

## National Association of Counties

Assessment of federal fiscal assistance and examination of innovative county response strategies

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### BACKGROUND

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization serving nearly 40,000 county-elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. It was founded in 1935 and unites county officials to:

- Advocate county priorities in federal policymaking
- Promote exemplary county policies and practices
- Nurture leadership skills and expand knowledge networks
- Optimize county and taxpayer resources and cost savings, and
- Enrich the public's understanding of county government.

NACo has and continues to provide important assistance to its member counties as they respond to and deal with the pandemic. Among NACo's first – and ongoing – areas of assistance was to help counties understand and utilize the financial support provided by Congress through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the CARES Act), which was enacted early in 2020 shortly after the pandemic broke out.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Impact of funding use regulations: One goal of this study is to review the allowed uses and controls associated with the federal government's fiscal assistance to counties to address the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Innovative strategies: The second goal is that the study will identify and document innovative strategies using CRF resources to meet the needs of their citizens, using six county case studies. The focus will be on county needs created by the pandemic, with special attention towards inclusive economic recovery and assisting vulnerable and underserved populations with public health and economic security issues.
- "Planned to actual" spending comparisons: Finally, the study will analyze the CRF spending plans and CRF budgets of the 119 participating counties to document spending categories and allocations by category.

## EAG

**Dr. Richard Callahan\*** is a Professor at the University of San Francisco, with a joint appointment from the USF School of Management and the USF School of Nursing and Health Professions. Dr. Callahan is Co-Director of the USF Master of Public Health Program in Sacramento and the Director of the Health Services Administration concentration in the Master of Public Administration in the School of Management. He has strong professional experience with county level government policy and fiscal analysis from working for over five years for the County of Los Angeles, with significant responsibilities for policy and budget analysis in an annual budget exceeding \$10 billion dollars. For the past 10 years, he has worked as a consultant for the California State Association of Counties, on strategy development, leading small group training seminars annually totaling between 120 to 160 elected officials, appointed executives and career managers. In addition, he was the initial Principal Investigator on a three year Haynes Foundation funded research project on fiscal sustainability for counties and cities in Southern California. He has been published in practitioner focused journals on the fiscal sustainability in The Government Finance Officer Association journal and in The National Civic Review.

**Lisa Gordon\***, CPA, MPA, is President and Chief Executive Officer of Atlanta Habitat for Humanity—one of the top 10 Habitat for Humanity International affiliates in the United States. She is a recognized leader in transformational redevelopment efforts for quality affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization. Ms. Gordon joined Atlanta Habitat in July 2015 and set the nonprofit homebuilder on a new course to become a catalyst for holistic neighborhood revitalization. As a leader in urban redevelopment and government service before joining Atlanta Habitat, Lisa was Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the Atlanta Belt Line, Inc., cabinet member in former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin’s administration, City Manager of East Point, GA and Assistant City Manager of Austin, Texas. Prior to these roles, she worked in county government for 10 years. She is an Advisory Board member of the Urban Land Institute, a member of the U.S. Council Advocacy Committee for Habitat for Humanity International, International Women’s Forum, Women’s Affordable Housing Network, Leadership Atlanta and Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW).

**Chris Morrill\***, MPA, is the Executive Director/CEO of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the US & Canada, a 21,000-member professional association that advances excellence in government finance to build thriving communities. He has decades of experience in local government, serving as city manager of the City of Roanoke, VA, the only seven-time All-America City, Assistant City Manager and Budget Director for the City of Savannah, GA, a budget analyst for Catawba County, NC, and downtown project manager for Lynn, MA. Mr. Morrill also served as Senior Municipal Finance Advisor to the South African National Treasury under a United States Agency for International Development project. In this position, he assisted the South African government with developing local government finance legislation, municipal budget reforms, and capacity building programs. He was in the first group of U.S. Peace Corps volunteers in the former Soviet Union, where he advised the City of L’viv, Ukraine on finance and management issues. Mr. Morrill is a recipient of the Southern Christian Leadership Council (Roanoke Chapter) Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major for Justice Award.

## PROJECT STAFF

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