

# State Economic & Infrastructure Development Investment Program

Established by Congress in 2008, the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) is a partnership between the federal government and the States of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. The mission of the NBRC is to fund economic development and infrastructure projects throughout designated counties in its four-state service area. The governance of the NBRC is based on the Appalachian Regional Commission model created in the 1960s.

The NBRC partnership provides investments to job-creating projects that help reduce poverty, unemployment, and outmigration. NBRC investment funds originate from the Federal Government but are approved by the Federal Government's NBRC representative (Federal Co-Chair) and the Governors of the four States.

The NBRC partnership is aided by recognized Local Development Districts (LDD) that assist with technical assistance, provide information on complimentary funding opportunities for projects, and ensure consistency with administration of projects that are funded.

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The NBRC Economic and Infrastructure funding is available to:

- State governments of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York
- Local governments (village, town, city and county)
- Other political subdivisions of States (regional planning commissions, authorities of the state)
- Indian Tribes; § 200.54 [Indian tribe](#) (or "federally recognized Indian tribe"). Indian tribe means any [Indian tribe](#), band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native [Claims Settlement Act](#) ( [43 U.S.C. Chapter 33](#)), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians ( [25 U.S.C. 450b\(e\)](#)). See annually published Bureau of Indian Affairs list of Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services
- Non-profit entities. The term 'nonprofit entity' means any organization described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under 501(a) of that Code. The non-profit entity must be able to demonstrate they have federal grant experience and organization capacity related to economic development.

## INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Ineligible applicants include for-profit entities, LLCs and other entities that are not a 501(c), [40 U.S.C. §15101\(c\)](#). Ineligible entities are also those entities normally deemed eligible but, due to prior federal or state funding history have been identified as ineligible for future investments. Additionally, a non-profit identified by a state that does not have a federally recognized 501(c) status is not an eligible applicant.

## DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Consensus between the four State Governors and the Federal Co-Chair based on applications being prioritized by the States. State economic development plans influence decision-making as does the NBRC's [Five Year Strategic Plan](#).

## **COMMISSION SERVICE AREA (updated yearly)**

Only projects within the NBRC's service area are eligible for funding under 40 U.S.C. §15733. For 2021, the NBRC service area is:

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

## **MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT and AVAILABLE FUNDING (updated yearly)**

The maximum grant amount for is \$1,000,000 for "infrastructure," defined below. For all other applications, the maximum amount is \$350,000.

The total amount of funds available for 2021 was approximately \$4.6MM /State. The Commission may, at its discretion, choose to make available an additional \$4.5MM in total funds (across all four NBRC states) via the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These will be made available dependent on the overall strength of project applications, and those applications' adherence to NBRC's strategic priorities as outlined in our strategic plan (available via NBRC's website).

## **ELIGIBLE PURPOSE**

The following funding categories constitute eligible activities for NBRC investments. There are two categories of eligibility, infrastructure with a maximum award of \$1,000,000 and non-infrastructure with a maximum award of \$350,000.

Congress requires NBRC to award 40% of all funds to public infrastructure projects. Congress defines public infrastructure projects (in NBRC's authorizing language) as "transportation", "basic public," "telecommunications," and "energy". NBRC allows infrastructure projects a maximum grant amount of \$1M to ensure the 40% threshold is met.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE – MAXIMUM AWARD OF \$1,000,000**

### **Transportation Infrastructure:**

Transportation infrastructure shall include construction and alteration or repair, including fixed installations and rights of way necessary for transporting from one point to another and may include roads, railways, airways, waterways, canals and terminals such as airports, railway stations, bus stations, parking, terminals, refueling depots (including fueling docks and fuel stations) and seaports, sidewalks and trails when directly used for transportation purposes.

### **Basic Public Infrastructure:**

Basic public infrastructure shall mean construction and alteration or repair, including those services that are generally necessary to conduct business and operate, and include waste, water, and energy. Specifically: The collection and distribution systems, treatment plants and other infrastructure that collects, treats and delivers drinking water and waste water-related services; electric power generation and transmission; solid waste to include, recycling, composting, disposal, and waste-to-energy via incineration; systems for heat distribution through sources such as co-generation, biomass, geothermal heating, heat pumps and central solar heating.

### **Telecommunications Infrastructure:**

Physical infrastructure shall mean construction and alteration or repair, including the building of towers, antennas, etc., and/or cyber infrastructure (routing and switching software, operational support systems, etc.) necessary to transmit information from one location to another. Investments in telecommunications infrastructure support reliable and affordable broadband to provide local businesses access to the digital marketplace, facilitate online learning and workforce development, and connect communities.

### **Renewable and Alternative Energy:**

Renewable energy shall mean construction and alteration or repair including what is generally defined as any naturally occurring, theoretically inexhaustible source of energy, such as biomass, solar, wind, tidal, wave, and hydroelectric power that is not derived from fossil or nuclear fuel. Publicly owned and non-profit entities are eligible. Facilities that are owned by a for profit entity or who will serve to benefit as a pass-through from an eligible entity will NOT be eligible.

## **NON-INFRASTRUCTURE – MAXIMUM AWARD OF \$350,000**

### **Business and Workforce Development:**

Business Development shall mean those areas of business development which include entrepreneurship, the creation of new businesses or the retention or expansion of existing businesses in the local communities and are deemed eligible. Projects shall document job-creation or job-retention. Funding of start-up projects, such as business incubators or industrial parks, must have committed business tenants. Expansion of existing business incubators and industrial parks are also allowed.

Business Incubation shall mean a business support process that accelerates the successful development of start-up and early-stage companies by providing entrepreneurs with an array of targeted resources and services.

Workforce Development shall mean job training or employment-related education for a specific employer to fill immediate job openings or retain current jobs which are documented as such by that specific employer. Delivery of such training shall be using existing public educational facilities (EPEFs) located in the region. However, if the applicant demonstrates (1) sufficient information demonstrating an EPEF's inability (e.g., insufficient capacity, curriculum, and/or accessibility) to satisfy the defined need, and the applicant (2) demonstrates a compelling need to use a non-EPEF for such training, then a project may be eligible.

Revolving loan funds may be used for the purpose of making loans to create and/or retain jobs. (Any applicant interested in applying for revolving loan funds should read Addendum I of this Program Manual to understand the uses and limitations of any revolving loan fund set up through NBRC.)

### **Basic Health Care:**

The cost of basic health care facilities, such as clinics and including telemedicine; remote clinical services; telehealth services, such as clinical services, provider training, and health education services. Basic health care services shall also mean limited treatment of mental illness and substance abuse. Operating costs of facilities will NOT be deemed eligible.

### **Decision making process:**

Consensus between the four State Governors and the Federal Co-Chair based on applications being prioritized by the States. State economic development plans influence decision-making as does the NBRC's Five Year Strategic Plan.

### **PROGRAMMATIC TIMELINE (Updated yearly)**

SEID funding amount availability -	February (dependent on Congress)
SEID program materials available -	March
Letters of Interest -	March-April
Applications due -	May
NBRC Notification of awards & notice to unsuccessful applicants -	by August 31 <sup>st</sup>
NBRC Grant Agreement preparation & distribution -	September
LDD and Grant recipient training (required) -	October/November

### **Who has received SEID investment funds in the past? (Updated yearly)**

You can find a listing of funding recipients by year on each State page: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York.



# Northern Border Regional Commission



## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022**

A Federal-State partnership for economic development in northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) is a partnership between the federal government and the states Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. Created by the 2008 Farm Bill, the NBRC targets resources to promote economic growth strategies and projects in the northern areas of its member states.

The Commission is composed of a Federal Co-Chair appointed by the President and confirmed by the United States Senate, and the governors of each state in the region or their appointed alternates.

This strategic plan for 2017-2022 will guide the Commission's programs and investments as it seeks to help the Northern Border region emerge from a period of significant economic transition and challenge. The Commission's strategies are designed to capitalize on regional assets to grow and retain wealth in the region, and are informed by local priorities identified by public, private, and not-for-profit stakeholders.

By investing in projects that address shared regional challenges and catalyze common opportunities, the NBRC plays a critical role in helping Northern Border communities retool their economies for the future. The Northern Border region is poised for economic revitalization if it can modernize its infrastructure, invest in business and workforce development, and build its capacity for community economic development. The NBRC is uniquely positioned to make these pivotal improvements possible.

## **ABOUT THIS PLAN**

In its early years, NBRC investments were guided by the 2008 recommendations of the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative, a federally-funded regional economic assessment and strategy process led by the Northern Forest Center with support from the region's governors. In 2014, the Commission contracted with the Northern Forest Center to update that strategy as the basis for this strategic plan. The Northern Forest Center is a regional non-profit with a service area nearly identical to that of the NBRC.

This plan is informed by extensive engagement with NBRC stakeholders across the region and grounded in local, state, and regional economic development strategies already in place. This work included the following in 2015-2016:

- Stakeholders across all four states;
- Plans and strategies across the region, including
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) and other regional development strategies, the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative, and other relevant plans;
- Participation in economic development forums around the region;
- Assessment of strategic plans developed by other federal- state regional development commissions;

- A regional socioeconomic assessment commissioned from the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies;
- A November 2015 conference of regional stakeholders; and
- Input from the NBRC federal co-chair and state members.

This plan marries the results of the stakeholder engagement and information collection with the NBRC statute (40 U.S.C, Subtitle V) to create a program and investment strategy that reflects the unique challenges and opportunities of the Northern Border Region and the economic priorities of its member states and communities.

The Plan was approved in October, 2016 by the Members of the Commission.



## **REGIONAL VISION**

The Northern Border region is known for its vital regional economies and thriving communities that provide for the well-being of the region's residents and support the stewardship of the region's natural and cultural assets.

## **MISSION**

The mission of the Northern Border Regional Commission is to catalyze regional, collaborative, and transformative community economic development approaches that alleviate economic distress and position the region for economic growth.



## **INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES**

In determining its investment priorities, the Commission is guided by the following principles:

- Invest for long-term community and economic impact;
- Support local initiatives that contribute to regional solutions;
- Encourage integrative approaches to building economic, community, and environmental well-being;
- Capitalize on local and regional assets to grow and retain wealth in the region;
- Use NBRC resources to fill gaps in the region's funding environment for community economic development; and
- Stimulate and integrate the capacity and resources of other partners and funders.

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Goal #1

**Infrastructure in Northern Border communities is modernized to better support business retention and expansion, and better position the region to compete in the global economy.**

Objective 1.1: Community infrastructure for business development. Revitalize and modernize essential infrastructure in Northern Border region communities.

Objective 1.2: Telecommunications. Increase access, affordability, and use of high speed telecommunications by Northern Border residents and businesses.

Objective 1.3: Energy. Stabilize and reduce electric and thermal energy costs.

## Goal #2

**Businesses in the Northern Border region are creating and sustaining jobs and wealth from the region's assets and are able to find employees with necessary skills.**

Objective 2.1: Asset-based business enterprise. Retain, expand and diversify business enterprise that capitalizes on the region's natural, cultural, and economic assets.

Objective 2.2: Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Position the Northern Border region as an attractive and supportive place for creative and entrepreneurial people.

Objective 2.3: Workforce development. Support and expand a highly productive workforce with skills suited to existing and future business needs.

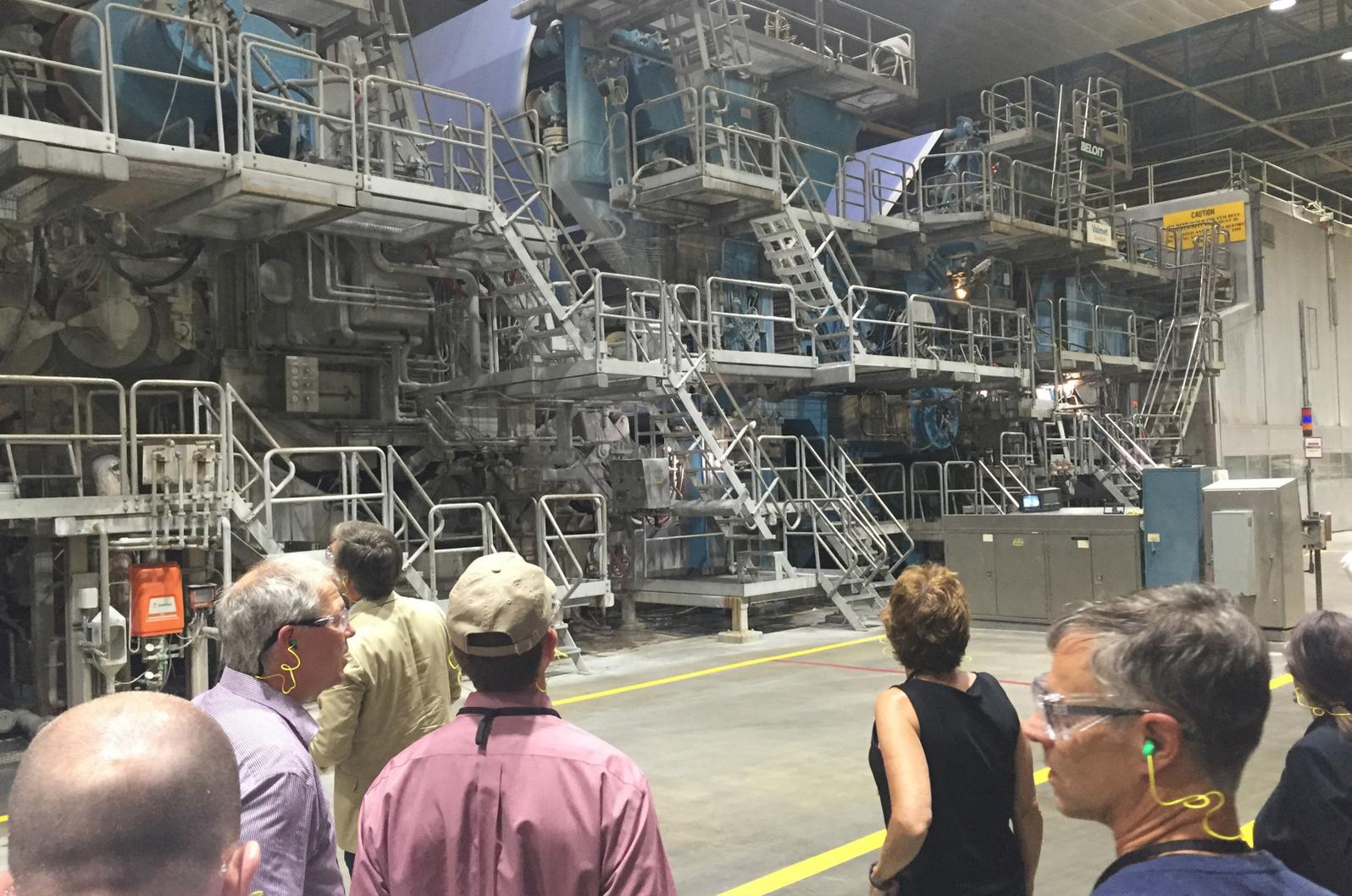
### Goal #3

**Northern Border communities and businesses are well positioned to anticipate and capitalize on changing trends.**

Objective 3.1: Leadership & community capacity. Foster entrepreneurial leadership and capacity for community economic development.

Objective 3.2: Regional knowledge. Inform and align local, state, and regional economic development decision making with regional data and perspectives.





## **FIVE YEAR PERFORMANCE GOALS**

Assuming consistent annual funding, the Commission will gauge its success and impact against its strategic goals and objectives between 2017 and 2022 with these performance measures:

- 5,000 jobs created or retained
- 10,000 households and businesses with access to improved infrastructure
- 1,000 businesses representing 5,000 employees benefit from NBRC investments
- 7,500 workers provided with skills training
- 250 communities and 1,000 leaders engaged in regional leadership, learning and/or innovation networks supported by the NBRC
- 3:1 NBRC investment leverage

## **ABOUT THE NORTHERN BORDER REGION**

The Northern Border region encompasses 1,100 towns and small cities and 36 counties across the northern reaches of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. Home to over 2 million people and the largest intact forest east of the Mississippi, the Northern Border region has been shaped over the centuries by the interactions between people and land and, more recently, a focus on conserving the landscape and developing the economy in tandem.

In the 1800s the region's farms and forests provided the raw materials that built some of Northeast's largest cities. In the 20th century new industries emerged and the region was known globally as the birthplace of modern pulp and paper making, with whole communities built around massive mills that employed tens of thousands across the region. During the same era, the region established itself as a premier recreation destination, drawing millions of visitors to enjoy its mountains, lakes, and fresh air.

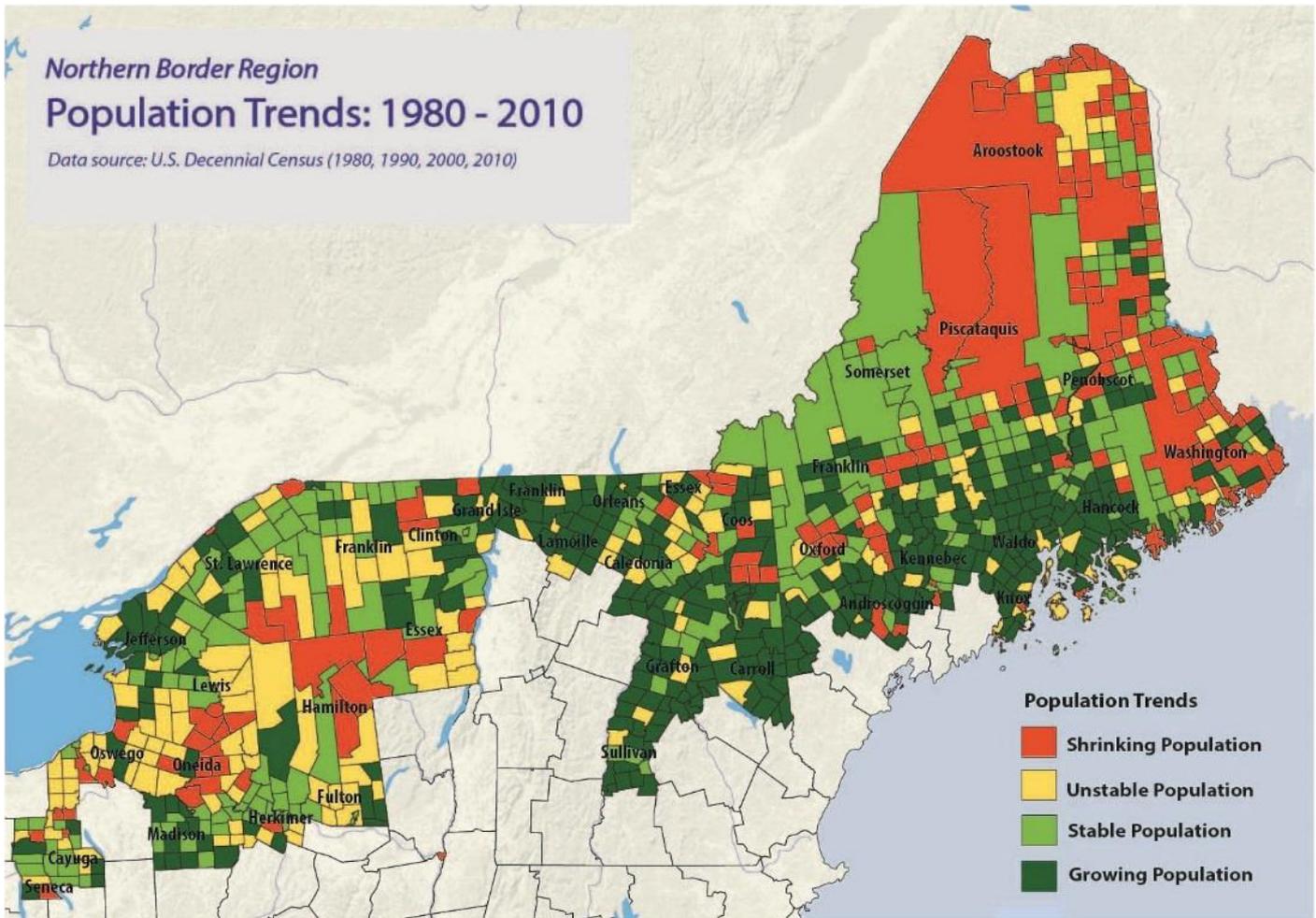
In more recent decades, global economic pressures have caused forest-based industries to shed tens of thousands of jobs, altered markets for the region's products and services, and spurred land speculation and continuous land sales. Like many rural parts of America, the Northern Border region is grappling with a changing economy and a transition from manufacturing dependence to a more diversified, service-driven economy.



## Northern Border Region

# Population Trends: 1980 - 2010

Data source: U.S. Decennial Census (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010)



## **Current Socioeconomic Trends**

### **POPULATION SHIFTS**

After several decades of change, overall population has stabilized in much of the Northern Forest, but the major extraction-based manufacturing communities and remote areas continue to lose population. Population is growing most quickly in percentage terms in recreation-based communities, but in terms of sheer numbers of people, most population growth is in communities whose economies are based on state/federal employment or services.

## **Current Socioeconomic Trends**

### **AGING POPULATION**

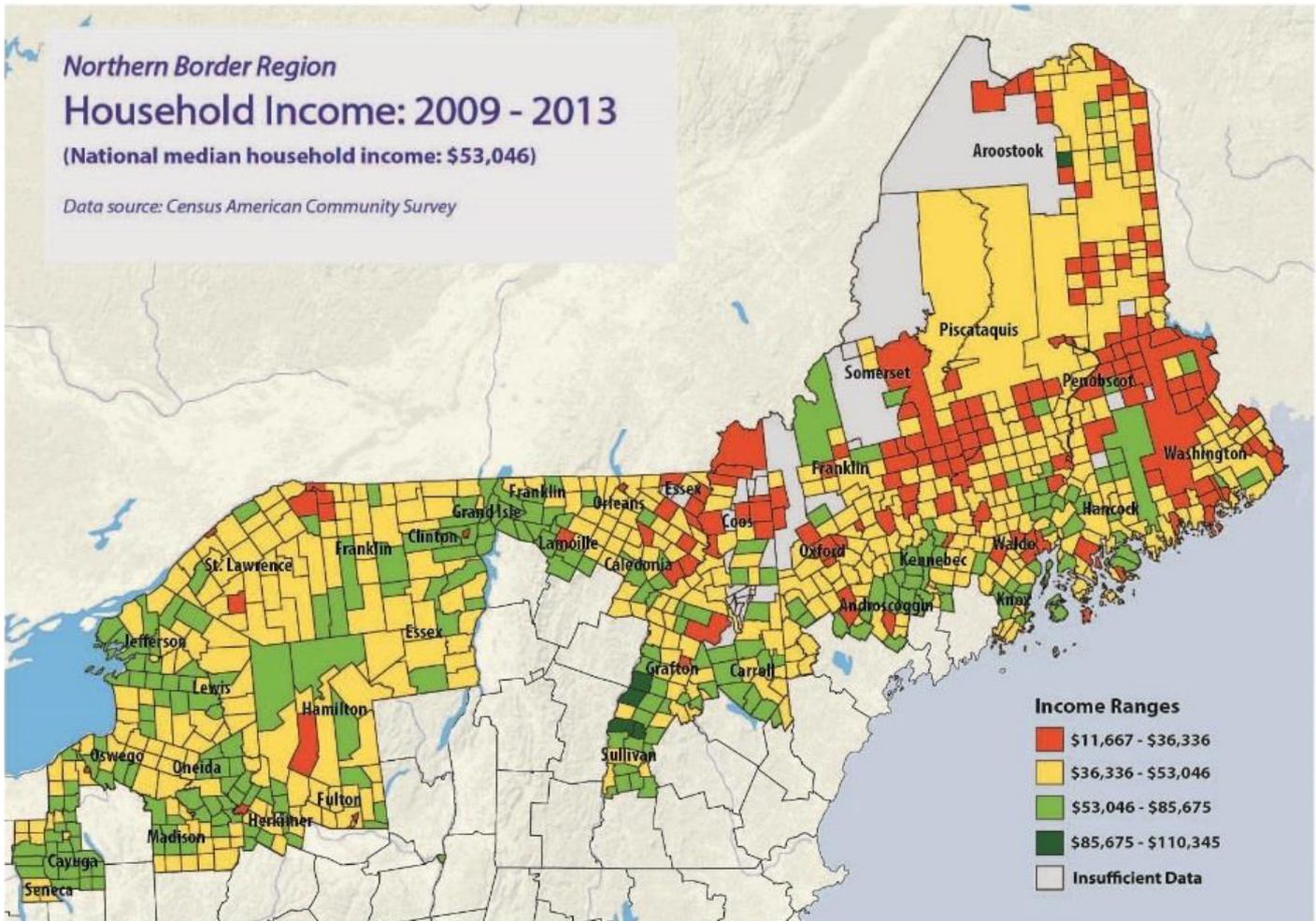
The Northern Border region as a whole is slightly older than the southern tiers of its member states, and its population is aging more quickly. Between 2003 and 2013, the share of the population over the age of 65 increased by almost 22%. These changes are occurring primarily because of low birth rates and because people are ‘aging in place,’ but also because these communities are having difficulty retaining younger people. This has important implications for the economy, as human capital is one of the principal forces behind economic development.

## Northern Border Region

# Household Income: 2009 - 2013

(National median household income: \$53,046)

Data source: Census American Community Survey



## **Current Socioeconomic Trends**

### **DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES**

A challenging combination of job and population loss, decaying infrastructure, and low economic diversification has left many of the region's historic population centers grappling with low income and high rates of poverty. Distress is most apparent in parts of the region that were historically dependent on manufacturing, and/or that are most remote.

## **Current Socioeconomic Trends**

### **DIVERSIFYING ECONOMY**

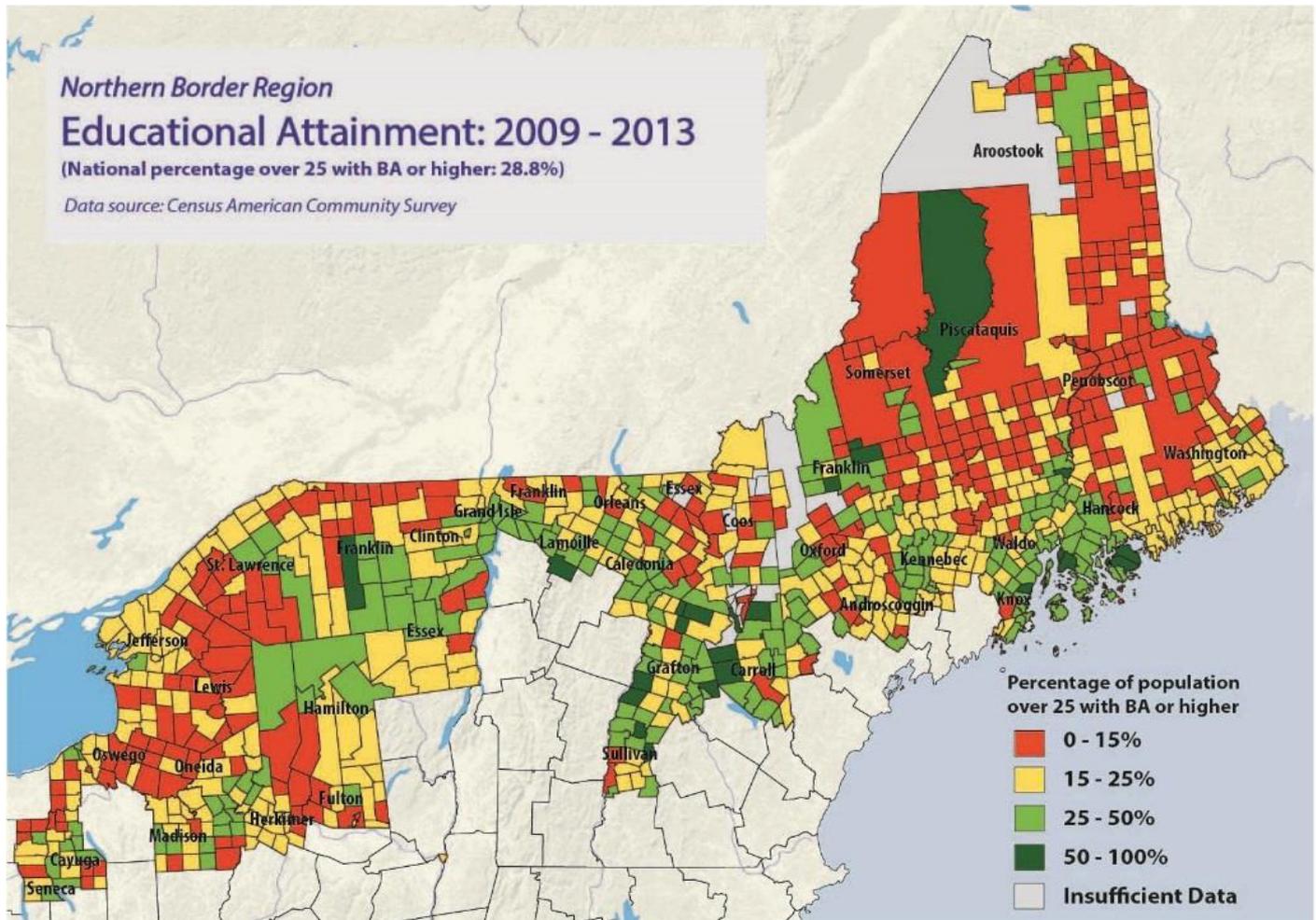
Across the United States, health care, social assistance and government account for an ever increasing share of the national economy, with manufacturing on the decline. The Northern Border region is no different. Manufacturing's contribution to the regional economy (as measured by worker compensation), while still significant, declined by 16% between 2003 and 2013, as contributions from the government, health care and social assistance, and leisure and hospitality sectors grew.

## Northern Border Region

# Educational Attainment: 2009 - 2013

(National percentage over 25 with BA or higher: 28.8%)

Data source: Census American Community Survey



## **Current Socioeconomic Trends**

### **CHANGING WORKFORCE NEEDS**

Today's economy demands a very different type of skill set than in the past. Many of the region's historic manufacturing communities have levels of college education well below the national average, reflecting a time when getting a well-paying job in a mill required a high school diploma and a willingness to work. As high-skill work becomes more important in all sectors of the economy, a significant segment of the region's workforce is at a disadvantage, mismatched with the needs of many existing and potential new businesses.

**Approved Unanimously on October, 2016 by Members or their Alternates**

Representing the Federal Government  
**Mark Scarano, Federal Co-Chair**

Representing the State of Maine  
**The Hon. Paul LePage, Governor**

Representing the State of New Hampshire  
**The Hon. Maggie Hassan**

Representing the State of Vermont  
**The Hon. Peter Schumlin**

Representing the State of New York  
**The Hon. Andrew Cuomo**

Northern Border Regional Commission  
JC Cleveland Federal Building, Suite 3602 | 53 Pleasant Street | Concord, NH 03301  
(603) 369-3001 | [www.nbrc.gov](http://www.nbrc.gov)