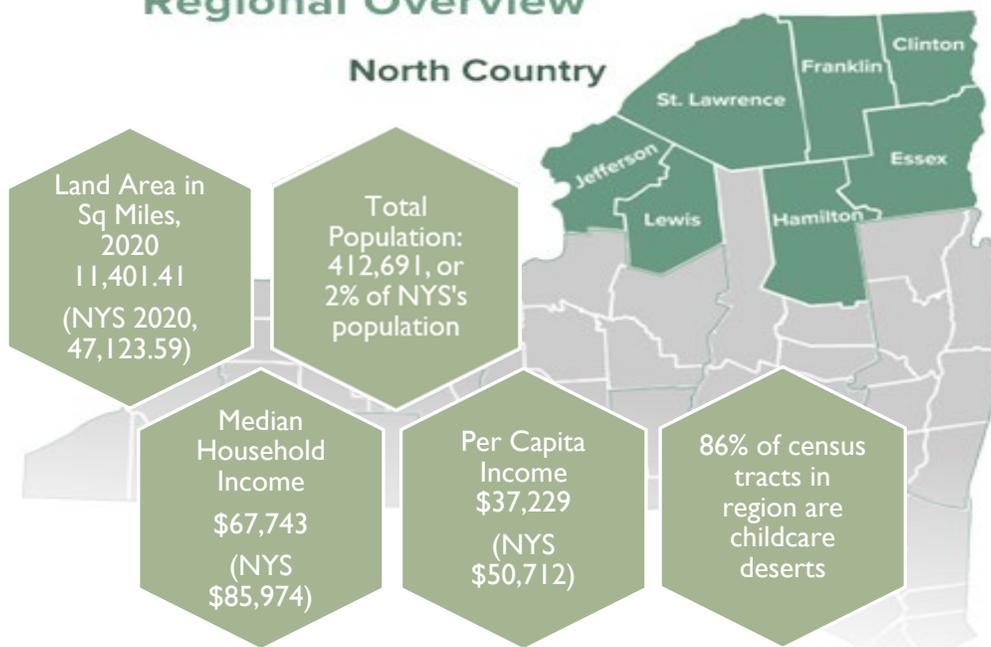


The North Country Alliance’s members, including business and community leaders, support meaningful programs and policies that meet the unique needs of the Adirondack Park and our surrounding rural communities in the seven-county region.

Regional Overview



MAP: 2025 ANNUAL REPORT & ACHIEVE INITIATIVE PROPOSAL

- The North Country comprises 24% of the state’s land area, and about 2% of the total population.
- The largely rural geographic area, with fewer people per square mile than urban areas, means a higher investment per capita by the state. For example, a \$1 million grant for utility infrastructure for 2 square miles in an urban area may impact 857 people, but in the North Country impact only 81. The grant funds per person/capita in the urban area is about \$1,167, while in the rural area it is \$12,346.
- If the state’s scoring system rewards the impact of the project on the greatest number of people served, rural communities will likely score lower as there are fewer people living per square mile than in the urban areas.
- With an average median household income of \$67,743, which is 21% lower than the state’s median household income, the grant dollars are more impactful to the rural community as the households don’t have the level of disposable income as their urban counterparts to afford debt associated with the project.
- Project costs are traditionally higher in rural communities than urban due to transportation costs, access to supplies/materials, environmental regulations, and available contractors. This is relevant for both infrastructure and housing projects.

What does this mean for the North Country?

HOUSING FOR ALL

The North Country, like most rural areas of the state, is struggling with housing affordability driven by several factors including: the higher costs for development in rural areas; the need for infrastructure; the lower median household incomes able to afford the rents and housing prices; the need for contractors/developers; and the need for technical assistance to support housing development. Housing that is affordable to all income levels is critically needed in the North Country. The NCA thanks the Governor for her support of a \$3 million North Country Housing Capital Loan Fund to address the need for housing that is affordable to those with 120-200% area median income levels. **The NCA strongly supports the Governor's initiatives to utilize existing housing programs to make them more efficient and responsive to our current housing needs.** 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.

BUILDING A RESILIENT WORKFORCE

The NCA supports the proposal to continue funding free community college for high-demand occupations, and encourages 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, as the region stands ready to support employers like Micron, Chobani, and others. The NCA strongly supports the Next Move NY program, funded by New York State in 2024. This program, unique to the State, will have a significant impact on placing soldiers leaving the military, spouses, and veterans into jobs in the North Country, and New York State.

CHILDCARE: A BUILDING BLOCK FOR GROWTH

Eighty-six percent, 86%, of census tracts in the region are identified as child care deserts. The business model for most childcare facilities is not sustainable. The lack of **affordable childcare** is a contributing factor to the out-migration of workers, and to people choosing to leave the workforce. The NCA welcomes discussion on a regional level as to how to balance funding (capital versus operating) so that resources are aimed at making childcare affordable to workers in the region.

PRISON CLOSURES AND REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

The NCA strongly opposes the full decommissioning (heat, electrical, and security) of closed correctional facilities which will severely undermine the ability to repurpose these facilities. DOCCS has closed eight 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 supports efforts to package the closed correctional facilities located in the Adirondack Park to obtain the constitutional amendment to dispose of them for business and housing development. 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 eight which are already closed.

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. However, the cost to build the infrastructure has more than tripled in cost due to excessive make-ready costs. These costs are ultimately passed on to the consumer. 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. Advancing the development of affordable broadband in rural communities supports opportunities for much needed competition in these areas.

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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 Governor's efforts for sound regulatory reforms to 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. The NCA also supports the Governor's efforts to improve the timely payment of contractors by the state.

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. The NCA further supports renewed funding of NY FAST and POWER UP for the development of shovel-ready industrial sites. The NCA further supports the restoration of funding for the RESTORE NY program.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

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. 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.

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. **State policies and mandates must support energy resilience, and be practical for consumers, while not imposing excessive costs to the consumer and creating burdens to business retention and growth.**

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. In 2025, bridge crossings were down 15.69% across the T.I. Bridge, 3.56% across the Seaway Int. Bridge, and 23% across the Ogdensburg Bridge. Crossings in Plattsburgh were also down most of 2025 by around 28%. Fewer travelers from Canada have had a negative impact on tourism businesses, and the overall economy in lost sales and bed tax revenues, in the North Country. Additionally, tariffs have directly impacted consumers and businesses with higher prices for goods and materials.



NorthCountryAlliance.org

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