



Catalyst, Forest Economy, and Timber for Transit

Program Information Sessions Q&A

February 4, 2026

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Eligibility

Q: Is there a max limit of dollars or individual grants that are active at any one time for a specific municipality before a municipality is ineligible for upcoming grants through NBRC?

A: No, but it's worth connecting with your State Program Manager to discuss your project competitiveness in a given cycle.

Q: If a few townspeople are thinking of a project do you suggest they form a non-profit or try to team up with local town government?

A: The project will need to come from an eligible entity - that could include a non-profit or a town government. Perhaps the easier route in this case is teaming up with local government.

Q: Do you use the Census Data to define the Distressed communities?

A: Yes, you can go here if curious: [Assessing Distress in NBRC Counties](#)

Q: What is NBRC's attitude about joint applications? Would it be better to have an "applicant organization" and a "subcontract" from the other organization(s) OR apply jointly?

A: A co-applicant is necessary when the project involves real property that will receive the direct benefit of NBRC funds such as renovation or construction. A sub-recipient is a better option for project partners and can be identified in the application as sub-recipients or project partners. It is not necessary for a partner to be a co-applicant.

Q: If an organization receives a Catalyst grant for planning, can they apply in future cycles for implementation for the same project?

A: Yes, but keep in mind the 75% requirement.

Q: How does NBRC treat entities with the same EIN, but different UEI numbers?

A: Multiple entities may have the same EIN, but different UEI numbers. Entities with distinct UEI numbers are treated as separate entities with separate eligibility and waiver requirements. Conversely, some entities will have separate departments with the same UEI. Because these departments are under the same UEI, they are treated as a single entity with the same eligibility and waiver requirements.

75% Expenditure Waiver

Q: We have a current NBRC grant that runs through September 30. Should we apply in the spring or fall round? Ideally if we were awarded a new grant, it would begin October 1.

A: If the current award is over 75% spent down, feel free to apply in the Spring! If not, you can still apply, but you will need to fill out and submit a 75% expenditure waiver (located in GMS pre-app). But doesn't hurt to check in with your State Program Manager as well!

Q: With regard to the 75% waiver, is this made up of approved reimbursements? We have a request from December that has not yet been reviewed and which places us over 75% once approved.

A: That pending reimbursement would be considered for the purposes of determining 75% expenditure. Pending requests are considered towards the 75% requirement.

Q: Another question on 75% waivers, I assume you do not need one if you have spent at this level?

A: Correct. 75% waivers are only required if NBRC funds and matching funds have not been spent down by 75%.

Significant Benefit Waiver

Q: Is geographic eligibility based on where the applicant organization is based or where the services (healthcare and/or workforce training) are delivered?

A: The applicant needs to be geographically based in the NBRC region. If an applicant is not based in an eligible county, a significant benefit waiver is required. The project needs to take place in a distressed or transitional geography or isolated area of distress to receive funds. If a project is located in an Attainment geography, a significant benefit waiver is required.

Q: State of NH is in Concord instead of for project location - so is a waiver required to show distress location eligibility.

A: Concord, NH is in an eligible county (Merrimack). The project location should reflect where the work is happening, not where the organization is located. A Significant Benefit Waiver is not required.

Match and Project Location

Q: How is match percentage determined?

A: Match percentage is determined by the location of the project. You can find out the match for your project location using the tools on NBRC's Project Eligibility and Match Determination webpage: <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/project-match>

Q: It looks like the Match Calculator is determined by the county level, but the 2026 NBRC County Community Static List shows match level based on the municipal level. If we are determining match across multiple municipalities, is there a way to calculate the match?

A: The best tool for a project with multiple communities (up to 10) is the Match Estimator. The best tool for a project with a single location (county, single community) is the County and Community Match List.

Q: Is that 50% of total project costs or 50% of the grant award?

A: Match percent is a calculation of total project costs.

Q: Can the match be in-kind?

A: Yes, match can be in-kind. In-kind is reserved for volunteer time.

Q: Does the match need to be "in hand" at the time of preapplication?

A: No. You can have planned match that is not yet committed at time of pre-app. If awarded, grantees have one year to secure any pending match.

Q: Must match be secured in advance or anticipated?

A: Match is not required to be “in-hand” or secured at the time of pre-application or application. NBRC does request and review the status of match as part of the evaluation to be sure applicants understand the match requirements. Grantees have one year from date of award to secure all committed match.

Q: Regarding the federal funding cap, in Part 3 of the Grant Programs User Manual it mentions if NBRC isn't the primary funding it can be used as non-federal match source. We are looking at several funding scenarios. Can you confirm if we were to receive a CDS grant that was the primary source of funding, we could then apply for an NBRC grant for the lesser amount, knowing there would still be the match requirement for NBRC's portion?

A: NBRC funds can be used to satisfy the non-federal cost sharing or match requirements for a project under another federal grant program for which NBRC is not the sole or primary funding source as outlined in 40 USC 15507. In these instances, NBRC funds would not count towards the federal share of the total project cost. The funds should all be associated with the same project. May want to reach out to admin@nbrc.gov with specific details so we can advise on how to enter that into your budget table.

Q: If the training location is in a distressed community (municipality) but the trainees could also serve residents coming from throughout the county which is transitional, which match rate should be used?

A: Please use the training location. Additional guidance on this can be found in the KPI appendix of the Grant Programs User Manual on the Catalyst page.

Q: If project is multi-community (Belmont, Tilton and Northfield NH) but only Belmont and Tilton are specifically listed communities at 50% match. Does a waiver for Northfield need to be submitted with the pre-app? All are in Belknap county - 50%.

A: A significant benefit waiver is not required for Northfield in this case. This project can use the Belknap county rate of 50% for match.

Q: What if the project serves multiple counties? What is the primary place of performance?

A: The project location is based on where the NBRC funds will be used, meaning where the project is physically taking place. If NBRC funds are primarily used to support staff at an office, use that

project location. If NBRC funds are used to support a training location that serves a broader area, use the training location. If NBRC funds are used for construction, use the location of construction.

Q: Is there guidance on the website as to how to calculate match for a statewide study?

A: The best tool for a project with multiple locations is the Match Calculator. You will want to select multiple counties to be statewide.

Budgets, Reimbursements, and Procurement

Q: If awarded a grant, can it be applied as a reimbursement to a project that has already begun?

A: No. No NBRC funds or match for a project can be expended until the date NBRC issues a Notice to Proceed for the project.

Q: If the project is partially underway but not proceeding without additional funding, can a grant be awarded to support it?

A: Potentially. You'll want to send an email to admin@nbrc.gov. NBRC will be able to give you guidance based on the unique circumstances of your project.

Q: Is this a reimbursement grant program? What kind of agreement is put in place for the grant?

A: Yes, all NBRC grants are reimbursement only.

Q: Is there a link for the procurement policy? Can't find in the manual

A: Procurement info is in our Compliance Manual, which is currently being revised and will be back on our resources page soon. If you need an answer sooner t, you can email admin@nbrc.gov and we can get you more info on procurement.

Q: Regarding the total budget for an implementation project: is there a maximum % of the budget that can be allocated to planning/design?

A: An implementation project applying for an infrastructure category must have a minimum of 50% construction costs. An implementation project with more than 50% planning/design costs for an infrastructure project is considered a feasibility project. An implementation project for non-infrastructure categories should be at least 50% non-planning/design related costs.

Q: Are NBRC funds considered federal or state?

A: Federal in most cases. If NBRC would be a smaller portion of a project largely funded by another federal funder, you may want to reach out to admin@nbrc.gov

Q: For our pre-app, do we have to have actual quotes to back up our ask or can we give our best estimate per expense category at this time?

A: I would say best estimate is OK at pre-app, but an application should come with detailed quotes/estimates.

Q: Can you advise again on what needs to occur before receiving a notice to proceed -- NEPA review, and approval of budget and contractors? Is it okay if we build ample time in for these reviews, but are able to implement sooner if these processes take less time?

A: The Notice to Proceed requirements are listed in the Compliance Manual. Requirements include completed Grant Agreement, NEPA approval, NBRC Form 1002 and match commitment documentation, and LDD contract (unless exempt or waiver applies). Understanding these requirements and timelines is important for a successful project. The project can begin implementation as soon as a Notice to Proceed is issued. The project is given 12 months from the date of award to secure match and must be completed within the 3-year project period.

Q: Can you go into the NEPA review process a bit more, as well as the procurement process, and how these both impact the project timeline? (for ex. are we required to get 3 bids for consultants/contractors, etc)

A: Here's where you can find more info on NEPA, including estimated timelines, budgeting, etc: <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/NEPA>. Procurement is covered in the Compliance Manual. The most important timeline impact for procurement is that a Notice to Proceed is required before spending or committing NBRC funds and matching funds.

Q: If we submit a proposal that includes both construction and operating expenses to launch an initiative, does that impact the maximum we can request?

A: (Catalyst) Please see appendix H of the Grant Program User Manual. If a project is applying for an infrastructure category under the Catalyst program, construction costs must be 50% or more of budget. General operating expenses are not an eligible cost. Operating expenses to launch an initiative are eligible. The application should speak to the sustainability of the project after the NBRC investment.

Q: Could you discuss indirect costs and how communities should account for them in the budget?

A: Indirect cost must be documented by a Federal Cognizant Agent or an entity acting on their behalf and documented by a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, submitted with the application. If you do not have a federally approved indirect cost rate (like many nonprofits), the de minimis rate of 15% can be used as the indirect cost rate for the application.

Catalyst Priorities and Scoring

Q: Are there any priorities within the categories for the Catalyst grant opportunity? And can you share more about NBRC's procurement policies and its impacts on the timeline and process of project implementation?

A: You can view details for each of the Catalyst categories in the Grant Programs User Manual on the Catalyst program page. The manual also has information about procurement. NBRC follows federal procurement requirements, and those are detailed in the NBRC Compliance Manual. Importantly, no funding can be committed until you have a Notice to Proceed from NBRC, which is issued after a project has completed all required forms, NEPA Review, and has demonstrated all match is committed to the project.

Q: the community we are working with is very rural and spread out. there are around 7500 people - would this qualify even though it is more than 5,000? The project is a community/sports center to help build up the youth gatherings and more. We are Herkimer County

A: It's NOT a requirement that your project serve a community less than 5,000 to be eligible.

Q: Our community has a population of 5084. But our project serves only the low income population in that location and surrounding region. It feels silly to ask, but with such a close number do we still check a box for more than 5000?

A: Yes. You will have an opportunity to provide demographic details in the narrative questions.

Q: can you send a link to nbrc agency investment priorities

*A: Please see the Grant Programs User manual available here:
<https://www.nbrc.gov/content/program-areas>. They are identified on page 24 of the manual and in the NBRC scoring criteria.*

Q: So if the community we serve is individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (which does not fall within your underserved community categories), but the majority of these individuals are considered low income, would we meet the criteria for the underserved community?

A: You will have an opportunity to describe these demographics in the Overview tab of your pre-application.

Catalyst Project Classification and Award Sizes

Q: Is the amount of funding available in the spring round the same as the amount of funding available in the fall round?

A: Both rounds will be funded at similar levels.

Q: For context, will you let us know if this is overall less money than NBRC awarded in prior years for this program; and how much less for this program?

A: 2026 is similar in total funding levels to 2025.

Q: We identified our purpose as Business and Workforce Development (Systems, services, programs and facilities that create, retain or expand businesses). Can we still qualify under Classification for "Multi-Jurisdiction Infrastructure" or are we restricted to the "Business and Workforce Development" classification (Appendix H) with a maximum grant of \$500,000?

A: Each category has a definition. If the project does not align with an infrastructure category and include a minimum of 50% construction costs, the project is not eligible for the infrastructure award size or multiple jurisdiction award size. If a project aligns with Business and Workforce Development category, the maximum award size is \$500,000.

Q: If a remote town that has its own power utility district, could the town apply for a multi category grant if they also have a project for transportation? Or would the town and the utility district need to apply for their own separate grants? Related, could the town apply on behalf of the utility to qualify for a multi category award?

A: To qualify for multi-infrastructure category, the infrastructure projects need to be related. 2 separate projects do not meet the requirements for a multi-infrastructure project. The utility district can apply for a project and the Town can apply for a project as separate entities for up to \$1M per project. The Town can apply for a project with the utility as a co-applicant if the 2 projects are connected and qualify for the higher maximum award.

Q: Can we apply for two categories?

A: Yes. A project can include multiple categories.

Q: Can you please confirm if we can/should not mix construction and operating in a single application? Or should we do more than one application if we have a project that would access both and have match in both.

A: One application can include both types of costs. Do not submit two separate applications.

Q: Are lead abatement/ lead service removal projects on a Public Water System considered a Program investment Priority?

A: Water projects are considered Basic Public Infrastructure. The application will need to describe and demonstrate how this project contributes to economic development priorities.

Forest Economy Program – Classification, Award Sizes, Policies and Contacts

Q: Is there a minimum or maximum amount for awards?

A: There is no award minimum. The maximum award under the Forest Economy Program is \$1,000,000.

Q: How is capital equipment purchases handled in FEP?

A: Equipment purchases are handled the same way across NBRC grant programs. See the [NBRC Compliance Manual](#) for information regarding procurement of goods and services, including equipment.

Q: I know Education/Marketing must be paired with another Priority area. Is it possible to combine both workforce AND community development in a strong concise proposal?

A: A project may address any number of the Forest Economy Program project categories.

Q: Is the list of FEP advisory board members public?

A: We are currently confirming Advisory Board members, with the hope of making a contact list public prior to the pre-application deadline.

Timber for Transit Classification

Q: Would a demonstration project that would be used to inform a planning study fall under feasibility or an implementation grant?

A: If the project includes construction and results in a transportation project it best fits implementation. If the project is primarily early-stage activities and results in plans or designs but not in a transportation project, it best fits feasibility.

Q: In the case of a feasibility study for a building or site assessment, will NBRC fund the entire scope of study or would it proportionally fund the scope pertaining to wood-based use?

A: Timber for Transit funding should be utilized for projects with a primary focus on the application of advanced timber products.

Q: Is there interest in Blue Economy related projects at the intersection of transit as well, and if so, how is Blue Economy defined?

A: Blue economy projects may be eligible if they connect to transportation and showcase the use of advanced wood materials, in alignment with the priorities of the Timber for Transit program. You may want to discuss whether Blue Economy projects are a priority in your state. Additionally,

transportation infrastructure is an eligible purpose in the Catalyst Program. If there are Blue Economy/marine transportation related projects that do not make use of advanced timber products, Catalyst Program could be a resource.

Pre-Application & GMS

Q: How long does it take for the registration to be reviewed/ completed, typically?

A: We typically review/approve registrations within 1-2 business days

Q: I've submitted a Project Interest Form to my NBRC Program Manager about a week ago but have yet to hear back. What is the usual timeframe for response?

A: Our State Program Managers may be inundated with meeting requests and emails, on top of their other duties. You did the right thing by reaching out early! I can't say exactly what the usual time frame is, as all SPMs operate differently.

Q: Where can I find the step-by-step guide to filling out the pre-application

A: Step-by-step for submitting: [Creating and Submitting a Pre-Application](#)

Q: Is there a pre-app checklist available? I found the app checklist, but not sure how it might differ from the pre-app.

A: Besides any applicable waivers, no additional attachments or documentation ("checklist items") are required at pre-app.

Q: Is there a way to get a copy of the online application with all of the questions so you can work offline?

A: There is not an offline version. You can find guidance to the narrative questions and budget requirements in the Catalyst, Forest Economy, or Timber for Transit Program Information Sessions slides. Once logged into GMS and the pre-application has been created, you can download a pdf version to share and use offline.

Q: Should we gather letters of support as part of the preapplication?

A: You'll have an opportunity at application to provide letters of support.

Q: When are notifications for full application awards scheduled to be announced?

A: Pre-applications will receive a response including invitations to apply by March 30, 2026 (approximately 4 weeks after submission). Applications will receive a response including award letters in early June.

Q: Is there a link to the guidance around the narrative components in the pre-application? It was broken down in this presentation but I am having a hard time finding it on the website or via program guide

A: The slides are the best guide for narrative content. The NBRC Scoring Criteria is also a good resource and references the narrative sections where NBRC expects to see information.

Q: I plan to assist a community in applying for NBRC funding. Does the community need an account with the enterprise grants management system? Or does my organization?

A: The organization that will be the awardee of funding should be the account owner in the Grants Management System.

Q: Can you un-submit an application to correct an error and re-submit before the deadline?

A: The system will not submit an pre-application until the errors (if any are corrected). When an application is successfully submitted, you will no longer be able to edit the pre-application.

LDGs

Q: How do I locate the LDD for my area?

*A: You can find the list of LDDs and the counties/communities they serve on this webpage:
<https://www.nbrc.gov/content/about-local-development-districts>*

Q: We are going for the Feasibility award and are looking to apply for the LDD waiver (we completed an NBRC project in the past two years). Should I reach out to the state program officer in advance of submitting an LDD waver to make sure we are on the right track there?

A: Yes, I recommend getting in touch with your SPM prior to your pre-app submission.

Q: On the pre-app is there a "check box" for exemption for using LDDs for states. It sounded like no waiver is required - correct?

A: State agencies, LDDs, and other entities of the state are automatically exempt from the LDD requirement. A waiver is not required for those organizations.

Q: Do we need to reach out to our LDD in advance of applying for the pre-application?

A: You aren't required to but we highly recommend connecting early as they are a very good resource!