

10 Reasons to Be a Member

1. REPRESENTATION IN WASHINGTON

NACo serves as your advocate and voice fighting unfunded mandates and unnecessary regulations, while seeking federal funding for vital county-owned infrastructure and services. NACo's professional legislative staff works with county officials to educate and lobby the Administration and Congress on key issues affecting counties and their residents. NACo's Board of Directors, at the direction of the membership, establishes legislative priorities annually which guide the association's efforts.

Over the past decade, NACo has been successful on 75 percent of its priority issues. Ongoing legislative priorities include:

- Protect the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds
- Protect the Federal-State-Local Partnership for Medicaid
- Support long-term transportation funding and county priorities in MAP-21 Reauthorization
- Protect county interests in federal "waters of the U.S." rulemaking
- Support county authority to collect existing sales taxes
- Support the payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) and secure rural schools (SRS) programs, and
- Support comprehensive immigration reform.

NACo's Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) and Rural Action Caucus (RAC) have platforms that are part of NACo's key legislative priorities and advocate these priorities on behalf of urban and rural counties throughout America.

Members participate in NACo's Legislative Affairs by:

- Attending NACo's Conferences where policy is formulated
- Serving on a steering committee
- Receiving Washington Watch and Alerts
- Taking action by writing or calling Members of Congress to voice concerns on behalf of your county and county governments across the nation, and
- Attending NACo Fly-Ins to lobby Members of Congress and educate the Administration about essential issues to counties.

“ The benefit to the county, our particular county, from NACo is incredible. Whether it is from the webinars we receive from NACo, whether it is the information we receive or whether it is attending these conference we go to, and we can bring that back both to the state and to our local authorities. It's terrific. It's a well-paid membership.

**Dennis O'Loughlin
Supervisor
Dane County, Wis.**

2. CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

NACo holds three major conferences annually. All of our conferences and events give members the opportunity to learn and gather information to help improve the effectiveness of their counties. The cornerstone of the NACo conferences is our Annual Conference which is held each year in July. It is at this event that NACo members come together to elect new officers and conduct the business of the association. Each conference has its own personality and individual focus. Membership entitles you to attend the following conferences at significantly reduced costs:

- Annual
- Legislative
- Western Interstate Region

Conferences provide you with an opportunity to:

- Network with your peers
- Participate in professional development programs
- Attend issue-related, informative workshops
- Hear from expert speakers on a variety of topics
- Learn best practices from county governments across the United States, and
- Influence policy and advocate for county issues.

3. FINANCIAL SERVICE CENTER PROGRAMS

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance

Nationally sponsored by NACo, the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance provides counties with access to nationally, competitively bid contracts that feature lower prices and guaranteed delivery of quality products and services. Since 1996, participating counties have saved more than \$1 billion through the U.S. Communities program.

Deferred Compensation

NACo, in partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) and state associations of counties, provides county employees with a Section 457 Deferred Compensation Program. Since its inception in 1980, NACo's Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement income program available to county employees. Nearly 350,000 county employees from over 3,000 counties and county special districts currently participate in the program.

Public Finance Authority

In 2010, the Public Finance Authority (PFA) was created as a unique governmental entity that can finance tax-exempt conduit bonds for public and private activities that benefit public agencies on a multi-state basis. PFA presents a new approach to traditional bond finance. The national and streamlined processes it offers will drive down costs of issuance and improve the access of many communities to tax-exempt finance for projects that provide public benefit, contribute to social and economic growth, and improve the overall quality of life in communities throughout the country.

eConnectDirect®

eConnectDirect®, a user-friendly platform offered by Multi-Bank Securities, Inc. and endorsed by NACo Financial Services, allows county treasurers and finance officers to invest with confidence and efficiency in the fixed-income marketplace.

4. LIVE HEALTHY U.S. COUNTIES

The NACo Prescription-Health-Dental Discount Program known as Live Healthy–U.S. Counties provides relief to uninsured and underinsured Americans who face high prescription, health and dental costs. The program is free to NACo member counties and has been offering real savings to county residents across the country since 2004. More than \$600 million has been saved in over 1,350 counties nationwide. The program, which is administered by CVS/caremark, includes discounts on prescriptions, vision care, LASIK & PRK vision procedures, hearing aids & screenings, prepaid lab work, prepaid diagnostic imaging, diabetic supplies and dental care.

The prescription portion of the program continues to grow, providing average savings of 24 percent on thousands of medications. The savings range from 15 to 75 percent, and the free discount card is accepted at more than 68,000 pharmacies nationwide. Adding the dental discount program enables residents to save on all health services through one program. This program helps residents of NACo member counties save 15 to 50 percent on dental care and is honored by more than 110,000 participating providers nationwide. The dental discounts help people who are uninsured, but can also complement health insurance plans or work with health savings accounts and flexible spending accounts.

The program is FREE for member counties and inexpensive for residents:

Prescription Drug Discount Card: Free for Residents

Dental Discount Program: \$6.95 month or \$69 year for individuals. \$8.95 month or \$79 year for families

Medical Services: \$6.95 month or \$69 year for individuals. \$8.95 month or \$79 year for families

The NACo Live Healthy Discount Program is NOT insurance.

COUNTIES can get more information on how your county can benefit from the program by visiting the county website at: www.naco.org/health <<http://www.naco.org/health>> .

5. COUNTY NEWS

NACo's biweekly newspaper, County News, is rated one of the best benefits of membership. County News is available in print, electronically and online (www.countynews.org <<http://www.countynews.org>>). County News highlights best practices, model programs, news items on timely issues, solutions from experts, research, and even job postings to attract candidates nationally. Multiple subscriptions are included with NACo membership.

NACo also emails members County News Now which is a biweekly electronic newsletter sent to over 40,000 county officials and staff. As part of NACo's efforts to enhance communication to our members, the newsletter is designed as a quick read with links for more in depth information on the website. The focus is on informing members of all that is new including publications, grant opportunities, legislative information, upcoming educational webinars, training programs, conferences and more. The newsletter is used to update NACo subscribers about the most current developments in Congress concerning counties.

6. WEBSITE AND WEB-BASED EDUCATION

Counties connect via NACo's website, your direct and best source for all information pertaining to NACo's programs, products and services. Visit www.naco.org <<http://www.naco.org>> for research, legislative information, educational resources, conference details, county related data to save you and your county time, resources and money.

Thousands of county officials and staff around the country participate in timely, practical education through NACo's webinar calendar each month. Staff and experts update content regularly to reflect the current economic challenges, program innovations and leadership strategies that concern NACo members. The webinar calendar, with instructions for registration, appears on the NACo website at www.naco.org/webinars <<http://www.naco.org/webinars>> . All programs are available to NACo members at no charge.

7. NETWORKING WITH OTHER COUNTY OFFICIALS

NACo membership provides a unique opportunity to interact with colleagues from across the country whether at a conference, through participation on a steering committee, on a legislative issue or even through NACo's online social media presence. Look for NACo on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube to connect and communicate with other county leaders.

8. COUNTY SOLUTIONS, INNOVATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

NACo provides information, training and assistance to counties on a wide range of issues in order to increase knowledge, build capacity and foster innovative practices in county programs. NACo provides an in-depth look at individual issues that are important for America's counties.

The services available to counties vary by project, but may include workshops, podcasts, special educational forums, newsletters, publications, toolkits, access to databases of county policies, programs, best practices and competitively awarded small grants, and individualized technical and consulting assistance.

Topics covered by current projects include:

Disaster preparedness and community resilience
Economic development
Health reform implementation
Public and community health advancement
Rural health
Jail population management
Pipeline safety
Transportation and infrastructure
Wetlands restoration and coastal resources management
Efficient and sustainable government operations, and
Energy efficiency and renewable energy.

9. DATA-DRIVEN RESEARCH FOR COUNTIES

NACo provides resources to enhance county activities and policies, to show the role of counties at the state and national level, and the impact of federal policies on counties. To illustrate the role of counties in the U.S. federalist system, NACo publishes data-driven research products that document the form and function of the country's 3,069 counties in numerous policy areas. These studies provide NACo membership with the data and analysis necessary to improve their decision-making process, inform a narrative about the role as well as the diversity of counties and support our advocacy efforts with individualized profiles on pressing issues such as PILT, endangered species, transportation and more.

Key research products include:

Why Counties Matter Paper Series – provides a baseline for NACo's research, policy and network building activities, documenting the counties' authority and structure, challenges and best practices implemented by counties in a range of policy areas.

County Tracker: On the Path to Recovery - To stay current on how counties are faring in the current economic recovery, NACo produced a first-of-its-kind analysis of the trends in counties' jobs, unemployment rates, output and housing prices. Available at www.naco.org/countytracker.

County Explorer - The County Explorer database, includes 80 individual data sets such as economic development, health, justice, public safety and much more. Available at <http://explorer.naco.org>

Also, by request, NACo is able to provide resources for your county such as sample resolutions, collections of county data, writing assistance in specific documents and more! Research and technical assistance form a cornerstone of NACo services for members.

10. GRANTS CLEARINGHOUSE

The NACo Grants Clearinghouse is a one-stop shop for grants information, featuring up-to-date listings of nearly 1,000 federal, state, corporate and foundation grants available to counties and community-based organizations. The new tool boasts enhanced search features, including the ability to search by category, eligibility, funder type and state, as well as any search word or search term. Each grant entry includes critical information including a summary, funding history and contact information.