



U.S. MAYOR

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Cities of Opportunity Task Force – Boston: MAYORS CITE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORTATION, AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENT IN COMBATting INCOME INEQUALITY

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Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh, at podium, kicks off Cities of Opportunity Task Force press conference in Faneuil Hall.



Mayors seek long-term transportation reauthorization with more local-directed funding. Left to right, USCM Vice President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary Victor Mendez, Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh, and USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran.



Senator Elizabeth Warren (MA) discusses her efforts to reduce income inequality and protect key federal investments.



“Dialogue on Municipal Strategies for Financial Empowerment” at UMass Boston. Left to right, Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh, USCM Vice President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio.



**March 27, 2015
Washington, DC**

At the Mayors Institute on City Design in Los Angeles, I continue to be impressed with our mayors who come to these U.S. Conference of Mayors sessions with very focused challenges seeking answers from some of the best architects and city resource people in our nation. Mayors John Giles of Mesa (AZ), Charlie Hales of Portland, Carlos Hernandez of Hialeah, Robert McDavid of Columbia (MO), Libby Schaaf of Oakland, and Ivy Taylor of San Antonio all came with different challenges and all left inspired and ready to push forward in modernizing their cities to meet the needs of their citizens.

We are most appreciative of Trinity Simons, Director of the MICD who has a very tough job of visiting our cities working with the mayors and staff to consolidate from many challenges just one challenge that fits into the MICD the protocol.

We thank Mayor Garcetti our host mayor and his team for helping us with MICD. Mayors and I had the good fortune of having dinner with Mayor Garcetti and it was a good time for mayor to mayor discussion as Mayor Garcetti is still recognized as the new mayor of Los Angeles.

Mayor Garcetti serves as Chair of our Trade Task Force and this area of work within our organization will become even more active as Congress and the White House wrangle to produce a bipartisan trade bill this year. As this issue heats up, we will count on Mayor Garcetti working with our Ports Task Force Chair Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown to work our nation's mayors to a consensus position on the Trade Bill.

In Boston this week, Mayor Walsh hosted our task force on income inequality. While there we focused on the wage gap issues in a special session on the

UMass Campus. The following day, the mayors heard from the dynamic Senator Elizabeth Warren. She is most effective in how she messages big picture issues and brings it down so that the average person can understand and have a personal connection to the issue. In other words, she connects.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio is urging all to make noise about the need for Congress to act on transportation legislation now. At issue is how it will be funded and the other ongoing issue is how we can guarantee through federal legislation that the federal funds sent back to the states are provided to our cities. History shows that money going to the states houses sometimes goes to where the pine trees and geese live and not where our urban and suburban public transportation users live. Traffic is a very stressful challenge to both urban and suburban people. It's a misery that is bringing us together.

Mayor de Blasio is saying, as we have been proclaiming, that we must use the metro, urban, suburban, and ex-urban areas together for political action now.

While this goes on, we are mindful over in the House that the Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Bill Shuster, is carrying water for us as he deals with a substantial number of members inside the Republican caucus who are opposed to anything that might, even in the least, resemble a tax increase. A sad note that we can't even get consensus to provide a transportation bill to maintain the interstates and provide funding for the transportation needs of Americans who just want to get up and go to work with less traffic and less danger.

Therefore, we must continue to work with Chairman Shuster and support him in his negotiations.

Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed is our Transportation Chair who could not be in Boston, but is very much involved with us and is our lead mayor on this critical issue. He has been working with Senate leaders, Chairman Shuster and the White House and no doubt will continue to be

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Mayors Call for Action on Transportation Reauthorization, Affordable Housing Investment

By USCM Staff

Standing in historic Faneuil Hall on March 23, mayors delivered a strong message to the nation and the federal government: Cities are leading the way in the fight to grow the middle class, but income inequality will continue to be a problem without federal investment in transportation and housing. Following two days of internal discussions and consultations with stakeholders, The U.S. Conference of Mayors Cities of Opportunity Task Force was confident in its call for action.

Hosted by Task Force Vice Chair Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh, and led by Conference of Mayors Vice President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Task Force Chair New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, the task force meeting included 20 mayors, representing cities of all sizes and regions of the country. The mayors gathered March 22-23 for extensive discussions on financial empow-

erment, transportation, and housing, as they relate to income inequality. In addition, Boston hosted a special discussion for city staff and local experts on activities for reducing income inequality at the historic Parkman House on March 21.

Financial Empowerment Forum

To kick off the task force meeting, Walsh hosted a public forum on Municipal Strategies for Financial Empowerment at the University of Massachusetts, Boston on March 22. During the forum, Walsh, de Blasio, Rawlings-Blake and Seattle Mayor Ed Murray interacted with Citi North America CEO William J. Mills (the Title Sponsor for the meeting), UMass Boston Vice Chancellor Ed Lambert, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston President and CEO Eric S. Rosengren, as well as Boston community members.

"What you find in the year 2015, as a mayor in America, is you are constantly innovating ways of going it alone and trying to have a full impact," said de Blasio, starting the discussion of best practices. Mayor de Blasio noted that 840,000 of his residents do not have access to checking account, and that, on average, they pay \$2,400 a year in check cashing fees as a result. To combat this, de Bla-



New York Mayor Bill de Blasio speaks during the forum on Municipal Strategies for Financial Empowerment.

sio is working with a number of banks to increase exposure and awareness among youth and low-income populations.

Meanwhile, Rawlings-Blake emphasized the work she is doing to reduce the burden of debt that many of her residents face, making it difficult for them to achieve financial independence. "Part of

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Portland (ME) Mayor Michael F. Brennan asks a question during the forum on Municipal Strategies for Financial Empowerment.

"The status quo is simply unacceptable. It's time for Congress to truly invest in the future of our cities and our nation by passing a bill that increases federal transportation funding."

– New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio

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the work of financial fitness is breaking that cycle of poverty that we have seen in too many of our families," she said.

Overall, the session focused on a variety of tools that cities can use to help their residents maximize their incomes and avoid many of the pitfalls that come with living outside the financial system. Walsh described the theme of the forum as, "Making sure people have the tools to take control of their situations and seize their opportunities."

And Murray stated, "When you talk about financial empowerment, ultimately,

everything I'm about to talk about in addition to the minimum wage, won't make a difference unless you give people a wage they can live on."

In their remarks, the panelists, all emphasized the importance of working with the business community to increase the impact of the work they are doing.

You can view the full forum by going to the website http://www.cityofboston.gov/cable/video_library.asp?id=15967.

Working Sessions

This second Cities of Opportunity meeting was designed to expand the scope of the task force to include the issues of transportation and housing, both of which are essential to securing



Madison Mayor Paul Soglin speaks during the Cities of Opportunity strategy session on transportation.

"It's time for a national urban agenda, one that will repair our country's aging transportation infrastructure, expand access to affordable housing and address income inequality."

– Seattle Mayor Ed Murray



USCM Community Development and Housing Chair Newton Mayor Setti Warren, at podium, speaks during the Cities of Opportunity press conference.

the American Dream. Previously, the work of the task force was focused on three issues: reducing income inequality, promoting early childhood education, and expanding access to broadband.

In closed sessions, the mayors spent much of Monday discussing the need to renew an expanded and sustained surface transportation bill and to ensure continued federal investment in affordable housing. The mayors were joined for parts of their discussions by U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary Victor Mendez and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (MA).

Mendez discussed key Administration initiatives to advance the goals of the task force, explaining how its GROW AMERICA renewal plan for the nation's surface transportation law will raise investment levels in the nation's transit and highway systems. Mendez explained the importance of the plan's emphasis on raising federal commitments to public transportation, proposing an increase of more than 75 percent over the prior law's funding level (MAP-21). In explaining other elements of the plan, he talked about the Administration's commitment to high-performing Metropolitan Planning Organizations,

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whereby the Administration doesn't call for funding increases for all MPOs serving metropolitan areas of 200,000 or more people but rather it reserves funding for those that meet their specified criteria and earn additional funds as part of a competitive grant process. Mendez also urged support for the "Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets," a local street safety initiative which was announced at the Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting in January.

On the issue of housing, the mayors recognized that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships programs are critical to providing more affordable housing in cities, and that it would not be wise to support transportation at the expense of these programs. The Conference of Mayors Chair of the Community Development and Housing Committee, Newton Mayor Setti Warren, urged the mayors to support National Community Development Week, April 6-11. Local housing strategies were discussed such as transforming vacant houses to livable homes of value and the use of housing trust funds, tax incentives, and inclusionary zoning to increase affordable housing. Mayors also felt that

***"Inequality is a national crisis."
– Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh***

it was important to take an active role in ending veterans homelessness.

In remarks on the fight to end income inequality, Senator Warren commended mayors and emphasized the importance of federal partnerships to revitalize the American middle class. Warren provided a detailed economic history of the United States, and noted that when the federal government made crucial investments, the middle class grew. Recently, in what Warren described as a period of disinvestment, income inequality has replaced middle class growth. Specifically, Warren called for renewed focus on infrastructure, education, and research in order to combat income inequality and revitalize the middle class.

Press Conference

During the meeting, the mayors held a press conference at Faneuil Hall to announce their commitment to work together, including through local action

and lobbying Washington, to urge Congress to move past partisanship and pass the surface transportation bill. Specifically, the mayors called for increased resources to the program, with more locally-directed funding to address the growing needs in cities where populations are steadily rising.

Walsh opened the press conference with remarks about why the task force was established by Conference President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson. "Inequality is a national crisis. It's holding down wages, it's holding back our economy, it's undermining the American Dream. Here in Boston we are innovating, and growing opportunity to lift individuals and families out of poverty. But we need our partners in the Commonwealth, and in the federal government to act and make the critical funding and policy decisions that invest in and strengthen municipalities, the building blocks of this nation."

Mayor de Blasio underscored the critical connection between transportation and helping working families to prosper. "Mayors are on the frontlines of combating inequality – and we know firsthand that transportation is central to that fight as the backbone of economic growth," said de Blasio. "Transit serves as a lifeline for so many, connecting those who need it most to jobs, school, and real mobility, while transportation infrastructure creates the good-paying jobs so many need. The status quo is simply unacceptable. It's time for Congress to truly invest in the future of our cities and our nation by passing a bill that increases federal transportation funding. And we'll be making that clear with direct action in our cities and

"As we look to Congress, we renew our call for stronger federal resource commitments, with more emphasis on locally-directed funding, to improve our transit and street systems to better serve our growing metropolitan areas and confront income inequality."

***– USCM Vice President Baltimore Mayor
Stephanie Rawlings-Blake***

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in Washington.”

Rawlings-Blake highlighted the need for some portion of federal transportation dollars to flow directly to cities and metropolitan areas. “Mayors know that transportation systems and services can be an effective tool to address inequality and understand how locally-directed transportation solutions can create more economic opportunity and better serve our nation’s working poor. As we look to Congress, we renew our call for stronger federal resource commitments, with more emphasis on locally-directed funding, to improve our transit and street systems to better serve our growing metropolitan areas and confront income inequality. We cannot let the federal government off the hook in supporting us in meeting these critical challenges.”

Murray called for a national urban agenda explaining that local innovation requires federal partnership. “Over the last two days, we’ve heard from mayors across the country about how our cities are laboratories for innovation, making a difference in people’s lives. In Seattle, we’ve led the way on raising the minimum wage, expanding local transit and access to pre-k. While cities are acting now, we can’t do it alone. It’s time for a national urban agenda, one that will repair our country’s aging transportation infrastructure, expand access to affordable housing and address income inequality. We must have a re-energized federal government that is acting as an equal partner to support the great work happening at the local level.”

To view the press conference, visit the website: http://www.cityofboston.gov/cable/video_library.asp?id=15961

Attending Mayors

The following mayors attended the Boston Cities of Opportunity Task Force meeting: Steve Adler of Austin (TX); Ralph Becker of Salt Lake City (UT); Michael Brennan of Portland (ME); Bill Carpenter of Brock-

ton (MA); Frank Cownie of Des Moines (IA); Bill de Blasio of New York City (NY); Carlo DeMaria, Jr. of Everett (MA); Kevin Dumas of Attleboro (MA); Jorge Elorza of Providence (RI); Bill Finch of Bridgeport (CT); Betsy Hodges of Minneapolis (MN); Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans (LA); Ed Murray of Seattle (WA); Stephanie Rawlings-Blake of Baltimore (MD); Daniel Rivera of Lawrence (MA); Paul Soglin of Madison (WI); Martin J. Walsh of Boston (MA); Setti Warren of Newton (MA); Nan Whaley of Dayton (OH); and A.C. Wharton of Memphis (TN).

**In appreciation for your Title Sponsorship
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Boston Meeting**

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Citi CEO William J. Mills, at podium, comments on Citi’s commitment to financial empowerment to Federal Reserve Bank of Boston President and CEO Eric S. Rosengren. Citi sponsored the Cities of Opportunity Task Force.



After Lost Bet, Mayor Walsh Wins Column for a Day

By Marty Walsh, *Globe*
Correspondent March 27, 2015

Where's Shirley?

Today I give up the best real estate in the city to a wannabe writer named Marty Walsh. Last year [I made a bet](#) with the good mayor of Boston, and he's now collecting his prize. He was so slow at installing a permanent director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority that I bet he couldn't find one before Charlie Baker was sworn in as governor. I lost. Walsh's get: Guest columnist for a day. The mayor was just as tardy turning in this column, but I wasn't about to make another bet with him.

An occasion to invest in our future

If you were in downtown Boston around lunch time on Monday, you might have seen something curious: 20 mayors, from cities large and small, walking down Washington Street together on their way to Faneuil Hall.

The group included everyone from New York's Bill de Blasio and Baltimore's Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, to Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans and Betsy Hodges of Minneapolis.

No, we weren't hosting a support group for opponent cities of the New England Patriots — although Mayor Ed Murray of Seattle was a great sport at AmeriCorps' "Service Bowl" on Saturday, helping us do some painting at St. Stephen's Church in the South End.

The mayors were in town as my guests for a meeting of Cities of Opportunity, a task force created by Mayor Kevin Johnson of Sacramento at the US Conference of Mayors last year.

He appointed Mayor de Blasio as chair and me as vice chair. It's a platform for mayors to join forces in tackling the extreme wage and wealth gaps that are shrinking opportunities, fracturing com-

munities, and slowing the economy all across the country.

As mayors, we are uniquely positioned to lead the charge to restore American opportunity. We are at the hubs of America's regional economies, innovating daily with business, nonprofit, and government partners. And we are free from the obstructions that have hindered Congress in recent years.

Most of all, we know the impact of inequality, neighbor by neighbor. Boston has not been immune. Though our city's unemployment rate is below 5 percent for the first time since the 2008 recession, our income distribution is among the most skewed in the country. Many people are working but struggling to get by.

As a lifelong resident of Dorchester, I've seen up close the difference that good wages and financial independence make to my neighbors. Shatira Mayes is one of them. She's a mother of two in Dorchester who has worked full time as a nursing assistant and is now making a living caring for children. At minimum wage, she tells of a choice each month between paying her rent or other bills. She is one of many members of the caring professions who struggle to make ends meet and worry their children's struggles will be even harder.

Shatira has signed up for financial coaching at our new Roxbury Center for Financial Empowerment, with the goal of going back to school to become a nurse. We're helping her and thousands of other Bostonians build their dreams by using new tools of financial management and career development. It's the kind of practical, proactive, people-centered policy that mayors specialize in.

At a Cities of Opportunity forum at University of Massachusetts Boston on Sunday, I spoke about this program, while other mayors shared their experience with minimum wage increases, earned income tax credit campaigns, and more.

We also agreed that in addition to

empowering individuals, we have to change the structural dynamics that drive inequality. Those dynamics include transportation infrastructure, housing markets, educational opportunities, and labor laws that are tilted against the working poor and, increasingly, the middle class.

It's not just unfair, it's bad for business. We are talking about our workforce and our consumer base, after all — the lifeblood of our economy.

These factors weakening our long-term outlook are regional and national. So as mayors, we have to bring our message to state and federal partners. Already, we have lobbied Congress for investments in prekindergarten; broadband Internet; and senior and affordable housing. We focused this week on transportation.

America's infrastructure is aging and increasingly unreliable. The White House reported last year that 65 percent of America's roads are rated in less than good condition; 25 percent of our bridges need repair or replacement; and 45 percent of Americans lack public transit access.

But you don't need statistics to convince the drivers and train riders of Greater Boston that we've reached a crisis point.

As I've said before, it's time for the state to make a bold investment in the MBTA. Public transit is not just about moving trains, it's about upward mobility — getting people access to the schools and jobs that can change their lives.

I talked to my fellow mayors about Boston's experiences this winter. And they shared their own horror stories. It seems every mayor has a bridge nightmare — none worse than Mayor Hodges of Minneapolis, who recalled the collapse of the Interstate 35 over the Mississippi River that killed 13 people in 2007. Meanwhile, as we spoke, the Long Island Bridge was being detonated a few miles to our south.

If, as some authorities estimate, every dollar spent on infrastructure creates two dollars of economic activity, what we're seeing now is the inverse: the economic drag of disinvestment. When roads crumble and rail service stalls, people can't get to their jobs. They can't keep their compa-

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nies productive and often can't get paid. They have less money to spend and our economy takes hit after hit.

And so that's why we marched to Faneuil Hall on Monday. We stood together to call on Congress to reautho-

rize surface transportation funding at a level adequate to begin fixing the infrastructure that Boston and America's economic progress depends on.

We need partners at the state and federal level with the wisdom and confidence to invest in America's future. But as cities, we're not waiting for help. We are innovating, we are forging creative partnerships, we are growing opportunity

wherever and however we can. We are determined to make America's economy work for the people who make it work.

I call on everyone – at every level of government, in every business and neighborhood – who still believes in the American Dream, to join us.

Martin J. Walsh is the 54th mayor of Boston. Follow him on Twitter [@marty_walsh](#).



Metro Economy Facts

By a 5 to 1 margin, Americans want Congress to pass a long-term transportation bill –

One of the issues that will be hotly debated in the new Congress is federal spending on infrastructure. How important is it that. . . ?											
	Overall	City 250k+	City 100k- 249,999	City 30k- 99,999	City <30k	Suburb 250k+	Suburb 100k- 249,999	Suburb 30k- 99,999	Suburb <30k	Urban County	Rural Area
The new Congress pass a new transportation investment bill that targets renewal, repair and modernization of the nation's infrastructure, which will go directly to your city or metropolitan area.											
High priority	55	59	49	64	58	49	57	53	57	61	46
Low priority	11	9	14	7	6	14	9	9	8	10	18
Not sure	5	5	6	3	3	6	3	7	6	3	6

Council on Metro Economies and the New American City

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors/Zogby Analytics Survey of Public Opinion: Cities of the 21st Century

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Cornett: Cities Need New Framework to Push Forward Priorities in Washington

By Ed Somers

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett addressed the Washington (DC) meeting of the National League of Cities (NLC) on March 10. Cornett commended the organization, being led by Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker, for its work on priorities such as reauthorization of the surface transportation law, passing the Marketplace Fairness Act, and protecting municipal bonds.

But Cornett, representing The U.S. Conference of Mayors as Second Vice President, urged the city leaders to help find “a new framework to push forward these and other priorities.” He told NLC that, “We, as city leaders, are facing two conflicting realities. One reality is that thought leaders from across the country and around the world have recognized us, mayors and local-elected officials, for what we have been doing to reduce partisanship, build public-private partnerships, and create laboratories of change.”



USCM 2nd Vice President Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett at the National League of Cities.

“We, as city leaders, are facing two conflicting realities. One reality is that thought leaders from across the country and around the world have recognized us, mayors and local-elected officials, for what we have been doing to reduce partisanship, build public-private partnerships, and create laboratories of change.”

– USCM 2nd Vice President Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett

“But a second reality is that many in Washington seem to see us as just another special interest group, as opposed to what we really are, innovative leaders

who are closest to the people and businesses that drive our economy,” Cornett argued.

Praising the city leaders for not just

waiting around for assistance from Washington, Cornett did say there are actions the federal government should take to help cities, actions that would not require a lot of new federal money.

“Washington can do a better job of managing issues they are clearly responsible for - like border security, trade rules, illegal drug importation, and immigration,” Cornett said. He added that, “Washington can target existing resources more directly to the local level to help us catalyze our most urgent projects and bring our infrastructure up to date. And Washington can better recognize what cities can do on our own and give us the power to do it, with fewer unfunded mandates and greater flexibility across the board.”

In concluding, Cornett said, “Just as we are creative in how we run our cities, we must be creative in how we approach the federal government.”

Great-West Financial® Increases Market Share and Rebrands as Empower- Retirement™

We have some exciting news to share with The United States Conference of Mayors. The retirement services division of Great-West Financial® has a new name, Empower Retirement™.

Empower unites the retirement businesses of Great-West Financial, Great-West Financial Retirement Plan Services (formerly J.P. Morgan Retirement Plan Services), and Putnam Investments.

The name "Empower" demonstrates a commitment to giving you everything you need to take charge of your retirement future. Empower defines success as helping people replace—for life—the income they earned while working. One thing that hasn't changed is our commitment to keeping you informed about ways to reach your retirement goals. You can continue to rely on us to provide superior service, innovation and a focused vision of a better retirement.

We encourage you to compare your current deferred compensation program with The United States Conference of Mayors Retirement Program. Under our Program, with Empower Retirement as our service provider, you and your employees will see these benefits:

- Elimination of administrative fees,

meaning more of your employees' dollars will go toward their retirement savings (and not toward fees)

- Enhanced education services and communications materials for your employees, including face-to-face and online seminars
- An expanded lineup of quality investment options, including exciting target date funds and a guaranteed lifetime withdrawal benefit
- Account management tools available 24/7 through the program's website and an automated voice response system

This announcement does not affect participant accounts or how they are serviced, and there is nothing participants need to do. They will continue to call the same phone numbers and go to the same websites to access their account. All retirement plan materials and the website will be gradually updated to reflect the new name.

For more information about the USCM/Empower Retirement Deferred Compensation Program, contact Kathryn Kretschmer-Weyland at 301-460-5251 or kweyland@usmayors.org.



MAYORS BUSINESS COUNCIL

Member Profile

IT'S TIME NETWORK

It's Time Network is a diverse network of women and men working to evolve democracy and affirm the value of interdependence between all people and groups. Building connections between political leaders, grass roots activists, local communities, and national associations, ITN's mission is to generate awareness around the importance of empowering women and girls and galvanize action across a range of issues including:

- Gender Equity
- Economic Equality
- Active and Balanced Political Participation
- Peace and Security
- Regenerating the Earth

Special Interests: Community Development, Environment, Labor Relations, Political Campaigns, Small Business Development

For more Business Council profiles visit the Conference of Mayors website at usmayors.org/buscouncil



2015 National Education Pathways with a Purpose Grant Awards: Now Accepting Applications

The United States Conference of Mayors and our partner USA Funds, are now accepting applications for the 2015 National Education Pathways with a Purpose Grant Awards. The Conference of Mayors will award competitive grants to recognize and expand creative initiatives that mayors have developed in their cities to advance both college and career readiness and college completion.

Cities will be recognized for developing strong and enduring collaborations between K-12 and higher education systems and employers to address college preparation and long-term career success. The initiative's four key elements include: streamlining key education transitions; facilitating smoother pathways from campus to the workplace; promoting innovative approaches to college and career preparation; and building new frameworks for data-driven decision-making. The monetary awards will support and/or enhance mayors who have established successful programs to provide education pathways with the purpose of completion and entry into the workplace; and calculated measurable results of that success.



The 2015 National Education Pathways with a Purpose Awards' application is available online at

<http://usmayors.org/pathwayswithapurpose/>

**Deadline for application submission is
April 3**

No extensions will be granted. No exceptions.

MAYORS WATER COUNCIL

**The U.S. Conference of Mayors invites all mayors to
attend the Mayors Water Council Meeting
in Washington (DC)**

Thursday, April 30 – May 1

**Mayors Water Council Co-Chairs
Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard**

Cordially invite you* to join the mayors water council meeting discussions on:

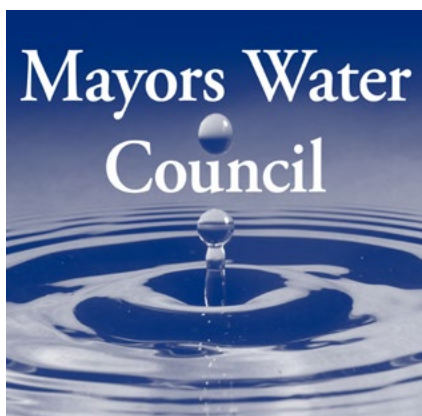
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- Public Water Affordability Dialogue
- Water And Wastewater Infrastructure Financing and P3s
- Water Supply, Conservation and Recycling
- Legislative and Regulatory Review
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Toll Free: (800) 821-4367**

Registration materials will be posted on the website

<http://usmayors.org/mwcdc>

* If you cannot attend,
consider sending your water or public works staff to participate.



**Meeting begins
2 pm, April 30
Concludes
12 pm, May 1**



Five Ways to Control Your Benefits Costs

Average Employee's Health Care Costs Up 150 Percent in Past Decade

By Carey Adamson, Colonial Life & Accident Insurance Company

Benefits costs remain a concern and employers are always looking for a way to alleviate the burden from their bottom line and the employee's pocket? In 2013, the average employee shouldered about \$5,000 a year in health care costs — an increase of 150 percent over the past decade, according to a 2013 Aon Hewitt Health Care Survey.

The good news is there are many proven, effective ways to contain those ever-increasing benefits costs — and many can be implemented at no direct cost to your city.

Here are five smart ways you can save money on the benefits you offer your staff.

1. Implement wellness initiatives.

Many employers today are implementing wellness initiatives — efforts to improve the overall health of their employees — to help reduce health care costs and increase productivity. These efforts range from health assessments to onsite fitness centers. Even simple, low-to-no-cost programs such as walking clubs or sponsoring quit-smoking classes can be effective.

2. Move noncore benefits to employee-paid voluntary benefits.

Utilizing voluntary benefits can give employees access to expanded benefits choices that meet their unique family situations and provides coverage that's typically more affordable than plans offered outside of work. This strategy can also help employees pay for some of the increased out-of-pocket costs that come with higher-deductible health plans. And voluntary benefits add no direct costs to

your city's budget.

3. Conduct a dependent verification audit.

Sure, your city wants to offer great benefits to employees and qualifying family members — but not to those who aren't actually eligible for coverage. Sometimes employees forget to remove family members who no longer qualify because of age or marital status. Health plan audits, also called dependent verification, ensure you're investing your benefits dollars where you intend them to be used. The industry average for ineligible dependents in these audits ranges from 5 to 8 percent, and can result in substantial savings for you.

4. Increase employee participation in pretax benefits programs.

Establishing Section 125 plans and maximizing employee participation in pretax benefits programs can save your city and your staff considerable dollars. Pre-taxing benefits gives employees the option to buy qualified insurance coverage with before-tax dollars. This makes coverage more affordable by reducing the taxable portion of their pay, so they pay lower income taxes. Section 125 plans allow employees to make before-tax contributions to personal spending accounts that can be used for qualifying health care or childcare expenses. These plans reduce your overall payroll, so they can also reduce your payroll taxes, including FICA, Social Security and Medicare matching taxes.

5. Customize benefits communication and enrollment.

It's hard to choose the right benefits if you don't understand them — or even worse, don't know what your options are. Educating employees about the myriad benefits choices available to them and how to select the benefits that work best for their lifestyles takes expertise. Understandably, few cities have staff with the time and knowledge to handle benefits communication themselves, and using enrollment firms only adds to their costs. Fortunately, these services — including one-to-one benefits counseling sessions — are available at no direct cost to the employer from some benefits providers.



Employee satisfaction rates with this type of service can be impressive. Ongoing post-enrollment surveys by Colonial Life show virtually all employees (97 percent) surveyed say personal benefits counseling improved their understanding of their benefits and that this type of communication is important (98 percent).

I've seen how these solutions have helped cities capture significant savings while providing a stronger, more valuable benefits package for their staff. Many of these solutions can be implemented without a lot of outside support. But when it's time to reach out to an expert, make sure you choose a benefits partner wisely. Look for a partner with extensive experience in your market, a proven track record of success and a reputation for excellent customer service. Choosing a partner with a long-term relationship in mind can pay for itself both now and later.

About the Author

Carey Adamson is Vice President of Public Sector Market Services for Colonial Life & Accident Insurance Company.

Colonial Life is a market leader in providing financial protection benefits through the workplace, including disability, life, accident, cancer, critical illness and hospital confinement indemnity insurance. The company's benefit services and education, innovative enrollment technology and personal service support more than 80,000 businesses and organizations, representing more than three million of America's workers and their families. For more information about Colonial Life's products and services, contact Adamson at CLAdamson@ColonialLife.com or visit www.ColonialLife.com.

You may also connect with Colonial Life at www.facebook.com/coloniallife-benefits, www.twitter.com/coloniallife and www.linkedin.com/company/colonial-life.

April 2015 Is Dollarwise Month



DOLLARWISE
MAYORS FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY

The U.S. Conference of Mayors DollarWise Campaign is pleased to announce that April is DollarWise Month. This year's DollarWise Month theme is "Be DollarWise With Your Tax Refund."

To register, and learn more about DollarWise Month, fill out the online form ([here](#)).

Two helpful resources include: [Better Money Habits.com](#) – An online financial education tool developed with the Khan Academy; and [Spent: Looking for Change](#) – A documentary that addresses the dangers of payday lending.

For questions on how to register and

participate, contact DollarWise Manager James Kirby by e-mail at: jkirby@usmayors.org or by phone at: (202) 861-6759.

Senator Udall Presented Congressional Arts Leadership Award

By Tom McClimon

New Mexico U.S. Senator Tom Udall was presented the 2015 Congressional Leadership in the Arts Award, co-presented each year by The U.S. Conference of Mayors and Americans for the Arts. The award was presented at Congressional Arts Kick-Off breakfast on Capitol Hill on March 24, Arts Advocacy Day. This public leadership award recognizes distinguished service on behalf of the arts. "We need a United States of America that puts the arts front and center of American life," Udall said in accepting the award. He reiterated the need for a cabinet level Secretary of Arts and Culture, which the Conference of Mayors supports.



Left to right, Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert Lynch, Senator Tom Udall (NM), and USCM staff member Tom McClimon.



Conference of Mayors Plans for Fall 2015 International Gatherings

By Paul Leroux

Flanked by international city and thought leaders, Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran appeared in London on March 2 to officially launch the Global Parliament of Mayors. The Parliament, which Cochran described as coming at “a defining moment for mayors around the globe,” will be the first-ever international organization to be comprised exclusively of mayors.

“The United States Conference of Mayors is proud to have relationships with mayors on every continent,” said Cochran. “The Global Parliament of Mayors will finally create the needed place for mayors of the world to learn, share, and make significant progress on the metro-urban challenges of our globe.”

Inspired by *If Mayors Ruled the World* author Dr. Benjamin Barber, the Global Parliament of Mayors will hold its first two sessions October 23-24 in London and Bristol, which has been designated the European Green Capital for 2015. These first two sessions will focus on global climate change, metro/urban resources, and governance of the new organization.

In addition to Barber and Cochran,



At left, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo with USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran.



At left, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran with U.S. Ambassador to France Jane D. Hartley.

early members of the Global Parliament of Mayors host committee include Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, Bristol Mayor George Ferguson, Athens Mayor Giorgios Kaminis, Barcelona Mayor Xavier Trias, Mannheim Mayor Peter Kurz, Palermo Mayor Leoluca Orlando, Tijuana Mayor Jorge Astiazarán Orcí, and Warsaw Mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz. The final U.S. delegation for the October sessions has yet to be determined.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors also plans to participate in the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21), which will run from November 30 to December 11 in Paris. To prepare for COP 21, Cochran has already met with Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo and her staff, as well as U.S. Ambassador to France Jane Hartley.



Left to right, Global Parliament of Mayors Executive Director Eileen Haring Woods, Former London Mayor Ken Livingstone, Harvey Goldsmith CBE, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Bristol Mayor George Ferguson, and Dr. Benjamin Barber appear at the Global Parliament of Mayors press launch on March 2.

How Cooperative Purchasing Can Help Cites Save Valuable Time, Money

By Kathryn Krestchmer-Weyland

It seems that mayors and cities across the U.S. are challenged with doing more with less. These are the days of cutbacks and limited resources yet expectations continue to rise. To help streamline the procurement process and cut costs, cities can turn to cooperative contracts as a resource. Participating in a cooperative purchasing program is an established best practice in public procurement. Cooperative purchasing consolidates the buying power of government agencies, schools and nonprofits nationally to provide benefits in pricing, product quality and contract efficiencies. Aggregating the purchasing power of these organizations can lower costs, increase services and save time.

There are a variety of regional and national cooperatives available, and as cities and mayors explore this purchasing option, there are many factors to consider beyond just product offerings. Most purchasing cooperatives offer cost and time savings, which are key to an effective procurement process.

Other factors to consider in your due diligence process include assessing the history and purchasing power of the cooperative. Those with years of experience, a substantial customer base, and significant sales volume are in the best position to deliver contracts that offer the most competitive pricing. Beyond pricing, your city will need to evaluate the process in which the contract/supplier was solicited and awarded. To ensure compliance with state-specific guidelines, procurement officials should select a purchasing cooperative that adheres to a competitive bid solicitation process through a lead public agency. Cooperative purchasing programs that engage in this best practice will also offer transparency to taxpayers by providing access to documentation to confirm compliance. Additionally, agencies that implement stringent supplier commitments, audits, and price benchmarking will enable you to participate in the program with confidence.

The largest national cooperative, U.S. Communities, is the only purchasing cooperative founded by public agencies, for public agencies. The five distinguished sponsors that cofounded and co-own U.S. Communities include The U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities (NLC), the National Association of Counties (NACo), and the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO). In addition, over 90 state associations show their support for U.S. Communities with sponsorship.

When it comes to cooperative procurements options, U.S. Communities delivers on key elements critical to the procurement process. U.S. Communities' supplier partners each commit to providing their most competitive government pricing to all participating agencies. Regularly scheduled internal and third-party audits ensure compliance with contract pricing, terms and conditions, while benchmarking analyses evaluate the overall value delivered. Supplier contracts are also reviewed quarterly by the Lead Public Agency, and all documents are publicly posted on the U.S. Communities website for complete transparency.

Since its founding in 1991, U.S. Communities has generated millions of dollars in savings for participating agen-

cies. With more than 500 purchasing professionals joining each month, the continued rapid growth is a testament to the program's record of integrity and unparalleled value. There are no fees to participate and no purchasing minimums, allowing maximum flexibility for participating cities. As you assess the programs available to your city, be sure to include U.S. Communities on your list.

About U.S. Communities

U.S. Communities is the leading national government purchasing cooperative, providing solutions and savings to members by aggregating the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. U.S. Communities provides members with access to a wide variety of competitively solicited contracts with national suppliers that have committed to providing their lowest overall public agency pricing.

For more information, contact Kathryn Krestchmer-Weyland at kweyland@usmayors.org or Jeff Bean at jbean@usmayors.org.



Cities Plan Events for National Community Development Week, April 6-11

By Eugene T. Lowe

Cities are now planning events for the 2015 National Community Development (CD) Week that is being held April 6-13. During CD Week, mayors will host events that will include their Congressional delegations to showcase projects and program of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships programs. Local businesses, citizens and community groups will also join the week's celebration.

A number of national organizations, including The U.S. Conference of Mayors, created National Community Development Week in 1986 to bring attention to CDBG, especially in Congress. The National Community Development Association (NCDA), one of the founders of CD Week, serves as the lead organizer of the national event. Over the last several years, HOME has been added as a program to be highlighted and celebrated during CD Week.

The 2015 National Community Development Week Planning Guidance says: "National Community Development Week provides an ideal opportunity to educate members of Congress and your community on CDBG and HOME and the importance of both programs on the lives of low-and moderate-income citizens."

At a minimum, every city should issue a press release and pass a proclamation highlighting the accomplishments of both CDBG and HOME. Other activities might include a tour of local CDBG and HOME



funded projects for your congressional delegation, their staff, local leaders, media, and others. Cities might also start a letter writing campaign during National CD Week. The CD guidance booklet suggests asking those directly receiving benefits to write a note to their congressional representative describing how CDBG and HOME have helped them. Present the

notes to Congressional members during the project tour or other CD Week event.

It is also suggested that you start a community-wide petition in support of increased funding for CDBG and HOME during CD Week. This petition can be sent to the Congressional member's Washington (DC) and local office.

Whatever you do, make sure that your city participates in the 2015 National Community Development Week.

National Community Development Week provides an ideal opportunity to educate members of Congress and your community on CDBG and HOME and the importance of both programs on the lives of low-and moderate-income citizens.





Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to Regulate Pay Day Lenders

By Dave Gatton

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) announced on March 27 that it is considering proposing rules that would regulate pay day lending practices.

"Today we are taking an important step toward ending the debt traps that plague millions of consumers across the country," said CFPB Director Richard Cordray. "Too many short-term and longer-term loans are made based on a lender's ability to collect and not on a borrower's ability to repay."

The proposals would target loans that

require payback within 45 days. Such short term loans often are rolled over into additional loans because the borrower cannot repay the loan in such a short period of time. Lenders would have to determine whether the borrower could repay the loan and lenders would have to agree to a 60-day cooling off period between loans. Lenders would also be required to provide affordable repayment options.

These proposals would also apply to longer-term loans and would restrict the ability of the lender to collect payments through access to the borrower's deposit or paycheck accounts. CFPB is also consid-

ering two proposals that would limit loans to a 28 percent interest cap and a \$20 application fee or require monthly repayments to be no more than five percent of the borrower's gross monthly income.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors, through its DollarWise Campaign, has launched an effort to educate the citizens on the perils of payday lending. During April's DollarWise Month the campaign is encouraging mayors to show the documentary *Spent: Looking for Change* on its public access channels. Contact James Kirby at jkirby@usmayors.org for the necessary technical arrangements.

Administration Establishes New Broadband Council to Promote Investment, Coordinate Federal Policy

By Kevin McCarty

To advance its broadband goals, The White House recently outlined additional Administration initiatives, including the establishment of an interagency Broadband Opportunity Council, to further support private and public sector efforts to build out infrastructures and promote higher Internet speeds.

In its March 23 release, The White House also reported on key milestones that have been achieved, notably the national goal of providing 98 Percent of Americans with access to high-speed, mobile broadband, specifically 4th Generation (4G) mobile broadband. According to the U.S. Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Inform-

mation Administration (NTIA), the nation – due to private sector investment – has now achieved this goal, nearly two years ahead of schedule.

The Broadband Opportunity Council is intended to promote broadband investment and coordinate broadband policy throughout the federal government. The newly-formed council will include representatives from 25 federal agencies and departments, and will be co-chaired by the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Agriculture. NTIA will lead the Commerce Department's efforts.

The new council is directed to survey the various federal agencies to create a comprehensive inventory of federal programs, including funding options now available to support broadband as well

as those that could be modified to support broadband. According to the release, the interagency effort is also expected to engage industry and other stakeholders to understand ways the government can better support the needs of communities seeking broadband investment, identify regulatory barriers unduly impeding broadband deployment or competition, and take all necessary actions to remove these barriers and re-align existing programs to increase broadband competition, deployment, and adoption.

In addition, the council will solicit input from local officials, industry leaders and other stakeholders on ways that the federal government can incentivize broad-

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Salt Lake City Mayor at House Hearing Unveils Proposals

By Kevin McCarty

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, led by Chairman Bill Shuster (PA) and Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (OR), held its second major hearing on renewal of the nation's surface transportation law (MAP-21), as the May 31 expiration date of the law looms ever larger.

The Committee, for its part, continues to use their hearing process to build the record for why a sustained and growing federal partnership with state and local governments is needed to grow the nation's economy and address growing infrastructure needs, with Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker testifying at the panel's March 17 hearing. Appearing on behalf of the National League of Cities where he now serves as President, Becker made the case for why a stronger federal role in transportation investment is vital to the nation and its economic growth and how empowering local officials further would ensure the smarter use of available

USCM with Local Coalition Seeks to "Localize" More Federal Highway Funds

federal resources.

"By necessity, locals are stretching the value of every dollar to invest in small- and large-scale projects of practical design. We are making existing corridors more efficient and multimodal; and doing so in ways that increase capacity at less

cost to the taxpayer. These locally-driven solutions are offering more travel options to the public, helping shippers and businesses keep goods and products moving, and delivering a bigger boost to inves-

See **HIGHWAY FUNDS** on page 21

Local/Metro Coalition Priorities to "Localize" Federal Highway Funding

The following summarizes the key proposals, offered by USCM, NLC, NACo, NARC, AMPO and NADO, to adjust provisions in four existing program areas:

- 1) **Surface Transportation Program (STP):** Increase to 75 percent the share of STP funds allocated by population to local areas (currently 50 percent).
- 2) **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP):** Increase to 100 percent the share of TAP funds allocated by population to local areas (currently 50 percent) and provide obligation authority with the TAP program funds as the STP program now provides to local areas.
- 3) **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ):** Provide obligation authority to the Congestion Mitigation and Air Q and direct the U.S. DOT Secretary, states and MPO areas to ensure that CMAQ funds are allocated to qualifying local areas (based on weighted populations).
- 4) **On-System Bridges:** Restore funding to on-system bridges by shifting more resources to the STP program to again give these critical facilities some priority under federal law.

BROADBAND from page 19

band investment, drive competition and remove regulatory and policy barriers at the community level.

The Council will report back to the President within 150 days, describing the steps each federal agency will take to advance these goals, including specific regulatory actions or budget proposals.

The full White House Release is available online at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/23/fact-sheet-next-steps-delivering-fast-affordable-broadband>.

HIGHWAY FUNDS

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tors, developers and our economies overall," Becker said in explaining how local elected leaders are using federal resources successfully.

Becker also used the hearing to convey the recommendation of a coalition of local and regional government organizations – The U.S. Conference of Mayors with the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, Association of Metro-

politan Planning Organizations, National Association of Regional Councils and the National Association of Development Organizations – telling the panel how the groups have joined together on a package of legislative recommendations to "localize" more of the available federal highway program dollars. (See inset for a summary of the recommendations.)

In his comments on the coalition's legislative package, Becker said NLC and the other groups are working in partnership "to build support for a much needed

course correction – not a radical departure from the current authorization."

Explaining the benefits of the proposals, he said, "Our proposals would enact a reorientation of federal surface transportation policy toward cities and metropolitan areas – where the changes in the transportation market are happening. And they would strengthen the partnership among all stakeholders to improve the quality of project selection, the practicality of design, and the value of every dollar spent."

COCHRAN

from page 2

most helpful with the transportation legislation as it creeps through Congress.

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh was a force in Boston at our meeting. When he speaks mayors listen. He wrote a column after we left. Here are some quotes from it:

"We also agreed that in addition to empowering individuals, we have to change the structural dynamics that drive inequality.

Those dynamics include transportation, infrastructure, housing markets, educational opportunities, and labor laws that are tilted against the working poor and, increasingly the middle class.

It's not just unfair, it's bad for business.

We are talking about our welfare and our consumer base, after all – the lifeblood of our economy...

And so that's why we marched to Faneuil Hall on Monday. We stood together calling Congress to re-authorize surface transportation funding at a level adequate to begin fixing the infrastructure that Boston and America's economic policy depends on.

We need partners at the state and federal levels with the wisdom and confidence to invest in America's future. But as cities, we are not waiting for help. We are innovating, we are forging creative partnerships, we are growing opportunity wherever and however we can. We are determined to make America's economy work for the people who make it work.

I call on everyone – at every level of government, in every business and neighborhood – who still believes in the American dream to join us."

Thank you Mayor Walsh for your words, action and support as we all are determined, as you say, to make America's economy work for the people who work.

San Francisco our 83rd Annual Meeting

San Francisco is where you, as mayor, must be this year on June 19 - 22. It will be an annual meeting you must not miss!

Register now. Contact Carol Edwards at cedwards@usmayors.org or 202-293-7330.

Happy Spring, we hope after all the snow and bad weather and Happy Easter.

Calendar of Events

(Updated 03/27/15)

April 30 – May 1

Mayors Water Council Meeting, Washington (DC). Contact: Rich Anderson randerson@usmayors.org / 202-861-6795.

May 13-15

Mayors Bike Summit, Madison. Contact: Kevin McCarty kmc-carty@usmayors.org / 202-861-6728. Registration Now Open

June 19-22

83rd Annual Conference of Mayors, San Francisco. Contact: Carol Edwards cedwards@usmayors.org / 202-293-7330; Sponsorship: Geri Powell gpowell@usmayors.org / 202-861-6774. Registration Now Open

For updates or changes, check our web site at
usmayors.org

San Francisco Mayor Lee "Rolling Out Red Carpet" for the 83rd Annual Conference



San Francisco • June 19-22

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Details available at
USMAYORS.ORG



"Thank you for being mayors!" San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee said, as he expressed his pleasure in hosting the next USCM Annual Conference in June. He encouraged the mayors to also bring their families to San Francisco.

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