NORTHERN BORDER REGIONAL COMMISSION

A Federal-State Partnership for Economic Development in northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York



Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Justification

As Submitted by the Federal Co-Chair to the Appropriations Committees of the House and Senate, June 2015

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About the NBRC

"A Federal-State partnership that provides federal grants for economic development and infrastructure projects in northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York"

Authorized by Congress in 2008 (PUBLIC LAW 110–246) and first appropriated by Congress in 2010, the Northern Border Regional Commission ("NBRC") was organized on the the Appalachian Regional Commission federal-state partnership model. Like the Appalachian Regional Commission, the NBRC is developed to provide infrastructure and economic development grants to select counties that have various degrees of economic and demographic distress. While NBRC grant funds originate from the Federal Government, final approval for grants are made by the Federal Government's NBRC representative (Alternate Federal Co-Chair) and the governors of the four States.

The NBRC is led by its Alternate Federal Co-Chair, Mark Scarano, who was nominated by President Obama on January 7, 2015, and was confirmed by the Senate on May 21, 2015. Reflective of its small size, the NBRC has only one other employee, a Program Specialist, who manages the NBRC's grant program. The NBRC has built a strong network of state, local, and economic development leaders who provide guidance and support for NBRC programs. Such support also help NBRC staff maintain knowledge of local conditions throughout its extensive service area.

The NBRC partnership is also aided by a select number of recognized Local Development Districts that assist in grant technical assistance, provide information on complementary grants for projects, and ensure applications are complete before being considered.

The NBRC is currently inspired by a 2008 strategic plan for the region¹ but is in the process of developing a more formal plan with considerable input from state, local, and economic development partners throughout the NBRC's service area.

Finally, the NBRC offers a wide ranging and popular grant program: the Economic & Infrastructure Development grant. Per the NBRC's enabling legislation, each year the NBRC records the economic and demographic data of the counties within the Commission's service area and uses the resulting statistics to classify the level of distress in each county.

¹ Northern Forest Center (2008). "Economic Resurgence in the Northern Forest: Regional Strategy and Recommendations of the Sustainable Economy Initiative"

Commission Members

Programmatic and project funding decisions by the Commission are made by the Federal Co-Chair and a majority of governors from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York.

The Governors



Maine Governor Paul LePage



NH Governor Maggie Hassan



Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin



New York Governor Andrew Cuomo

The Federal Co-Chair

Mark Scarano was unanimously confirmed as Federal Co-Chair of the Northern Border Regional Commission on May 21st, 2015.

Scarano cut his economic development teeth as Community Development Director in Millinocket before being hired by the Piscataquis County (Maine) Economic Development Council as their Business Development Director and, subsequently, Executive Director. In that position, he led successful efforts to attract job creating manufacturers to Piscataquis County as well as support workforce, tourism, and community development initiatives that helped sustain the region's economy.



Mark Scarano

During his eight years leading the Grafton County (New Hampshire) Economic Development Council, Scarano expanded the economic development programs offered by the Council to include workforce development and entrepreneurship promotion. Successes included funding an innovative program that provides high school students with real world, technical internships at local businesses as well as fundraising and constructing a \$2.3 million business incubator in Plymouth in partnership with Plymouth State University.

Scarano was raised in Ludlow, Maine, and graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Maine and a master's degree from the Iowa State University of Science and Technology.

The NBRC Service Area

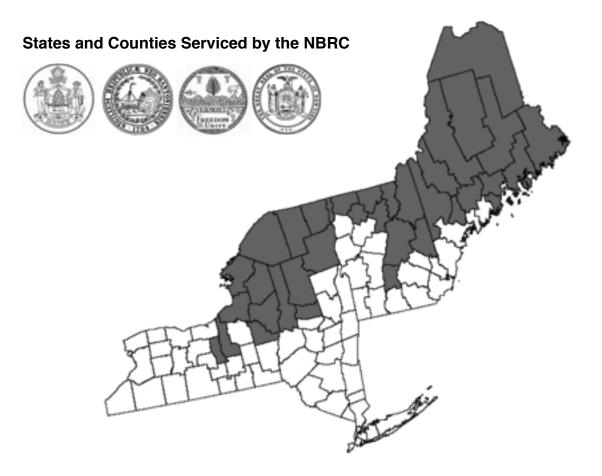
Recognizing similar economic and demographic challenges facing the northern parts of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, Congress delineated the NBRC's service area in the 2008 enabling legislation and only projects within the service area are allowed funding. The thirty-six counties within this service area include:

In New York: Cayuga, Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Oswego, Seneca, and St. Lawrence counties

In Vermont: Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Orleans counties

In New Hampshire: Carroll, Coos, Grafton, and Sullivan counties

In Maine: Androscoggin, Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington counties



Distressed and Transitional Counties

Per its 2008 enabling legislation, the NBRC is required to annually survey the economic and demographic data of the counties within its service area and to classify these counties in a manner that reflects historic or new levels of distress. The five criteria used to develop this classification include:

- 1. Outmigration of Population
- 2. Per Capita Income lower than the national average
- 3. Unemployment higher than the national average
- 4. 2000-2010 Population increase less than the national average
- 5. Poverty Rate higher than the national average

Counties classified as "Distressed" are the most severely and persistently economically distressed and underdeveloped of the NBRC's 36 county service area and have high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration. Distressed counties have at least three of the criteria stated above.

Accordingly, the following 26 counties are designated as "Distressed" for the purposes of prioritization and match:

In New York: Cayuga, Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Herkimer, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Oswego, St. Lawrence, and Seneca counties. In Vermont: Caledonia and Essex counties. In New Hampshire: Coos County. In Maine: Androscoggin, Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington counties

The percent of qualified project costs matched by NBRC funds in distressed counties is up to 80%. Federal law requires the NBRC to provide 50% of appropriations to projects categorized as distressed.

Counties classified as "Transitional" are economically distressed and underdeveloped or have recently suffered high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration. Transitional counties have at least one of the criteria stated above.

As such, the following counties are designated as "Transitional" for the purposes of prioritization and match:

In New York: Hamilton and Jefferson counties. In Vermont: Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Orleans counties. In New Hampshire: Carroll, Grafton, and Sullivan counties. In Maine: Kennebec County

The percent of qualified project costs matched by NBRC funds in transitional counties is up to 50%.

Areas of Investment

The following investment categories, as found in Public Law 110-246 (June 18, 2008) Subtitle V – Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development, represent the allowed areas of focus for NBRC grant funds.

- 1. To develop the transportation infrastructure of its region;
- 2. To develop the basic public infrastructure of its region;
- 3. To develop the telecommunications infrastructure of its region;
- 4. To assist its region in obtaining job skills training, skills development, and employment-related education, entrepreneurship, technology, and business development;
- 5. To provide assistance to severely economically distressed and underdeveloped areas of its region that lack financial resources for improving basic health care and other public services;
- 6. To promote resource conservation, tourism, recreation, and preservation of open space in a manner consistent with economic development goals;
- 7. To promote the development of renewable and alternative energy sources.

Federal law mandates that 40% of NBRC appropriations be utilized for infrastructure projects (1, 2, and 3 above) while 50% of NBRC appropriations shall be dedicated for distressed counties.

Considering the wide ranging nature of these categories and limited funding for grants, and in respect to the NBRC's enabling legislation that requires a five year investment plan, the NBRC has begun a process of prioritizing these categories in order to maximize its investments on local economies. As such, during its FY 2014 grant round, the NBRC provided a grant to the Northern Forest Center with a mandate to update, through stakeholder input, the original regional economic development strategy document.²

The update includes the following activities:

- 1. Identify needs in coordination with key advisors, including local development districts
- Identify potential members of state-state advisory groups; seek opportunities to align/inform/be informed by state and local-level strategies (e.g. EDA Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies)
- 3. Assess the Strategic Economy Initiative framework, goals and work plan; make adjustments as necessary

² Northern Forest Center (2008). "Economic Resurgence in the Northern Forest: Regional Strategy and Recommendations of the Sustainable Economy Initiative"

- 4. Engage and convene four-state advisory groups over 12 month period
- 5. Engage consultants to produce an updated social and economic assessment of the Northern Border Commission counties
- 6. Secure support from Governors and members of the congressional delegation
- 7. Publish and circulate strategy
- 8. Communicate with stakeholders throughout the strategy process, via web, social media and other means, to promote initiatives and success consistent with NBRC goals

This updated document will be used to prioritize grant applications and guide the Commission in moving forward with new programs and investment areas.

FY 2014 Grants

In September, 2014, the NBRC Members approved \$4.4MM in grants to projects in each of the four states that represent part or all of the seven legislatively mandated investment categories.

During this round, 84 applications were received from the NBRC's four state service area.

State	Received Applications	Amounts Requested	Awarded Applicants	Amounts Awarded
New York	34	\$6,944,600	5	\$971,000
Vermont	14	\$3,016,600	5	\$1,091,900
New Hampshire	11	\$2,447,100	5	\$954,100
Maine	25	\$5,559,900	6	\$1,428,000
Totals	84	\$17,968,200	21	\$4,445,000

The resulting awards were made to the following organizations:

Re	cipient Organization	State	NBRC Grant Amount	Matching Amount	Number of jobs to be created and/ or retained
1	City of Ogdensburg	NY	\$250,000	\$1,450,000	10
2	Canton Potsdam Hospital	NY	\$196,000	\$49,000	1
3	Hudson Headwaters Health Network	NY	\$250,000	\$4,481,250	30
4	Northern Forest Ctr.	NY	\$175,000	\$75,000	10
5	Lake Placid Ski Club	NY	\$100,000	\$405,000	10
6	Lyndon State College	VT	\$226,739	\$49,904	644
7	Northern Comm. Inv. Corp.	VT	\$250,000	\$65,788	0
8	Towns of Troy & Jay	VT	\$250,000	\$75,000	60
9	Vt. Agency of Trans.	VT	\$250,000	\$132,120	5
10	VT Housing & Cons. Board	VT	\$114,940	\$114,940	81
11	Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network	NH	\$161,670	\$40,417	10
12	Town of Littleton	NH	\$250,000	\$432,400	41
13	Coos Econ. Dev. Council	NH	\$240,000	\$60,000	0
14	Northern Comm. Inv. Corp.	NH	\$200,000	\$50,000	0
15	University of NH	NH	\$102,442	\$25,610	1
16	Indian Twp Passamaquoddy	ME	\$250,000	\$90,055	5
17	Town of Hartland	ME	\$250,000	\$75,072	142
18	Town of Ashland	ME	\$226,000	\$666,000	30
19	Maine Wood Products Association	ME	\$230,000	\$113,500	450
20	City of Ellsworth	ME	\$250,000	\$63,000	104
21	Northern Forest Center	ME	\$222,000	\$224,030	0
			\$4,444,791	\$8,738,086	1,633.5

FY 2016 Activities

In an effort to become a more impactful organization throughout its four state region, the NBRC staff and management aim to improve its programmatic and administrative capacity. As such, the NBRC will:

- Continue to engage contractor and assorted stakeholders for the NBRC's strategic plan update (Strategic Economy Initiative) with the goal of having the document completed by February, 2016. This document will provide focus to the NBRC's extremely wide programmatic services and allow a more direct identification of the organization's economic and demographic impact.
- Create new outreach activities such as a website, database of stakeholders, media outlets, and a newsletter distribution service.
- Commence educational meetings with State partners about their roll in providing for NBRC organizational and administrative costs.
- Develop partnerships with applicable State agencies with the goal of helping them build state comprehensive development and infrastructure plans.
- Plan rules and policies for an eventual Local Development District program.
- Engage contract expertise for in-depth economic and demographic statistical data on the NBRC's service area with the goal of: classifying 2016 distressed and transitional counties; identifying distressed sub-county regions in attainment counties; and creating a base set of statistics for which future programmatic goals can be compared and future progress can be quantified.
- Develop new policies and procedures pertaining to oversight of ongoing grants and ensure that all grantees meet existing grant requirements for reports and documentation of results. Create new databases of reports so as to identify programmatic success or need for changes. Contract with legal services to develop more detailed grant agreements that focus on grant administration expectations and costs, reporting requirements, statistical collection, and enhanced timelines for project completion.
- Make new grant rules surrounding the detail of regular reports from grantees, with particular emphasis on their project's relief of employment, low income, and outmigration challenges.
- Research opportunities for audit work and create a regular pattern for such oversight.
- Continue to research best organizational and grant practices with sister agencies such as the Delta Regional Authority and Appalachian Regional Commission.

- Engage stakeholders throughout the four state NBRC service area through in person visitations, and higher profile meeting attendance.
- Hire a person to assist the Federal Co-Chair and Program Specialist in their duties as well as provide high-level administrative support by: conducting research; preparing statistical reports; handling information requests; performing clerical functions such as preparing correspondence, arranging conference calls, and scheduling meeting; file and retrieve corporate documents, records, and reports; manage office inventory; coordinate events; and perform regular information technology activities.

FY 2016 Budget

TABLE 1: Sources and Uses of Funds for Fiscal Years 2015 to 2015 Appropriations

	FY 2015	2016 President's Budget	Change from 2015
Sources (Appropriations)	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$0
Uses (NBRC Programmatic & Operating Expenditures)			
Econ/Infrastructure Grants	\$4,620,931	\$4,370,396	-\$250,535
LDD Grant Program	\$0	\$100,000	\$100,000
Operating Expenditures	\$379,069	\$529,604	\$150,535
	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	

TABLE 2: Programmatic Expenditures for Fiscal Years 2015 to 2015 Appropriations

	FY 2015	2016 President's Budget	Change from 2015
Econ/Infrastructure Grants	\$4,620,931	\$4,370,396	-\$250,535
LDD Grant Program	\$0	\$100,000	\$100,000
	\$4,620,931	\$4,470,396	-\$150,535

TABLE 3: Operating Expenditures for Fiscal Years 2015 to 2015 Appropriations

	2016 President's	Change from	
FY 2015	Budget	2015	
\$296,500	\$414,060	\$117,560	
\$31,532	\$56,200	\$24,668	
\$15,695	\$20,265	\$4,570	
\$20,000	\$13,467	-\$6,533	
	\$700	\$700	
\$5,000	\$3,500	-\$1,500	
	\$13,911	\$13,911	
	\$2,500	\$2,500	
	\$5,000	\$5,000	
\$1,084		-\$1,084	
\$725		-\$725	
\$123		-\$123	
\$25		-\$25	
\$3,809		-\$3,809	
\$188		-\$188	
\$165		-\$165	
\$368		-\$368	
\$122		-\$122	
\$1,548		-\$1,548	
\$1,815		-\$1,815	
070		 	
\$370		-\$370	
	\$296,500 \$31,532 \$15,695 \$20,000 \$5,000 \$5,000 \$1,084 \$725 \$123 \$25 \$3,809 \$188 \$165 \$368 \$165 \$368 \$122 \$1,548 \$1,548 \$1,815	FY 2015 President's Budget \$296,500 \$414,060 \$31,532 \$56,200 \$15,695 \$20,265 \$20,000 \$13,467 \$700 \$3,500 \$5,000 \$3,500 \$13,911 \$2,500 \$5,000 \$3,500 \$13,911 \$2,500 \$13,911 \$2,500 \$123 \$5,000 \$123 \$25 \$3,809 \$188 \$165 \$368 \$122 \$1,548 \$1,815 \$1,815	

Appendix

County Distress Categories Distress Counties Data Set Transitional Counties Data Set NBRC Organizational Chart

COUNTY DISTRESS CATEGORIES

As directed by Public Law 110-246, June 18, 2008

Designations	Criteria for Designation	Designated Counties/Areas	Percent of Project matched by NBRC	Exceptions
"Distressed County"	"have high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration" <i>and</i> "are the most severely and persistently economic distressed and underdeveloped"	Maine: Androscoggin, Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Oxford, Penobscot,Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, Washington New Hampshire: Coos Vermont: Caledonia, Essex New York: Cayuga, Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Herkimer, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Seneca	80%	Exceptions for increased grants to 90% of project: if the project involves 3 or more counties or more than one state <i>or</i> if the project provides significant interstate or multi-county benefit
"Transitional County"	"have recently suffered high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration" <i>or</i> "are economically distressed and underdeveloped"	Maine: Kennebec New Hampshire: Carroll, Grafton, Sullivan Vermont: Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orleans New York: Hamilton, Jefferson	50%	Exceptions for increased grant match to 60% of project: if the project involves 3 or more counties or more than one state <i>or</i> if the project provides significant interstate or multi-county benefit
"Attainment County"	"not designated as distressed or transitional counties"	None	Projects are generally not applicable for NBRC funds	Exceptions for NBRC funding and percent of project matched by NBRC: if the project covers more than one county, 50%. If the project involves 3 or more counties or more than one state, 60% <i>or</i> if the project provides significant regional benefit, 50% <i>or</i> the project is within an "isolated area of distress" see below
"Isolated Areas of Distress"	"areas located in [attainment] counties that have high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration"	Applicable municipalities, census tracts, or labor market areas. Has not been researched.	50%	Exceptions for increased grant match to 60% or project: if the project involves 3 or more counties or more than one state <i>or</i> if the project provides significant interstate or multi-county benefit

40% of any grant amounts provided by the Commission in a fiscal year shall be spent on "transportation infrastructure", "basic public infrastructure", or "telecommunications infrastructure."

50% of total appropriations made to the NBRC shall be dedicated to programs and projects designed to serve the needs of distressed counties and isolated areas of distress in the region

FOR DESIGNATING TRANSITIONAL COUNTIES

	Prir	Primary Distress Criteria			Secondary Dis	stress Criteria	At least ONE
Area	Migration (2010-2013) ¹	Poverty Level (2013) ²	24-Month Average Unemployment Rate ⁴	OR	Per Capital Personal Income (2013) ³	3-year Average Labor Force Participation Rate ^{4,5}	factor from EITHER of the criteria categories?
United States	2.4%	15.8%	7.8%		\$44,765	63.45%	
Regional Average	-0.4%	15.1%	7.7%		\$38,903	59.78%	
Androscoggin, ME	-0.1%	16.5%	6.9%		\$37,680	67.53%	\checkmark
Aroostook, ME	-2.5%	16.4%	9.0%		\$36,647	57.73%	 √
Franklin, ME	-0.9%	15.5%	9.0%		\$33,137	56.01%	√
Hancock, ME	0.8%	14.3%	8.3%		\$39,804	64.95%	√
Kennebec, ME	-0.8%	14.8%	6.6%		\$39,743	63.98%	√
Knox, ME	-0.5%	14.1%	6.4%		\$41,703	63.22%	√
Oxford, ME	-1.0%	15.0%	8.5%		\$34,012	60.57%	√
Penobscot, ME	-0.4%	15.9%	7.4%		\$36,713	61.99%	√
Piscataquis, ME	-2.3%	17.6%	9.8%		\$34,388	51.13%	√
Somerset, ME	-1.0%	17.8%	9.5%		\$34,263	58.57%	√
Waldo, ME	0.4%	16.8%	8.0%		\$35,195	62.05%	√
Washington, ME	-2.0%	18.8%	10.1%		\$35,887	52.69%	1
Carroll, NH	-0.7%	10.4%	5.2%		\$49,119	62.48%	1
Coos, NH	-3.2%	14.8%	7.0%		\$40,174	57.71%	√
Grafton, NH	0.6%	11.1%	4.4%		\$50,194	65.16%	√
Sullivan, NH	-1.7%	10.4%	4.6%		\$42,665	63.84%	√
Cayuga, NY	-0.7%	14.2%	7.6%		\$38,666	62.29%	V
Clinton, NY	-0.7%	15.7%	9.2%		\$38,831	55.09%	 √
Essex, NY	-1.5%	11.7%	9.3%		\$39,309	53.57%	√
Franklin, NY	0.2%	22.4%	9.3%		\$34,111	52.59%	√
Fulton, NY	-1.7%	15.7%	9.8%		\$39,083	59.02%	√
Hamilton, NY	-1.3%	12.1%	8.4%		\$47,868	70.65%	√
Herkimer, NY	-0.5%	16.4%	8.5%		\$36,871	58.45%	√
Jefferson, NY	2.8%	15.7%	9.8%		\$44,968	53.15%	√
Lewis, NY	0.2%	14.8%	9.9%		\$34,873	57.42%	√
Madison, NY	-1.4%	13.9%	8.2%		\$37,628	59.86%	√
Oneida, NY	-0.6%	17.6%	8.1%		\$40,145	55.89%	√
Oswego, NY	-0.8%	18.6%	10.0%		\$34,976	58.51%	√
St. Lawrence, NY	0.0%	21.4%	9.8%		\$32,692	52.89%	√
Seneca, NY	0.4%	13.1%	7.4%		\$36,606	58.22%	\checkmark
Caledonia, VT	-0.2%	14.3%	5.8%		\$36,929	63.22%	\checkmark
Essex, VT	-1.5%	18.1%	6.5%		\$30,686	58.03%	√
Franklin, VT	1.1%	11.8%	4.5%		\$44,657	69.72%	√
Grand Isle, VT	0.2%	9.7%	5.3%		\$47,220	66.33%	√
Lamoille, VT	2.4%	12.3%	5.2%		\$44,006	79.67%	√
Orleans, VT	-0.2%	15.0%	6.7%		\$39,055	67.56%	1
	34	12	20		29	26	36

1 - USDA Economic Research Service - County Level Population Data (2000-2013) - http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products.aspx

2- United States Census Bureau - Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (2013) - http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/downloads/estmod13/index.html

3 - Bureau of Economic Analysis - Personal Income Summary (CA04, 2013) - http://www.bea.gov/regional/

4 - Bureau of Labor Statistics - Unemployment (2011-2013) - http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables

5 - Bureau of Labor Statistics & US Census Bureau (2011-2013) - Local Area Unemployment Statistics and 16 & Over Population - http://www.bls.gov/lau/ & h

FOR DESIGNATING DISTRESSED COUNTIES

	Primary Distress Criteria		1	Secondary Distress Criteria		1	
Area	Migration (2010-2013) ¹	Poverty Level (2013) ²	24-Month Average Unemployment Rate ⁴	AND	Per Capital Personal Income (2013) ³	3-year Average Labor Force Participation Rate ^{4,5}	At least THREE factors AND at least ONE from each category?
United States	2.4%	15.8%	7.8%		\$44,765	63.45%	
Regional Average	-0.4%	15.1%	7.7%		\$38,903	59.78%	
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Seneca, NY	0.4%	13.1%	7.4%		\$36,606	58.22%	1
Caledonia, VT	-0.2%	14.3%	5.8%		\$36,929	63.22%	1
Essex, VT	-1.5%	18.1%	6.5%	-	\$30,686	58.03%	 √
Franklin, VT	1.1%	11.8%	4.5%		\$44,657	69.72%	•
Grand Isle, VT	0.2%	9.7%	5.3%		\$47,220	66.33%	
Lamoille, VT	2.4%	12.3%	5.2%		\$44,006	79.67%	
Orleans, VT	-0.2%	15.0%	6.7%		\$39,055	67.56%	
36	34	12	20		29	26	26

1 - USDA Economic Research Service - County Level Population Data (2000-2013) - http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products.aspx

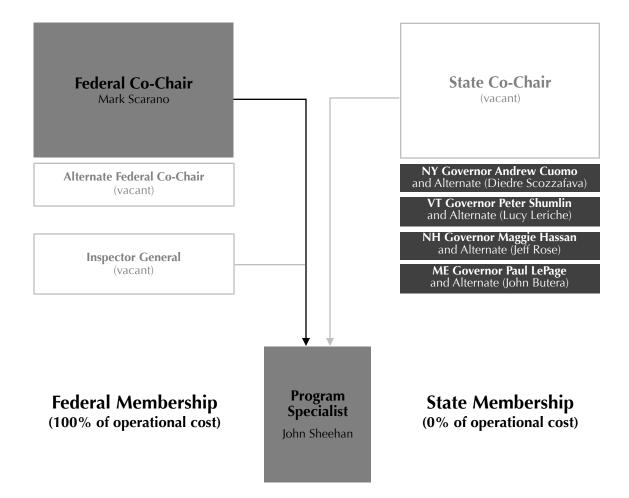
2- United States Census Bureau - Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (2013) - http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/downloads/estmod13/index.html

3 - Bureau of Economic Analysis - Personal Income Summary (CA04, 2013) - http://www.bea.gov/regional/

4 - Bureau of Labor Statistics - Unemployment (2011-2013) - http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables

5 - Bureau of Labor Statistics & US Census Bureau (2011-2013) - Local Area Unemployment Statistics and 16 & Over Population - http://www.bls.gov/lau/ & h

NBRC ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



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