

January 12, 2024



The Ninety-Three

NACO Executive Director Comments on Governor's Property Tax Reform Proposal

Lincoln, NE - The Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) appreciates Governor Pillen leading the charge for property tax relief in our state. While county property taxes account for only one-sixth of the property tax load in the state, counties are involved in every step of the property tax process, and are sensitive to the burdens our citizens bear, but also mindful of the services they expect from their local government.

We agree with the Governor that true, effective reform requires current state property tax relief efforts to be provided directly to political subdivisions to lower their starting point when determining their property tax requests. We further agree that any caps, which can help make the property tax more predictable in the aggregate, must include reasonable exceptions, including allowing communities to grow commensurate to their needs, and requires a commitment on the part of the State to provide a sustainable source of direct relief that grows in concert with the costs of local government.

We agree that the more the State can provide in direct relief, the more impactful it will be for Nebraska property owners. How the necessary revenue of the State and its political subdivisions is raised is still the subject of a lot of open dialogue, and NACO applauds the Governor for assembling stakeholders to move this ball forward. Determining the right level of service we provide to the citizenry is one of the fundamental questions of what government is for, and NACO has been and will be a willing partner in that conversation.

Read on our website: <https://nebraskacounties.org/resources/press-releases.html/title/january-10-2024-naco-executive-director-comments-on-governor-s-property-tax-reform-proposal>

SLCG Cybersecurity Grant Webinar



JANUARY 16TH, 2024

2:00 PM

SLCG

CYBERSECURITY GRANT WEBINAR

Do you need help with your SLCG project submission or have questions about the process? Please join us!

Subjects to be covered will be

- ✓ Project Submission Questions
- ✓ Project types for this round of funding
- ✓ Grant Program Basics



To join the webinar browse to <https://SLCG.Nebraska.gov/> and click the Join Webinar button!



The submission window for the second round of State and Local Cybersecurity Grants is open from November 13, 2023 to February 4, 2024.

An upcoming webinar on project submission will be hosted on **January 16, 2024 at 2:00 PM CST.**

For more information, visit: <https://slcg.nebraska.gov/>

Upcoming Events

2024

County Board Chair Workshop
February 16, Kearney

Southeast District Meeting
March 14, Lincoln

Northeast District Meeting
March 15, Norfolk

Central District Meeting
March 21, York

Panhandle District Meeting
March 27, Bridgeport

West Central District Meeting
March 28, Ogallala

County Budget Workshop
June 12, Kearney

County Board Workshop
June 12-14, Kearney

NACO Legislative Conference
October 11, TBD

NACO Annual Conference
December 18-20, Kearney

www.nebraskacounties.org

County Board Chair Workshop Registration

This workshop is for County Board Chairs and Vice Chairs.

Friday, February 16, 2024 | 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Younes Conference Center South, 16 W Talmadge Rd , Kearney, NE 68845

Deadline to pre-register: 2/5/24

Registration fee: \$0

Register Here

View the Agenda Here

Protecting farmland, rural communities are key topics for upcoming USDA and DOE listening sessions on clean energy siting

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will host a series of four listening sessions throughout January 2024. During these listening sessions, local stakeholders are invited to share perspectives on the benefits and challenges related to clean energy project siting and its impact on agricultural lands and rural communities.

Here's why it is crucial for county leaders to make their voice heard:

Following historic federal investments through the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment in Jobs Act, a record level of clean energy projects has been proposed and many are under construction in rural areas across the country, including on agricultural land.

The deployment of clean energy is crucial for improving domestic energy security and rural economic development. However, if implemented without feedback from county leaders, concerns regarding diminished property values, loss of vital farmland and deterioration of the rural character could become a reality.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to clean energy siting, as each community has unique factors that must be considered during the implementation process.

Preserving local decision-making is crucial to ensuring the clean energy deployment minimizes harm to the environment and working lands and maximizes benefits for communities.

Each listening session is geared toward a specific stakeholder group:

Government permitting and policy representatives at the state, county and local level are invited to attend a session on January 12, from 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. EST. Register [here](#).

Agricultural producers are invited to attend on January 16, from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. EST. Register [here](#).

All stakeholders and members of the public are invited to attend on January 16, from 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. EST. Register [here](#).

Rural stakeholders and clean energy developers on January 17, from 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. EST. Register [here](#).

These sessions will provide a valuable opportunity for county leaders and other stakeholders to communicate their thoughts on clean energy siting challenges to our federal partners.

Counties applaud USDA and DOE efforts to engage local leadership because:

Counties support the recognition and incorporation of the county perspective on clean energy siting.

Counties support comprehensive efforts to encourage and enable American agriculture to provide energy to the United States while continuing to produce abundant, safe and affordable food and fiber.

State and federal entities must continue to partner with counties to implement locally led strategies for the conservation and use of natural resources.

Source: National Association of Counties (NACo) <https://www.naco.org/news/protecting-farmland-rural-communities-are-key-topics-upcoming-usda-and-doe-listening-sessions>

USDOT announces Bridge Investment Program

On December 20, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced \$9.7 billion in funding for the [Bridge Investment Program \(BIP\)](#) through Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. The BIP is a competitive grant program focused on rehabilitating existing bridges to reduce the number of bridges in poor condition and bridges in fair condition at risk of falling into poor condition.

Are counties eligible?

Yes. The BIP has expanded eligibility so that local government entities, including counties, are eligible to apply directly to USDOT. Counties can apply for the regular bridge and planning funding [here](#), and the large bridge funding [here](#).

What can counties use the Bridge Investment Program funding for?

There are three project categories within the BIP: large bridge, regular bridge, and planning.

Large Bridge

Projects that cost more than \$100 million

Maximum award amount is 50% of total costs

Minimum award amount is \$50 million

2022 recipients listed [here](#)

Regular Bridge

Projects that cost less than \$100 million

Maximum award amount is 80% of total project costs

90% if the bridge is an off-system bridge

Minimum award amount is \$2.5 million

2022 recipients listed [here](#)

Planning

\$20 million is set aside for planning projects

Maximum award is 80% of total project costs

2022 recipients listed [here](#)

When is the application due?

The application deadlines for FY2023-FY2026 are listed below.

Large Bridge

FY2025: August 1, 2024

FY2026: August 1, 2025

Regular Bridge

FY2023/FY2024: March 19, 2024

FY2025: November 1, 2024

FY2026: November 1, 2025

Planning

FY2023/FY2024: February 19, 2024

FY2025: October 1, 2024

FY2026: October 1, 2025

Additional Resources

A fact sheet about the BIP can be found [here](#). Answers to frequently asked questions can be found [here](#). For information about other funding opportunities through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL/P.L. 117-58), see [NACo's funding matrix for counties](#).

Source: National Association of Counties (NACo)

<https://www.naco.org/news/usdot-announces-bridge-investment-program>

FEMA Seeks Volunteers for Virtual BRIC National Review Panels

FEMA is seeking volunteers from state, local, tribal and territorial governments and other federal agencies to participate on the [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) virtual national review panels.

The agency is accepting [Expression of Interest](#) forms from **Jan. 8, 2024–Feb. 15, 2024**. These volunteers will leverage their mitigation experience and expertise to determine how subapplications meet [BRIC qualitative evaluation criteria](#).

The virtual panels will run April 8 – May 3, 2024 on Zoom. Panelists will serve 30 hours on one weekly panel from 10 a.m.–5 p.m. ET plus a three-hour training.

FEMA anticipates that participants on the panels will commit eight hours a day over the course of five business days. All reviews will be conducted virtually and there is no compensation for participating on the panels.

The agency anticipates participation in these panels will strengthen the BRIC review process by ensuring it is transparent, equitable and inclusive. It will also offer insight into new and creative ways communities are addressing different hazards, an expanded network of individuals and a fresh look at ways to contribute to community disaster resilience.

For more information, visit the BRIC [webpage](#) on [FEMA.gov](#).

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

LINCOLN, NE – The Nebraska Department of Health and Human (DHHS) services is inviting licensed childcare programs across the state that are open and operating to consider two new grant opportunities worth up to \$15 million.

The Restoration and Enhancement Program (REP) and Technology Access Program (TAP) are need based funding programs being administered by DHHS's Office of Economic Assistance (OEA) and funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

DHHS will be offering 5 (five) informational webinars with live demonstrations to guide child care providers through the application process of each grant. Three webinars will be conducted in English and 2 (two) will be facilitated in Spanish.

Restoration and Enhancement Program

Through the Restoration and Enhancement Program grant opportunity, DHHS seeks to assist licensed child care providers with improving facilities, investing in new equipment, and enhancing the quality of childcare homes and centers throughout the state of Nebraska. Awards will support programs by providing funding for allowable

indoor and outdoor equipment, facility and maintenance repairs, installation of required fire alarm systems, and upgrading child care supplies and equipment.

Technology Access Program

Through the Technology Access Program, DHHS seeks to promote adequate and updated technology to enhance the child care quality and capacity throughout the state. This funding will facilitate the ease of service delivery, encourage higher personal security and protection of Nebraska's children, and further the educational programs of child care providers.

Applications for both programs will be accepted beginning at **8:00 a.m. CST on Monday, December 18, 2023 through 11:59 p.m. CST February 9, 2024.** Awards to qualifying REP applicants will be made following the close of the application period. Awards to qualifying TAP applicants will be made on a rolling basis until funds are fully disbursed, which may occur prior to February 9, 2024.

Licensed child care providers who wish to apply for the Restoration and Enhancement Program and/or Technology Access Program must submit a completed application describing how requested grant funds would be used. The application will be available at www.dhhs.ne.gov/CCDF during the application period.

To learn more about these funding opportunities, please visit www.dhhs.ne.gov/CCDF for more details and to register for one of the informational Webinars.

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

USDOT announced the FY24 RAISE Grant application which makes \$1.5B available to state, local and tribal governments for projects "for planning or constructing surface transportation infrastructure projects that will improve safety; environmental sustainability; quality of life; mobility and community connectivity; economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism; state of good repair; partnership and collaboration; and innovation".

The deadline is February 28, 2024.

The NOFO is [here](#) and additional information about RAISE is [here](#).

2024 NACo President and Executive Director Meeting

Marvin Kohout, Saline County Commissioner and 2024 NACO President, and Jon Cannon, NACO Executive Director, are out in Washington D.C. this week attending the NACo President and Executive Director Meeting.

Follow along on Facebook!





RESOURCES

[Legislative Newsletter](#)

[County Employment Opportunities](#)

[Legal Calendar](#)

[2024 Election Calendar](#)



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