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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2024

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## **Jobs, Equity, Impact: 2024 *Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities* Grants Available for Northern Border Region**

*The Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities program funds projects supporting rural communities in aligning workforce development efforts with economic development plans.*

The U.S. Department of Labor (DoL) has released the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for the 2024 [Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities \(WORC\) program](#). Now in its sixth round, the program runs in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), and the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC). The total pool of funds available across the three Commissions is **\$49.2 Million**.

The WORC initiative seeks to address persistent economic distress and create pathways to high-quality careers for people living or working in the Northern Border, Appalachian, and Lower Mississippi Delta regions, helping them to remain and thrive in these communities. Successful applicants will propose projects that support the initiative's three Focus Areas: Promoting the availability of good jobs, prioritizing equity, and sustaining impact.

“Our vision for an inclusive economy is one where all residents in our region have the chance to pursue meaningful careers that pay good wages. This program is focused on fostering partnerships in Northern New England and New York that will help workers gain skills to improve their economic standing,” said **Chris Saunders, Federal Co-Chair of NBRC**.

Administered by the department's Employment and Training Administration, each WORC grant – ranging from \$150,000 to \$1.5 million – will fund projects to provide career training and supportive services to people in the Northern Border, Appalachian and Delta regions so they may secure quality jobs in stable, high-demand occupations.

Successful applicants will design projects that demonstrate collaboration with community partners and coordination with existing economic development strategies. Review the [WORC Funding Opportunity Announcement and apply](#).

The NBRC was added to the WORC Initiative for the first time in 2023 and received \$4.7MM in awarded funds to support workforce development partners serving our region; Northern Forest Center Inc. (NH), Brattleboro Development Credit Corp. (VT), Vermont Healthcare & Information Technology Education (VT), and Community College of Vermont (VT).

“WORC allowed us [Brattleboro Development Credit Corp.] to dramatically expand our workforce programming, reaching more people and new audiences. As we wrap up our second quarter of WORC programming, BDCC is already developing our second ELL (English Language Learning) supported vocational workforce program, a Healthcare Careers Bootcamp geared to new Americans. By this fall, we'll be leveraging the curricula and partnerships developed in Q1-3 to launch programming targeted to our third target audience — adults without college degrees,” said **Jack Spanierman, Workforce Education Specialist**.

Over the next few weeks, the NBRC will announce information sessions hosted by both DoL and the NBRC to provide additional program details, and information on technical assistance available to potential applicants to the program in the region. The sessions will be free and open to the public, and information will be available via a special WORC link on the NBRC’s homepage, [nbrc.gov](http://nbrc.gov), and through subsequent releases.

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***About the Northern Border Regional Commission ([www.nbrc.gov](http://www.nbrc.gov))***

*Created in 2008, the Northern Border Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership whose mission is to help alleviate economic distress and encourage private sector job creation in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.*