



2025 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.”

HOUSING FOR ALL

Housing that is affordable to all income levels, and especially those with 80%-200% area median income levels, is critically needed in the North Country. **The NCA strongly supports** the Governor’s initiative to capitalize a Mixed-Income Revolving Loan Fund to fill construction financing gaps by providing a lower-cost and more flexible form of capital than is generally available in market financing. **The NCA also supports** technical assistance programs to assist communities to address zoning, land use, comprehensive planning, and other issues that may impede housing development; as well as, a matching grant program to assist municipalities with planning and pre-development costs associated with the development of housing.

BUILDING A RESILIENT WORKFORCE

The **NCA supports** the proposal to fund free community college in high-demand occupations, and **encourage** funding for workforce development within the SUNY and BOCES systems. The **NCA also supports** incentives for job training programs, industry specific initiatives, and workforce training centers.

In 2024, the region won \$10 million as part of the Governor’s Challenge and is using the funds to implement the Next Move NY program. Next Move NY will match transitioning soldiers from Fort Drum, NY, spouses and veterans with employment opportunities across the region and state. The NCA supports and encourages the implementation of this program.

CHILDCARE: A BUILDING BLOCK FOR GROWTH

The lack of affordable childcare is a contributing factor to the out-migration of workers, and to people choosing to leave the workforce, exacerbating the worker shortage during a time with a historically low unemployment rate. Eighty-six percent, 86%, of census tracts in the region are identified as child care deserts. We cannot build and fill new childcare facilities without staff. **The NCA strongly supports** proposed programs that address both physical childcare facilities, and also investment in **retaining and attracting skilled childcare workers**. **The NCA welcomes discussion on a regional level** as to how to balance funding so that resources are aimed at making childcare affordable to workers in the region.

BROADBAND: BUILDING THE LAST MILE

The NCA strongly encourages funding for rural broadband and cellular service. Significant progress has been made in bringing access to high speed, affordable broadband, and cellular service to rural areas. Investment should continue in last-mile solutions to provide service to the most rural populations. **The NCA strongly opposes** excessive fees, taxes, and other charges or mandates, passed on to broadband providers that negatively affect deployment of fiber or equipment to rural areas.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

The North Country is home to many private and state higher education campuses. All are economic drivers within their respective communities, not only through payrolls but the dollars going into the communities by students. All are struggling due to changing demographics and rising costs. **The NCA supports** the fair and equitable distribution of SUNY funding to **ALL** SUNY campuses and additional funding for tuition assistance programs at all institutions of higher education.

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PRISON CLOSURES AND REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

The NCA opposes the further closing of prisons in the North Country. DOCCS has closed seven facilities in the North Country in the last 15 years; not a single one of which has been redeveloped or repurposed. The economic impact on the communities with closures is disproportionately severe and the state now owns millions of square feet of empty prison space in the region. The NCA **appreciates** the state's financial resources and redevelopment assistance to communities and economic development organizations seeking to repurpose closed facilities, however it stands firm that the state not close any additional prisons in the North Country until it **demonstrates meaningful success in repurposing the seven which are already closed.**

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

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, but is limited to future growth by inadequate delivery infrastructure. Also, 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 and creating burdens to business retention and growth.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The NCA supports funding and policies for the development of critical water, wastewater, and electrical transmission infrastructure that support business and housing growth in rural communities. Many communities do not score competitively in the state's infrastructure programs under the Disadvantaged Communities criteria. Scoring criteria needs to be revised to provide parity in scoring/funding for rural communities. **The NCA further supports** renewed funding of NY FAST for the development of shovel-ready industrial sites.

CROSS BORDER TRADE CONCERNS

The North Country and Canadian economies are so broadly and deeply integrated that the state must be **actively concerned** about the impact in New York of U.S. tariffs and trade policies on Canada and the resulting Canadian tariffs on the U.S. The ongoing uncertainty caused by the threat of such policies, and the substantial and harmful impacts from them should they be enacted, will be real on sectors as diverse as manufacturing, warehousing, energy costs, construction, agriculture and tourism. The results will be dire to North Country residents and businesses.

REGULATORY REFORM AND EFFICIENCY

New York State ranks among one of the most regulated states in the country with nearly 300,000 regulations on the books, second to only California. The NCA **supports** the New York State Economic Development Council's call for a governor's office of regulatory review, or an intra-agency liaison, that will: review existing regulations to ensure there is consistency; identify and remove redundant regulations; coordinate an internal review amongst state agencies on any new proposed regulation; and run fiscal impacts on any newly introduced regulation to ensure it does not impact affordability and the state's economic development goals.



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