



PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Forest Economy Program is designed 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 to impact the forest-based economy 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 industry.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

Fiscal Year 2025 federal appropriations have not been finalized. An estimated \$5 million may be made available for awards under this Forest Economy Program subject to the availability of future appropriations. Any selection and award under this Forest Economy Program are subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

AWARD SIZE

Forest Economy projects are eligible for an award up to \$1,000,000.

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 project priorities:

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.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Utilization of wood-based heating technologies and/or "Mass Timber" products (e.g., Cross-laminated timber) in public use projects (prioritizing locally sourced* wood products where possible)
- Collaborative efforts to support communities negatively impacted by the decline in the forest-based economy to attract new wood-utilizing enterprises

*For the purposes of this program, "locally sourced" means sourced, where possible, within the [four state NBRC region](#).

2. **Workforce [re] training and development projects** for the purpose of building the skills and recruiting and retaining the workforce needed for forest businesses.
Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Development and marketing of targeted workforce programs to support identified employers' needs for a skilled workforce (i.e., new technology, safety, apprenticeship, etc.)
 - Training and recruitment programs that prepare participants for careers in logging, forestry, and related businesses
3. **Business planning and technical assistance projects** that enhance the viability and sustainability of new and existing forest businesses
Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Technical assistance, training in business skills, and access to financing to local forest industry businesses
4. **Marketing/communication and education work** (must be paired with at least one other project category).
Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Marketing and communications that promote the benefits of northern border forests
 - Marketing to promote the environmental and climate benefits of forest management and forest products in ways that strengthen markets for wood products.
 - Forest resource planning and industry supply chain analysis projects
 - Carbon storage, carbon footprint, and/or life cycle analysis projects for wood products
5. **Public 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 industry, and/or demonstrate the use of wood products in public infrastructure.
Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Energy sourcing or supply upgrades that reduce costs for industry and/or create new markets for residuals

Research: Basic research projects will not be considered. Preference will be given to applied research and demonstration projects that demonstrate a strong connection to industry.

2025 AGENCY INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Invest in the development and commercialization of technologies that create and grow needed markets for low-grade forest harvest residuals.
- Invest in workforce recruitment, development, and training to increase job placement across the forest product continuum.
- Help to sustain and grow existing forest industry businesses and operations, such as through technical assistance.
- Aid in the 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 to produce wood products and advanced materials manufacturing.

- Leverage existing (or, in some cases, new) partnerships to impact multiple counties, states and/or the entire NBRC region, and/or have the potential to do so.

TYPE OF AWARDS

All awards will be made in the form of Grant Agreements. NBRC does not anticipate having substantial involvement in the work conducted under the award.

MATCH AND COST SHARE

NBRC defines match as the minimum required by law to receive NBRC funds. Cost share is defined as the total of other funds necessary to complete the project. Prospective applicants should refer to the NBRC distress criteria to determine the level of required match for the project.

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);
- Federally recognized Indian Tribes; § 200.54 Indian tribe. Indian tribe means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. Chapter 33), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians (25 U.S.C. 450b(e)). See annually published Bureau of Indian Affairs list of Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services
- 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. The non-profit entity must be able to demonstrate they have federal grant experience related to community and economic development.
- Institutions of Higher Education (must be able to demonstrate existing industry partnerships)

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Ineligible applicants include for-profit entities, LLCs and other entities that are not a 501(c), 40 U.S.C. §15101(c). Ineligible entities are also those entities normally deemed eligible but, due to prior federal or state funding history have been identified as ineligible for future investments. Additionally, a non-profit identified by a state that does not have a federally recognized 501(c) status is not an eligible applicant.

COMMISSION SERVICE AREA

Only projects within the NBRC's service area are eligible for funding under 40 U.S.C. §15733. For 2025, the NBRC service area is:

- Maine: Androscoggin, Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington counties.
- New Hampshire: Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coös, Grafton, Merrimack 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, Schoharie*, Seneca, Sullivan, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties.
- Vermont: all counties within the State

* With active awards in Schoharie County from another federal commission, the county is not currently eligible for NBRC funding in FY 2025 per NBRC's statute and has not been included in distress calculations.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

The Forest Economy Program will run two funding rounds in 2025, with pre-application deadlines at 5:00pm EST on March 7 and August 29, and full application deadlines at 5:00pm EST on April 18 and October 10, respectively.

Pre-applications are required for funding consideration. Applications are by invitation only. They will be reviewed for eligibility, maximum award amounts based on project classification, and adherence to program priorities. Full applications will only be accepted from those entities expressly invited to apply and must be submitted using NBRC's online application system.

Interested and invited applicants should refer to the 2025 Forest Economy Program Manual for detailed preapplication and application submission instructions. The Program Manual is available on NBRC's website at www.nbrc.gov/content/FEP.

CONTACTS

For those considering applications in 2025, please visit the NBRC Forest Economy Program website for information on eligibility and project development. Questions related to eligibility and NBRC agency priorities can be directed to NBRC Forest Economy Program Manager, Marina Caceres, mcaceres@nbrc.gov, 603.369.3001

Additional Forest Economy Program information can be found on NBRC's website www.nbrc.gov