

# National Association of Regional Councils

## WHO WE ARE

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) is the preeminent alliance for fostering regional cooperation and building regional communities.

We advocate for regional approaches with federal and state governments; provide training and technical assistance on the latest regional developments; and conduct research on timely regional topics.

For more than three decades, NARC has represented multi-purpose regional councils of government that assist community leaders and citizens in developing common strategies for addressing cross-cutting transportation, economic development, air and water quality, social equity, growth, and other challenges.

Today, NARC welcomes membership from other public, private, academic, nonprofit, and civic regional organizations and interests as we work to engage the regional community in achieving regional excellence.

## WHAT WE DO

**Advocacy:** NARC represents the legislative and regulatory interests of regional councils, and advocates at the national and state level for regional initiatives that improve the quality of life in our regional communities.

**Member Education & Services:** NARC helps its members address tough regional challenges through an active program of conferences, publications, technical assistance and training.

**Regional Outreach:** NARC brings its members and other individuals and organizations together to promote regional cooperation. Through its Institute for The Regional Community (ITRC), NARC hosts a national Regional Agenda at its annual Regional Summits, prepares periodic national *State of the Regions* reports, and awards Regional Honors to individuals, organizations and regions that achieve regional excellence.

## THINKING REGIONALLY

**Tough Challenges:** Transportation and traffic congestion...air and water quality...economic development and growth...inter-community disparities, workforce training, and housing...information technology and the digital divide...

These are all tough challenges that cross jurisdictional boundaries--challenges that can best be addressed through regional cooperation, planning and action.

**What is a Regional Council of Government?** Regional councils of government--more than 450 of them across the nation--are multipurpose, multi-jurisdictional, public organizations. Created by local governments to respond to federal and state programs, regional councils bring together participants at multiple levels of government to foster regional cooperation, planning and service delivery. They have a variety of names, ranging from councils of government to planning commissions to development districts.

**Making a Difference:** Regional councils are typically governed by a board of elected officials and other community leaders. Together with an executive director and staff, they provide forums on regional

issues, conduct regional planning, provide information and technical assistance services to local governments, and administer federal, state and local programs of a regional nature, such as senior programs, job training, housing and community development, and disaster services.

## **NARC'S ROLE**

### ***Advocacy: Developing Regional Strategies***

NARC advocates for regional approaches with federal and state governments--including campaigns such as "Regional Councils Make Growth Smart," and "Regional Councils Make Federal Programs Work." NARC monitors legislative developments impacting regions and advises member regional councils through the electronic bulletin, *NARC Legislative Update*.

### ***Member Education: Fostering Regional Cooperation***

NARC provides training and technical assistance on the latest regional developments, conducts research on timely regional topics, and promotes regional cooperation through its conferences and publications--including the *Regions* newsletter, the *eRegions* electronic bulletin, electronic List Serve bulletins, and our Web site. The annual **Washington Policy Conference** brings regional leaders together to discuss federal legislation and policies impacting regions, and to set NARC's legislative priorities for the year. The annual **National Regional Summit** is held during the same week in Washington to explore regional initiatives and innovative approaches to regional issues. Both are sponsored jointly by NARC and the ITRC. Later in the year, to bring members up to date on the latest regional developments, NARC holds its **Annual Conference and Exhibition**, hosted each year by a different regional council. And, each fall, regional council executive directors meet for the annual **Executive Directors Conference** to network, take advantage of professional development offerings, and share information and ideas on the latest regional projects.

### ***Regional Outreach: Engaging Community Leaders, Citizens and Organizations***

NARC founded the Institute for The Regional Community in 1994 as a forum for exploring regional initiatives and bringing together different regional organizations and interests. The ITRC, which publishes the quarterly journal, *The Regionalist*, is currently studying the creation of an alliance of the regional community to strengthen regional cooperation in the new century, and is looking at the concept of a regional information clearinghouse--a national database to help communities address regional challenges.