



CONGRESSIONAL[★] 20 CITY CONFERENCE 26



EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES: MARCH 14-15

Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR) Committee

Sunday, March 15, 2026

1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Marriot Marquis Hotel, Washington DC
Univ. of DC/Catholic Univ Room (Level M1)

Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR) Federal Advocacy Committee

Sunday, March 15, 2026 – 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Room: Univ. of DC/Catholic Univ Room (Level M1)

1:00 - 1:10 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND MEETING OVERVIEW

- **The Honorable Ruth Grendahl, Chair** - *Councilmember, City of Apple Valley, Minnesota*
- **The Honorable Mary Dennis, Vice Chair** - *Mayor, City of Live Oak, Texas*
- **The Honorable Bryan Barnett, Vice Chair** - *Mayor, City of Rochester Hills, Michigan*

1:10 - 1:30 BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS (BEA) – DISCUSSION ON CITY-LEVEL STATISTICS

- **Vipin Arora** – *Director, Bureau of Economic Analysis*
- **Mauricio Ortiz** – *Associate Director for Regional Economics, Bureau of Economic Analysis*
- **Rebecca Pocase** – *Economist, Bureau of Economic Analysis*

1:30 – 1:35 REMARKS FROM NLC FIRST VICE PRESIDENT MAYOR JOHNSON

1:35 - 1:50 MUNICIPAL FINANCE 101 PLAYBOOK FEEDBACK

- **David Goldman** - *Deputy City Administrator & Finance Director, Oak Harbor, Washington*
- **Paige Mellerio** - *Senior Policy Advisor, Government Finance Officers Association*

1:50 - 2:10 DISCUSSION ON STATE OF PLAY ON TAXATION, FOCUSED ON CRYPTOCURRENCY

- **Andrew Lutz** – *Director of Tax Policy, Bipartisan Policy Center (Invited)*

2:10 – 2:20 BREAK

2:20 - 2:30 KNOW YOUR CITY TOOL DEMONSTRATION

- **Christy Baker-Smith:** *Director of Research, National League of Cities*

2:30 – 3:00 FEDERAL ADVOCACY UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

- **Chair Ruth Grendahl, Chair - Moderator**
- **Dante Moreno - Legislative Manager, Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations, National League of Cities**

3:00 – 3:30 DISCUSSION ON TARIFFS STATE OF PLAY

- **The Honorable Bryan Barnett, Vice Chair - Mayor, City of Rochester Hills, Michigan**
- **Elena Spatoulas Patel – Co-Director, Tax Policy Center**

3:30 CLOSING REMARKS FROM CHAIR

- **The Honorable Ruth Grendahl, Chair - Councilmember, City of Apple Valley, Minnesota**

Enclosures:

- NLC Policy Development and Advocacy Process
- 2025 City Summit FAIR Executive Summary
- 2026 FAIR Workplan
- 2026 Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR) Committee Roster

Upcoming FAIR Committee Meetings

- April 16 (3-4 ET) - Virtual (Teams)
- May 21 (3-4 ET) - Virtual (Teams)
- July 7-10 - In-Person, Louisville, KY
- September 17 (3-4 ET) - Virtual (Teams)
- October 15 (3-4 ET) - Virtual (Teams)
- November 18-21: In-Person, Nashville, TN

CCC Sessions of Interest

- **Workshop: Simplifying Federal Grants: How Communities Can Shape the Next Wave of Grant Reform:** Monday, March 16, 10:30-12:00 - Independence Salons EFGH (Level M4)
- **Workshop: Bridging Community Divides & Strengthening Civic Trust –** Tuesday, March 17 9-10:30 – Liberty Salons MNOP (Level M4)
- **Workshop: Strengthening Your Advocacy Strategy for Securing Federal Grants –** Tuesday, March 17, 10:45-12:15 - Capitol/Congress Room (Level M4)
- **Federal Agency Expo and Meet NLC Experts,** Tuesday, March 17, 2:15 p.m. Mezzanine Foyer (2nd Floor)

NLC POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY PROCESS

As a resource and advocate for more than 19,000 cities, towns and villages, the National League of Cities (NLC) brings municipal officials together to influence federal policy affecting local governments. NLC adopts positions on federal actions, programs and proposals that directly impact municipalities and formalizes those positions in the [National Municipal Policy \(NMP\)](#), which guides NLC's federal advocacy efforts.

NLC divides its advocacy efforts into seven subject areas:

- Community and Economic Development
- Energy, Environment and Natural Resources
- Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations
- Human Development
- Information Technology and Communications
- Public Safety and Crime Prevention
- Transportation and Infrastructure Services

For each of the seven issue areas, a Federal Advocacy Committee advocates in support of NLC's federal policy positions. Members of each Committee serve for one calendar year and are appointed by the NLC President.

Federal Advocacy Committees

Federal Advocacy Committee members are responsible for providing input and advocating on legislative priorities and reviewing and approving policy proposals and resolutions. Additionally, Committee members engage in networking and sharing of best practices throughout the year.

Federal Advocacy Committees are comprised of local elected and appointed city, town and village officials from NLC member cities. NLC members must apply annually for membership to a Federal Advocacy Committee. The NLC President makes appointments for chair, vice chairs, and general membership. In addition to leading the Federal Advocacy Committees, those appointed as Committee chairs also serve on NLC's Board of Directors during their leadership year.

At the Congressional City Conference, Federal Advocacy Committee members are called upon to advocate for NLC's legislative priorities on Capitol Hill, as well as develop the committee's agenda and work plan for the year. Committee members meet throughout the year to further the plan, hear from guest presenters, discuss advocacy strategies and develop specific policy amendments and resolutions. At the City Summit, Committee members review and approve policy proposals and resolutions. These action items are then forwarded to NLC's Resolutions Committee and are considered at the Annual Business Meeting, also held during the City Summit.

Advocacy

Throughout the year, Committee members participate in advocacy efforts to influence the federal decision-making process, focusing on actions concerning local governments and communities. During the Congressional City Conference, Committee members have an opportunity, and are encouraged, to meet with their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill. When NLC members are involved in the legislative process and share their expertise and experiences with Congress, municipalities have a stronger national voice, affecting the outcomes of federal policy debates that impact cities, towns and villages.

2025 CITY SUMMIT
FAIR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Policy:

- ❖ **Section 1.03 Intergovernmental Relations**
 - N. Census
 - P. Election Administration

Resolutions:

- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-1:** Support for the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act
- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-2:** Urging Congress to Ensure Accurate Counts For All Municipalities in the 2030 Census
- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-3:** Support of Legislation to Streamline the Federal Grant Processes
- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-4:** Preserving the Tax-Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds
- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-5:** Calling for the Restoration of the Tax-Exemption on Advance Refunding Bonds
- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-6:** Promoting Civic Discourse Within and Among Communities Across America
- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-7:** Urging Federal Engagement with Local Governments on the Development of Cryptocurrency Regulation
- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-8:** Calling to Resolve the Conflict Between State and Federal Cannabis Laws
- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-9:** Urging Sustainable Federal Fiscal Policy to Preserve Local Funding Stability
- ❖ **NLC RESOLUTION 2026-10:** Supporting the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit to Strengthen Local Economies and Reduce Child Poverty

FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS (FAIR) FEDERAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE 2026 WORK PLAN

The main purpose of the Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR) Federal Advocacy Committee is to 1) provide input and advocate on legislative priorities, 2) review and approve policy proposals and resolutions, and 3) engage in networking and sharing of best practices.

NLC's [2026 Federal Action Agenda](#) is a biannual agenda mapped to the Congressional cycle to guide local advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill and with the Administration. The agenda for 2026 is about strengthening local economies through federal partnership and positioning local leaders as key partners in shaping federal policies to meet the needs of their communities. The 2026 Action Agenda outlines NLC's core principals, aims to support cities, towns and villages of all sizes in successfully accessing federal grant opportunities and urges Congressional and Administrative action in helping to solve some of the most pressing challenges at the local level.

The charge to each of NLC's federal advocacy committees is to develop a work plan to further the Federal Action Agenda. Core FAIR issues fall under several pillars of the 2025 Action Agenda. The committee will meet over the course of the year to engage in advocacy activities and develop policy recommendations, as necessary. Committee members will also share best practices, successes and challenges in utilizing these new federal funding opportunities.

Summary of Last Year's Activities

Last year, the FAIR Committee supported advocacy efforts on protecting the tax-exemption of municipal bonds and ensuring that NLC was ready for emerging tax issues. Specifically, the committee focused on preserving the tax exemption and reinstating advance refunding; urging federal engagement with local governments on the development of cryptocurrency regulation; and calling to resolve the conflict between state and federal cannabis laws once and for all.

Congressional and Administrative Actions and NLC Accomplishments in 2025:

- **Congress** – NLC played a lead advocacy role in urging Congress to protect the tax-exemption on municipal bonds. NLC also championed the Streamlining Federal Grants Act and worked with key Members of Congress to get it reintroduced in the Senate. The Streamlining Federal Grants Act aims to make federal grants – from application to reporting – more accessible and less burdensome to all communities. NLC was instrumental in getting a funding increase for the U.S. Census Bureau and report language added in to the Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations bill in support of the upcoming 2026 census test sites. This funding increase will help the Bureau prepare for the Local Update to Census Addresses (LUCA) program, which is the only way for communities to contribute directly to the accuracy of the census, as well as ensure adequate preparations for the 2030 decennial census.

- **Administration** – Due to staff turnover issues within the U.S. Department of Treasury, the annual reporting period for the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) proved troublesome for many municipalities, especially those that were small and rural. NLC successfully lobbied Treasury and Congress to extend the report deadline from April 30 to June 30, with another period for municipalities to submit their report in September and October. This deadline extension allowed non-compliant municipalities to decrease by over 76%.

FAIR PRIORITY AREAS

Municipal Finance Education

What to watch in 2026

- **Publication of a Municipal Finance Playbook for local elected officials.**
 - Municipal financial health underpins local government. Yet a recent NLC survey shows that many elected officials do not feel confident in their understanding of their city's finances and that key financial information is often not delivered in a clear, decision-ready format. Because of that NLC has partnered with the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) to create simple, practical tools to help elected officials make sense of financial information and ask better questions about their community's financial condition.
 - In February 2026, NLC hosted four focus groups with local elected officials on what they know and don't know about their community's finances.
 - At CCC 2026, NLC and GFOA will present the findings and request feedback from the FAIR Committee before creating the playbook and other resources, to be released this year.
- **Congressional education campaign around Advance Refunding bonds.**
 - Following NLC's successful drive to preserve the tax-exemption on municipal bonds last year, NLC will continue its education and advocacy campaign to reinstate Advance Refunding bonds.
 - This campaign is supported in part by the Public Finance Network, a separate 501(c)3 organization that NLC sits on the board of.
- **Ending of the America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) Program.**
 - The spending deadline for the ARPA SLFRF Program is December 31, 2026. NLC is working with the U.S. Department of Treasury to help all communities understand the compliance and reporting measures they must follow to stay within the program's guidelines. This includes offering report guidance and aid, closeout guidance and aid, and spend down guidance and aid.
 - Additionally, as stated in the most recent [City Fiscal Conditions](#) report, while SLFRF played a critical role in stabilizing municipal budgets through FY2024, its upcoming conclusion in 2026 has prompted cities to reassess spending priorities. Growth in general fund programs has slowed, and cities entered FY2025 with a more cautious outlook. NLC will be monitoring this situation and assessing how to best support communities.
- **Another party-line reconciliation bill in Congress that may endanger municipal bonds.**
 - There have been discussions of another party-line reconciliation bill but congressional leadership has not coalesced around a concrete idea or plan. Reconciliation bills have been one of the biggest threats to tax-exempt municipal bonds, because Members of Congress are looking for "pay fors" for their priorities and historically they are pushed through very quickly without much time for external conversations.
- **Opposition to unfunded mandates.**
 - NLC remains staunchly opposed to unfunded mandates on communities. NLC is working with Rep. Foxx's office on the [Unfunded Mandates Accountability and Transparency Act of 2025](#), which would require every piece of legislation being considered in Congress to clearly identify if it would be an unfunded mandate on communities.

Census

What to watch in 2026

- **Success of the 2026 census test sites.**
 - There has never been a perfect census, but the 2020 decennial had structural issues that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mid-decade tests are essential for the Bureau to test new strategies, implement new technologies and root out failure points before they become costly errors. The 2026 test is the only planned test this decade.
 - A recent [Federal Register Notice](#) looks to significantly curtail both the number of test sites and scope of the test, which we are concerned will significantly weaken the Bureau's ability to prepare for an accurate 2030 count. NLC will continue to engage with conversations with both Congress and the Administration on the importance of an accurate 2030 count and how the federal government can best partner with local communities. For more information on the changes made to the 2026 census tests, please see [NLC's recent blog](#). If you would like to send a letter to your Members of Congress, you can do so [here](#)
- **Preparations for the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program.**
 - The Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program is one of the only opportunities for state, local and tribal governments to contribute directly to the accuracy of the census in their respective jurisdictions, by helping ensure a comprehensive address list for housing units and group living facilities (Group Quarters) before the enumeration starts. Local governments are best positioned to identify living quarters missing from the primary address list such as housing units built since the last Census or not visible from the street, or apartment units in larger structures. If an address is not listed, the Census Bureau will not attempt to count that household and remain unaware that it has missed that household or facility.
 - Although the LUCA program officially opens in early 2027, communities that begin preparing now will be best positioned to act quickly and thoroughly when the short application window opens.
 - NLC is helping communities prepare for the LUCA program by offering support through webinars, blogs, FAQs and direct support, including a [March 31 webinar on the LUCA program](#). NLC will be working with the U.S. Census Bureau to provide train-the-trainer resources for national and state associations to ensure communities have the support they need to assess and complete the LUCA program, should they desire to.
 - NLC will also be monitoring and responding to Federal Register Notices on the LUCA program, including one open from [February-April proposing the LUCA timeline, offerings, and opportunities](#).

Simplifying Federal Grants and Processes

What to watch in 2026

- **Simplifying Federal Grants:** NLC supports legislation that would make the application, administration, reporting, and closeout of federal grants simpler. There is currently legislation pending in Congress and we anticipate more bills to be released this year.
 - The [Streamlining Federal Grants Act](#) takes real steps to improve the grants system for communities. The bill would break down barriers to access, simplify guidance, improve coordination across federal agencies and help communities better navigate the federal grant system from application to closeout. To read more about the bill, [click here](#).
 - There is currently only a Senate version, but we expect the House to reintroduce their version shortly.

- There have been multiple Executive Orders released that may impact the federal grants process, including the [Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking](#). NLC is tracking all Executive Orders and providing fact sheets on those relevant to local communities, which you can view [here](#).

Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR)

Leadership

Committee Chair Ruth Grendahl, Council Member, City of Apple Valley, MN

Vice Chair Bryan Barnett, Mayor, City of Rochester Hills, MI

Vice Chair Mary Dennis, Mayor, City of Live Oak, TX

Members

Richard Adams, Councilmember, City of Mesa, AZ

Jack Arriaga, Federal Relations Manager, City of Portland, OR

Jason Ashmore, Mayor, City of Sesser, IL

Larry Avery, Council Member, City of Gadsden, AL

Thomas Barnhorn, Councilor, City of Seminole, FL

Celina Benitez, Mayor and MML Exc. Committee Member, City of Mount Rainier, MD

Chris Benson, City Administrator, City of Pembroke, GA

Sammie Brown, Chief of Staff to Council Chairperson, City of Riviera Beach, FL

Bob Campbell, Councilmember, Town of Leland, NC

Mark Chambers, Alderman, City of Milwaukee, WI

Alejandra Chavez, City Council Representative- District 1, City of El Paso, TX

Ron Davis, Councilmember, City of Mableton, GA

Brian Dehner, City Administrator, City of Edgewood, KY

Gay Donnell Willis, Deputy Mayor, City of Dallas, TX

Penny Gold, Commissioner, Town of Longboat Key, FL

David Goldman, Deputy City Administrator/Finance Director, City of Oak Harbor, WA

Raul Gonzalez, Council Member, City of Arlington, TX

Alejandra Gorski, Legislative Liaison, City of El Paso, TX

Tonya Graham, Mayor, City of Ashland, OR

Tie Gutierrez, Councilmember, City of Thousand Oaks, CA

Katie Halse, Assistant Director, Intergovernmental Relations, City of Bellevue, WA

Jennifer Hawkins, Councilmember, City of Chandler, AZ
Allison Heyward, Councilmember, City of Schertz, TX
Don Hudson, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director, City of Tualatin, OR
Kurt Johnson, District 6, City of Grand Prairie, TX
Linda Julien, Councilwoman, City of Miami Gardens, FL
Cleophus King, City Council Member, City of Bessemer, AL
James Kole, Councilmember, City of Laurel, MD
John Link, Mayor, City of Edgewood, KY
LaTonya Martin Rogers, Councilmember, City of East Point, GA
Britt Moore, Mayor Pro Tem, City of High Point, NC
Devin Murphy, Mayor Pro Tempore, City of Pinole, CA
Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Port Wentworth, GA
Vanna Ngo, Legislative Affairs Officer, City of Grand Prairie, TX
Steve Powers, City Administrator, City of Mukilteo, WA
Christopher Roberts, Mayor, City of Shoreline, WA
John Rutherford, Council Member, City of Nashville - Davidson County, TN
Daphnee Sainvil, Intergovernmental Affairs Manager, City of Fort Lauderdale, FL
Jennifer Scott, Town Manager, Town of Braselton, GA
Kyle Shephard, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, City of Orlando, FL
Ryan Skrobarczyk, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, City of Corpus Christi, TX
Crystal Smitherman, Councilmember, City of Birmingham, AL
James Stewart, Mayor, City of Irondale, AL
Fabiola Stuyvesant, Commissioner, City of Sunny Isles Beach, FL
Kyonzte Toombs, Council Member, City of Nashville - Davidson County, TN
Katie Topinka, Intergovernmental Relations Director, City of Minneapolis, MN
James Vanderpool, City Manager, City of Anaheim, CA
Natasha Williams-Brown, Councilwoman, City of South Fulton, GA