



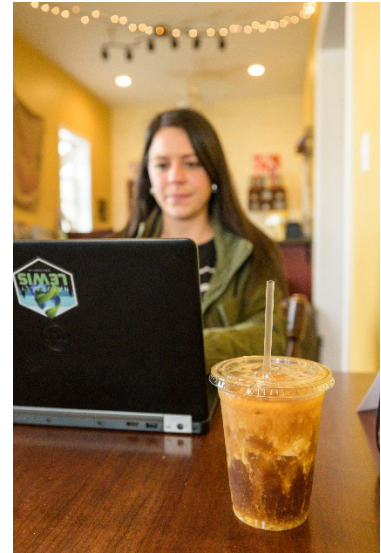
# 2023 North Country Alliance Education and Outreach Agenda

*New York is a diverse state.  
A “one-size-fits-all” approach is not the best mechanism to affect positive job growth.*

## RURAL BROADBAND

**The NCA strongly encourages funding for rural broadband and cellular service.** There are still great swaths of rural areas that do not have access to high speed, quality, affordable broadband, or cellular service. The services are not comparable to those provided in metropolitan or urban areas. The counties have been working proactively with NYS to challenge the FCC data which will ultimately factor into how much federal BEAD funding the state will receive. The BEAD funding will play an important role in filling the telecommunication gaps in **rural** communities.

The NCA **strongly opposes** excessive fees, other charges or mandates, passed on to broadband providers that negatively affect deployment of fiber or equipment to rural areas. These added costs hinder further development in rural areas, and negatively affect the availability of services to these communities. Ultimately, this increases cost to the resident and hinders economic growth in rural communities in the North Country.



*Photo Credit: Naturally Lewis*

## WORKFORCE, CHILDCARE & HOUSING

**The NCA supports funding and policies currently proposed that promote the development of our workforce, including investment in affordable, quality childcare opportunities and housing options to support our working families.** The lack of affordable childcare and housing are contributing factors to the out-migration of workers from the North Country. Eighty-six percent, 86%, of census tracts in the region are identified as child care deserts. There is also a significant need for affordable housing in the region as more and more households are paying more than 30% of their income for housing costs. Additional taxes and fees on NYS residents make homeownership an ideal and not a reality, and push workers to leave the state. In the North Country, efforts are underway to attract workers to the region through initiatives like Drum Country NY, as well as partnerships with colleges like SUNY Jefferson and others to train child care providers in order to increase child care slots in the region.



*Photo Credit: Naturally Lewis*

## RESTORE NY

**The NCA strongly supports funding to the RESTORE NY program.** This program has resulted in the redevelopment of several buildings in the North Country which have resulted in new housing and commercial space for businesses, and have removed blight from many downtowns. One such project was the redevelopment of a former historic, brick cheese plant in downtown Carthage, NY. It is now occupied by a restaurant.



*Photo Credit: DANCO*

## INVESTMENT IN RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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**The NCA strongly supports investment for rural infrastructure projects in Upstate on par with investments in Downstate.** With federal funds for infrastructure to include roads, water, sewer, airports, and broadband, the NCA strongly advocates for parity in funding to Upstate rural communities as such funding provided to Downstate.

## CROSS BORDER CONNECTION

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**The NCA is committed to strengthening what has been called "the most special and integrated economic and social relationship on earth."** The U.S.-Canadian economic dynamic continues to be of singular importance to the North Country economy. With the foregoing in mind, the U.S. and Canadian governments must focus on continued coordinated planning of U.S.-Canadian border crossings.

## TOURISM

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**The North Country Alliance supports funding and policies to strengthen the tourism industry in our rural region.**

The NCA **applauds** Governor Hochul's funding for Olympic Regional Development Authority capital improvements. We also **support** the additional round of \$15 million in competitive funding through the Market NY Program to support tourism marketing plans and other projects that best demonstrate regional collaboration among counties to promote regional attractions, as well as matching grants to assist counties and municipalities in local tourism efforts, the I Love NY marketing campaign, and other targeted investments.



*Photo Credit: TI Tourism Council*

## PRISON REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

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While not proposed in the FYE 2024 budget, **the NCA opposes the further closing of prisons in the North Country.** It is difficult to repurpose these facilities, and the economic impact on the communities with closures is disproportionately severe. The NCA encourages the state to provide financial resources and redevelopment assistance to communities and economic development organizations seeking to repurpose closed facilities.

## CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

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**The NCA supports the development of renewable energy generation capacity.**

The state must continue to invest in critical infrastructure to address changing regional electrical grid requirements and to efficiently move the supply of green energy across the state. The North Country supplies significant hydroelectric, wind and solar electricity, however is limited to future growth by adequately-sized delivery infrastructure. In addition, some state mandates to use electric-only durable goods (i.e. appliances) before the delivery issue is resolved will ultimately stress the power grid. State policies and mandates must support energy resilience while not imposing excessive costs to the consumer.

