Northern Border Regional Commission
Grant Process Orientation

Note: In the case of discrepancies between the information in this orientation and information from NBRC, we defer to the NBRC.

BEA and SPM Roles

State Program Manager:

- seek projects

- advises on competitiveness

- scores projects

- presents to Governors or Governor's Alternates for final vote.

BEA:

- first point of connection for many

- sorts projects towards eligible funding

- facilitates the application process

- hosts technical assistance

- aligns NBRC projects with state strategy

Learning Objectives

- Understanding of:
  - The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC)
  - Timeline and process flow for applying
  - How we define economic development and projects
  - Each NBRC grant program and funding priorities
  - How a project will be evaluated for funding
- Best Practices:
  - For engaging with the NBRC
  - Document checklist for application
  - Document check-list for Notice to Proceed, post-award

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Quick Overview

Northern Border Regional Commission

- One of 8 Regional Commissions in the US
- Focused on rural economic development
- Conducted through three grant programs with distinct timelines, uses, and processes:
  - Catalyst
  - Forest Economy Program
  - Timber for Transit

- Projects involve a discrete start, stop, and outputs
- Competitive projects align with NBRC, state, regional strategies

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Process Flow

- Pre-application technical assistance
- Pre-application: validates eligibility and alignment, not competitiveness
- Full application: evaluates competitiveness, voted on for award
- From award, obligation of federal funds
  - Officially labels the monies as "for your project"
  - LDD expenses can be backdated to this date
- One year to obtain a Notice to Proceed (NTP)

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Process Flow

- From NTP, three-year execution period
  - Project match can now be expended alongside project funds
  - Match is "due" at the same time as reimbursement requests
  - Quarterly and annual reporting: project & financial
  - Reimbursement requests (proportional match included per request)

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Timeline

Spring 2025:

- Pre-application deadline: 5 pm, March 7th

- Application deadline (by invitation): 5pm, April 18th

- NBRC Meeting: early June

- Notice of awards & unsuccessful applications: by June 27th

Fall 2025:

- Pre-application deadline: 5 pm, August 29th

- Application deadline (by invitation): 5pm, October 10th

- NBRC Meeting: December

- Notice of awards & unsuccessful applications: December

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Where to Start

- Validate entity, location, and project eligibility

- Develop your project concept, attend or watch recorded trainings from NBRC, attend this orientation

  - A good rule of thumb: use the questionnaire on the state technical assistance website as a guidepost for: www.nbrc-nh.com

  - Questions should be directed to admin@nbrc.gov

- Why use the technical assistance page?

  - Helps us track your project and send you updates

  - Historically, technical assistance correlates with successful awards

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Economic Development Projects

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Economic Development 101

- Economic Development =/= antipoverty programs
  - Antipoverty work is generally focused on alleviating the symptoms of economic distress for individuals

- Economic development is...
  - The development of capacities that expand economic actors' capabilities. (Individuals, firms, or industries)
  - More money in more pockets over time, or the improvement of systems to do so.
  - Note the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):
    - Businesses, jobs, costs, private investment, etc

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Projects 101

- A planned series of efforts to result in predetermined outcomes
- Projects have a discrete start and stop, with concrete outputs

- A logic model is a useful tool to organize efforts in this way
- The planned activities should link together and culminate in the outcome
- Budget line items should relate to and support planned activities

- Notice of Federal Interest for infrastructure.

Logic Model

- Plan backwards, implement forward

- Initial conditions: situation, priorities, assumptions, externalities

- Inputs -> Activities -> Outputs -> Outcomes -> Impact

- Impact is post-project analysis and beyond the scope of a grant
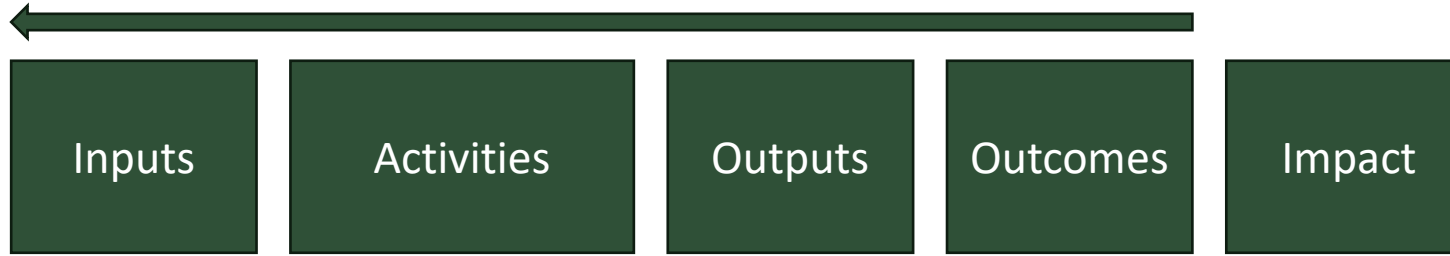
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NBRC Eligibility and Competitiveness

Eligible Entities

- State & local govt
- Planning commissions & other authorities
- 501c organizations
- Federally-recognized tribes

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Eligible Areas

- Coös, Sullivan, Cheshire, Belknap, Carroll, Merrimack, Parts of Grafton
- Ineligible: Strafford, Rockingham, Hillsborough
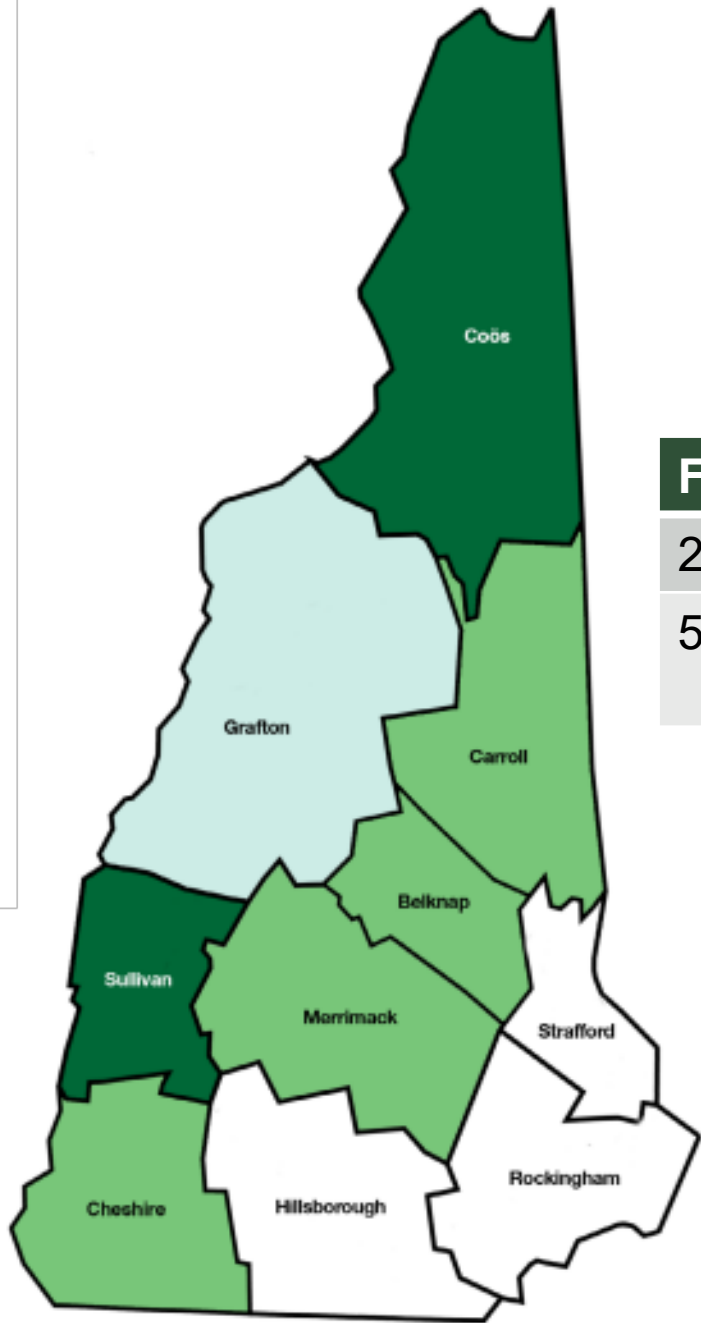
Funding Split	Counties
20% local match	Coös, Sullivan
50% local match	Merrimack, Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Parts of Grafton

Funding Priorities Overview

- Funding priorities with details can be accessed by clicking on a grant program link on the page here and scrolling down to resources at the bottom of that specific program page.

- Within each NBRC Program User Manual:

  - Funding priority

  - How the NBRC defines that priority

  - Examples of prior projects

  - Needed data to demonstrate alignment

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Catalyst Program

Catalyst Infrastructure

- Up to $1 million per project
- Transportation
- Basic Public Infrastructure
  - Water & Wastewater, Solid Waste, Heat Generation Systems, Outdoor Recreation, Public Meeting Spaces, Childcare or Basic Healthcare Facilities
- Telecommunications
- Renewable & Alternative Energy
- Higher maximum criteria (2+ areas, 2+ types)

Catalyst: an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action

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Catalyst Program

Catalyst Non-Infrastructure

- Up to $500k per project
- Workforce Development (immediately hirable skills or pipelines)
- Business Development
- Basic Health Care
- Resource Conservation, Tourism & Recreation

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Forest Economy Program

- Up to $1 million per project
- Community Development
- Workforce Training & Development
- Business Planning & Technical Assistance
- Marketing, Communication & Education
- Infrastructure in Direct Support of Forest Economy
  - Transportation
  - Basic Public Infrastructure
  - Telecommunications
  - Renewable & Alternative Energy

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Timber for Transit

- Up to $5 million per project
- Using advanced wood products in transportation infrastructure
- Three categories
  - Feasibility
  - Implementation
  - Feasibility & Implementation

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Scoring Criteria

- Alignment with priorities

- Project readiness

- Clearly articulated economic development benefits

- Leveraging local and regional resources/assets

- Community buy-in

- Articulates need for NBRC funding

- Other criteria available in User Manual appendices

Readiness & Competitiveness

- A project would be considered "Ready" when:
  - Planned activities with definite outputs
  - Budget logically links to activities
  - Fits one or more NBRC funding priorities
  - Data demonstrates funding priority alignment

- Competitive when:
  - Aligns with two or more of state, local, regional, or NBRC plans
  - Scores well in reference to the program scoring criteria
  - Articulates local support and funding need
  - Organizational capacity to implement

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Document Checklist: Application

Forms provided within the GMS:

- Debarment Suspension Certification Form 1001
- SF-424 - Application for federal assistance
  - SF-424 SAMPLE with Instructions
- SF424B – Assurances for Non-Construction
- SF424D – Assurances for Construction
- SF-LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- SF-LLL SAMPLE

Document Checklist: Application

Documents grantees are required to complete and upload to the GMS:
- Authorized Official Resolution
- SF-424cbw – Grant Application Detailed Budget Worksheet
- Current Certificate of Good Standing (Non-Profit Organizations)
- IRS Determination Letter (Required for Non-Profit Organizations)
- Indirect Cost Rate Documentation (if applicable)
- Revolving Fund Loan Documentation (if applicable)
- Waivers (if applicable): 75% Expenditure, Significant Benefit, LDD

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Ongoing Process and Engagement

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Ongoing Best Practices

Application process

- Get technical assistance: www.nbrc-nh.com
  - Historically, technical assistance correlates with successful awards
- Talk to the State Program Manager
- Only 3-5 letters of support, no boilerplate

Post-Award:

- Keep all parties in the loop
- Deviate from scope only with permission
- Use appropriate forms and procedures

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Working with the NBRC

- The NBRC is a federal entity, which means they operate through:
    - *Rules*: read the User Manuals and understand them.
    - *Documents*: there's (most likely) a form for that…
    - *Processes*: rules and documents reinforce process
    - Especially with project changes, ***do not "ask for forgiveness later"***, it may leave you in a bad spot unable to reimburse people

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Working with the NBRC

- Applicant Authorized Official: your responsibility to stay in communication

  - When in doubt, ping <admin@nbrc.gov>

  - Clear, concise communication, cite user manuals when possible

  - Accurately describe current conditions and the request

  - Subject and first few lines should let them quickly sort your email to the most appropriate person

  - Post-Award, include your grant number

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Post-Award Document Checklist

- **_To obtain Federal Obligation of Funds (by NBRC)_**
    - o Review Award Letter – Review and Complete any noted missing or incomplete material from your application.
    - o Execute and Upload to GMS
        - ▪ Grant Award Acknowledgement Form (Found at the end of Award Letter)
        - ▪ SF3881 ACH Form

Post-Award Document Checklist

- ***To obtain a Partial Notice to Proceed (PNTP),*** which authorizes grant funds to be used for LDD assistance (up to 1% of formula) and tasks associated to complete NEPA including environmental consultants as approved by NBRC (scope, budget, timeline)
  - o Attendance of mandatory new grantee training sessions
  - o LDD Contract
  - o Grant Agreement – review, signed, uploaded
  - o NEPA – Intake Form *(Level of review is determined by NBRC ER Consultant, dependent on scope 6 to 12+ months)*
- ***To obtain a Full Notice to Proceed (FNTP)***
  - o Documentation of NEPA Satisfaction (NBRC ER Consultant)
  - o Documentation of match/cost share (Form 1002 & support)

Post-Award Compliance

- Items such as state and local permitting, Select Board approval, etc
- [NBRC Grant Administration & Compliance Manual](#)
- [National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)](#)
- [Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA)](#)
- [Standard Forms](#)
  - Competitive Bidding vs Sole Sourcing (talk to NBRC before obligating funds)
  - Project reports, financial reports, and reimbursement requests
  - Amendments to the grant agreement
  - Authorized Official and updating contacts

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Questions?

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