

2021 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

Funding for infrastructure, especially rural broadband is critical. We strongly encourage State and Federal investment in infrastructure, especially for rural broadband. There are still great swaths of rural areas that do not have access to high speed, quality broadband. The services are not comparable to those provided in metropolitan or urban areas. The North Country, like other rural areas, has seen an influx of people leaving the metro/urban areas to work remotely, however this is only possible if high speed, quality broadband is available. Telecommuting is fast becoming the new norm, and now more than ever, we need quality broadband in our 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 hinders economic growth in rural communities in the North Country.

FUNDING THE BUDGET GAP

The NCA strongly opposes increases in state taxes to fund the budget gap. Broad taxes, including income, continue to be detrimental to business and workforce growth in New York State. In order to emerge from the recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we will need to foster resilient businesses and a diverse workforce unburdened by additional state taxes. They will need these cash resources to invest in staffing and capital to recover.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING

The NCA strongly supports the continuation of stable funding for community colleges. Our community colleges play a vital role in educating our current and future workforce. COVID-19 and population declines negatively affect the financial security of our community colleges. However, now more than ever we need community colleges to provide flexible degrees and training programs to meet the demand by businesses for technical skills and micro credentialing.



WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The NCA supports funding that promotes technical skills and trades for providing relevant workforce development skills. Our ability to adapt to new technologies and in-demand occupations hinges on the ability of our educational institutions, technical schools, and trade programs to provide these programs and services.

PRISON CLOSURES

The NCA opposes the further closing of prisons in the North Country. It is difficult to repurpose these facilities, and the economic impact on these communities of closures is disproportionately severe. Any additional facility closures should take place in areas of the State with higher property values, costs, and more robust commercial activity and redevelopment potential.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

Robust, empowered and integrated local development agencies and corporations are the frontline partners for ensuring the successful execution of the Governor's Regional Councils and local community initiatives. Any efforts to erode their powers and effectiveness would be detrimental to economic development in the North Country.

THE NORTH COUNTRY ALLIANCE

The North Country Alliance is a member organization of businesses and institutions from across Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, Essex and Hamilton Counties, New York. The NCA provides access to capital for small businesses; is an advocate for North Country businesses; and works together to provide resources, education, and networking opportunities to foster economic growth in the North Country.

NorthCountryAlliance.org

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