



**Northern Border
Regional Commission**

Forest Economy Program

www.NBRC.gov

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Northern Border Regional Commission

AGENDA

- Introduction
- NBRC Overview
- Forest Economy Program Information
- Examples of Successful Projects
- Helpful Hints
- Questions



Northern Border Regional Commission

Introduction

Established by Congress in 2008, the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) is a partnership between the federal government and the States of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. The mission of the NBRC is to fund economic development and infrastructure projects throughout designated counties in its four-state service area. The governance of the NBRC is based on the Appalachian Regional Commission model created in the 1960s.

The NBRC partnership provides investments to job-creating projects that help reduce poverty, unemployment, and outmigration. NBRC investment funds originate from the Federal Government but are approved by the Federal Government's NBRC representative (Federal Co-Chair) and the Governors of the four States.

The NBRC partnership is aided by recognized Local Development Districts (LDD) that assist with technical assistance, provide information on complimentary funding opportunities for projects, and ensure consistency with administration of projects that are funded.



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A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain range. The foreground and middle ground are filled with dense, vibrant green forests covering the slopes of the mountains. In the distance, the mountain peaks are shrouded in a light mist or haze, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The sky is a pale, overcast blue.

NBRC Overview



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Mission and Authority

- 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
- The Commission was enacted by Congress through the 2008 Farm Bill which amended 40 US Code to include the creation of the NBRC
- The statutory authority is based on one vote of the Federal Co-Chair and the collective votes of the four Governors
- The NBRC was reauthorized in the 2014 Farm Bill and again in 2018



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Commission Service Area

Only projects within NBRC's service area are eligible for funding:

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

New Hampshire: Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coös, Grafton, and Sullivan

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

(see Isolated Areas of Distress (applicable in NH and VT) in NBRC's [2023 Distress Criteria Report](#))



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Federal-State Partnership

The States play a crucial role in the NBRC as they partner with the Federal Government to focus NBRC funding strategies and prioritize investments.

- **The Commission:** The decision-making process of the Commission is comprised of five voting members including a Federal Co-Chair, who is appointed by the President following confirmation by the Senate, and the Governors of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York
- **Governor's Alternates:** The Governors are represented on the NBRC by their chosen alternate
- **State Program Managers:** The Governor's Alternates assign NBRC partnership duties to a State Program Manager. The SPMs serve as the primary point of contact for entities interested in NBRC funding



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Who coordinates Forest Economy Program activities for the states?

State Program Managers coordinate NBRC-related program activity for their state, such as organizing the review team and scoring of all program applications.

The FEP Advisory Board (AB) is made up of forest economy experts in each of the four states, and their role is to assist in project development as well as to provide guidance and lend expertise to State Program Managers.

You can find contact information for State Program Managers and Advisory Board members in the Forest Economy Program Materials, linked [here](#).



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2023 Forest Economy Program (FEP)

The Commission will make up to \$7 million in grants available,
with a maximum award of \$1 Million.

(After spring awards, approximately \$4.4MM remains available for the fall grant round.)

www.nbrc.gov/content/FEP



2023 FEP Timeline

FALL 2023 APPLICATION TIMELINE

Forest Economy Program Information Sessions

Letters of Interest (**required**)

Responses to LOIs including invitations to apply

Applications Due (by invite only)

NBRC Selection Meeting

NBRC notice of awards & notice
to unsuccessful applicants

August 2023

Sept. 22 by 5pm EST

Week of October 16th

Nov. 10 by 5pm EST

January 2024

By January 31, 2024



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Eligible Applicants

- State governments of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York
- Local governments and secondary and career technical centers (village, town, city and county);
- Other political subdivisions of States (regional planning commissions, authorities of the state);
- Indian Tribes; § 200.54 Indian tribe (or “federally recognized Indian tribe”).
- Non-profit entities. The term ‘nonprofit entity’ means any organization described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under 501(a) of that Code.
- Institutions of Higher Education (must be able to demonstrate existing industry partnerships)



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2023 FEP Process

Threshold Requirements

- NBRC staff will review the LOIs to confirm eligibility. LOIs will then be shared with the FEP Advisory Board
- The Advisory Board, in coordination with State Program Managers, will make the final determination of which projects will or will not be invited to submit an application
- Note: FEP Letters of Interest are required. Please review the Program Manual for additional information on LOI submission requirements. All program materials are available on NBRC's website at www.nbrc.gov.



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FEP Advisory Board

- Consists of one member representing the Federal Co-Chair and two members from each of the four states
- Markets the program and serves as a resource for project development
- Evaluates letters of interest and provides sector expertise to State Program Managers for application evaluation
- Serves as a resource to projects invited to submit a full application
- DOES NOT score applications.
- A full list of AB members can be found in FEP program materials, found [here](#).



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FEP Purpose

The purpose of this program is to support the forest-based economy, and to assist in the industry's evolution to include new technologies and viable business models across the 4-state NBRC region.

For those potential applicants familiar with the NBRC's core "Catalyst" funding opportunity, the Forest Economy Program is distinct in two important ways:

- The Forest Economy Program emphasizes the potential for impact across the entire NBRC region.
- Infrastructure projects (defined by Congress in NBRC's authorizing language to be inclusive of transportation, water and wastewater, telecommunications, and energy) must directly support the forest economy.



FEP Program Description

Whether funded directly or through partnerships, funds will be awarded to support projects in the forest economy, which may include one (or multiple) of the following:

- 1.** Community development projects that support the diversified use of forests within the Northern Border Regional Commission's service area for economic activity to include wood products and advanced materials manufacturing, as well as for other economic activity that utilizes northern border forests sustainably and demonstrates planning for climate resiliency.



FEP Program Description

- 2.** Workforce [re] training and development projects for the purpose of building the skills and recruiting and retaining the workforce needed for forest businesses.
- 3.** Marketing/communication and education projects that promote the environmental and climate benefits of forest management and forest products in ways that strengthen markets for wood products.



FEP Program Description

- 4.** Business planning and technical assistance projects that enhance the viability and sustainability of new and existing forest businesses
- 5.** Public infrastructure projects that directly support the forest industry, and/or that demonstrate the use of wood-based products in public infrastructure



FEP Investment Goals

1. Invest in the development and commercialization of technologies that create new markets for forest product residuals.
2. Invest in workforce recruitment, development, and training to increase job placement across the forest product continuum.
3. Support for eligible entities helping to sustain and grow existing forest industry businesses and operations, such as through technical assistance.
4. Revitalization of rural communities through the diversified use of northern border forests for economic activity to include wood products and advanced materials manufacturing, as well as for other economic activity that utilizes northern border forests sustainably for the production of wood products and advanced materials manufacturing.
5. Encourage projects that leverage existing (or, in some cases, new) partnerships to impact multiple counties, states and/or the entire NBBC region, and/or have the potential to do so.



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For Example...

The following are examples of projects that were successfully funded in the past:

- *The project:* In 2019, the Town of East Millinocket was funded to redevelop the East Millinocket paper mill site into a multi-industrial complex.
- *The resulting impact on the forest economy:* The Town of East Millinocket was able to successfully purchase the mill property and prepare the site for industrial use by new businesses, including forest product companies. This project is a good example of a community development project as described in the Forest Economy Program materials.





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For Example...

The following are examples of projects that were successfully funded in the past:

- *The project:* In 2020, the Northern Vermont University was funded to establish the NVU Forestry Accelerator & Workforce Development program to address the economic shift produced by the chronic and consistent decline of the forest products industry across the tri-county region.
- *The resulting impact on the forest economy:* the Forestry Accelerator Program provides technical assistance to companies looking to develop markets in northern New England and works to solve regional challenges in the forest economy.
- This project is a good example of a business planning and technical assistance project that directly supports the forest industry.

<https://forestaccelerator.org/>



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For Example...

The following are examples of projects that were successfully funded in the past:

- *The project:* In 2021, the University of Maine was funded to evaluate wood sources and treatments for their suitability in fiber thermoforming (plant-based replacement for plastic packaging), and to develop a training course to develop the workforce needed to operate new machinery.
- *The resulting impact on the forest economy:* The project helps to position the region to “become a resource – both in knowledge and skills – as fiber thermoforming continues to grow”. – University of Maine 2021 NBRC RFEP application. This project represents an investment in the development and commercialization of technologies that create new markets for forest product residuals, as well as a forest economy workforce training project.



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For Example...

The following are examples of projects that were successfully funded in the past:

- *The project:* In spring 2023, the NBRC funded the Jesup Memorial Library's Mass Timber Expansion Project, which will build an 11,400 square foot addition to the existing building in Bar Harbor, Maine, using cross laminated timber made from locally sourced eastern hemlock.
- *The resulting impact on the forest economy:* This project will showcase the use of our local species in an increasingly popular and climate smart forest product, mass timber. This project is a good example of a community development project that supports the diversified use of forests within our region for economic activity that utilizes northern border forests sustainably.



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Helpful Hints

- Review FEP Program Materials, including the program timeline and a detailed program manual available at nbrc.gov/content/FEP
- Discuss project specifics with your State Program Manager
- Utilize Advisory Board members as a resource
- For a full list of funded Forest Economy Program projects, visit the FEP page of the NBRC website and click “Forest Economy Award History”



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A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain valley. The foreground and middle ground are filled with dense, vibrant green forests covering rolling hills and valleys. In the background, several layers of mountain ranges are visible, appearing increasingly hazy and blue as they recede into the distance under a bright, slightly overcast sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

QUESTIONS?