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Biden's Infrastructure Czar Offers Tips for Cities Seeking Grants.

Mitch Landrieu, a former mayor, suggested that local governments can act now to prepare for competitive funding programs available under the new \$1.2 trillion public works law.

The senior White House advisor tasked with overseeing the recently approved \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package says there are immediate steps cities can take that could help them compete for grants federal agencies will award under the law.

"You don't have to wait," Mitch Landrieu, former mayor of New Orleans, told members of the U.S. Conference of Mayors on Friday.

For instance, he said city leaders should make sure proposed road and bridge projects are part of their regional planning organization's transportation improvement plan. Additionally, he said, they could determine where they'd like to install electric vehicle chargers, map and inventory lead pipes that need to be replaced, and work with states to identify broadband gaps.

He also suggested that mayors preparing to pursue grant funding should loop in their congressional representatives as allies—even if those lawmakers voted against the infrastructure legislation. "Even those that voted no, still want the dough," he quipped.

The mayors group was gathering in Washington, D.C. this week for its annual winter meeting.

Landrieu, who served as Conference of Mayors president from 2017-18 during his mayoral tenure, was sympathetic to concerns among city officials that major funding streams from the public works law will go to states, rather than directly to cities.

"I know that for some of you in this room the fact that the money has gone to the states gives you headaches ... and it may not easily trickle down to your community," he said. "You've got to do your work on that level, to make that happen and to make your case."

Landrieu urged attendees to pick up a fact sheet available at the meeting in Washington, D.C. meant to provide a thorough list of the competitive grant programs that the infrastructure law includes for cities. He said a more detailed guide for states and localities, covering different programs in the package, would be released in the coming weeks.

And he said his team was working on developing a "technical assistance pipeline" to help cities through grant application processes, acknowledging that, especially for smaller cities with limited staff, applying for federal funding can be a heavy lift.

Route Fifty

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