

**North Country Regional Economic Development Council (NCREDC)
2014 Regional Council Plan**

**Supporting Information and Eligibility Criteria For North Country Regional Economic Development
Council Priority Project Nominations**

Overview

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council (NCREDC) put great importance on its general understanding of the terms “transformative and transformational,” particularly as it applies to their implementation priorities and selecting Priority Projects

The Priority Project Nomination Form must be completed and submitted by an applicant for their project to be considered by the NCREDC for consideration as a Priority Project. Priority Project CFAs are scored the full 20 out of 20 points from the Council, while the remaining 80 points are scored by State Agencies after a CFA is submitted. Priority Projects can be considered given eligibility through the following categories:

- Economic Development Priority Project
- Opportunity Agenda Priority Project
- Cleaner Greener Community Priority Project
- Global NY
- Veterans Initiative
- NY Rising Communities Reconstruction Program
- Workforce Development
- Interregional Collaboration

The NCREDC has developed the Priority Project Nomination Form to simplify this process and to gather the information necessary to understand the proposed project. It is important for the applicant to follow the instructions on the Priority Project Nomination form and to utilize the information contained in this document to complete the form. To be considered as a Priority Project, the Nomination Form must be completed and submitted to the North Country Regional Council. A committee then reviews, scores, and recommends priority projects to the council for approval.

It is also very important to highlight that every project MUST complete the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) to be eligible for funding.

The remainder of this document will provide guidance and information on the categories of Priority Projects identified above.

Any project selected by NCREDC as a priority project and expecting funding from NYS in 2014 must also complete a Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). Please refer to the CFA homepage at <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/> for more information. The website will explain the CFA process and timeline, provide information on the various CFA programs, provide questions & answers on CFA programs and process, and offer dates for CFA training throughout NYS.

NCREDC Priority Nomination Form must be filed by June 16 at 4PM to the North Country's e-mail address: NYS-NORTHCOUNTRY@esd.ny.gov

Vision Statement

All Projects and Priority Projects must meet at least one of the components in the NCREDC's Vision Statement:

The North Country Will Lead the Economic Renaissance of New York State's Small Cities and Rural Communities

We will:

- Energize our communities by building on growth in the aerospace, transit equipment, defense, biotech, energy, and manufacturing industries
- Leverage our gateway to Canada, the nation's largest trading partner, to lead the State in global investment
- Attract and nurture entrepreneurs through innovation to catalyze the highest per capita rate of small business start-ups and expansions in the state
- Invest in community development infrastructure that expands opportunities and capacity
- Innovate effective rural healthcare and education delivery networks
- Elevate global recognition of the region as one of the special places on the planet to visit, live, work and study
- Activate tourism as a driver to diversify our economies by creating demand to accelerate private investment
- Invest in agriculture as we help feed the region and the world
- Create the greenest energy economy in the state

Economic Development Priority Project

The primary criteria for consideration as a Priority Project by the NCREDC is that the project must be Transformative or Transformational. Following is the guidance for this from the Regional Council Strategic Plan:

Transformative and Transformational Projects shall exhibit a majority of the following attributes:

- The project will unlock barriers to economic progress;
- The project capitalizes on a unique regional asset(s);
- The project can demonstrate a positive regional impact;
- If a project is a pilot, the project must be able to demonstrate that it can be replicated and is scalable for potential regional results, and
- The project represents an innovative solution
- Projects that demonstrate a multi-country or regional impact shall be most highly valued.

Other important considerations for Priority Projects:

- The project should be ready to proceed within a 6 to 18 month time frame.
- The project should have all of its funding secured and available and be able to move forward given completion of a grant award agreement with New York State. Generally, funds cannot be spent on a project until a contract with the State is executed.
- Most Priority Projects are expected to have a significant impact on creation or retention of jobs in northern New York.
- For 2014, special consideration will be given to projects that demonstrate they will compete in the global marketplace, have sales or shipments outside the United States, or will generate investment into New York State by foreign entities. Global and foreign are defined as any company or entity not located or owned in the United States.

Global NY

A new initiative for 2014 is Global NY. Emphasis is placed on increasing the export of New York State-made products and increasing foreign direct investment. The Priority Project Nomination Form will include questions about your company's export and foreign direct investment practices. Projects that promote the Global NY initiative will be given careful consideration.

Veterans Initiative

Another new focus for 2014 is the Veterans Initiative. A project that is owned or operated by a United States Veteran will be given strong consideration by the Regional Council. Also, projects that provide services such as housing, education, health counseling, etc. to Veterans and/or a project that will specifically focus on employment of Veterans will receive additional consideration.

NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program

The New York Rising Community Reconstruction program was established in July 2013 to provide additional rebuilding and revitalization assistance to communities damaged by Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee, and severe 2013 summer storms in five upstate counties. This program empowers communities to prepare locally-driven recovery plans to identify innovative reconstruction projects and other needed actions to allow each community not only to survive, but also to thrive in an era when natural risks and disasters are becoming more common.

The newly created Resilience Fund offers low-cost financing for resilient community and municipal infrastructure projects. Municipalities must leverage at least 30% of the total project cost with other funding sources to have up to 70% of the total project cost covered by low-cost subsidized loans. While all municipalities will be eligible to apply, New York Rising Community Reconstruction Communities will receive special consideration.

Workforce Development

The NCREDC has identified key industries in its five-year strategic plan. Workforce Development projects should focus on improved coordination between businesses' demand for skilled labor and the workforce systems supply of workers with the requisite skills.

Interregional Collaboration

Projects that overlap Regional Council boundaries or complement cross-regional objectives should explain the Regional Council regions in which the project is located in or affects, and how the project meets the goals of each region.

Opportunity Agenda Priority Project

The Opportunity Agenda is an initiative to target resources and expertise to help overcome challenges that prevent poor communities, families and individuals from fully participating in the State's economic revitalization. The North Country Opportunity Agenda, a region-wide strategy, will invest new and existing CFA resources in projects that foster a business environment that provides residents with the opportunity to enter the workforce and provides North Country residents with the tools they need to overcome economic barriers and fully participate in the state's economic revitalization.

To implement the North Country Opportunity Agenda, the Council is seeking projects that are specifically designed to assist economically distressed populations that are affected by one or more of the following criteria:

- Experienced significant job loss (from a particular employer, plant closure or industry) in the past five (5) years;
- Experienced a loss in markets due to foreign competition;
- A poverty rate of at least 125% of the seven (7) county average poverty rate;
- At least 50% of total student population is eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced – price lunch program;

- A March, 2014 county unemployment rate greater than the NYS average (7.3%);
- Residing in a county with a seasonal unemployment rate greater than 125% of the seven County average;
- Experienced a population decline since the last decennial census (2000 to 2010);
- Residing in, or proximate to, a Brownfield site, Environmental Justice Area or former Empire Zone Investment Zone area;
- Residing in, or proximate to, an area where at least 15% of the total property/land within has been vacant, abandoned, deteriorated or is otherwise unavailable for industrial, commercial or retail development or redevelopment;
- Significant barriers to attracting financing and/or investment exist; or
- A median household income of 51% or less than the statewide non-metropolitan Median Individual Household Income (MHI).

Opportunity Agenda Projects that will be considered by the NCREDC must address one or more of these challenges by satisfying one or more of the following:

- Provides incentives to complete high school education and enrolling in higher education or completion of college. Advances e-learning, telecommuting, e-commerce and telemedicine and/or boosts the sustainability of long-term learning, employment and investment in distressed communities. Increase accessibility to broadband technology and provision of education opportunities to improve digital literacy skills.
- Promotes on the job training programs that include skills-gap reversal measures, apprenticeships, career awareness opportunities for middle or high school students, or promotes additional academic and professional development opportunities for high demand occupations by partnering with institutions of higher education and apprenticeship programs.
- Establishes advanced manufacturing programs to remediate skill gaps and prepare the workforce for current employer needs.
- Create collaborations within the community/region to remove transportation, quality affordable early care, and learning childcare services as barriers to employment.
- Establish partnerships with banks and lending institutions to create incentives for small business startups and that support micro-business/self-employment opportunities.
- Establishes funding, services, and/or energy conservation, resource, and financial literacy education to assist low-income populations that are adversely affected by escalating costs of home heating services, home repair, quality housing, and home safety repairs.
- Benefits households where the average age is 50% or more than over 55 years of age.
- Benefits communities with an outmigration rate for persons under the age of 35 that exceeds the regional average.
- At least 13.9% of households who participate in the project are enrolled in SNAP/Food Stamps.
- Provides at least 51% of jobs that are created or saved to low-mod income individuals.

Projects that are selected as a part of the North Country Opportunity Agenda must also demonstrate the ability to:

- Help move impoverished people into jobs;
- Promote private-public partnerships in job investments;
- Overcome a particular challenge to economic participation; and,
- Help revitalize distressed communities.

Opportunity Agenda Projects must also demonstrate that it satisfies one or more of the Vision statements detailed above and/or the *North Country Sustainability Plan*. North Country Opportunity Agenda Projects may serve a particular area or be multi-jurisdictional.

Cleaner Greener Communities Priority Projects

Goals and strategies of “Our Economy,” the North Country Sustainability Plan, *for reference only*. To read the full plan, go to <http://www.adirondack.org/green>.

- Clean Energy
- Vibrant Towns
- Local Economies
- Transportation Efficiency
- Water Quality
- Materials Reuse
- Citizen Engagement
- Collaborative Planning
- Resilient Communities

Cleaner Greener Communities Projects that will be considered by the NCREDC must address one or more of these challenges by satisfying one or more of the following:

- Develops or uses renewable energy resources
- Improves building energy efficiency
- Invests in downtowns
- Grows local business/es in forestry, farming, food processing, or access to local food
- Improves transportation efficiency
- Safeguards water quality
- Creates markets for reused materials
- Reduces Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Updates local plans to incorporate smart growth and sustainability principles
- Engages and educates residents
- Improves the resilience of communities through climate adaptation strategies