



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **\$1.8 Million Awarded for Economic Development Support Through Northern Border Regional Commission, USDA Rural Development Partnership**

*Projects will help advance healthcare and workforce development, boost winter tourism, create and retain jobs in rural communities, and support local food systems.*

**CONCORD, NH, December 22, 2025** – Today, the [Northern Border Regional Commission \(NBRC\)](https://www.nbrc.gov) and [U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development \(RD\)](https://www.usda.gov/rural-development) announced \$1.8 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.

The awards being made through this partnership will support community-driven initiatives in each state with a particular focus on healthcare accessibility, outdoor recreation, small business development, and the local food distribution and education.

“These awards demonstrate NBRC and USDA RD’s shared commitment to supporting businesses that are creating jobs in rural communities. Whether deploying new loan capital, or building out spaces for small business entrepreneurs, each of these awards will contribute to growing the local, state and regional economy,” said **Chris Saunders, Federal Co-Chair of the NBRC**.

“USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins has made it clear that making more local food available to more local communities is an absolute priority,” said **Patrick Suprunowicz, USDA Rural Development (RD) State Director for New Hampshire and Vermont**. “And it is a priority of mine to make sure the Agency always promotes and enables our famed recreational offerings here in the Twin States to bring more tourists and more income to small businesses. That is why these two investments, made in partnership with our friends at NBRC, align so perfectly with the RD mission. Through the Rural Business Development Grant program, northern New Hampshire’s riding trails will stay open longer, and southern Vermont’s food networks will enjoy a year-round market and event space. These projects underscore the vital essence of community building and economic development, and we are proud to be a part of them.”

“Revolving loan funds like the North Country Alliance’s are critical tools for strengthening rural economies,” said **USDA Rural Development's New York State Director Richard Mayfield**. “They have a strong record of leveraging investment and by recapitalizing this fund, we are ensuring rural small businesses and entrepreneurs throughout the North Country can access the capital they need to create and retain jobs in these communities.”

“USDA Rural Development is committed to putting Maine people first, including providing access to new and better healthcare options,” said **USDA Rural Development's Maine State Director John Butera**. “These critical funds invested in St. Joseph Hospital through our long-standing partnership with the Northern Border Regional Commission will give our skilled healthcare workers the best tools available to do their jobs, resulting in healthier Maine people and supporting President Trump’s unwavering commitment to make America healthy again.”

Funds will support the following efforts across NBRC’s four-state region:

**St. Joseph Hospital (Penobscot, ME):** **\$491,204.07**

St. Joseph Hospital has been awarded \$491,204.07 to expand its telehealth curbside consult platform, improving access to specialty care for rural primary care providers across Maine. The project will enhance provider skills, reduce unnecessary referrals, and improve patient outcomes while supporting workforce retention. This initiative aligns with Maine’s Economic Development Strategy and NBRC’s healthcare and workforce development priorities.

**Stratford Nighthawks (Coös, NH):** **\$334,400.00**

**Project Summary:** The Stratford Nighthawks Snowmobile Club has been awarded \$334,400.00 to purchase a new snow groomer to maintain over 140 miles of trails in northern New Hampshire. The groomer will improve trail quality, extend the riding season, and support the region’s winter tourism economy. This investment will benefit local businesses and ensure safe, reliable access for residents and visitors.

**The North Country Alliance Local Development Corporation** **\$500,000.00**  
**(Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence, NY):**

**Project Summary:** The North Country Alliance has been awarded \$500,000.00 to recapitalize its regional revolving loan fund, which supports small business development across seven counties in northern New York. The fund has a strong track record of leveraging investment and creating or retaining jobs in rural communities. This infusion of capital will help meet current demand and support up to 194 jobs.

**Vermont Farmers Market Education Center Inc (Rutland, VT)****\$500,000.00**

**Project Summary:** Vermont Farmers Market Education Center has been awarded \$500,000.00 to complete renovations of Farmers Hall, a hub for food distribution, education, and public events in Rutland, Vermont. The project includes infrastructure upgrades to support year-round markets, teaching kitchens, and local food access. This initiative supports food systems, public infrastructure, and economic development.

For more information about future grant programs and partnership opportunities through the NBRC, please visit [nbrc.gov](http://nbrc.gov).

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**About the NBRC**

Created in 2008, the Northern Border Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership whose mission is to catalyze community vitality and economic prosperity in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont through flexible funding and strategic support.

**About USDA Rural Development**

USDA Rural Development invests in rural America with loan, grant, and loan guarantee programs to promote rural prosperity. The commitment and resources we bring to rural communities help drive economic security and prosperity. Our programs expand access to high-speed internet, electric, and transportation infrastructure, and support business growth, healthcare, education, housing, and other community essentials. Learn more online at [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov)