



# United Counties Council of Illinois

## Fall Conference Education Seminar



### AGENDA

Saturday, October 28, 2023

#### 9:00 – 9:05 AM *Welcoming Remarks*

- **Ryan McCreery** – UCCI Executive Director

#### 9:05 – 9:20 AM *Introduction to the National Association of Counties & Infrastructure Overview*

The National Association of Counties will introduce their top priorities for counties across the country, and provide a deep-dive presentation on the infrastructure funding programs in transportation and beyond to be aware of for the coming fiscal year.

- **Seamus Dowdall** – NACo Associate Legislative Director for Telecommunications & Technology
- **Owen Hart** – NACo Associate Legislative Director for Agriculture & Rural Affairs

#### 9:25 – 10:10 AM *Fireside Chat on Rural Broadband and the BEAD Program*

The NTIA's Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program will bring \$1 billion in funding for the deployment of broadband infrastructure to unserved and underserved locations across the state of Illinois. NACo will engage in a fireside chat with the director of Illinois' state broadband office to discuss county priorities for participation and coordination in the BEAD program.

- **Seamus Dowdall** – NACo Associate Legislative Director for Telecommunications & Technology
- **Matt Schmit** – Director, Illinois Office of Broadband; Chair, Illinois Broadband Advisory Council

#### 10:10 – 10:30 AM: **Short Break**

#### 10:30 – 10:45 AM *State of Play on the 2023 Farm Bill Reauthorization*

The 2018 Farm Bill authorizes a broad series of federal programs that provide critical resources to both urban and rural counties and residents across the country. Despite failing to reauthorize the 2018 Farm Bill before programs authorized in the law began to expire on September 30, Congress continues to work toward a reauthorization before all programs expire at the end of the calendar year. NACo staff will provide an update on where Congress stands on the Farm Bill, as well as key county priorities NACo is looking to secure in the eventual reauthorization.

- **Owen Hart** – NACo Associate Legislative Director for Agriculture & Rural Affairs

#### 10:45 – 11:15 AM *Briefing from USDA Rural Development*

USDA Rural Development (USDA-RD), a mission area within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, administers programs intended to enhance the economy, resiliency and quality of life for communities across rural America. USDA-RD oversees a \$216 billion portfolio of grants and loans that assist rural counties in delivering essential services to residents. USDA-RD Illinois State Director Betsy Dirksen Londrigan will share information on USDA-RD's ongoing initiatives, as well as her perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing rural counties today.

- **Betsy Dirksen Londrigan** – State Director for Illinois, USDA Rural Development

#### 11:15 – 11:45 AM *Briefing from Illinois Farm Bureau*

Since 1916, Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) has provided education and information to help Illinois farmers while supporting legislation and lobbying efforts about agricultural issues. IFB Director of National Legislation and Policy Development Adam Nielsen will provide an introduction to IFB's work in support of Illinois farmers at both the state and national level and share insights into how county governments and the agriculture industry can work together to foster more resilient rural communities.

- **Adam Nielsen** – Director of National Legislation & Policy Development, Illinois Farm Bureau

#### 11:45 – 11:50 AM *Closing Remarks*