



Northern Border
Regional Commission

2024 NBRC PREAPPLICATION WORKSHOP SERIES

Develop and Strengthen Your Project Concept

Adrienne Harrison, Program Manager: aharrison@nbrc.gov

Marina Bowie, Program Manager: mbowie@nbrc.gov



Topics for today's session:

1. Brief review of NBRC competitive programs, timeline, and program resources
2. Steps for developing a project concept + available resources!
3. Early feedback and program contacts + available resources!
4. Completing a preapplication + available resources!
5. Common feedback and project development tips
6. What's Next?
7. Q&A



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NBRC Competitive Programs, Fall Timeline, and Program Resources



Catalyst Program Overview

The purpose of this program is ***to stimulate economic growth and inspire partnerships that improve rural economic vitality*** across the four-state NBRC region.

Examples of projects Catalyst may support include, but are not limited to:

- Modernizing and expanding water and wastewater systems
- Revitalizing transportation infrastructure
- Establishing workforce development programs and facilities
- Growing outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies
- Constructing new childcare and healthcare facilities



2024 Catalyst Program

NBRC anticipates making a minimum of \$50MM available in 2024

- \$27MM awarded in Round 1/Spring funding round
- Minimum of \$20MM available in Round 2/Fall funding round
- All awards are subject to the availability of funds

[View Catalyst recorded info sessions for program details.](#)



Forest Economy Program Overview

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 four-state NBRC region.

- \$3M available for the fall 2024 grant round
- The Forest Economy Program emphasizes the potential for impact 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 economy.

[View Forest Economy recorded info session for program details.](#)



Timber for Transit Overview

NEW IN 2024!

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.

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

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

- All awards are subject to availability of funds

[View Timber for Transit recorded info sessions for program details.](#)



2024 Program Timeline

NEW! Pre-application process replaces the former Letters of Interest process

- GMS opens for pre-applications on August 15, 2024
- Required to receive an invitation to apply
- Due by 5:00pm on September 6, 2024
- 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 NBRC on behalf of the States by September 20, 2024

View [Catalyst](#), [Forest Economy](#), or [Timber for Transit](#) recorded info sessions for program details.



2024 Program Resources

NBRC program pages:

[Catalyst](#), [Forest Economy](#), and [Timber for Transit](#)

- Program Specific Information Sessions
- Program User Manuals
- State Program Manager (All) and Advisory Board (FEP) contact information
- Program FAQs

NBRC Resources:

- [Distress criteria](#)
- [LDD Resources](#) (Catalyst)
- [State Economic Development Strategies](#) (Catalyst)

Grants and Opportunities

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

[NBRC Grants Management System](#) – Open to Spring 2024 Round awardees and previously registered users only. Registration for new users will open in early August. Please note: if you are currently registered in the GMS, your login credentials will work but you will not see Fall Round opportunities until mid-August, when the system will open for preapplication submissions.

- [2024 Spring Round New Grantee Mandatory Training Sessions](#) – July/August - [View Training Session Dates and Times](#)
- [Preapplication Workshop Sessions – July 26 and August 2](#)
- [Application Boot Camp Sessions](#) – September/October, dates coming soon



The [CATALYST PROGRAM](#) stimulates economic growth and inspires partnerships that improve rural economic vitality across the four-state NBRC region. The Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that modernize and expand water and wastewater systems; revitalize transportation infrastructure; establish workforce development programs and facilities; grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies; and construct new childcare and healthcare facilities.



The [FOREST ECONOMY PROGRAM](#) supports the forest-based economy and assists in the industry's evolution to include new technologies and viable business models across the 4-state NBRC region. The Forest Economy Program is distinct from other programs in two important ways: 1) the Forest Economy Program emphasizes the potential for impact across the entire NBRC region; and 2) 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.



The [TIMBER FOR TRANSIT PROGRAM](#) advances 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. Highly competitive projects will demonstrate and widely promote the utility of high value forest products (e.g. glued laminated timber, cross laminated timber, composite materials, etc.) in transportation infrastructure and commit to enhancing climate resilience in rural communities.



Developing a Project Concept

1. Confirm eligibility
2. Review available programs and determine the appropriate NBRC program for your project
3. Identify areas of *direct* project alignment with NBRC Program and State Priorities
4. Identify the lead applicant and identify and engage relevant project partners
5. Outline project details using the Project Interest Form



Confirm eligibility for NBRC funding

***before reaching out to State Program Managers or Advisory Board**

Eligible Locations:

- NBRC Service Area for eligible states and counties
- 2024 Distress Criteria for locations designated in distressed, transitional or attainment counties. If location is attainment county, determine if an exception applies

Eligible Applicant & Co-Applicant Entity

- Type of entity: 501(c), state or local government, Native Tribe, etc.
- Prior NBRC awardees must have expended at least 75% of funds or submit an expenditure waiver.

Eligible Purposes:

- Project Categories
- Project Classification Process & Award Sizes

[View Catalyst](#), [Forest Economy](#), or [Timber for Transit](#) recorded info sessions for eligibility details.



Select appropriate NBRC program

Review available programs and determine the appropriate NBRC program for your project

- Alignment of project concept with program purpose
- Project category that applies to project idea
- Project classification to determine maximum award size

Let's categorize...



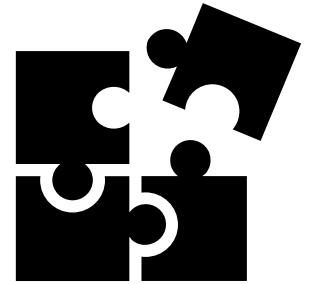
Not sure where your project would be most competitive? Contact admin@nbrc.gov



Identify relevant program priorities

Identify areas of *direct* project alignment with NBRC Program Priorities and State Priorities and articulate the connection.

- For example, Catalyst is an economic development program – intended to catalyze economic development across the NBRC region. A project that is eligible, but doesn't focus on why the project is important to the economic development of your community or region is not as competitive. Tell the story of how your project directly impacts the economy.





Identify applicant and key project roles

Identify the lead applicant

- Applicant versus co-applicant
- Confirm eligible entities
- Identify one Authorized Official
- Identify Project Manager role if applicable
- In the GMS projects are limited to 2 contacts, one must be AO

Identify if co-applicant is needed

Identify and engage relevant project partners

- Local Development Districts (or LDD waiver)
- Organizations that might provide letters of support for application



Outline Project Details

Outline project details using the Project Interest Form


- The ***Project Interest Form*** is available on NBRC's website - [Program Areas](#) page
- Use as a ***project development tool*** to determine eligibility, program fit, and it can help highlight any gaps in the project, or questions you may have for program contacts.
- The Project Interest Form ***is not*** a preapplication.
- Share with State Program Managers or Advisory Board members (FEP only) to understand your project concept ***before*** you meet.



Outline Project Details

Fields for basic project information:

- Applicant name, Location, Type of Entity, Contact Information
- Project Classification (construction vs non-construction, and infrastructure vs non-infrastructure categories)
- Project Description, Anticipated Timeline
- Estimated Project Costs and NBRC Request Amount

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NBRC PROJECT INTEREST FORM

NBRC recommends interested applicants complete the Project Interest Form before meeting with their State Program Manager. The information in this form allows the program manager to maximize the opportunity for feedback and funding program suggestions during project development meetings.

Applicant Entity Name:

Type of Entity:

State Government (Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont only)

Local Governments (village, town, city, county) and secondary or career technical centers

Public universities and colleges

Other political subdivisions of states (regional planning commissions, authorities of the State)

Indian Tribes (federally recognized Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community)

501 (c) Non-profit Entity

If the applicant does not fit an eligible entity type, the entity is **not eligible** to apply for NBRC funding.

Project Location:

County:

City/Town and State:

A project must be located within a county designated by NBRC as Distressed or Transitional, or an Isolated Area of Distress to be eligible to apply for NBRC funding. The list of eligible counties is available [here](#).

If project is **not within an eligible NBRC County**, note where the project is located and briefly describe if your project will have a direct economic impact on an eligible county.

Project Contact Information:

Name:

Title:

Email:

Phone:

Identify the Local Development District (LDD) or Planning Commission associated with your project location. View a list of the eligible LDDs [here](#).

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Developing a Project Concept – available resources!

- Program User Manuals – [Catalyst](#), [Forest Economy](#), [Timber for Transit](#)
 - Eligibility requirements
 - NBRC Program Priorities/Funding Objectives/Project Categories
- [State Economic Development Strategies](#)
- Local economic development plans, climate action plans, or other documentation of need for project concept
- [Local Development District webpage](#)



Early Feedback and Program Contacts

1. Confirm eligibility for NBRC funding
2. Get early feedback from program contacts
3. Further develop project details to include feedback received in meetings with State Program Managers and/or Advisory Board members



Get early feedback from program contacts

- Program contacts include:
 - NBRC staff,
 - State Program Managers (who score proposals for all programs), and
 - Forest Economy Program (FEP) Advisory Board Members (who provide their forest sector expertise to State Program Managers to consider when scoring FEP proposals).

The appropriate contact depends on the program and type of feedback you're looking for. Before you reach out to a program contact, be sure to review program materials, including program FAQ documents.



Get early feedback from NBRC

- For questions related to eligibility, program requirements, federal regulations, or project administration, contact NBRC at admin@nbrc.gov



Get early feedback from State Programs

For questions about alignment with state priorities, contact your State Program Manager. Be sure to send the SPM your Project Interest Form in advance.

- **Maine:** Send your Project Interest Form to BizAwards.DECD@maine.gov
- **New Hampshire:** Interested applicants in NH are encouraged to sign up for the technical assistance program that is available - <https://nbrc-nh.com/> Send questions about the website to the NH State Program Manager, Ian Davis:
Ian.M.Davis@livefree.nh.gov
- **New York:** Send your Project Interest Form to the NY State Program Manager, Kyle Wilber: kyle.wilber@dos.ny.gov
- **Vermont:** Send your Project Interest Form to the VT State Program Manager, Kristie Farnham: kristie.farnham@vermont.gov

See [NBRC contacts](#) webpage for additional program manager information.



Get early feedback from Advisory Board

For questions about alignment with Forest Economy Program categories or investment priorities? Contact a FEP advisory board member

Forest Economy Program Advisory Board Members

Commission Representative:

Joe Short, jshort@northernforest.org (603) 491-2651

Maine:

Dana Doran, dana@plcloggers.org (207) 688-8195
Eric Kingsley, kingsley@inrslc.com (207) 233-9910

New Hampshire:

Andy Fast, Andrew.Fast@unh.edu (603) 862-2402
Jasen Stock, jstock@nhtoa.org (603) 674-8148

Vermont:

Christine McGowan, christine@vsjf.org (802) 828-5770
Charlie Hancock, northernwoodsforestry@gmail.com (802) 326-2093

New York:

Michelle Capone, mcapone@danc.org (315) 661-3200
Daniel Berheide, dberheide@wetelcom.com (518) 461-3614



Early Feedback and Program Contacts – available resources!

- Completed Project Interest Form *Reminder this is not the pre-application
- Program User Manual! (located on the relevant program page of the NBRC website. Refer to the program and investment priorities listed therein)
 - Look ahead to the pre-application requirements
- State Program Managers (all programs)
- Advisory Board Members (FEP only)



The GMS
opens for
registration
in early
August!

Preparing to Create a Preapplication

1. Register applicant in Grants Management System (this applies to *new* GMS applicants only)
2. Outline preapplication responses by following the guidance set in the Program Manual "Preapplication Development" section
3. Review NBRC's NEPA webpage to understand impacts to timeline



Register applicant in GMS

Registration for *new* users will open in early August.

If you are currently registered in the GMS, your login credentials will work but you will not see Fall Round opportunities until mid-August, when the system will open for preapplication submissions

Grants Management System –
[Registration Guidance Document](#)

REGISTRATION PROCESS

The GovGrants registration process requires a valid EIN to complete your organization's registration. Your Organization's Authorized Representative will submit the registration to NBRC to be granted access to the GovGrants system.

Registering an Organization in GovGrants

- 1) Navigate to <https://nbcrgovgrants.my.site.com/ApplicantLanding?username=null> to access the external portal.
- 2) Click on the **Register** button to initiate the GovGrants registration process for the Grantee Organization.

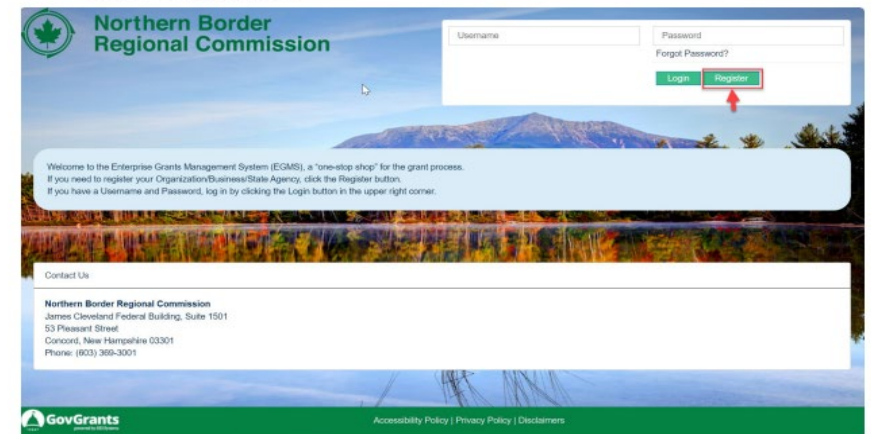


Figure 1: Registering a Grantee Organization

Initiating the Registration Process

- 3) On the Grantee Registration page, click the **Organization** link to expand the section.



Outline preapplication responses

Begin drafting narrative responses required for the Preapplication

- Project Abstract
- Project Goals and Outcomes
- Project Beneficiaries and Community Context
- Statement of Need
- Program Investment Priorities

Attend next preapplication workshop session on August 2, 2024:

- NBRC will review key elements of a ready project including examples of a well-developed project scope and timeline, budget narrative and funding sources.
- Come with draft project scope, timeline, budget narrative

Preapplication will be available in GMS on August 15, 2024

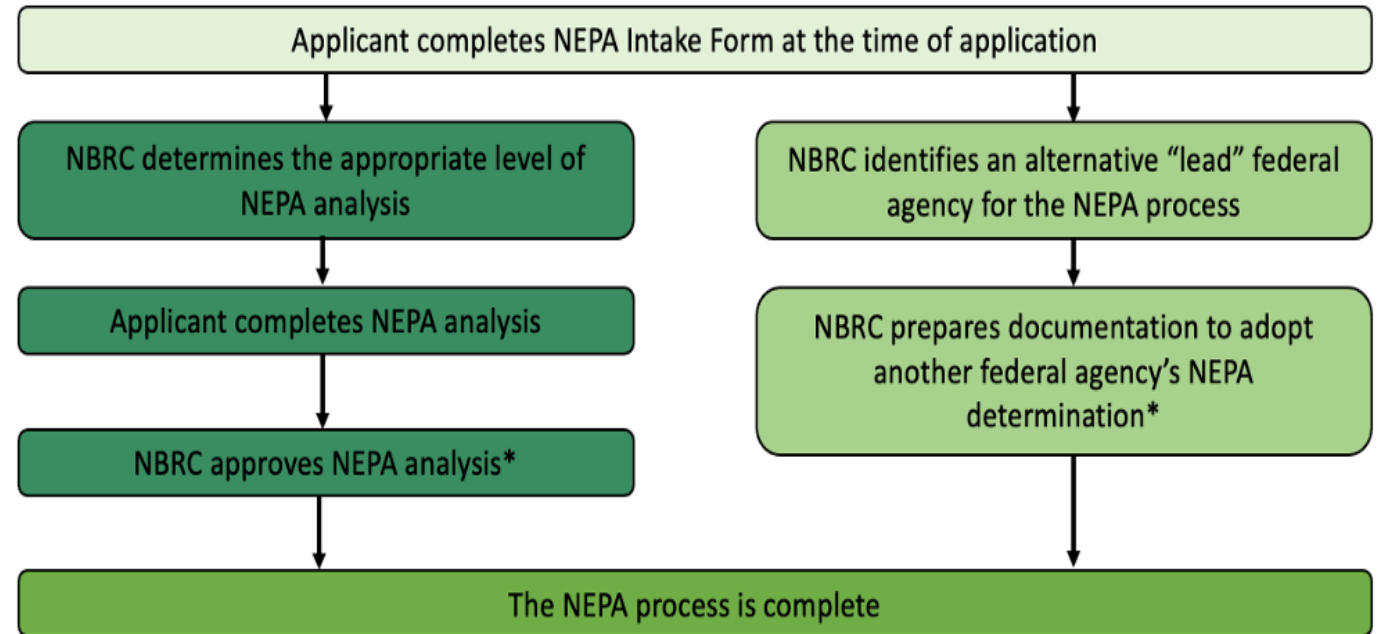


Review NBRC's NEPA webpage

All NBRC projects are required to complete NEPA environmental review

- This process can add a few weeks, to a few months, to up to a year to the project timeline
- Part of preparing for NBRC funding is to understand the NEPA requirements

NBRC's NEPA Processes



*A public comment period may be required after this step

Visit the [NBRC NEPA webpage](#) for details



Common feedback and tips

1. Project category and project classification
2. Use of funds and expected match
3. Connections to Economic Development Strategies
4. Connections to community/regional/sector impacts
5. NEPA or LDD costs not in budget or timeline



Catalyst Program Common Feedback

Project category and project classification:

- Project reclassification

Use of funds and expected match:

- Additional information to clarify ownership
- Clear description of what the NBRC funds will be used for
- Potential for ineligible costs
- Additional information on funding sources and status of match needed

Connections to Economic Development Strategies/impacts:

- Clear description of economic impacts from project
- Additional information to clarify where economic impacts will happen
- Additional information needed to show alignment with state priorities



Catalyst Program Common Feedback

NEPA costs not in budget or NEPA not in timeline:

- NEPA is required of all NBRC projects and needs to be accounted for in the timeline and budget
- See NEPA webpage for support on understanding financial and time commitments for NEPA

LDD costs not in budget:

- Catalyst projects require LDD costs at 2% of the NBRC requested amount to be in budget for grant administration projects
- Exception for approved LDD Waiver



Forest Economy Program Common Feedback

Project category and project classification:

- Identify *direct* alignment with investment priorities and project categories

Use of funds and expected match:

- Additional information to clarify ownership
- Clear description of what the NBRC funds will be used for
- Potential for ineligible costs

Connections to Regional Strategies/Impacts:

- Clear description of economic impacts to the sector and region
- Additional information to clarify the value add to the forest sector
- Additional information needed to show alignment with state priorities
- Information related to anticipated market impacts



Timber for Transit Program Common Feedback

Project category and project classification:

- Justification for higher maximum award

Use of funds and expected match:

- Additional information to clarify ownership
- Clear description of what the NBRC funds will be used for
- Additional information on funding sources and status of match needed
- NEPA timeline and budget considerations

Connections to Economic Development Strategies/impacts:

- Clear description of economic impacts from project
- Additional information to clarify where economic impacts will happen
- Additional information needed to show alignment with state priorities



What's Next

- August 2 at 10:00-11:30: Preapplication Workshop #2 – Is Your Project *Ready* for NBRC Investment?
- Attend live **Pre-application Office Hours** scheduled for Wednesdays in August. See [Events page](#) for registration and details.
- August 15: GMS Opens for Preapplications by 8:00am
- View GMS Preapplication Guidance Document and recorded office hours
- September 6: Preapplications due by 5:00pm
- September 6: Waiver requests and documentation due with preapplication



What's Next

A few notes:

- Registration required for pre-application
- Pre-application required
- Pre-application can only be associated with one funding program at a time
- Do not wait until the last hour to submit in case there are unexpected errors encountered



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QUESTIONS?

Send questions to admin@nbrc.gov.

To sign up for NBRC email updates and news, [click here](#).