



Northern Border
Regional Commission

2024 TIMBER FOR TRANSIT Program Information Session

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Agenda Items:

Timber for Transit Program Overview

- Purpose and example projects
- Available Funds

Determining Eligibility

- Eligible Locations: NBRC Service Area, 2024 Distress Criteria, Determining Eligibility & Match/Reimbursement Ratios
- Eligible Applicants and Co-Applicants
- Eligible Purposes: Project Categories, Investment Priorities and Award Sizes



Agenda Items:

Pre-Application

- Timeline, Process & Requirements
- Evaluation of pre-applications

What's Next

- Project Development
- NBRC Office Hours
- Grants Management System Training

Q&A



Timber for Transit Overview

NEW PROGRAM!

The Timber for Transit Program is designed ***to advance the use of domestic forest products in transportation infrastructure*** projects across Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont ***to showcase the capabilities of wood*** in these applications.



2024 Timber for Transit Program

The Northern Border Regional Commission may award up to \$25,000,000 over the next three years for projects that demonstrate the capabilities of wood in transportation infrastructure*.

Timber for Transit funding to be competitively awarded in two funding rounds

- All awards are subject to availability of funds

*Transportation infrastructure as defined for the Timber for Transportation program is further explained in the forthcoming program manual



2024 Timber for Transit Program

NEW! Pre-application process will replace the former Letters of Interest process

- Required to receive an invitation to apply
- Due by 5:00pm on March 15 for spring round and September 6 for fall round
- Must be submitted using NBRC's **NEW!!** online grants management system
- **NEW!!** All waiver requests must be submitted with pre-applications
- Reviewed by NBRC for eligibility and by state programs for alignment with priorities
- Invitations to apply are issued by the state programs

All pre-application details will be covered in this session!



Determining Eligibility

Eligible Locations:

- NBRC Service Area
- 2024 Distress Criteria
- Determining Eligibility & Match/Reimbursement Ratios

Eligible Applicants & Co-Applicants

Eligible Purposes:

- Project Categories & Award Sizes
- Program Investment Priorities



NBRC Service Area

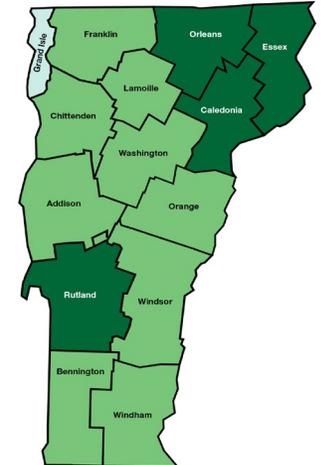
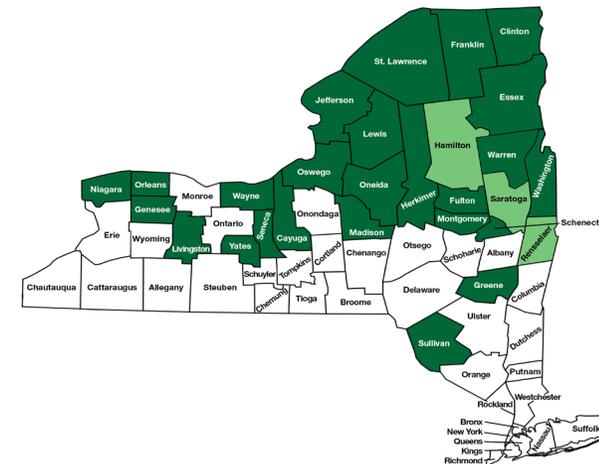
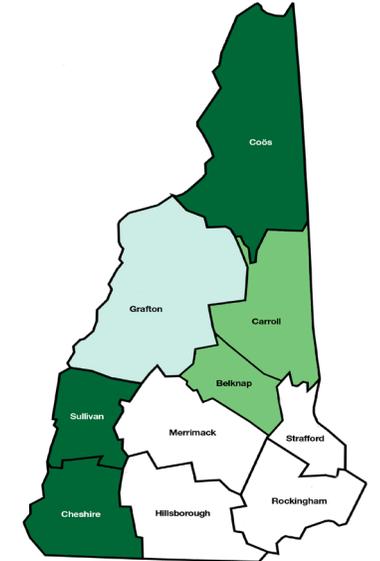
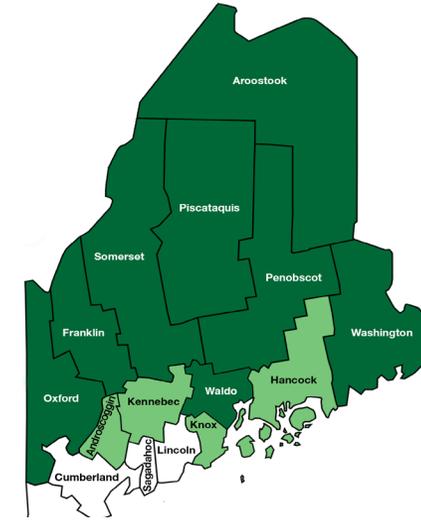
Commission Service Area - Only projects within the NBRC's service area are eligible for funding

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

New Hampshire: Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coös, 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





NBRC Distress Criteria

NBRC is required to annually assess the level of economic and demographic distress in its service area. The resulting designations reflect whether the NBRC can provide grants within a county.

Distressed: Eligible for 80% funding and require a 20% match

Transitional: Eligible for 50% funding and require a 50% match

Attainment: Ineligible for funding, unless exceptions apply:

- Isolated Areas of Distress: specific municipality designated distressed
- Significant Benefits: benefits to surrounding distressed and transitional counties (waiver required)
- Multi-county or multi-state project that includes at least one distressed or transitional county. Requires an averaged match



Determining Eligibility & Match

1. Determine if project location is in NBRC Service Area
2. Determine if project location is in distressed, transitional or attainment county. If in attainment county, determine if exceptions apply or a Significant Benefits Waiver is required.
3. Identify reimbursement and match rate associated with location.

Resources:

- Program User Manual
- [2024 Distress Criteria](#) on NBRC website

The screenshot shows the Northern Border Regional Commission website. The header includes the logo and navigation links: Northern Border Region, Program Areas, Impact & Reporting, and Resources. The main content area is titled "Assessing Distress in NBRC Counties" and contains the following text:

By statute, the Commission is required to annually assess the level of economic and demographic distress among the counties in its service area. Assessing distress is important as the resulting designations reflect whether or not the Commission can provide grants within a county as well as what level of match is required of Commission funded projects.

[Distress Criteria for 2024](#)

Counties are designated as Distressed, Transitional, or Attainment.

Distressed Counties

40 U.S.C., Subtitle V states that "distressed" counties are those that "have high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration" and "are the most severely and persistently economic distressed and underdeveloped." The NBRC is required to allocate 50% of its total Appropriations to projects in counties falling within this designation. Commission grants within Distressed Counties only require a 20% match.

Transitional Counties

Counties that are "transitional" counties "have recently suffered high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration" or "are economically distressed and underdeveloped." Commission grants within Transitional Counties require a 50% match.

Attainment Counties

Finally, "attainment" counties are those that are neither "distressed" or "transitional." The Commission is not allowed to fund projects within an attainment county.

Exceptions to Attainment County Eligibility

In general, NBRC funds may not be provided to projects located within a designated "Attainment County." However, there are opportunities to provide funding to projects within these counties if any one of the following exceptions below is met.

- **Isolated Areas of Distress:** When a county is first designated as "Attainment" the Commission will automatically collect economic and demographic data within that county to identify "Isolated Areas of Distress." Isolated areas of distress are municipalities that have high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration.



Eligible Applicants & Co-Applicants

- **State governments:** Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont & New York
- **Local governments:** Village, town, city and county
- Other political **subdivisions of States:** regional planning commissions, authorities of the state
- **Indian Tribes:** See annually published Bureau of Indian Affairs list of Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services
- **Non-profit entities.** All 501(c) organizations

Ineligible Applicants & Co-Applicants:

- For-profit entities, LLCs and other entities that are not a 501(c) are **NOT** eligible to apply for NBRC funds.
- Applicants from outside NBRC member states are ineligible

Applicants
will identify
entity type in
registration
process!



This
requirement
applies
across
programs!

Previous Award Recipients

An eligible applicant with an open or active NBRC award cannot receive an additional NBRC investment until the current award has both

- submitted reimbursement requests totaling 75% or more of the project and
- demonstrated that 75% of the cost share has been expended before the pre-application deadline

If the 75% expenditure requirement cannot be met, the applicant can apply for a waiver. The **75% Expenditure Waiver** must be submitted together with the pre-application.

Resources:

- Timber for Transit Program User Manual



Program Eligible Purposes

Proposed projects must fit one or address both of the following categories:

Feasibility Projects will be awarded a minimum of \$250,000 and a maximum of \$1,000,000. Such projects may include:

- Such as inventory assessments of the suitability of wood, architectural and engineering designs, cost analyses, permitting, etc.

Resources: Timber for Transit Program User Manual



Program Eligible Purposes

Implementation Projects will be awarded a minimum of \$1,000,000 and a maximum of \$5,000,000:

- Construction of transportation infrastructure to include: permanent vehicular and pedestrian bridges, railway structures and rail bridges, trail bridges, covered bridges, wildlife crossings, etc.
- Construction of transportation-adjacent infrastructure to include: highway rest stops, ferry terminals, train stations, outdoor recreation transportation infrastructure, highway sound barriers, etc.



Program Eligible Purposes

Feasibility & Implementation Projects which address both feasibility and implementation as described above will be awarded a minimum of \$1MM and a maximum of \$5MM.

NBRC will consider awards up to \$5MM for projects that

- 1) demonstrate alignment with two or more of the funding priorities of the program,
- 2) project has been identified by NBRC or a State(s) as addressing a time-sensitive issue of magnitude or severity that will be addressed by the proposed project, and
- 3) construction takes place in two or more eligible communities, counties or states. Eligibility for the maximum award amount will be determined in the PREAPPLICATION review process conducted by NBRC and the member states.



Program Investment Priorities

- Commit to utilizing domestically sourced timber
- Demonstrate evidence of planning for climate resiliency, including but not limited to carbon capture, increased frequency and intensity of storm events, and sea level rise.
- Utilize projects as a tool for university and industry education and training
- Demonstrates alignment with state and community initiatives.
- Include promotion/publication/marketing as part of their project deliverables
- Support, benefit, or engage communities that are historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by poverty or inequality (pursuant to Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government).



NBRC Policies & Requirements

- Match and Cost Share
- Period of Performance
- Ineligible Purpose
- Program Income
- Use of Funds
- Notice to Proceed
- NEPA
- Federal Funding Ceiling
- BABAA/Buy American Preference

Applicants are encouraged to review the **Program User Manual** and **NBRC Compliance Manual** to confirm all requirements will be met in the project.



Match and Cost Share

This will be
calculated
automatically
in the pre-
application!

Reimbursement / Match ratio

- 80/20 or 50/50 depending on location
- Reimbursement requires that the Match & Cost Share be spent at the applicable ratio

Calculating Match and Cost Share

- Required minimum match = NBRC Requested Funds x match rate
- Cost Share = Total Project Costs – (NBRC requested funds)
- Status of match sources will be requested at the time of pre-application.
- Neither the NBRC award nor the match can be expended prior to receiving a Notice to Proceed



NBRC Funding Requirements Cont'd

Period of Performance:

- NBRC awards have a 3-year Performance Period
- NBRC suggests delaying the pre-application to a future funding round if the proposed project cannot be completed within the 3-year performance period

Ineligible Purpose:

- Funds cannot go to a for-profit entity, no pass throughs to for-profits
- See Program User Manual for full list of ineligible purposes

Program Income:

- Costs financed by 'program income' are treated through the deductive method as outlined in 2 CFR 200.307(e)(1)



NBRC Funding Requirements Cont'd

Use of Funds:

- NBRC funds may be used to match other federally funded projects (when both federal agencies allow) only when the total grant funds from NBRC and other federal funders does not exceed 80% of the total project budget.
- NBRC funds used to purchase or construct real property requires the federal government to maintain an interest in that property for 20 years

Ineligible Costs:

- Maintenance (routine or deferred)
- Allowance or payment of debts
- See Program User Manual for full list of ineligible costs



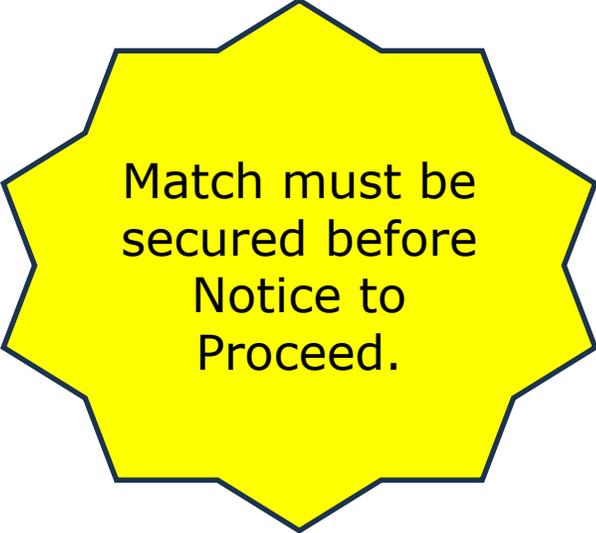
NBRC Funding Requirements Cont'd

Notice to Proceed:

- NBRC funds and match cannot be committed or expended before receiving the Notice to Proceed
- NEPA environmental review of project required before receiving Notice to Proceed

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

- Categorical Exclusions (a few weeks; no to low \$)
- Categorical Exclusions plus section 106 consultation (a few months; \$1,500-\$3,000)
- Environmental Assessment (6-12 months; \$5,000-\$10,000)



Match must be secured before Notice to Proceed.



Federal Funding Ceiling

NBRC awards have a federal funding ceiling of 80%

- If a project is utilizing multiple federal sources (including NBRC), no more than 80% of the total project costs can be comprised of federal funds.
- HUD's Community Development Block Grant Program funding from your state does not count toward the federal cap
- Loans do not count towards the federal cap
- It is important for applicants to check with other federal sources, as each federal agency may have its own restrictions



Buy American Preference

Build American, Buy American Act (BABAA) was enacted on November 15, 2021, and sets forth a domestic content procurement preference (“Buy American Preference”) for ***iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used for infrastructure projects.***

Resources: NBRC’s website for [BABAA guidance](#).



Pre-Applications

- **Pre-Application Details:**
 - Timeline, Process & Requirements, Evaluation
- **State Role in Pre-Applications**
- **What to Expect After the Pre-application**



Pre-Application: Timeline & Key Dates

- Program Information Sessions: February 12-13 
- Online pre-application system opens: February/March
- Round 1 Pre-applications Due: **March 15 by 5:00pm EST**
 - **NEW!** All applicable waivers are due with pre-application:
 - ✓ 75% Waiver Request for Prior Award Recipients (all programs)
 - ✓ Significant Benefit Waiver Request (all programs)
- Round 1 Timber for Transit Program Pre-Application Review: March 19-30
- Responses – feedback/invitations to apply: **Week of April 1**

Pre-applications are required



Pre-Application: Process

All pre-applications must be submitted using NBRC's online grants management system.

- Detailed guidance will be made available for accessing system
- Requires registration (establishing a new user account)
- Requires responses to pre-application questions



Pre-Application: Requirements

Applicant and Co-Applicant Information

- Applicant Organization
- Organization Type (eligible applicant type)
- Address
- EIN
- Unique Entity ID - Applicant should enter UEI if one is available. UEI is not required to submit a pre-application but will be required to receive an award.

This information will be collected during the registration process.

This information will be requested as part of the registration process and transferred to the pre-application.



Pre-Application: Requirements

Applicant characteristics

- Previous award recipient (If yes, enter NBRC award #)
- Rural community (defined as population less than 5,000)

Primary Place of Performance – where will the project take place?:

- Address including zip code
- County

Project Title

This information will be requested as part of the pre-application.



Pre-Application: Requirements

Budget Narrative

- Description of expenses over \$5,000 by category
- Table describing match sources: source, federal v non-federal, and status of match

Budget Details

- Requested NBRC funds
- Match and Cost Share funds
- Total Project Costs

This information is submitted in the GMS. There are no additional budget documents to upload for pre-application.

Funds will need to be allocated across budget categories



Pre-Application: Requirements

Pre-application budget categories

- Personnel
 - Fringe Benefits
 - Travel and Transportation
 - Equipment
 - Supplies and Materials
 - Consultants
 - Contracts and Sub-Grantees
 - Construction
 - Other Direct Costs
 - Indirect Costs
- These budget categories align with the SF-424cbw.
- **NEW!!** Pre-applications DO NOT require the SF-424cbw form, but full applications (by invitation only) will.



Pre-Application: Requirements

Narrative Questions:

- Project Abstract
 - Project Goals, Outcomes and Outputs
 - Program Investment Priorities
 - Project Beneficiaries and Community Context
 - Statement of Need
-
- All narrative text boxes have a 10,000-character limit and formatting/editing capabilities.
 - Applicants encouraged to have narrative responses available in a word processing document to easily copy and paste into the pre-application.

Guidance in
Part II of
Timber for
Transit Program
User Manual.



Pre-Application: Requirements

Project Abstract – Narrative

- Provide a summary of the proposed project.
- What NBRC eligible purpose and project category does this project address?
- Describe the status of the project – ready for implementation, planning tasks ongoing, early stages.
- What is the project scope? Over what period of time will this project be completed?



Pre-Application: Requirements

Project goals, outcomes, and outputs - Narrative

- What are the expected economic outcomes (e.g. impacts on jobs, employment and wage growth) of this project
- Describe the scale of expected economic impacts on the community, county, or region?

Appendix G lists examples of Economic Outcomes and Outputs



Pre-Application: Requirements

Program Investment Priorities - Narrative

- Which NBRC Agency Investment Priorities best apply to this project?
- Which state program priorities best apply to this project?

Refer to the NBRC Agency Investment Priorities and Scoring Criteria in the Timber for Transit Program User Manual.



Pre-Application: Requirements

Project Beneficiaries and Community Context - Narrative

- Who will benefit?
- Why does this project matter to the community?
- If applicable, how does this project serve or benefit rural communities with populations of less than 5,000 or disadvantaged communities?
- If applicable, how does this project help communities prevent, reduce, withstand, and/or improve recovery from climate related impacts and disasters?



Pre-Application: Requirements

Statement of Need - Narrative

- What is the challenge or problem the project seeks to address?
- What is the proposed solution?
- Why is this project important?
- Describe the opportunity gained by funding this project now.
- Why is NBRC funding important for this project?



Evaluation of Pre-Applications

NBRC and the States will consider a project's alignment with the funding priorities for these program dollars when both issuing invitations to apply at the pre-application phase and in scoring projects at the application phase.

Resources:

- Timber for Transit Program User Manual – Investment Priorities
- Timber for Transit Program User Manual – Scoring Criteria



Evaluation of Pre-Applications

When issuing invitations to apply at the pre-application phase, NBRC and the States will also consider:

- the costs and expected benefits associated with the requested NBRC investment;
- the projects identified as a state priority;
- the benefits provided to the broader community and region.



State Program Manager Role

- Project Development
- Review and assess pre-applications for alignment with Timber for Transit Program priorities
- Issue invitations to apply



What to Expect After Pre-Applications

During the week of April 1, applicants will receive notification of pre-application status along with information from NBRC.

- Invitation to Apply (if available, will include feedback)
- Recommendation to resubmit in future with feedback
- Ineligibility determination



What's Next

Project Development

- Determine eligibility
- Self classify project and award maximum
- Self evaluate project against NBRC scoring criteria
- Meet with State Program Manager if further discussion needed



What's Next

Grants Management System Information

- Information about the System will be available and technical support resources will be made available

A few notes:

- Registration required for pre-application
- Pre-application required
- Pre-application can only be associated with one funding program at a time



Northern Border
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QUESTIONS?

Send future questions to
admin@nbrc.gov



NBRC Contacts

NBRC Staff:

- Andrea Smith, NBRC Program Director, asmith@nbrc.gov
- Sarah Demers, NBRC Program Coordinator, sdemers@nbrc.gov
- Marina Bowie, Timber for Transit Program Manager, mbowie@nbrc.gov

State Program Managers:

- Each State has a Program Manager, who are employees of State government appointed to the role by the Governor's Alternate:
- Maine: Charlotte Mace, charlotte.mace@maine.gov
- New Hampshire: Steve Fortier, steven.j.fortier@livefree.nh.gov
- Vermont: Kristie Farnham, Kristie.Farnham@vermont.gov
- New York: Kyle Wilber, kyle.wilber@dos.ny.gov



Resources

NBRC Timber for Transit Program Website:

- <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/t4t>

NBRC Distress Criteria:

- <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/distressed-counties>

Local Development Districts (LDDs):

Timber for Transit Program awardees are not required to utilize an LDD for grant administration, however If an entity is awarded funding and deemed to not have sufficient internal capacity to self-administer

their project, NBRC may require the entity to contract with a Local Development District (LDD) who has opted in to NBRC's LDD Partnership Program.

- A complete list of LDDs can be found at <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/local-development-districts>