 2016. Although the HOME program has received annual increases or level funding since 2016, funding levels remain short of the $1.8 billion FY 2010 level. HOME was funded at $1.5 billion in FY 2023, equal to the FY 2022 funding level, and should be raised to $2.1 billion in FY 2024.

Valley County, Idaho and NACo Housing Task Force co-chair, Sherry Maupin, urges for federal solutions that can support counties in fostering housing affordability at the NACo Housing Task Force kick off event.

AMEND THE FEDERAL MEDICAID INMATE EXCLUSION POLICY

> *Urge your members of Congress to amend the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy, which is a harmful policy that strips pre-trial detainees in local jails of federal health benefits such as Medicaid, Medicare or the Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP).*

BACKGROUND

Current federal law prohibits the use of federal funds and services, such as Medicaid, Medicare and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), for inmates of a public institution – a category that includes our local jails. The policy, known as the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP), was originally enacted in 1965 under the Social Security Act and intended to prevent state governments from shifting inmate care costs to federal programs. However, this practice has had detrimental consequences of cutting off federal health benefits to local jail inmates who are awaiting trial and presumed innocent, causing disruptions in primary and behavioral health care access, contributing to worse health outcomes, higher healthcare costs and jail recidivism.

COUNTY INTEREST

Counties own and operate 91 percent, or 3,100, of local jails across the country, which see approximately 10.6 million individuals pass through each year, with an average length of stay of 25 days. Although two-thirds of those detainees are pre-trial and presumed innocent, current federal law prohibits Medicaid and other federal safety net programs from paying for their medical care, leaving counties responsible for the full cost of inmates' health care, rather than the traditional federal, state and local partnership for safety-net services. NACo has created a toolkit and drafted a comprehensive report detailing the impact of this policy on county jails, inmates, and local communities, with relevant policy recommendations.

TALKING POINTS

- Counties invest $176 billion in community health and justice and public safety services each year, including the entire cost of medical care for all detainees in the local justice system.
- Counties operate 3,100 local jails that see approximately 10.6 million individuals pass through each year with an average length of stay of 25 days.
- Although two-thirds of those detained in jails are pre-trial and are presumed innocent, due to federal law, counties bear the cost of medical care for all arrested and detained individuals.
- MIEP causes disruptions in primary and behavioral health care access, contributing to worse health outcomes, higher healthcare costs and jail recidivism.
- Congress has the opportunity to advance legislation that would improve care coordination for individuals with mental health, substance use or other chronic health conditions by allowing continued access to federal benefits to pre-trial detainees.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Several pieces of bipartisan legislation were introduced in the 117th Congress to address the MIEP, however none passed. The Medicaid Reentry Act (H.R. 955/S.285), would have allowed Medicaid payment for medical services furnished to an incarcerated individual during the 30-day period preceding the individual's release. The Due Process Continuity of Care Act (S.2697/ H.R. 6636), similarly would have allowed pretrial detainees to receive Medicaid benefits at the option of the state. The Equity in Pretrial Health Coverage Act (S.3050), also would have removed limitations under Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP and the Department of Veterans Affairs on benefits for persons in custody pending disposition of charges.

Ultimately, a version of the MIEP was amended in the FY 2023 omnibus appropriations package, which included a section to remove limitations on Federal Financial Participation for juveniles who are inmates pending disposition at the option of the state. This change will take effect 24 months after the date of enactment of the FY 2023 omnibus spending package. However, NACo will continue to advocate for other bipartisan policies that will further address MIEP.

Arapahoe County, Colo. Commissioner Nancy Sharpe advocates to amend the MIEP and reinstate federal health care benefits for non-convicted justice-involved individuals on Capitol Hill.

SUPPORT FULL MANDATORY FUNDING FOR PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES PROGRAM AND REAUTHORIZATION OF THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM

> *Urge your members of Congress to support full mandatory funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program and Secure Rural Schools program.*

BACKGROUND

NACo supports restoring full mandatory funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which compensates public lands counties for untaxable federal land. NACo also supports extending the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program as a transitional funding mechanism until the federal government fully implements a sustainable, long-term forest management program with adequate revenue sharing for forest counties and schools.

COUNTY INTEREST

Over 1,900 counties (61.6 percent) in 49 state states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands benefit from PILT and SRS. These counties rely on PILT and SRS to support critical county services, including law enforcement, search and rescue, fire protection, forest maintenance, education and transportation infrastructure.

County officials come together for a photo after a day of advocacy on Capitol Hill during the annual Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Fly-In.

TALKING POINTS

PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES

- The PILT program provides payments to counties and other local governments to offset losses in tax revenues due to the presence of substantial federal land within their county.
- Because local governments are unable to tax the property values or products derived from federal lands, PILT payments are necessary to support essential, mandated local government services such as education, emergency services, transportation infrastructure, law enforcement and health care in over 1,900 counties.
- Without predictable mandatory funding, PILT will remain a discretionary program subject to the annual appropriations process.

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS

- The SRS program provides assistance to rural counties and school districts affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests on federal lands. Counties rely on SRS payments to provide numerous critical services including infrastructure, conservation projects, search and rescue missions and fire prevention programs.
- If Congress fails to reauthorize SRS payments by the end of FY 2023, the expiration of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self- Determination (SRS) Act will create dramatic budgetary shortfalls for over 700 rural counties across the United States. When the authorization for SRS lapsed in FY 2016, federal forest payments to counties decreased by over 80 percent on average.
- Urge your members of Congress to enact a long-term legislative solution for continued revenue sharing payments to forest counties through the U.S. Forest Service's Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program. Congress reauthorized SRS and removed the annual 5 percent funding reduction through FY 2023 in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (P.L. 117-58) enacted on November 15, 2021.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES

The FY 2023 omnibus appropriations package (P.L. 117-103), enacted in December 2022, ensured full, mandatory funding for PILT to over 1900 counties nationwide. PILT was fully funded in FY 2022 at $549.4 million. In FY 2021, public lands counties received $529.7 million from PILT. The program was funded at $514.7 million in FYs 2019 and FY 2020. The FY 2018 Omnibus appropriations package signed into law on March 23, 2018 funded PILT at $552.8 million. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 fully funded PILT at $465 million for FY 2017.

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS

SRS was reauthorized on November 15, 2021, for FYs 2021 through 2023. The U.S. Forest Service distributed $250 million to over 700 counties parishes and boroughs in April 2022. Additionally, SRS Title III funds may now be used for expanding broadband access in schools.

SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT THE COUNTY-RELATED PROVISIONS OF THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW, INFLATION REDUCTION ACT, & THE CHIPS AND SCIENCE ACT

> *Urge your members of Congress to continue to pass legislation that provides direct and flexible funding to county governments by showcasing the county role in implementing these historic investments.*

BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW

BACKGROUND

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58), officially enacting the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The BIL provides $973 billion over five years from FY 2022 through FY 2026, including $550 billion in new investments for all modes of transportation, water, power and energy, environmental remediation, public lands, broadband and resilience. In addition to providing authorizations for a wide variety of programs, the BIL also makes advanced appropriations over a number of years to several federal agencies. Typically, federal appropriations are made over one fiscal year by an annual appropriations act or an omnibus.

COUNTY IMPACT

As major owners and operators of our nation's transportation and infrastructure network, counties play a key role in ensuring the successful interpretation and implementation of the BIL. Counties are eligible to directly apply for several competitive programs included in the legislation, such as the Bridge Investment Program (BIP), the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants, State and Local Cybersecurity grants, and more. As leaders in the nation's transportation system, these competitive programs help counties construct and improve critical transportation infrastructure to foster safe and thriving communities.

TALKING POINTS

- Counties play a major role in America's transportation and infrastructure network, owning and operating 44 percent of public roads and 38 percent of bridges - more than any other level of government. Simultaneously, counties directly support 78 percent of public transit systems and 34 percent of airports that keep our residents connected in every corner of the country.
- Each year, counties invest $134 billion in the construction of infrastructure and the maintenance and operation of public works. Through the BIL, counties will be able to make much-needed investments to improve our nation's infrastructure.

Hennepin County, Minn. Commissioners Angela Conley and Marion Greene welcome U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and highlight infrastructure investments made in the county.

- Competitive programs that counties are eligible to directly apply for in the BIL included in the BIL must be fully funded at their authorized levels in the annual appropriations process to ensure successful implementation.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On August 10, 2021, the U.S. Senate passed an amended version of the U.S. House of Representatives bill by a vote of 69-30. The House then passed this amended version on November 5, 2021 by a vote of 228-206, and the President signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law 10 days later, officially enacting the BIL.

CHIPS AND SCIENCE ACT

BACKGROUND

The Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors and Science Act of 2022 (CHIPS and Science Act), signed into law on August 9, 2022, provides $52 billion in semiconductor manufacturing subsidies to incentivize companies to build, expand, or modernize domestic semiconductor facilities. It also includes a 25 percent tax credit to encourage investments in semiconductor manufacturing. As the employer of more than one in every 50 American workers, counties play a crucial role in our nation's workforce and local economies.

COUNTY IMPACT

County officials actively promote economic growth by attracting and retaining businesses, providing assistance to businesses for recovery, fostering entrepreneurship within the community and engaging in partnerships that drive economic growth. Two provisions in the CHIPS and Science Act – Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs (Tech Hubs) and the RECOMPETE Act Pilot Program – will enable counties to invest in a variety of their local economic needs. The legislation includes $1 billion for the RECOMPETE Pilot Program to provide distressed local communities, including counties, with flexible 10-year block grants to pursue comprehensive economic and workforce development initiatives. The legislation also includes $10 billion for Tech Hubs, which consist of a consortium of universities, economic development organizations, local industry, rural communities, and local governments concentrated within a geographic area, to carry out workforce and economic development activities. Through these two programs, counties will be able to leverage long-term investments to revitalize their economies and improve local and national employment.

TALKING POINTS

- County governments are collectively one of the largest employers in the nation, employing 3.6 million workers. Additionally, the impact of the pandemic on the local government workforce remains acute, with 584,000 local government jobs yet to be recovered.
- County officials actively promote economic growth by attracting and retaining businesses, providing assistance to businesses for recovery, fostering entrepreneurship within the community and engaging in partnerships that drive economic growth.
- In FY 2023, the RECOMPETE Pilot Program received $200 million while Regional Tech Hubs received $500 million. Both programs must continue to be funded at least at their authorized levels in the annual appropriations process to ensure proper implementation of the programs.
- Counties are actively working with our federal partners – both Congress and the administration – to ensure the successful implementation of the CHIPS and Science Act.
- We are actively pursuing new opportunities, provided by this legislation, that will ensure a comprehensive, cooperative and inclusive approach to economic and infrastructure development, particularly in areas that are economically distressed, thus making economic growth more equitable.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

After the U.S. Senate passed the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act by a 64-33 vote on July 27, 2022, the U.S. House of Representatives quickly passed the bill one day later. President Biden signed the bill into law on August 9, 2022, and passed an Executive Order on August 25 to facilitate implementation of the bill.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

BACKGROUND

On August 16, 2022, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) was signed into law. The IRA aims to reduce the federal deficit, cut greenhouse gas emissions and lower health insurance related costs while increasing health insurance coverage for vulnerable Americans.

COUNTY IMPACT

Environmental stewardship is a primary function of county governments to create healthy, safe and vibrant communities for our residents. This includes revitalizing contaminated sites to ensure safe and equitable neighborhoods, providing waste and recycling services to minimize pollution and implementing land use and energy policies to promote sustainable communities, along with many other duties. Through the IRA, counties are offered the opportunity to pursue clean energy initiatives and reduce emissions through new competitive grant programs, local resiliency investments and clean energy tax credits.

TALKING POINTS

- Counties play a crucial role in responding to climate change and reducing national emissions levels through the deployment of clean energy, among other initiatives.
- Many counties engage and partner with local utilities in energy planning, including utility-scale renewable energy projects, key regulatory issues, grid modernization and storage and energy assurance strategies.
- Many counties are already drafting plans to utilize the funding offered by the IRA to pursue clean energy projects in their communities. Potential projects under consideration include solar and battery storage programs, the electrification of county fleets and waste-to-energy plants. Some intend to apply for grant funding from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy while others plan to make use of the tax incentives offered by the IRA through the new direct pay option.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

After passing Congress through the budget reconciliation process, the Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169) was signed into law on August 16, 2022. The law is the product of months-long congressional negotiations follow the passage of the Build Back Better Act (BBBA) in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2021. Because the law was advanced under the reconciliation process, its provisions are solely fiscally focused. As such, the funding in the law is all appropriated rather than authorized, meaning that the funding is guaranteed.

NACo's FEDERAL FELLOWSHIP INITIATIVE

Highlight NACo's new Federal Fellowship Initiative and urge participation in future Initiative cohorts as a way to strengthen the intergovernmental partnership.

BACKGROUND

In 2022, NACo launched its new Federal Fellowship Initiative that aims to educate members of Congress, Congressional staff and federal policy officials about the roles and responsibilities of counties across the country. Through a series of in-person, field-based county tours and peer exchanges, the Fellowship focuses on the importance and structure of America's intergovernmental system of federal, state, local and tribal officials, with a specific focus on the roles, mandates, operations and policy priorities of county elected and appointed officials.

COUNTY IMPACT

During the multi-day visits to one rural and one urban county during the year, participants have the opportunity to learn about the general structures and duties of counties, as well as examine specific public policy topics, such as: economic competitiveness and mobility, public health and community health, public lands management, transportation and infrastructure (including funding/financing and asset management), disaster preparedness and response, public safety, and general public administration.

During the Initiative's first in-person, field-based tour located in Miami-Dade County, participants engaged with federal, state and local leaders, and visited tour sites including the Miami International Airport, PortMiami, Miami-Dade County Emergency Operation Center, South Corridor Transit Project and the Miami Center for Mental Health and Recovery.

TALKING POINTS:

- NACo's new Federal Fellowship focuses on the importance and structure of America's intergovernmental system, with a specific emphasis on the roles, responsibilities, operations and policy priorities of county governments across the country.
- As part of the initiative, NACo aims to educate members of Congress, Congressional staff and federal policy officials about the roles and responsibilities of counties across the country.
- The Fellowship is a unique opportunity to gain a new perspective on the vast roles and responsibilities, engage with local leaders and gain an understanding of how federal policies impact local communities and residents. Participants will travel to one urban and one rural county throughout the year and partake in multiple events in Washington, D.C.
- We urge you to reach out to NACo and express interest in joining the second Fellowship cohort, which will begin September 2023 and conclude August 2024.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The Underline
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