

NEW YORK STATE'S NORTH COUNTRY

REGIONAL PLAN – PY 2020 - 2024

Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development Board

North Country Workforce Development Board

St. Lawrence County Workforce Development Board



June 2021

North Country Regional Plan

Jefferson-Lewis, St. Lawrence and North Country

Introduction:

The three North Country Local Workforce Development Boards oversee workforce development activities in seven North Country counties, including:

- Jefferson-Lewis – Jefferson and Lewis counties
- North Country – Clinton, Essex, Franklin, and Hamilton counties
- St. Lawrence – St. Lawrence County

The same seven counties also comprise the seven-county region assigned to the North Country Regional Economic Development Council (NCREDC). This is a congruence between the territory served by both the NCREDC and the three Workforce Development Boards (WDB).

The North Country region constitutes approximately 23% of the New York State's land area and is home to approximately 2.23% of the state's population. In addition, the region has no population center where economic and workforce activities are focused within the region. Its two most populous cities, Plattsburgh and Watertown – include populations of about 32,901 and 35,505 respectively (EMSI April 2021)– are located approximately 160 miles apart; resulting in a three-hour drive from one city to the other (in good weather). Furthermore, about 18% of the region's population resides in its two major "population centers."

It is important to draw attention to these geographic and demographic realities because they make it difficult to do cohesive regional economic development planning, not to mention workforce planning and delivery, for the seven-county region. The NCREDC has struggled with this issue since its inception in 2011 i.e., how to adopt meaningful strategies that apply to the diverse and extended region and not just to areas where the population clusters are located.

The region's three Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) are aware of this challenge because all three WDB executive directors are engaged in in the NCREDC, one of them since its implementation. The three directors serve on the NCREDC Workforce Committee and Ms. Mayforth (Jefferson-Lewis) is its co-chair. Additionally, the three executive directors also serve on other NCREDC task forces and work groups. In short, they are aware of the challenges the Council has had.

There are economic commonalities across the region – and the NCREDC has done its best to make the most of them. Dairy farming has a major presence in all but one of the seven counties; tourism is a major factor in all seven counties; and in all but Hamilton County, significant employment is still created by what is left from mines and rural resource-based manufacturing establishments (paper, lumber, dairy products, and transportation).

Notwithstanding this, the differences among the region's counties – and even within the counties - are dramatic and make it difficult for the seven counties to engage in workforce development planning and implementation activities, even though the executive directors of the region's three WDBs have been meeting regularly and working together on WIOA and other workforce-related issues.

Most recently, since each WDB's Local Plan is part of the Regional Plan and since the labor market (see Appendix A) data in the area's respective Local Plans is regional rather than county specific, the first section of their respective 2021-2024 Local Plans are identical. The executive directors worked with their regional IDAs and economic databases to identify the regional data included.

Regional Service Strategies:

The three WDB's have examined the circumstances of the North Country region and have concluded that using cooperative service delivery agreements is not practical because of the region's expanse (23% of NYS' land mass) and the lack of a central community on which the economy and labor market focuses. The three areas cannot envision cooperative service delivery scenarios in which the inefficiencies generated by the region's geography and demography don't exceed the efficiencies attained.

NYS DOL recognizes these challenges. It serves the seven-county North Country region from eight offices and only among the three offices located in St. Lawrence County is there significant shared service delivery in place.

Sector Initiatives for In-Demand Sectors or Occupations:

As part of the preparation of the three WDB's respective Local Plans, the region's three WDB's developed a common demand occupations list. The list focuses on occupations, not sectors, because of the region's heterogeneous employer base. For example:

- There are paper mills in four counties, but not in the other three.
- Businesses focusing on supporting Ft. Drum in Jefferson County may also affect portions of neighboring Lewis and St. Lawrence counties but demand for such occupations in the rest of the region is non-existent.
- The four colleges located within 10 miles of each other in central St. Lawrence County create occupational demands whose only close parallel is a two-hour drive in Plattsburgh and Saranac Lake areas (each hosting two colleges).

The list for in demand occupations can be accessed at:

<http://www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/lwia/lwia-occs.shtm>. It is a testament to the sub-regional differences that characterize the region's employers' skills demand but also demonstrates (as noted earlier) the overlapping in occupational demands among the three WDB's. Examples of the latter include health care professions and tourism.

Collection and Analysis of Regional Labor Market Data:

The three WDBs have relied on NYSDOL's North Country regional labor market analyst, Mr. Anthony Hayden, who is based in Lake Placid. He has given his time and expertise and has continued the long-term collaboration between the region's WDBs which pre-dates the creation of the regional councils.

As noted earlier, the three WDB's executive directors have collaborated in their use of Mr. Hayden's data in preparing their respective Local Plans. The four have forged a working collaboration to provide services to the region.

Additionally, the three WDBs have accessed economic development data through EMSI, which gives a timely picture of the economic situation in the region's seven counties.

Regional Spending Plan:

WIOA states the Regional Plan should include "the establishment of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region..." As in the case of regional service strategies as stated above, the region's three WDB's have examined the circumstances of the North Country region and created a regional spending plan that includes administrative cost arrangements while pooling funds is not appropriate at this time due to factors highlighted above.

Due to differences in the way the three WDB's deliver services and the variations in the customer base, pooling funds would not address the specific needs of our diverse areas and their populations. .

Coordination of Supportive Services:

WIOA states the Regional Plan should include "the coordination of transportation and other supportive services, as appropriate, for the region." As explained above, the three WDB's have concluded that such coordination is not appropriate due to the vast geographical size of our region and its sparse population.. The decentralization of our most populated areas (Plattsburgh and Watertown) further complicates the notion of providing a coordinated transportation or supportive services system.

Coordination of Services with Economic Development Partners:

In WIOA, it says the regional plan should include "the coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers." The three North Country WDBs currently work closely with their local and county-level economic development services and providers.

Though there are many local and county-level development services and providers, there are few that cover the entire region. Aside from the NCREDC, there are only three other regional economic development service providers whose service territory covers the same seven counties of the region as the NCREDC. Those three organization are:

- CITEC, Inc., the Regional Technology Development Organization for the region,
- North County Alliance (NCA)
- Workforce Development Institute (WDI)

CITEC provides training for manufacturing clients and all three WDBs use its services when appropriate. Meanwhile, the training CITEC does focuses on upgrade and management training and generally there are fewer opportunities to use WIOA funds for such training because the employees to be trained are ineligible for WIOA assistance. The three WDB's collaborate with CITEC in other areas.

The NCA is a seven-county economic development organization which started as a trade association of the region's economic developers in the mid 1980s. Since then, it has expanded its membership to include bank and business membership. Since the NCA has for the last few years been expanding beyond its trade association roots, it is time for the other two North Country WDB's to join the

organization. The executive directors of both the Jefferson-Lewis and North Country WDB's plan to become members of the NCA shortly.

Lastly, the WDBs also work in close collaboration with WDI as it funds training and education activities such as Manufacturing Day, Business and Education Forum, and Adirondack P-Tech. The WDI also participates in the activities of the NCREDC's Workforce Committee,

Examples of WDI's collaboration with the WDBs include:

- The Medical Academy of Science and Health (MASH) Camp in Jefferson and Lewis counties;
- Their participation in the Workforce Development Councils in Clinton, Essex, Franklin and Hamilton counties; and
- The WDI's recent commitment of training funds to help Titan Mining restart the Balmat zinc mine in St. Lawrence County;
- WDI has also worked to get NAmTrans and USDA grants;
- The Jefferson-Lewis WDB Director is the NCREDC Workforce Committee Co-Chair with the WDI North Country representative acting as the other co-chair.

In addition to continuing their collaboration with CITEC, WDI, and the NCA, as well as with their local economic development partners, the three WDBs will continue to work with the NCREDC. As mentioned in the Introduction to this Regional Plan, the three WDB Directors have been involved with the NCREDC. Two of WDB Directors are on the P3IC Committee and all three serve on the NCREDC Workforce Committee. They will continue to serve on these and other appropriate work groups constituted by the Council.

Performance Accountability Measure Negotiation and Reporting:

It is not surprising that the North Country's three WDB's are consistent when they say that they have conferred on how they can "collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in section 116(c), for local areas or the planning region" and that they determined, given the diversity of the region, the distances and the diffuse labor market, it is not feasible to have common performance accountability measures that apply to the seven counties.

This Local Plan proposes to develop meaningful accountability data in the North Country by continuing to apply the measures to the three WDB's as is currently the practice. The North Country WDB's choose the WIOA approved option to develop local levels of performance for each of the region's three local areas and not for the region as a whole. These performance measures were recently negotiated separately, but in collaboration, in March of 2020.

The three WDB's will also continue their long-standing practice of conferring about how benchmarks for the new performance standards prescribed by WIOA should be developed and whether there should be symmetry among them as they are applied to the regions' WDB's. In spite of the WDB's insistence that the region is too large, too decentralized and too diverse to permit them to adopt meaningful regional service strategies, sector initiatives, spending plans, and coordinated support services, the seven counties DO have many things in common when it comes to performance measures.

For key economic benchmarks such as high unemployment, aging workforce and low household incomes and, in spite of considerable variety across the seven counties, the three WDB's will continue to

consult with each other, recognizing that the region's counties are intensely rural and that performance measures and benchmarks designed to fit all regions do not apply fairly or meaningfully to rural counties like those in the North Country.

APPENDIX A

Labor Market Profile

Resident Civilian Labor and Nonfarm Employment

NORTH COUNTRY REGION

September 2017

Category	Sep 2017	Net Year	% Year
Resident Civilian Labor Force	177,100	1,100	0.6%
Employed	167,900	1,500	0.9%
Unemployed	9,200	-300	-3.2%
North Country Region Unemployment Rate	5.2%	-0.2	
NYS Unemployment Rate	4.7%	-0.2	
US Unemployment Rate	4.1%	-0.7	
Total Nonfarm	160,100	1,300	0.8%
Total Private	113,500	1,300	1.2%
Goods-producing	17,400	300	1.8%
Natural Resources, Mining & Construction	6,900	200	3.0%
Manufacturing	10,500	100	1.0%
Service-Providing	142,700	1,000	0.7%
Private Service-Providing	96,100	1,000	1.1%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	28,600	500	1.8%
Information	1,800	0	0.0%
Financial Activities	3,700	0	0.0%
Professional & Business Services	7,000	0	0.0%
Education & Health Services	32,300	500	1.6%
Leisure & Hospitality	17,600	-100	-0.6%
Other Services	5,100	100	2.0%
Government	46,600	0	0.0%

North Country Educational Attainment
NORTH COUNTRY REGION
April 2021

Seven County Educational Attainment:

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 12.5% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (7.6% below the national average), and 11.8% hold an Associate's Degree (3.2% above the national average).



	% of Population	Population
● Less Than 9th Grade	3.2%	9,060
● 9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.3%	20,610
● High School Diploma	36.8%	104,221
● Some College	18.0%	50,894
● Associate's Degree	11.8%	33,487
● Bachelor's Degree	12.5%	35,369
● Graduate Degree and Higher	10.5%	29,609

Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development Board

Jefferson County Educational Attainment:

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 13.8% of Jefferson County, NY residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (6.2% below the national average), and 12.6% hold an Associate's Degree (4.0% above the national average).



	% of Population	Population
● Less Than 9th Grade	2.5%	1,729
● 9th Grade to 12th Grade	6.0%	4,147
● High School Diploma	35.0%	24,270
● Some College	21.2%	14,734
● Associate's Degree	12.6%	8,757
● Bachelor's Degree	13.8%	9,571
● Graduate Degree and Higher	8.9%	6,176

Lewis County Educational Attainment:

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 11.1% of Lewis County, NY residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (9.0% below the national average), and 12.2% hold an Associate's Degree (3.6% above the national average).



	% of Population	Population
Less Than 9th Grade	2.7%	497
9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.0%	1,276
High School Diploma	44.0%	8,070
Some College	14.7%	2,695
Associate's Degree	12.2%	2,231
Bachelor's Degree	11.1%	2,031
Graduate Degree and Higher	8.4%	1,536

North Country Workforce Development Board

Clinton County Educational Attainment:

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 12.1% of Clinton County, NY residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (7.9% below the national average), and 10.4% hold an Associate's Degree (1.8% above the national average).



	% of Population	Population
Less Than 9th Grade	3.8%	2,148
9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.9%	4,418
High School Diploma	38.0%	21,296
Some College	16.8%	9,399
Associate's Degree	10.4%	5,816
Bachelor's Degree	12.1%	6,794
Graduate Degree and Higher	11.0%	6,187

Essex County Educational Attainment:

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 15.3% of Essex County, NY residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (4.8% below the national average), and 12.3% hold an Associate's Degree (3.7% above the national average).



	% of Population	Population
Less Than 9th Grade	2.3%	654
9th Grade to 12th Grade	5.6%	1,605
High School Diploma	34.6%	9,874
Some College	18.0%	5,120
Associate's Degree	12.3%	3,499
Bachelor's Degree	15.3%	4,355
Graduate Degree and Higher	12.0%	3,408

Franklin County Educational Attainment:

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 10.0% of Franklin County, NY residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (10.0% below the national average), and 13.1% hold an Associate's Degree (4.5% above the national average).



	% of Population	Population
Less Than 9th Grade	4.0%	1,442
9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.9%	2,825
High School Diploma	37.6%	13,422
Some College	18.1%	6,474
Associate's Degree	13.1%	4,656
Bachelor's Degree	10.0%	3,580
Graduate Degree and Higher	9.2%	3,276

Hamilton County Educational Attainment:

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 8.6% of Hamilton County, NY residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (11.4% below the national average), and 10.3% hold an Associate's Degree (1.7% above the national average).



	% of Population	Population
Less Than 9th Grade	3.6%	130
9th Grade to 12th Grade	22.1%	789
High School Diploma	24.6%	879
Some College	23.4%	837
Associate's Degree	10.3%	367
Bachelor's Degree	8.6%	308
Graduate Degree and Higher	7.4%	263

St. Lawrence County Workforce Development Board

St. Lawrence County Educational Attainment:

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 12.2% of St. Lawrence County, NY residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (7.9% below the national average), and 11.4% hold an Associate's Degree (2.8% above the national average).



	% of Population	Population
Less Than 9th Grade	3.4%	2,461
9th Grade to 12th Grade	7.7%	5,551
High School Diploma	36.8%	26,410
Some College	16.2%	11,635
Associate's Degree	11.4%	8,160
Bachelor's Degree	12.2%	8,730
Graduate Degree and Higher	12.2%	8,762

ATTACHMENT A-1

Signature of Chief Elected Official(s) NORTH COUNTRY REGION

In compliance with the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, the Final Rule, and Planning guidelines and instructions developed by the Governor, this Regional Plan is being submitted jointly by the Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development Board, North Country Workforce Development Board and St. Lawrence County Workforce Development Board and their respective Chief Elected Official(s).

By virtue of my signature, I:

- Agree to comply with all statutory and regulatory requirement of the Act as well as other applicable State and Federal laws, regulations, and policies;
- Affirm that the Grant recipient possesses the capacity to fulfill all responsibilities and assume liability for funds received, as stipulated in §679.420 of the rules and regulations;
- Affirm that the composition of the Local Board is either in compliance with the law, rules and regulations and is approved by the State or, will be in compliance within 90 days of Regional Plan submission;
- Affirm that the Chair of the Local Board was duly elected by that Board; and
- Affirm that the Board, including any staff to the Board, will not directly provide any career services unless approved to do so by the Chief Elected Official

Signature of the Local Chief Elected Official (CEO)
Jefferson County

Date

Name: Mr. Scott A. Gray
Title of Local CEO: Chair, Jefferson County
Address: 195 Arsenal St
Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: 315 785-3075
E-mail: scottg@co.jefferson.ny.us

Are you the Grant Recipient CEO?

Yes ___

No ___

ATTACHMENT A - 2

Signature of Chief Elected Official(s) NORTH COUNTRY REGION

In compliance with the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, the Final Rule, and Planning guidelines and instructions developed by the Governor, this Regional Plan is being submitted jointly by the Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development Board, North Country Workforce Development Board and St. Lawrence County Workforce Development Board and their respective Chief Elected Official(s).

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Signature of the Local Chief Elected Official (CEO)
Lewis County

Date

Name: Mr. Larry Dolhof
Title of Local CEO: Chair, Lewis County
Address: 7660 N State St
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: 315-376-5355
E-mail: terryclark@lewiscounty.ny.us

Are you the Grant Recipient CEO? Yes ___ No x

ATTACHMENT A - 3

Signature of Chief Elected Official(s) NORTH COUNTRY REGION

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Signature of the Local Chief Elected Official (CEO)
Clinton County

Date

Name: Mr. Mark Henry
Title of Local CEO: Chair, Clinton County
Address: 137 Margaret St.
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
Phone: 518-563-4600
E-mail: mark.henry@clintoncountygov.com

Are you the Grant Recipient CEO?

Yes _x_

No

ATTACHMENT A - 4

Signature of Chief Elected Official(s) NORTH COUNTRY REGION

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Signature of the Local Chief Elected Official (CEO)
Essex County

Date

Name: Mr. Shaun Gilliland
Title of Local CEO: Chair, Essex County
Address: 7551 Court St.
Elizabethtown, NY 12932
Phone: 518-873-3350
E-mail: supervisor@townofwillsborony.gov

Are you the Grant Recipient CEO? Yes ___ No x

ATTACHMENT A - 5

Signature of Chief Elected Official(s) NORTH COUNTRY REGION

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Signature of the Local Chief Elected Official (CEO)
Franklin County

Date

Name: Mr. Don Dabiew
Title of Local CEO: Chair, Franklin County
Address: 355 W. Main St.
Malone, NY 12953
Phone: 518-481-1640
E-mail: ddabiew@franklincony.org

Are you the Grant Recipient CEO? Yes ___ No x

ATTACHMENT A - 6

Signature of Chief Elected Official(s) NORTH COUNTRY REGION

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Signature of the Local Chief Elected Official (CEO)
Hamilton County

Date

Name: Mr. William Farber
Title of Local CEO: Chair, Hamilton County
Address: 102 Co. Rd. 11
Lake Pleasant, NY 12108
Phone: 518-548-6651
E-mail: chairman@hamiltoncountyny.gov

Are you the Grant Recipient CEO? Yes ___ No x

ATTACHMENT A - 7

Signature of Chief Elected Official(s) NORTH COUNTRY REGION

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Signature of the Local Chief Elected Official (CEO)
St. Lawrence County

Date

Name: Mr. William Sheridan
Title of Local CEO: Chair, St. Lawrence County
Address: 48 Court St.
Canton, NY 13617
Phone: 315-379-2276
E-mail: wsheridan@stlawco.org

Are you the Grant Recipient CEO?

Yes ___

No ___

ATTACHMENT B - 1

Signature of WDB Chairs NORTH COUNTRY REGION

In compliance with the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, the Final Rule, and Planning guidelines and instructions developed by the Governor, this Regional Plan is being submitted jointly by the Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development Board, North Country Workforce Development Board and St. Lawrence County Workforce Development.

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Matthew Cooper, Chair, Jefferson-Lewis WDB
Senior Managing Engineer
Barton and Loguidice, DPC
120 Washington St, suite 201
Watertown, NY 13601
mcooper@bartonloguidice.com
315-701-9810

Date

ATTACHMENT B - 2

Signature of WDB Chairs NORTH COUNTRY REGION

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John VanNatten, Chair, North Country WDB
Glens Falls National Bank
14 Durkee St.
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
518-324-3255
jvannatten@arrowbank.com

Date

ATTACHMENT B - 3

Signature of WDB Chairs NORTH COUNTRY REGION

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- Affirm that the Board, including any staff to the Board, will not directly provide any career services unless approved to do so by the Chief Elected Official.

Mr. Dallas Sutton, SLCWDB Chair
St. Lawrence County Board of Legislators
48 Court St., Canton, NY 13617
DSutton@nbtbank.com
315-391-0622

Date

ATTACHMENT C - 1

Signature of WDB Executive Directors NORTH COUNTRY REGION

In compliance with the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, the Final Rule, and Planning guidelines and instructions developed by the Governor, this Regional Plan is being submitted jointly by the Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development Board, North Country Workforce Development Board and St. Lawrence County Workforce Development.

By virtue of my signature, I:

- Agree to comply with all statutory and regulatory requirement of the Act as well as other applicable State and Federal laws, regulations, and policies;
- Affirm that the composition of the Local Board is either in compliance with the law, rules and regulations and is approved by the State or, will comply within 90 days of Regional Plan submission;
- Affirm that the Chair of the Local Board was duly elected by that Board; and
- Affirm that the Board, including any staff to the Board, will not directly provide any career services unless approved to do so by the Chief Elected Official.

Cheryl Mayforth
Executive Director, Jefferson-Lewis WDB
1000 Coffeen St
Watertown, NY 13601
c.mayforth@co.jefferson.ny.us
315-786-3646

Date

ATTACHMENT C - 1

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Sylvie Nelson
Executive Director, North Country WDB
194 US Oval
Plattsburgh, NY 12903
snelson@ncworkforce.com
518-561-4295 ext. 3075

Date

ATTACHMENT C - 1

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Barbara Lashua
Executive Director, St. Lawrence County WDB
80 State Highway 310
Canton, NY 13617
blashuaslcwdb@gmail.com
315-571-4541

Date