



## Northern Border Regional Commission & USDA Rural Development Announce \$3 Million in Joint Funding for Projects in Northern New England & New York

*Investments to benefit New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine initiatives*

**MONTPELIER, Vt., November 16, 2022** – Today, the [Northern Border Regional Commission \(NBRC\)](#) and [U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development \(RD\)](#) announced \$3 million in funding for economic-development projects in Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. Congress has provided funds to the NBRC since 2019 for this partnership, which advances the strategic objectives of both agencies. Awards will support community-driven initiatives in each state and bolster a regional effort aimed at increasing growth in the outdoor recreation economy. The NBRC identified investments in outdoor recreation as a method for contributing to the Biden-Harris Administration’s National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health and these awards further that commitment.

“The success of this partnership is in the way it elevates local initiatives that are essential to growing the regional economy,” said Chris Saunders, Federal Co-Chair of the Northern Border Regional Commission. “NBRC communities have identified specific workforce training and childcare projects and our four member states have stated clearly that harnessing the potential of the outdoor recreation economy is a key theme throughout the entire region.”

“By working together with the NBRC to fund these essential projects, our agency is able to broaden the scope and impacts of community-building programs for rural residents in the Twin States,” said Sarah Waring, State Director for [USDA Rural Development in Vermont](#) and [New Hampshire](#). “This important partnership provides an annual reminder of what smart, forward-looking economic development looks like. Funding in Vermont and New Hampshire for 2022 will provide infrastructural support for childcare and workforce training, reaffirming our commitment to building back our rural communities stronger than ever.”

“Collaboration is critical to the success of rural Maine,” shared Rhiannon Hampson, State Director for [USDA Rural Development in Maine](#). “We value our partnership with the NRBC as it allows the dollars we have to resonate throughout the state, improving the lives of our neighbors, and the economies of our small communities. This project funding also brings in a valuable state partner, Maine DACF, and helps to create thoughtful access to our valuable natural resources—proving once again that economic growth and preservation of natural spaces can go hand-in-hand.”

“One of the many priorities of the Biden-Harris Administration is to ensure that rural residents and businesses have the same opportunities and access to markets that their urban counterparts enjoy,” said [USDA RD New York](#) State Director Brian Murray. “This equity of access—whether it is through technical training and workforce development or supporting rural recreational economies—can be realized through the cooperation between NBRC and USDA Rural Development. This partnership is essential for the continued growth and success for rural economies throughout each of the partner states—and ensures that these communities have the same opportunities to thrive”.

Funds will support the following efforts across NBRC’s four-state region, including support for the administration of these projects:



# Northern Border Regional Commission

## **North Country Workforce Partnership (Plattsburgh, NY)**

**\$335,834**

The Authentic STEM Connect US (ASTEM) is an innovative approach to career and technical training and workforce development, partnering secondary school students with regional businesses to solve real-world challenges. The program aims to partner with 80 companies, train 30 mentors, and reach 250 students in the next three years.

## **Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (Farmington, ME)**

**\$335,834**

This project involves construction of a multiple-use bridge over the Sandy River connecting the Whistle Stop Trail to downtown Farmington, Maine. By increasing the accessibility of Farmington's downtown the project will result in increased trail use, downtown visitation, and local spending. When completed it will be the longest pedestrian bridge and single-span snowmobile bridge in Maine.

## **Franconia Soaring Foundation, Inc. (Franconia, NH)**

**\$335,834**

The FSF will construct a multi-functional Training and Operations Center facility on its property comprising the south end of the Franconia Airport. The Center will facilitate career development opportunities in aviation-related fields and provide a training and education resource for regional STEM programs.

## **Pittsford Village Farm (Pittsford, VT)**

**\$335,834**

The Pittsford Village Farm will renovate a currently vacant space in a historic building in the village center and repurpose it for childcare programming and community functions. The project aims to offer high-quality, affordable early childhood education opportunities for 26 households. Additionally, space within the building will be set aside as a community gathering room for the public to use for meetings or events.

## **Outdoor Economy Council**

**\$1,566,664**

Building on the success of past funding, NBRC and USDA will again fund a regional Outdoor Economy Council that leverages ongoing initiatives in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont to further develop and market each state's tourism and recreation-based economies. Increased coordination across the NBRC territory will help to drive the regional Outdoor Recreation economy and collectively develop broader regional capacity for expanding this crucial industry.

## **About the NBRC**

Created in 2008, the Northern Border Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership whose mission is to help alleviate economic distress and encourage private sector job creation in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. In its thirteen-year history the Commission has awarded 387 grants, amounting to more than \$114 million in direct investment and \$416 million in additional leveraged investments, across the four states through its primary State Economic & Infrastructure Development (SEID) grant program and other special initiatives.

## **About USDA Rural Development**

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov). If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit our [GovDelivery subscriber page](#).