



Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request

As submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees March 2020

Table of Contents

About the NBRC	2
NBRC Members	3
The NBRC Service Area	4
Distressed and Transitional Counties	5
Areas of Investment	6
FY 2019 Grant Awards	7
FY 2021 Areas of Focus	7
FY 2021 Proposed Budget	8

About the NBRC

Our Vision: The Northern Border region is known for its vital regional economies and thriving communities that provide for the well-being of the region's residents and support the stewardship of the region's natural and cultural assets.

Our Mission: The mission of the Northern Border Regional Commission is to catalyze regional, collaborative, and transformative community economic development approaches that alleviate economic distress and position the region for economic growth.

Authorized by Congress in 2008 (USC 40, Subtitle V) and first appropriated by Congress in 2010, the Northern Border Regional Commission ("NBRC") is modeled after the Appalachian Regional Commission federal-state partnership. The NBRC was created to provide infrastructure and economic development assistance to projects in counties that have varying degrees of economic and demographic distress.

Authority and oversight functions of the NBRC are shared by five Members: The Federal Government represented by the Federal Co-Chair and the States of Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont, represented by the Governors of those States. NBRC investments and policies are approved by the vote of the Federal Co-Chair and the collective vote of the majority of State Governors.

As a Federal-State partnership, the NBRC enjoys a strong network of State economic development leaders who provide guidance and support for NBRC programs. Such support also helps NBRC staff maintain knowledge of local conditions throughout its extensive service area.

The NBRC partnership is also aided by a select number of certified Local Development Districts that assist in grant technical assistance, provide information on complementary grants for projects, and administration of the NBRC grant funds.

The NBRC Members have a shared staff that is accountable and responsible to the Members as a whole. The staff provides impartial information and counsel as to NBRC programs and direction.

The NBRC offers a wide ranging and popular grant program: The Economic & Infrastructure Development Investment Program. The EID Investment Program's overall parameters are directed by statute but are specifically oriented toward the goals and objective found within the NBRC's Five Year Strategic Plan. The NBRC also offers a new grant program with a regional forest-based economy emphasis: the Regional Forest Economy Partnership (RFEP).

NBRC Members

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



Representing the Federal Government

Member: Harold B. Parker, Federal Co-Chair



Representing the State of Maine

Member: The Honorable Janet Mills, Governor

Governor's Alternate:

Commissioner Heather Johnson, Department of Economic & Community Development

NBRC Program Manager: Andrea Smith, Department of Economic & Community Development



Representing the State of New Hampshire

Member: The Honorable Chris Sununu, Governor

Governor's Alternate:

Commissioner Taylor Caswell, Dept. of Economic Affairs

NBRC State Program Manager:

Mollie Kaylor, Dept. of Economic Affairs



Representing the State of New York

Member: The Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Governor

Governor's Alternate:

Deputy Secretary of State Mark Pattison, Local Government Services

NBRC State Program Manager:

Kyle Wilber, Local Government Services, NY Secretary of State



Representing the State of Vermont

Member: The Honorable Phil Scott, Governor

Governor's Alternate:

Deputy Secretary Ted Brady, Agency of Commerce & Community Development

NBRC State Program Manager:

Tim Tierney, Agency of Commerce & Community Development

The NBRC Service Area

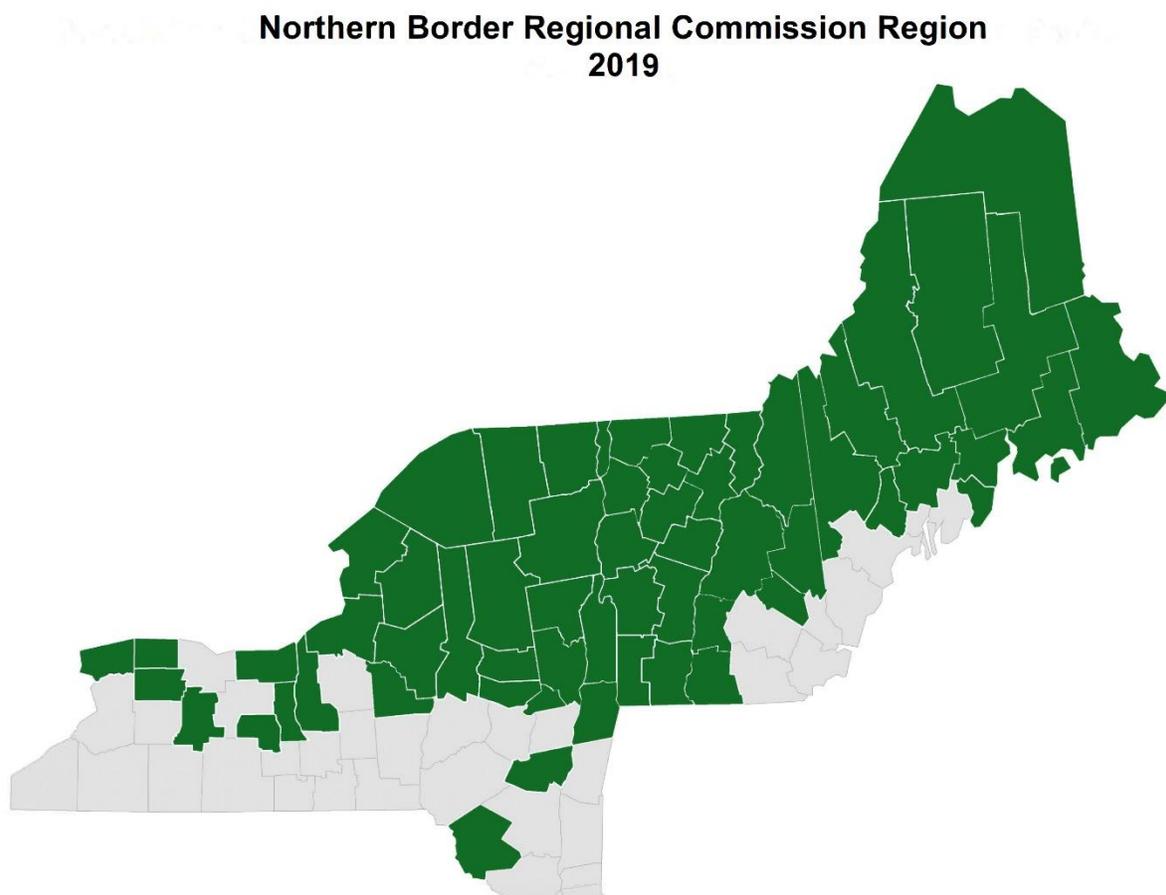
Recognizing similar economic and demographic challenges facing the northern parts of Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont, Congress delineated the NBRC's service area by statute and only projects within the service area are allowed funding. 2018 Reauthorization added 24 additional counties.

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

New Hampshire: Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, and Sullivan counties

New York: Cayuga, Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Orleans, Oswego, Rensselaer, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Seneca, Sullivan, Warren, Washington, Wayne and Yates counties.

Vermont: all counties within the State



Distressed and Transitional Counties

By statute, the NBRC is required to annually assess the level of economic and demographic distress within its region. The reasons for this annual exercise include:

- To have reliable and timely data that can inform NBRC leadership as they create new- and perfect existing- economic and infrastructure funding programs,
- To create a benchmark in which annual compilations of economic and demographic data can be compared to the NBRC's Five Year Plan goals,
- To identify whether the NBRC can provide grants to projects within a county,
- What level of match is required by grant applicants for projects.
- To assist States as they develop their own economic and community development programs, and
- To provide publicly available information so local decision makers can prioritize their economic and community development strategies.

Classification Criteria

The ultimate result of this work is to separate counties and municipalities within the NBRC service area into certain classifications including Distressed Counties, Transitional Counties, and Attainment Counties.

The NBRC bases the classification of counties based on the following distress categories:

Primary Distress Categories

(required by statute for consideration):

- Percent of Population below Poverty Level,
- Unemployment Rate, and
- Percent Change in Population

Secondary Distress Categories:

- Percent of Population with a bachelor's degree or higher,
- Median Household Income, and
- Percent of Secondary and Seasonal Homes

Distressed Counties

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

Transitional Counties

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

Attainment Counties and Isolated Areas of Distress

Finally, "Attainment" counties are those that are neither "distressed" nor "transitional." The NBRC is not allowed to fund projects within an attainment county unless the project is within an "Isolated Area of Distress," or have been granted a waiver. Isolated areas of distress are "areas [municipalities] that have high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration."

Listing of Counties by Distress

Please refer to the NBRC's website for the most recent [2019 Distress Criteria](#).

Areas of Investment

The following investment categories, as found in Pub.L 110-246, Subtitle V – Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development, represent the allowed seven 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 grants be utilized for infrastructure projects (numbers 1, 2, 3 and 7 above) while 50% of NBRC appropriations shall be dedicated for distressed counties.

Strategic Investing

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 created a Five-Year Strategic Plan that will give the NBRC focus and priorities from 2017-2021. Below are the areas of investment supported in the Strategic Plan:

- Revitalize and modernize essential infrastructure in Northern Border region communities.
- Increase access, affordability, and use of high-speed telecommunications by Northern Border residents and businesses.
- Stabilize and reduce electric and thermal energy costs.
- Retain, expand and diversify business enterprise that capitalizes on the region's natural, cultural, and economic assets.
- Position the Northern Border region as an attractive and supportive place for creative and entrepreneurial people.
- Support and expand a highly productive workforce with skills suited to existing and future business needs.
- Foster entrepreneurial leadership and capacity for community economic development.
- Inform and align local, state, and regional economic development decision making with regional data and perspectives.

The NBRC's Five Year Strategic Plan is available for downloading on the NBRC's website:

<http://www.nbrc.gov/content/strategic-plan>

FY 2019 Grant Awards

The NBRC has four funds: The Economic & Infrastructure Development (EID) Investment Program, the Regional Forest Economy Partnership (RFEP), a collaboration with the Economic Development Administration (EDA), and a collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The EID Program is the core of NBRC's function, and it funds economic and community development projects and programs within the NBRC's four State region. In 2019, EDA funds were awarded to EID projects that met the requirements of both the NBRC and the EDA. USDA funds were granted to the NBRC, and utilized in each of the States to primarily fund Outdoor Recreation Economy work; crucial investments in the diversification of a post-forest based economy.

The parameters of the NBRC's investments are directed by the NBRC's enabling legislation, standard Federal grant requirements, the NBRC's Five-Year Strategic Plan, and State or regional economic development plans.

Below is a summary of the grants awarded during the 2019 EID round (which includes EDA awards) and 2019 RFEP round. More detailed information on the grants can be found within the [NBRC's 2019 Annual Report](#).

FY 2021 Areas of Focus

In accordance with the President's budgetary recommendation to Congress, the NBRC's activities in 2021 will focus on the closure of the agency and ensure that future grant reimbursement requests are processed in a timely manner. In meeting this mandate, NBRC leadership will oversee the following activities:

- To identify acceptable Federal entities that have the capacity and subject matter expertise that can and will assume responsibility for outstanding grant balances,
- Negotiate, create, and enter into inter-agency agreement(s) that will transfer these outstanding grant balances to the accepted entity,
- Work with NBRC's current contracted human resource providers to terminate and compensate NBRC personnel,
- Terminate any outstanding contracts, and
- Properly transfer or dispose of equipment.

Awards: EID Grants, 2019

Number of Awards:	45
Total Amount of Awards:	\$13,952,746.02
Total Amount Requested:	\$43,040,256.56

Awards: Regional Forest Economy Partnership (RFEP), 2019

Number of Awards:	9
Total Amount of Awards:	\$7,199,999.00
Total Amount Requested:	\$32,095,816.00

FY 2021 Proposed Budget

The proposed Commission Budget Request for the 2021 fiscal year is **\$850,000** in order to carry out the 2020 Areas of Focus described in the previous chapter.

NBRC

	President's Budget 2021
11 Personnel Compensation	\$357,352
12 Personnel Benefits	\$178,676
13 Benefits for Former Personnel	\$183,080
21 Travel, Transportation of Persons	\$5,000
22 Transportation of Things	\$5,000
23 Rent, Communications, Utilities	\$35,499
24 Printing and Reproduction	\$1,000
25 Other Services	\$77,893
26 Supplies and Materials	\$1,500
31 Equipment (general)	\$5,000
41 Economic & Infrastructure Development Grants	\$0
41 Regional Forest Economy Partnership	\$0
31 Equipment (grant monitoring database)	\$0
25 Other Services (programmatic)	\$0
Subtotal	\$850,000