

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2026



REDC
REGIONAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

This cover is a digital collage of various places in our region at various times in the past.

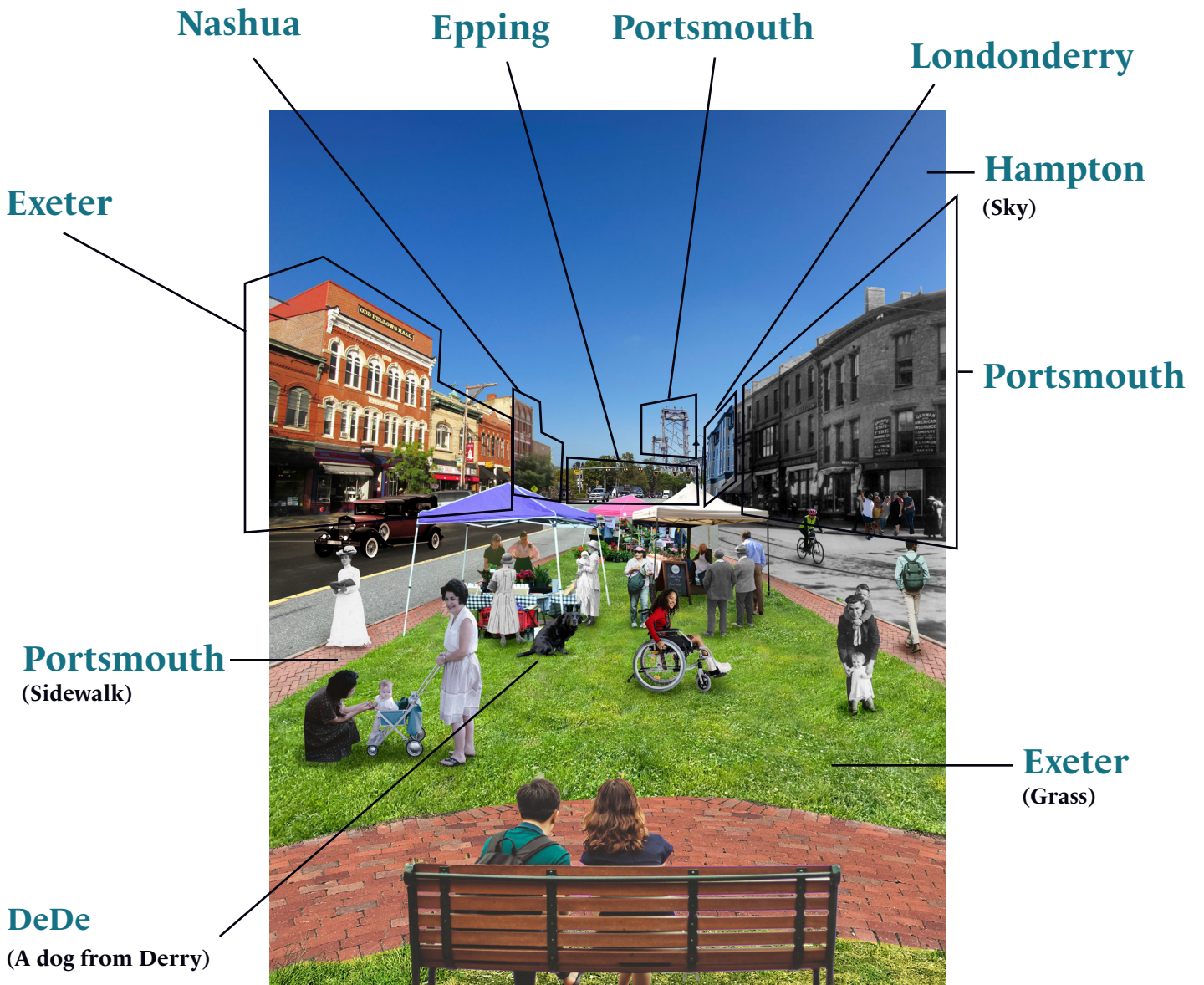


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Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Regional Economic Development Center (REDC), I would like to recognize our partners in the publication of the 2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update. Without the advice and continued support of our many partners, this strategic plan—and the support it provides for the region—would not be possible.

REDC extends our sincere thanks to the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA), for their ongoing support and funding. We also wish to acknowledge the Philadelphia Regional EDA office and Katherine Trapani, Economic Development Representative, for their continued guidance and partnership.

The REDC staff would like to recognize the dynamic and active involvement of the CEDS Strategy Committee, the REDC Board of Directors, and our economic development partners at the regional, state, and federal levels for their insights and valuable contributions to this year's strategic plan update. This year, we built upon the visioning work of the 2025 Five-Year CEDS, following up on complex issues including the workforce housing and childcare crises, as well as the regulatory barriers that contribute to these challenges. Additionally, the CEDS highlights innovative projects in the Workforce Attraction and Retention and Community Vibrancy priority areas that demonstrate how the Granite State is adapting to today's economic landscape.

We are especially grateful to the Regional Planning Commissions in our region, the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast, and Scott Lemos, as well as the many dedicated volunteers who contributed to the CEDS process by writing sections, providing photographs, or assembling data.

This publication reflects the hard work carried out across the region over the past year and identifies areas where additional focus is needed. REDC remains actively engaged with regional economic development stakeholders and works to share timely, relevant information with communities and businesses throughout our service area.

We welcome your thoughts and continued engagement as we work together to strengthen southern New Hampshire as a place to live, work, and thrive.

With gratitude,

Daniel Gray, REDC President
and the REDC Team



Introduction

The Regional Economic Development Center of Southern New Hampshire (REDC) is pleased to present the 2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update, the first annual update to the 2025 Five-Year CEDS.

The CEDS serves as a master economic development plan for the southern New Hampshire region, designed to guide the region's economic development priorities and actions. It is the result of a continuous, collaborative planning process developed with broad and diverse community participation. The plan identifies the region's economic challenges and opportunities and promotes strategies to support sustainable economic development, foster effective transportation systems, enhance and protect the environment, and responsibly manage growth and resources.

Each year, REDC submits the CEDS and its annual updates to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) for approval. The EDA grant (federal funding) used to create this document conforms with the Executive Orders (EOs) enacted by the current administration, and our grant funds were not used to support the development of any referenced reports created by other organizations which may have been generated prior to the enactment of the EOs.

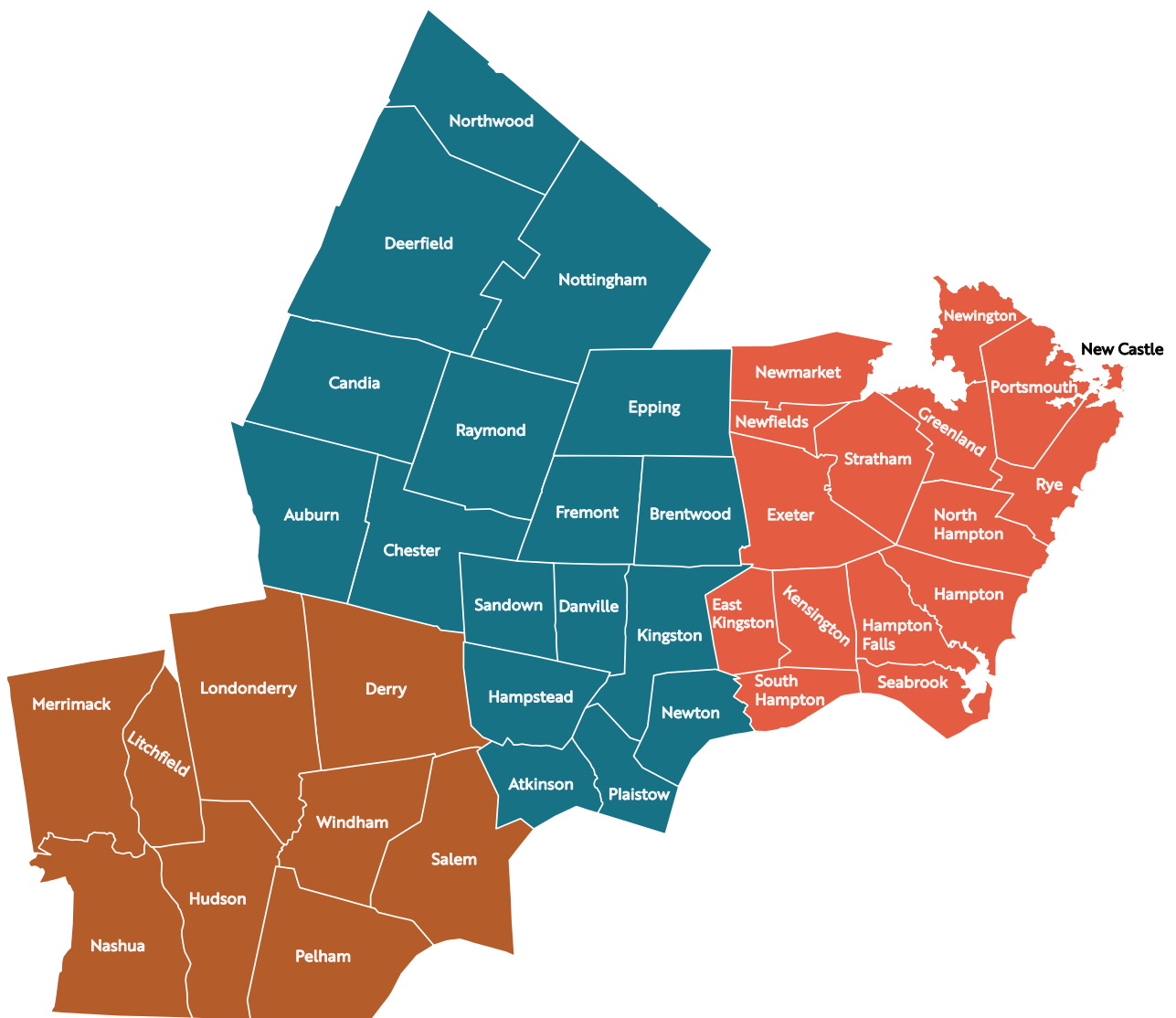
The CEDS process begins with the establishment of a broad-based Strategy Committee. Throughout the planning cycle, REDC staff, consultants, and the Strategy Committee work together to provide up-to-date demographic and economic data, identify regionally significant programs and projects, share resources related to workforce training and job development, support disaster preparedness and resiliency planning, and address other key regional issues affecting the communities, businesses, and residents within the CEDS district.

As part of the CEDS process, REDC and its partners developed a regional vision statement and a set of priority areas and goals that guides the region over a five-year cycle. The visioning phase of this cycle was completed in 2025 through a series of public engagement sessions, in collaboration with our Regional Planning Commissions and the Consensus Building Institute. Over the following four years, we will implement and monitor progress toward these goals with regular input and guidance from the Strategy Committee to ensure our objectives remain relevant and responsive to evolving economic conditions.

An important component of this process is the identification of Priority Projects: public works, planning efforts, and other initiatives that align with the CEDS vision and priority areas and have the potential to promote long-term economic and community development.

The CEDS region includes the 37 municipalities in Rockingham County, along with the towns of Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Pelham, and the city of Nashua in eastern Hillsborough County. For demographic and planning purposes, this area is divided into three subregions. While this is our designated Economic Development District (EDD), we acknowledge that economic impacts often extend beyond municipal boundaries. As such, our reporting and analysis may include information from outside the official region when relevant.

REDC, a nonprofit organization incorporated in 1994, promotes responsible, sustainable economic development in southern New Hampshire. Our mission focuses on creating employment opportunities—particularly for low- to moderate-income (LMI) individuals—by providing access to alternative financing for business and industrial expansion or relocation. These efforts support job creation and retention, ultimately contributing to increased tax revenues and greater economic vitality for the region. REDC manages several multi-million dollar loan funds, which we use in tandem with technical assistance and business advising to help New Hampshire businesses grow and thrive.



Executive Summary

Every five years, the Regional Economic Development Center of Southern New Hampshire (REDC) drafts an updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that includes a vision, priority areas, and economic development goals. This process was completed in 2025, and the 2025-2029 Five-Year CEDS was submitted to the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) in June 2025. The full report is available at www.redc.com/ceds-2025-2029.

Through targeted outreach and work with our partners, the following Priority Areas were identified and adopted as part of the five-year CEDS:

- Housing
- Childcare
- Infrastructure and utilities
- Transportation
- Workforce attraction and retention
- Environment and natural resources
- Community vibrancy



From September 2025 through June 2026, REDC staff and the Strategy Committee, with assistance from our partners and consultants, verified and updated the background inventory and regional overview; reviewed and approved the 2026 Priority Project list; completed a new State of the Economy report; and added new partners and resources to the Priority Areas section. New spotlight features and work from the planning commissions that share our region have been included for the 2026 Update. Finally, the CEDS website has been revised to include the information listed within the CEDS, as well as updated demographics and statistics.



REDC Annual Update

In the past year, REDC continued to build upon its partnership with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and many other federal, state, and local partners. Working in collaboration with the Regional Planning Commissions, the CEDS Strategy Committee, and our member communities, REDC has fulfilled its responsibilities as the designated administrator for the Rockingham Economic Development District, as assigned by the EDA. REDC has maintained its annual grassroots CEDS planning process, supported regional economic development projects, provided technical assistance to economic stakeholders at the local level, and increased funding opportunities for its members and clients. The following is a highlight of the past year's activities.

REDC Regional Business Development & Training Center

REDC was honored to have our annual CEDS recognized in an Economic Development District Community of Practice (EDD CoP) [resource article](#) from the [National Association of Development Organizations \(NADO\)](#). The case study was published in February 2026.

In March, REDC received the NH Small Business Administration's (SBA) 2025 Leading Microloan Intermediary of the Year Award. REDC's President Dan Gray, REDC Business Advisor Liz Salas, and REDC Office Manager & Loan Coordinator Angel Paradis proudly accepted the award alongside Peter Steele, New England



Regional Director, and Amy Bassett, NH District Director, both from the U.S. SBA, at the Manchester Historical Association in Manchester.

Cycling off at the end of their terms, REDC Board of Directors said goodbye to André Garron, Town Manager of Hooksett, NH, and Mike Decelle, Dean of UNH Manchester, each serving for approximately nine years. REDC cannot thank André and Mike enough for their contributions to our mission.

REDC began the implementation of its Building Roots Home Fund with a busy year, funding four projects with a total of \$5.41 million in direct REDC financing. This funding will create 249 new residential units in New Hampshire, all of which have at least 20% of each project's units earmarked for rents affordable for workforce housing.

During the past 12 months, REDC has hosted and participated in dozens of events to promote economic development throughout our region. For more information on our events, please visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/REDCofSNH.

Technical Assistance and Lending

During the fiscal year ending March 2026, REDC closed on 21 loans for 19 clients, valued at approximately \$6.5 million. These loans leveraged over \$95 million in additional financing and created or retained more than 140 jobs. REDC's business advisors provided technical assistance to over 150 clients.

REDC continues as the Hub for Kiva loans in New Hampshire. There were 54 new loan applicants in the past 12 months. We provided coaching to 43 applicants and assisted them with their application, providing information about the loan process and/or business management coaching. Five of these loans were 100% funded. REDC staff held three webinars and five in-person Kiva informational events.



CEDS

REDC began work on the 2026 CEDS update in the fall of 2025. This is the first update to the 2025 Five-Year CEDS. We held three Strategy Committee meetings between November 2025 and April 2026, with a fourth meeting held in June, which falls in the 2027 fiscal year.

REDC started work on the CEDS Priority Project list in the winter months. We streamlined the update and new project submission process with the creation of an online form. The new process was presented to the committee at its November meeting. The information, along with a one-page outline regarding the benefits of the Priority Project list was sent via email to committee members, regional partners, and existing project sponsors. We received proposals for seven new projects, as well as updates on all but two of the 2025 projects.

REDC worked closely with the four regional planning commissions (RPCs) that share our region. Each RPC provided valuable input as well as an update to their individual regional planning processes. Once again, REDC hired Scott Lemos to complete an update on the regional economy.

REDC staff collected the demographic and economic data for the 2026 CEDS from October through April 2026, completed writing in May 2026, and submitted the 2026 CEDS Update to the EDA in June 2026.

Acknowledging Laurel Adams

REDC President Laurel Adams passed away suddenly on July 20, 2025. This loss brought profound sorrow to those who knew her. Laurel oversaw REDC's operations and worked with many NH stakeholders to help identify challenges facing NH's small businesses. She

worked in economic development for over two decades and received her CECD in 2004 from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). As the President of the REDC, Laurel managed REDC's vast loan programs, financing, grant development, fundraising, CEDS development, and strategic planning. The depth and diversity of REDC's programs are unique in NH, and this is due to Laurel's vision and drive.

REDC continues to honor the spirit of this great leader. To read more about Laurel's legacy on economic development and small business in the region, visit: <https://www.redc.com/laurel-adams>.



Client Spotlight: Salt & Soul

In September, 2025, REDC provided financing to Salt & Soul, a wellness business based in New Boston, NH. Salt & Soul is a wellness studio created as a calm, supportive space to slow down, reset, and care for the body and nervous system. They offer private salt therapy (halotherapy) booth sessions, red light therapy, and pulsed electromagnetic field grounding therapy.

Owner Carrie Goodwin began planning the business in January 2025 and quickly gained momentum in the first quarter. By quarter four, she had a location in her hometown and was up and running.

REDC's loan supported the purchase of machinery and provided working capital. Carrie shared with us, "Without financing from REDC, I wouldn't be where I am right now. I wouldn't have been able to offer the new modalities, the PEMF mats, and the chairs for the mats. I wouldn't have been able to secure the new red light unit. And those funds have helped me be able to do all of that without the stress of whether or not the services are paying for the brick and mortar and knowing that I have that safety net in my first year has just been incredible."

Carrie never imagined this business would happen, and it was the best thing she's ever done. Being a small business owner in her hometown has been a meaningful experience, especially as it has given her the opportunity to reconnect and build relationships. Carrie's love for New Boston is strong; she appreciates the supportive community and the interconnectedness of the other businesses.

A video spotlight featuring Carrie's experience with REDC can be found on REDC's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/6pFDZ8oA694>.



Regional Overview

Regional Geography

The Regional Economic Development Center of Southern New Hampshire (REDC) CEDS region is comprised of the 37 municipalities of Rockingham County, plus the towns of Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Pelham, and the city of Nashua, all located in eastern Hillsborough County. There are two cities (Portsmouth and Nashua) and 40 towns. The total area of the region is approximately 860 square miles which includes a water area of roughly 40 square miles. The region is located in southeastern New Hampshire, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the east; Essex County, MA on the south; Hillsborough County, NH on the west; and Strafford County, NH on the north. The center of the region is approximately equidistant (60 miles) from Boston, MA and Portland, ME, and approximately 30 miles east of Manchester. According to the most recent American Community Survey (five-year data), the population of the CEDS region was 484,254 persons in 2023. The NH Office of Strategic Initiatives estimated the population at 493,514 for July 2023.

The western and southern sections of the region are part of the middle and lower Merrimack River Valley areas, respectively. The eastern portion is part of the Piscataqua River Basin, except for the coastal communities, which drain directly to the Atlantic Ocean. A portion of the city of Nashua is part of the Nashua River Basin.

The Piscataqua River, which forms the border between Maine and New Hampshire, drains into the Gulf of Maine through Portsmouth Harbor. Portsmouth Harbor is the only major port between Portland, ME, and Boston, MA. The 18-mile coastline is the smallest for any of the 23 coastal U.S. states.

For the purposes of developing the original 2000 CEDS document, REDC divided Rockingham County into three subregions of roughly equal size. These subregions, called the “Seacoast”, “Central”, and “West” subregions, were established based upon such factors as transportation infrastructure, institutional service areas, labor market areas, and other socio-economic associations. The “Seacoast” subregion was later renamed the “Eastern” subregion.

With the inclusion of five additional communities in 2010, these subregions were adjusted, and a map of the current subregions is on page 5. The new communities added only approximately 19% in land area, but increased the total population by over 50%. Since 2010, the three subregions have remained unchanged and remain useful in analyzing differing growth and development trends affecting the region, as well as in characterizing the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of different parts of the region.

Regional Planning Commissions

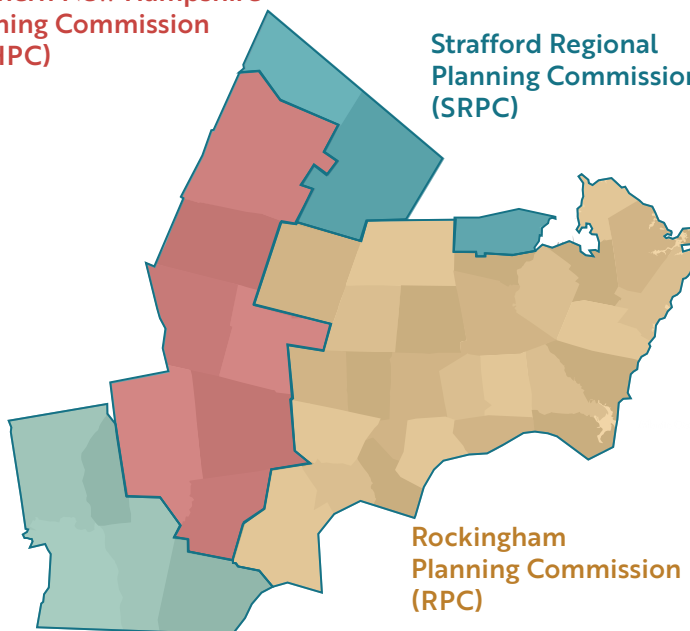
Created under NH RSA 36:46, the primary role of New Hampshire's nine Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) is to support local municipalities in their planning and community development responsibilities. Some of the RPCs include economic development in their scope of work. Each RPC is staffed by professionals and is supported by elected and/or appointed commissioners from the municipalities comprising the RPC. The RPCs work with municipalities, regional partners, and residents to identify shared priorities for growth, infrastructure, and long-term investment. RPCs support local municipalities in their planning and community development goals by:

- Assisting communities in preparing local planning documents;
- Providing technical assistance and general guidance to local land use boards;
- Helping to secure funding for transportation and other infrastructure projects;
- Working with municipalities to obtain and administer state and federal grant programs; and
- Reducing costs to municipalities through regional coordination and intermunicipal cooperation.

The REDC CEDS region contains portions of four RPCs: Nashua Regional Planning Commission, Rockingham

Southern New Hampshire
Planning Commission
(SNHPC)

Strafford Regional
Planning Commission
(SRPC)



Nashua Regional
Planning Commission
(NRPC)

Rockingham
Planning Commission
(RPC)

Planning Commission, Southern NH Planning Commission, and Strafford Regional Planning Commission. REDC works collaboratively with all four RPCs, and each is a strategic partner in the CEDS planning process.

Each RPC is required by New Hampshire statute to prepare regional master plans, compile housing needs assessments, and review developments of regional impact. A brief summary of each RPC's current regional planning efforts may be found later in this document (pages 44-48). For more information about the Regional Planning Commissions in NH, visit: www.nharpc.org.

Areas of Economic Distress

Overall, the REDC CEDS region is prosperous, with low unemployment and higher than average incomes; however, there are pockets of distress throughout the region. The U.S. Economic Development Administration

(EDA) considers an area as experiencing economic distress if it has an unemployment rate that is, at a minimum, one percentage point higher than the national average, or per capita income that is 80% or less than the national average. The EDA uses the National Economic Resilience Data Explorer (NERDE) tool to determine the distress level of a census tract or county (<https://nerde.anl.gov/opportunity/distress/tract>). For analysis in the current CEDS, a NERDE distress report was generated in March 2026.

Based on the current available data, there are parts of 12 CEDS communities that are experiencing economic distress. This is three more communities than a year ago. The information is summarized in the table below.

Distress Chart

Census Tract	Municipality	Unemployment Rate	Percent of National Unemployment	PCI	Percent of National PCI	Disaster in past 5 years
United States		5.2	n/a	\$44,673	n/a	n/a
Census Tract 1031	Atkinson	5.6	108%	\$70,052	157%	Yes
Census Tract 500	Candia	5.5	106%	\$49,676	111%	Yes
Census Tract 34	Derry	5.7	110%	\$47,447	106%	Yes
Census Tract 36.01	Derry	7	135%	\$47,287	106%	Yes
Census Tract 650.07	Hampton	5.9	113%	\$84,594	189%	Yes
Census Tract 650.08	Hampton	11.9	229%	\$51,568	115%	Yes
Census Tract 1041.01	Hamstead	6.1	117%	\$58,864	132%	Yes
Census Tract 123.01	Hudson	8	154%	\$65,807	147%	No
Census Tract 123.02	Hudson	6.6	127%	\$54,803	123%	No
Census Tract 38.01	Londonderry	5.4	104%	\$61,592	138%	Yes
Census Tract 38.02	Londonderry	10.2	196%	\$59,916	134%	Yes
Census Tract 39.02	Londonderry	7.2	138%	\$57,723	129%	Yes
Census Tract 104	Nashua	7.7	148%	\$59,431	133%	No
Census Tract 106	Nashua	7.9	152%	\$37,535	84%	No
Census Tract 107	Nashua	4.6	88%	\$29,238	65%	No
Census Tract 108.01	Nashua	7.7	148%	\$37,699	84%	No
Census Tract 113	Nashua	10.1	194%	\$57,177	128%	No
Census Tract 114.02	Nashua	7.4	142%	\$51,027	114%	No
Census Tract 710.01	Rye	5.3	102%	\$100,782	226%	Yes
Census Tract 1011.01	Salem	5.9	113%	\$53,582	120%	Yes
Census Tract 1062	Salem	6.8	131%	\$71,200	159%	Yes
Census Tract 630.01	Seabrook	7.7	148%	\$49,644	111%	Yes
Census Tract 630.03	Seabrook	7.2	138%	\$41,669	93%	Yes
Census Tract 1061.02	Windham	8.1	156%	\$79,134	177%	Yes



Derry, NH in 1887. Credit to www.maps.bpl.org via Wikimedia Commons.

Land Use and Natural Features

The historical landscape and land use characteristics of the region reflect the population boom following World War II. The land area of the region was primarily rural at the beginning of this growth period, with only a few communities having densely developed town and city centers and the sewer and water facilities to support them. As the region grew, many communities avoided building sewer and water infrastructure due to the costs associated with construction and management, and the desire to remain rural. The decision to not provide sewer and water treatment resulted in lower density development spread across the landscape, requiring onsite wells and septic systems. Residential development, with roads and traffic, grew rapidly, along with a separation of residential and commercial uses and the creation of large commercial development along major roadways.

The lack of sewer and water infrastructure remains an obstacle to the development of much needed housing across the region and increased economic development in the more rural communities.

The rural to urban transition continues in the region today. Residential development is distributed throughout communities, and commercial and industrial development is concentrated primarily in downtowns, urban centers, and along major transportation corridors. Many towns in the region retain a low population density, yet struggle to maintain a truly rural character in the face of lost agricultural and forest land, as well as low-density but widespread residential subdivisions. Approximately 66% of land in the REDC region remains as undeveloped land (forest, agriculture, wetland, water, and open land), however this undeveloped land is fragmented by roads and buildings. Local and regional efforts to conserve open space

and natural habitats through conservation continue, resulting in approximately 22% of land in the region permanently conserved from development.

The REDC CEDS region and sub-regions exhibit considerable variations in land use. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis by the Rockingham Planning Commission of 2010 and 2022 land use data highlights the following of the REDC CEDS region:

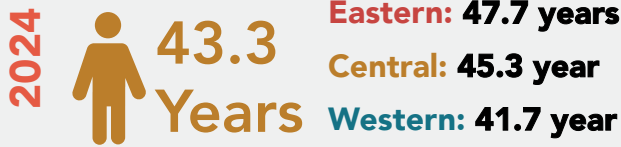
Eastern Subregion	Central Subregion	Western Subregion	Entire Region
32.2% Forested	59.1% Forested	56.8% Forested	41.0% Forested
31.2% Developed	20.0% Developed	20.4% Developed	34.0% Developed
23.2% Undeveloped or wetlands	12.9% Undeveloped or wetlands	17.5% Undeveloped or wetlands	16.6% Undeveloped or wetlands
7.3% Water	4.7% Water	3.0% Water	4.8% Water
5.5% Agricultural	3.5% Agricultural	2.4% Agricultural	3.6% Agricultural

Land use is a different than land cover. The methodology used to determine land use for this report exists somewhere between land use and land cover (that is, what is on the ground). For the purposes of this document, everything not developed, not forest, and not designated as agricultural use is classified as undeveloped. Many of these areas are wetlands, disturbed land that has yet to undergo construction, parks, and other land where it is hard to interpret the use.

The natural features of the REDC region contribute to the high quality of life reported by residents as well as the region’s ability to attract new business and industry. In 2025, the NH Business and Economic Affairs published the Workforce Toolbox for the Outdoor Lifestyle. The toolkit is designed for business owners and human resources professionals to incorporate the state’s natural features and outdoor recreation assets into workforce recruitment strategies. For more, visit <https://www.nheconomy.com/office-of-outdoor-recreation/what-we-do/workforce-development/workforcetoolkit>.

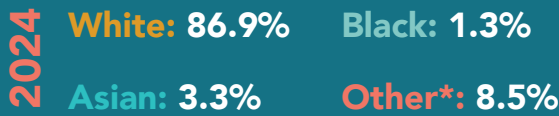
Demographics

Median Age: NH



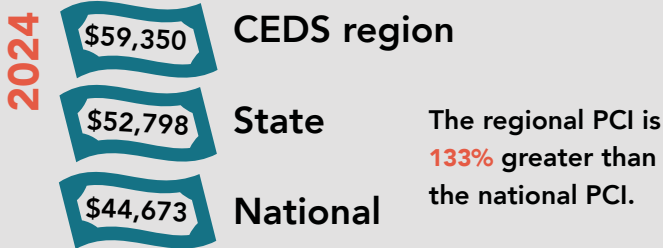
With 21.5% of the population age 65 or older, NH was tied with Vermont as the second oldest state, behind only Maine.

Race: REDC CEDS Region

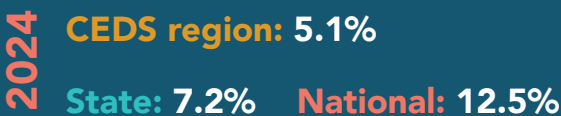


* Residents who identified as another race or more than one race.

Per Capita Income



Poverty Rate



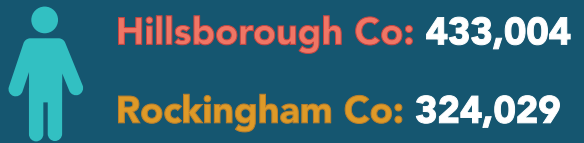
Population:

REDC CEDS Region



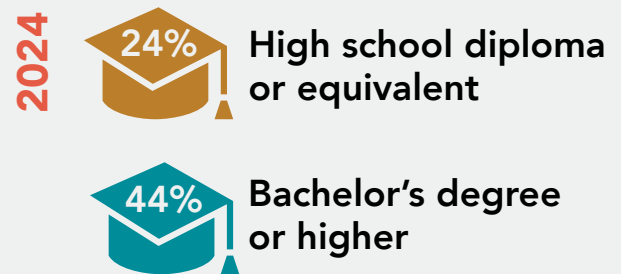
In 2024, the REDC CEDS Region made up 35% of the state's total population.

Regional Counties

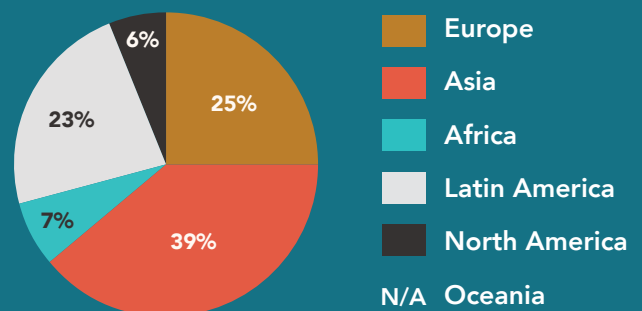


The population of both counties is equally split between male and female residents.

Education of Residents: REDC CEDS Region

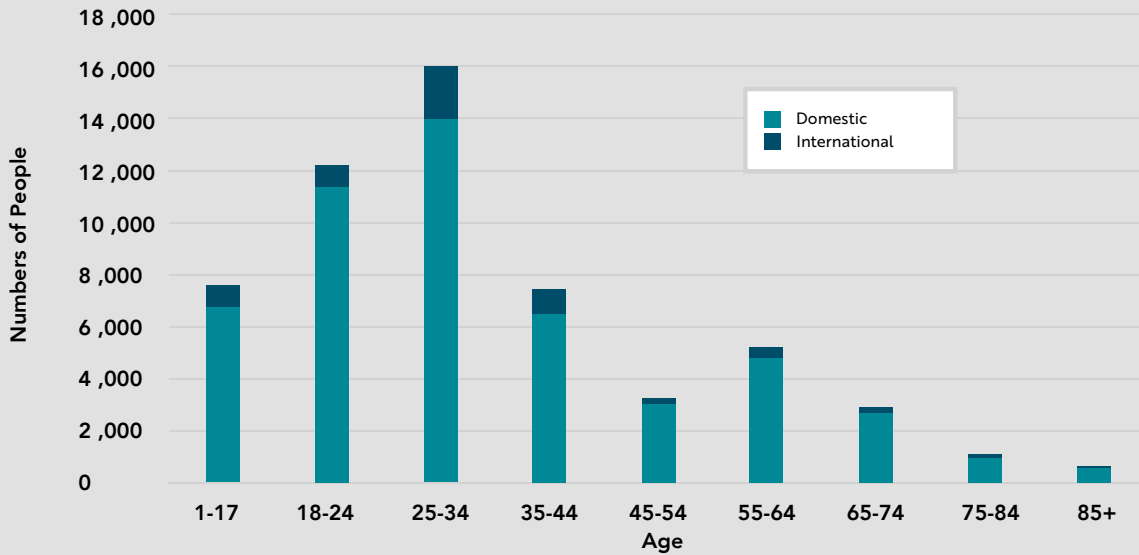


In 2024, there were just over 22,300 naturalized U.S. citizens living in the CEDS region. The majority immigrated from Asia.



New Hampshire In-Migration by Age

Estimates of Domestic and International Migration by Age Group, from 2019 to 2023*



Young people are moving to the state, but challenges with affordability, particularly housing costs, can hinder long-term population growth.

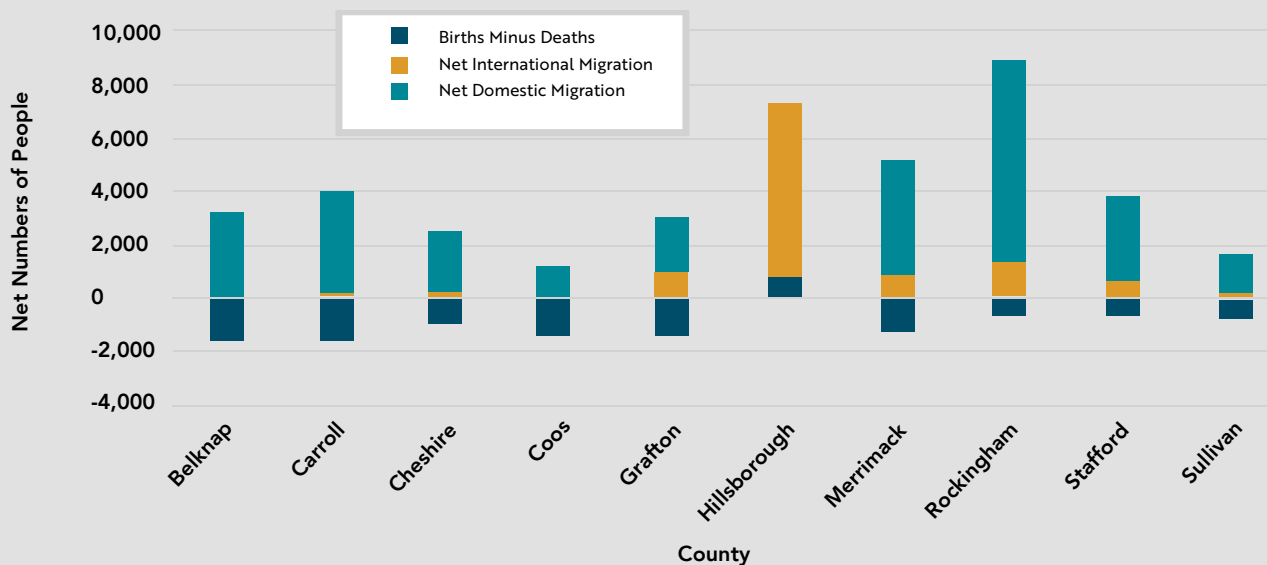
*Note: Those migrating from Puerto Rico and U.S. territories are included in domestic in-migration.



From 2020 to 2024, there were more deaths than births in NH, with only Hillsborough County reporting a net increase in population from births minus deaths. Almost 100% of in-migration to Hillsborough came from international net-migration. Rockingham County experienced the largest net in-migration for all NH counties.

New Hampshire Population Change By County

Births Minus Deaths, International, and Domestic Net-Migration, from April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2024



Employment and Workforce

In 2024, Hillsborough and Rockingham counties provided over **52%** of the state's total employment.

Top Industries: Employment

2024

Hillsborough Co:

- Healthcare and Social Assistance: **31,630 jobs**
- Manufacturing: **25,113 jobs**
- Retail: **25,110 jobs**

Rockingham Co:

- Retail: **24,298 jobs**
- Healthcare and Social Assistance: **18,820 jobs**
- Manufacturing: **16,214 jobs**

Top Industries: Average Weekly Wages

2024

Hillsborough Co:

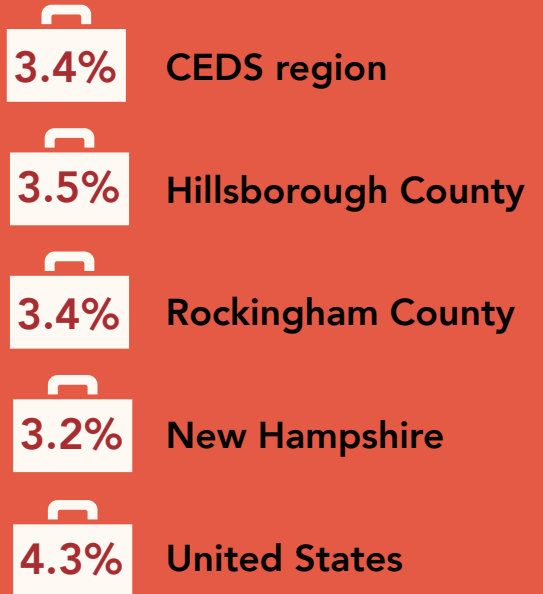
- Information: **\$2,860**
- Utilities: **\$2,775**
- Finance and Insurance: **\$2,681**

Rockingham Co:

- Management of Companies: **\$3,287**
- Utilities: **\$2,886**
- Finance and Insurance: **\$2,775**

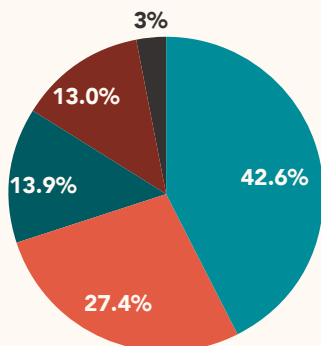
Annual Unemployment Rate

2025

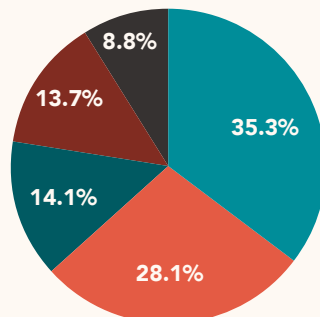


Annual Unemployment Rates are up 0.6-0.7% from 2024, and were at the highest rates in 10 years, excluding the spike caused by the COVID pandemic.

Reasons for Unemployment



2024



2025

- Permanent Job Losers
- New Entrants and Re-Entrants
- Job Leavers (Voluntary)
- On Temp Layoff
- Temp Job Ended

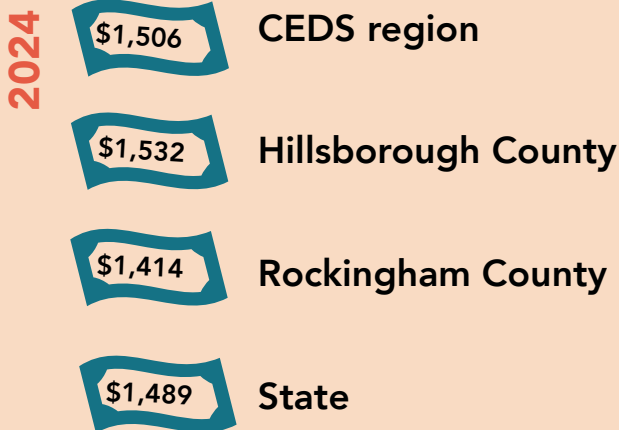
Labor Force

2025 While Hillsborough and Rockingham counties added over 2,000 people to its combined workforce, the number of unemployed workers increased by just under 3,000 individuals.

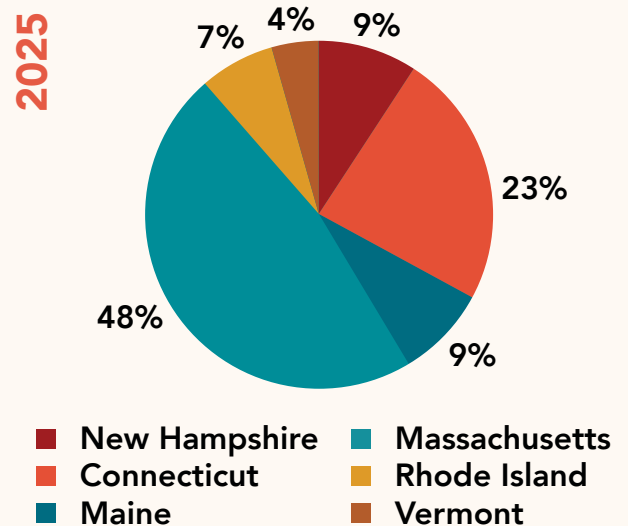
Summary of Employers and Employment, 2024

Area	Private Employers			Total Number of Employees			
	Private Goods-Producing	Private Service-Providing	Total Private	Private Goods-Producing	Private Service-Providing	Gov't	Total Private + Gov't
REDC CEDS Region	2,321	12,672	15,049	41,712	175,630	22,288	239,306
Hillsborough County	1,838	9,432	11,270	34,529	145,419	21,433	201,381
Rockingham County	1,598	8,968	10,566	25,031	117,364	14,667	157,063
New Hampshire	7,048	48,473	55,521	103,455	501,098	83,578	688,130

Average Weekly Wage



New England Labor Force by State



Housing

Housing availability and attainability remain among the most significant constraints to economic growth across the Greater Seacoast region. Like much of the country, the region has experienced sustained price escalation, limited inventory, and rising cost burdens for both renters and homeowners. These pressures are particularly acute locally, where demand continues to outpace supply, placing strain on households, employers, and communities alike.

Since 2020, housing costs have risen sharply due to long-term underproduction, elevated construction costs, and sustained demand. While price growth has moderated in some areas, attainability remains constrained by high home values, interest rates, and property taxes. Rental markets are similarly tight, with vacancy rates well below a healthy five percent, and rents continuing to outpace wage growth, further limiting access to homes that the regional workforce can afford.

These conditions have led to widespread housing cost burden. Nearly half of renters in Rockingham County are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Among homeowners, roughly 30% face similar challenges. In practical terms, about half of renters and one-third of homeowners in the Seacoast are struggling to afford their housing costs.



Implications of High Housing Costs

Recent [reports](#) from New Hampshire Housing underscores the scale of the challenge. According to [Who Can Afford Housing in New Hampshire?](#) (2025):

- A household must earn approximately \$182,000 annually to afford the median-priced single-family home, yet only about 15% of households reach that income level.
- Since 1998, inflation-adjusted home prices have increased by 129%, compared to just a 19% increase in household incomes.
- With a median home price of \$565,000, most renters are priced out of homeownership, including many at lower price points.

While these figures reflect individual challenges, their broader economic implications are substantial. Widespread housing cost burden constrains workforce growth, limits business expansion, and undermines long-term economic resilience.

Employers across sectors report increasing difficulty attracting and retaining workers due to a lack of housing that is affordable to the regional workforce. Essential workers, including those in healthcare, education, hospitality, and public service, are increasingly priced out of the communities they serve, often resulting in longer commutes that increase financial strain, congestion, and environmental impacts.

Local and Regional Dynamics

Housing pressures are especially pronounced in areas with strong economic growth, close proximity to employment centers, and high quality-of-life amenities. While these factors drive demand, they also intensify competition for limited housing, particularly for entry-level and “missing middle” options.

Communities are experiencing rising home values that outpace incomes, limited availability of entry-level and missing middle housing, increasing rents, low vacancy rates, and displacement pressures for lower- and moderate-income households. At the same time, development has not kept pace with demand due to regulatory constraints, infrastructure limitations, and financing challenges, creating a structural imbalance that continues to restrict the production of workforce housing.

Emerging Strategies and Opportunities

Communities across the region are advancing strategies to increase housing

supply and expand access to workforce housing, reflecting a growing recognition that housing is critical to economic competitiveness.

Employers and business leaders are playing an increasingly important role. At the [2025 Greater Seacoast Housing Summit](#), hosted by the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast in partnership with the Seacoast Chamber Alliance, regional employers highlighted how housing constraints are directly affecting recruitment and retention. In response, several have launched employer-assisted housing strategies tailored to their workforce needs, including direct investment in housing development, master leasing of units, down payment and rental assistance programs, and partnerships with developers and nonprofit organizations to bring new units online. These efforts reflect a growing understanding that housing is essential infrastructure for business operations, with employers contributing resources, urgency, and innovation to complement public and nonprofit efforts.

Additional key approaches include zoning and land use reform to allow a broader range of housing types; streamlining development processes; public-private partnerships; targeted financial incentives; and community engagement to build support for housing solutions. These strategies are most effective when implemented through coordinated, regional approaches that align housing with economic development priorities.

Looking Ahead

Workforce housing will remain a central factor shaping the region's economic trajectory. Without meaningful progress, housing constraints will continue to limit growth, workforce stability, and economic opportunity.

At the same time, increasing alignment among public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders presents a significant opportunity. By advancing policies and investments that support diverse, attainable housing options, the region can strengthen its economic foundation, support its workforce, and enhance overall quality of life.

A comprehensive, data-driven approach grounded in collaboration and long-term planning will be essential to ensuring that housing supports, rather than constrains, the region's future.

Housing in Newmarket, NH.



MOTEL WILLEY
c. 1822

One of the oldest buildings in Newmarket, NH, the Willey House is a fine example of Federal-style architecture. The Willey House is a fine example of Federal-style architecture. The Willey House is a fine example of Federal-style architecture. The Willey House is a fine example of Federal-style architecture.

Housing

Housing Units: REDC region

2024



206,078 units



1,979 units added



606 units unoccupied

Despite the addition of new units in the housing stock, the region continues to have a shortfall of available units.

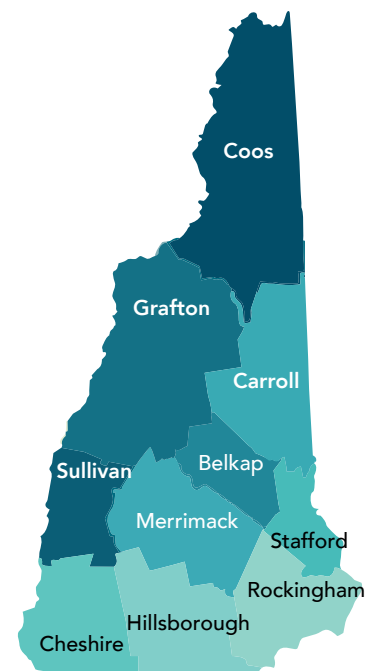
Summary of Housing Permits and Needed Units

	2020-2023 Housing Units Permitted*	2020-2024 Year-Round Housing Units Needed
Nashua Regional Planning Commission	3,249	5,143
Rockingham Planning Commission	3,236	5,352
Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission	3,200	7,212
Strafford Regional Planning Commission	2,197	3,289
New Hampshire	7,055	47,737

*Includes seasonal units

Change in Median Single Family House Sale Price

County	2019 Price	2025 Price	Percent Change
Belknap	\$269,000	\$519,000	92.9%
Carroll	\$265,000	\$500,500	88.9%
Cheshire	\$220,000	\$395,000	79.5%
Coos	\$116,100	\$252,000	117.1%
Grafton	\$227,125	\$460,000	102.5%
Hillsborough	\$318,000	\$555,000	74.5%
Merrimack	\$270,000	\$505,000	87.0%
Rockingham	\$386,000	\$670,000	73.6%
Stafford	\$282,000	\$515,000	82.6%
Sullivan	\$187,000	\$385,000	105.9%
Statewide	\$300,000	\$535,000	78.3%



2024 Rental Vacancy Rate



Hillsborough County: 3.5%

Rockingham County: 3.9%

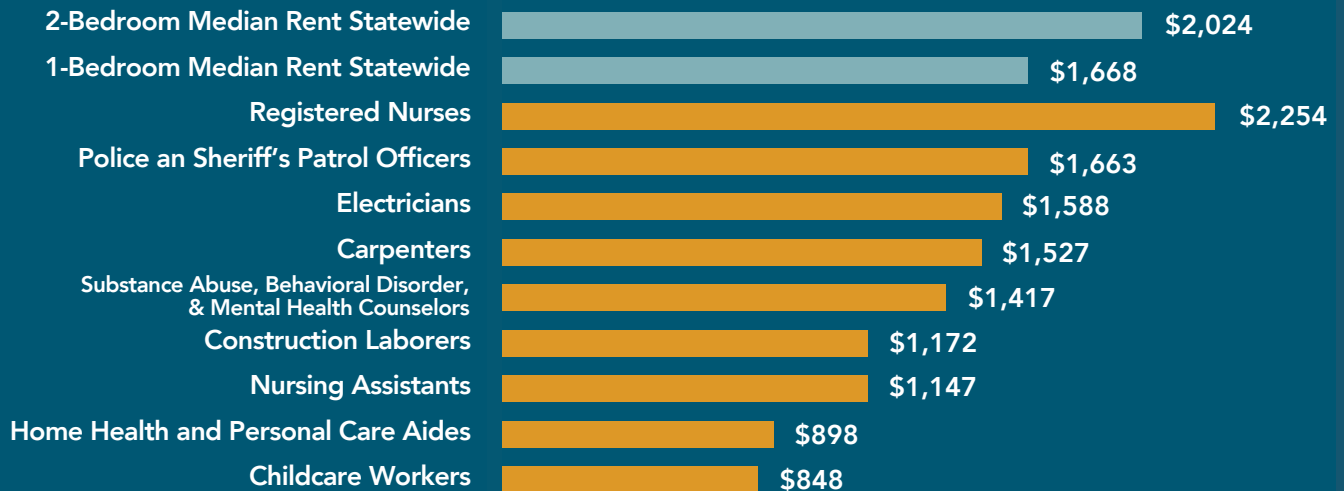
State of NH: 4.0%

Average Monthly Rental Prices

	2023	2024
REDC CEDS Region	\$1,774	\$1,966
Hillsborough County	\$1,847	\$1,877
Rockingham County	\$1,911	\$1,917
State of NH Average	\$1,644	\$1,691

2024 High-Demand Occupations and Rental Affordability

Rent and wages are displayed as median monthly values.



Across the state, an increasing share of essential workers cannot afford the median rent, even while working full-time. (NH HFA, October 2025)

Childcare

The NH Fiscal Policy Institute's (NHFPI) February 2025 report, "The Economic Impact of the Granite State's Child Care Shortage", found the limited availability of licensed childcare is partly related to a shortage of childcare professionals across the state. Low wages for these workers may contribute to a high staff turnover. State records show that there has been an 8.9% decrease in the number of licensed childcare providers between 2020 and 2025. In 2024, the median annual salary for a childcare worker was \$34,570 (\$16.62/hour). This may be too low to meet basic living expenses in New Hampshire. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Living Wage Calculator, a single NH adult without children would need to earn \$51,552 per year (before taxes) to support themselves. A single adult with one child would need to earn \$93,451, while two working adults with one child would need to earn \$104,373. These estimates do not include money set aside for emergency savings, retirement, or paying off student loan debt.

According to the NHFPI, between 2022 and 2024, tuition for an infant and four-year-old in center-based care in New Hampshire averaged nearly \$30,000 annually. For families with children under 18 years old between 2019 and 2023, this amounted to approximately 19.6% of a median-earning married couple's income (\$152,054), 40.6% of a median earning single father's income

(\$73,233), and 60% of a median earning single mother's income (\$49,587). Last year, Governor Kelly Ayotte raised the maximum income eligibility threshold for the Child Care Scholarship Program, a state-federal program that supplements a family's childcare tuition based on their household income, which has helped some childcare providers avoid increasing tuition costs for families.

NHFPI's February 2025 report found an average of approximately 17,300 NH residents reported being out of the labor force each month because they cared for children who were not in school or childcare. This figure does not include workers who worked reduced hours due to limited or no childcare. NHFPI estimates there was a shortage of about 9,100 childcare slots in the state in 2023. According to the Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center's 2024 Roadmap report (<https://pn3policy.org/pn-3-state-policy-roadmap-2024/>), NH ranks 47th out of the 50 states and District of Columbia on policies and strategies that benefit families with young children between the prenatal state and age three.

The childcare shortage negatively impacts finances for families, businesses, and the state. Using data from the Bipartisan Policy Center's (BPC) 2021 report, The Economic Impact of America's Child Care Gap (<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/the-economic-impact-of-americas-child-care-gap/>),

and data from New Hampshire, NHFPI estimates New Hampshire families may have lost approximately \$114 million to \$178 million in earnings in 2023 due to inadequate childcare availability. This lost income impacts family budgets and the local economy. In addition, New Hampshire businesses suffer from employee productivity losses and the payout of benefits such as paid time off, paid family leave, and medical insurance. The estimated range for these losses is between \$35 million to \$55 million. Estimates of lost local and state tax revenue because of the childcare shortage range from \$9 million to \$14 million for 2023. The sources for these lost revenues include taxes on fuel, rooms and meals, and real estate transactions.

Policy considerations cited by NHFPI to increase the availability of childcare include:

- Reducing administrative barriers to New Hampshire’s childcare scholarship program
- Allocating additional general funds for childcare providers
- Developing a true cost of high-quality early care and educational model
- Increasing focus on recruitment and retention of early care and education workforce
- Easing zoning restrictions and language barriers for potential family childcare providers

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) worked with a team of students from the New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service to conduct an in-depth assessment of the SRPC region’s childcare landscape. The 2025 report, “Expanding Childcare Access in Strafford County, New Hampshire”, includes policy recommendations at the federal, state, and local levels. Recommendations include:

- Leveraging federal funding
- State budget allocations for long-term childcare funding
- Expanding state subsidy programs and addressing affordability
- Granite Steps for Quality – direct financial support and provider incentives
- Zoning and regulatory reforms to expand childcare access
- Public-private partnerships and employer engagement
- Workforce development – apprenticeships and licensing support
- Start-up funding for new childcare providers

Access to affordable childcare is crucial for both families and the region’s economy. Addressing this issue requires comprehensive policies designed to increase the availability, affordability, and quality of childcare.

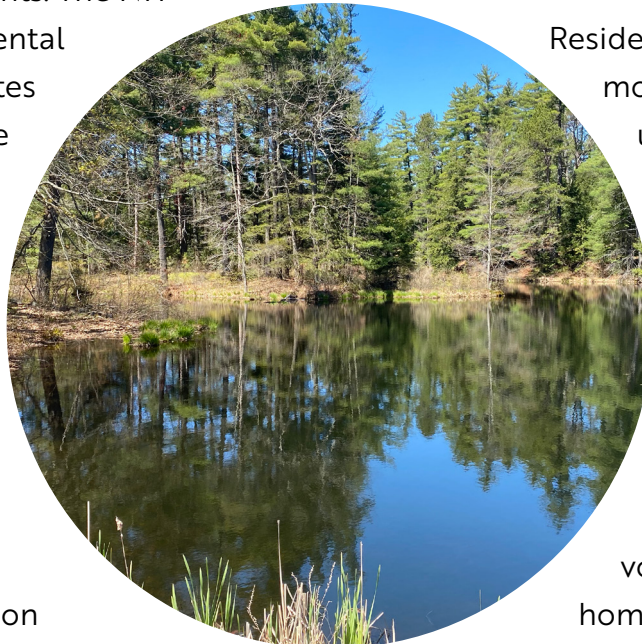
Infrastructure and Utilities

Sewer and Water

There are 10 municipal sewer systems operating wastewater treatment facilities in the REDC region, primarily servicing the more suburbanized and urbanized communities. Many of these facilities have received substantial upgrades in recent years to comply with EPA mandates in order to reduce the amount of nitrogen and other pollutants being discharged from wastewater treatment plants. The NH Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) estimates 60% of homes in the state are served by individual septic systems.

There are 14 large water systems operating in the REDC region, the majority owned and operated by municipalities. All but two of these systems rely on groundwater withdrawals to meet demand. Systems operated by the towns of Exeter and Salem rely on surface water and groundwater withdrawals. Operating public water systems has become increasingly complex. Contamination from PFAS, extreme rain events, and cyanobacteria are just a few of the challenges facing water systems. The DES Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau works with water system operators, both public and private, to implement local groundwater protection

programs, promote water conservation, and ensure accurate water use and testing. Over three-quarters of the communities in the REDC region have local groundwater protection regulations aimed at protecting local drinking water sources. NH DES estimates over 75% of the population in the region is served by community water systems, with the remaining served by private wells.



Chester, NH.

Residential use accounts for more than 70% of all water use in the region, and the type of housing development significantly affects the amount of water used. Homes in less urbanized areas with extensive lawns consume a much greater volume of water than homes in areas with a higher population density. It continues to be important for communities and water suppliers to make land use and other policy decisions that protect ground and surface water resources and maximize the efficient use of water.

Stormwater

Municipalities in the region continue to make significant investment in stormwater infrastructure and maintenance, regulatory changes to control runoff, and outreach

efforts to effectively manage stormwater. Water pollution from stormwater runoff accounts for over 90% of the pollution entering surface waters in the region and across the state, and an increase in extreme precipitation events has put additional pressure on stormwater infrastructure. Much of the stormwater comes from rain and snowmelt running off roads, parking lots, roofs, and lawns. Most municipalities are required by US EPA to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program to identify and remove sanitary and other wastes from stormwater systems, monitor the water quality of stormwater, and encourage low impact development and the installation of green infrastructure, such as rain gardens. Several communities in the region participate in regional stormwater coalitions to share ideas on meeting federal permit requirements.

Energy

Four electric utilities serve the REDC region: Eversource, Unitil, New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, and Granite State Electric (Liberty). NextEra Energy Resources operates a nuclear power facility in Seabrook, known as Seabrook Station. With its 1,244-megawatt electrical output, Seabrook Station provides 56% of New Hampshire's electricity net generation. In 2024, natural gas proved about 26% of the state's total electricity generation and 17% of came from renewable resources, including small-scale solar installations. As of October 2025, the total capacity of

New Hampshire's solar installations was 306 megawatts. Most of the state's renewable generation comes from hydroelectric power, biomass, and wind.

New Hampshire does not produce or refine crude oil and has no crude oil reserves. Most of the petroleum products are from U.S. Mid-Atlantic and Gulf Coast refineries or from other countries, primarily Canada. Approximately 60% of New Hampshire households use petroleum products as their primary heating fuel, the second-largest share in the country. Wood is used as a primary heating source for approximately 5% of NH households, four times the national average.

The distribution of natural gas in the region is provided by three utilities regulated by the NH Public Utilities Commission: Unitil (Northern Utilities), Keyspan (Liberty Utilities), and EnergyNorth (Liberty Utilities). New Hampshire does not have any natural gas reserves or production. Gas supply for residential, commercial, and industrial customers is provided by two gas transmission pipelines running from Dracut, MA into Salem, NH and north through Plaistow, Newton, East Kingston, Exeter, Stratham, Greenland, Portsmouth and Newington. One gas line is owned by Unitil and is linked to the major nationwide natural gas distribution system. Another line runs parallel to this line from Plaistow to Exeter. An interstate high-pressure gas transmission pipeline owned jointly by Portland Natural Gas Transmission System and Maritimes Northeast Pipeline

runs through Rockingham County, providing access to gas production facilities in Nova Scotia and western Canada. The electric power sector is the largest natural gas consumer in New Hampshire, accounting for more than half of the natural gas used in the state.

In October 2025, New Hampshire had almost 290 public electric vehicle charging locations. Charging locations are located along the state's major interstate highways and in urban areas.



Broadband

In November 2025, the state secured \$18.6 million in federal funding to advance its broadband expansion program. Additionally, New Hampshire was rated the top state in the nation for internet connectivity, according to Reviews.org's U.S. broadband assessment (October 2025).

The state's NH Broadband Mapping Initiative (<https://broadbandnh.sr.unh.edu/portal/apps/experiencebuilder/experience/?id=31b1aeb597249239e588ae26caa759b>) indicates that the REDC region has adequate broadband infrastructure, with residents having access to speeds up to one Gbps, making it possible to work remotely, stream, and engage in other high-bandwidth activities. Broadband access has become an indispensable component of the economy, enhancing productivity, facilitating education, fostering innovation, supporting government and public services, and driving regional economic development. Larger cities such as Nashua and Portsmouth have access to more than one broadband provider, typically Xfinity or Fidium Fiber. Small communities may not have access to more than one provider. This lack of competition is seen as preventing consumer choice and creating high costs for service.

Transportation

The REDC region is served by a well-developed roadway network, a geographically limited public transportation system, and a large variety of domestic and international freight transportation carriers. All modes of transport and goods movement are available within or near to the region, including the Port of New Hampshire, Pan Am Railways main line, and Portsmouth International Airport at Pease.

Transportation planning in the region is the responsibility of the regional planning commissions in coordination with state, regional, and local governments. This activity is carried out through the federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) process, which identifies and prioritizes transportation improvements. In cooperation with NH DOT, the MPO works to plan, prioritize, and select transportation projects for federal funding appropriated through the



Sarah Mildred Long Bridge, Portsmouth, NH.

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

Highways – An extensive roadway network serves the region. Major north-south highways include Interstates 93 and 95, NH Routes 16, 28, 102, 125, and U.S. Route 1. Interstate 95 serves as the major transportation corridor between southern and northern coastal New England and the Maritime Provinces of Canada. Its connection to NH Route 16 in Portsmouth allows it to serve as a vital link for travel to the Lakes Region, White Mountain Region, and northern New Hampshire. Interstate 93 runs from the Massachusetts state line, through the cities of Manchester and Concord and, ultimately, to Interstate 91 in Vermont. NH Route 125 serves an increasing volume of local in interstate traffic from the Massachusetts line northerly through the region and beyond. All three highways link with Interstate 495 in Massachusetts, providing access to the Boston metropolitan area. The region’s east-west highway network is not as well

developed, with access provided primarily by NH Route 101 across the center of the region, NH Route 111 in the south and U.S. Route 4 in the north.

Commuter Rail – Downeaster - Amtrak operates the only commuter rail service operating in the CEDS region, serving 12 communities in three states. The regional service, known as the Amtrak Downeaster, provides daily service between Brunswick, ME and Boston, MA, with 10 intermediate stops, including stops in New Hampshire in Dover, Durham, and Exeter. The Downeaster makes five roundtrips daily between Portland and Boston, with three of those trips extending to Freeport and Brunswick, ME.

Airports – The REDC region is served by two regional airports: Manchester-Boston Regional Airport in Manchester and Portsmouth International Airport at Pease. Manchester-Boston Regional Airport provides passenger, cargo, and general aviation air services. The airport served 1.2 million passengers in 2024. Portsmouth

International Airport at Pease is a joint civil- and military-use airport located in Portsmouth on the former Pease Air Force Base. The airport is owned by the Pease Development Authority. In 2024, the airport handled 75,886 aircraft operations, including scheduled commercial flights and military operations. Two commercial airlines operate out of Pease, Allegiant Air and Breeze Airways. The airport also houses the 157th Air Refueling Wing of the New Hampshire Air National Guard.

Freight – Intermodal freight such as truck, rail, air, and ocean shipping play an important role in the region’s continued economic development. Many businesses rely on freight services to meet the needs of their customers and to receive raw materials for use in production. The movement of goods in the region is accomplished by a variety of freight options – air, rail, truck, pipeline, ships, and multiple modes, including mail. The region is served by direct airfreight services



at Portsmouth International Airport, Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, and Boston Logan Airport.

The REDC region is served by the main line of Pan Am Railways, a major U.S. regional railroad, historically known as the Boston and Maine Railroad. The mainline is categorized as a Class 4 track, which allows passenger speeds up to 80 mph and freight rail. Branch line freight services are currently available between the main line and Portsmouth and over the Sarah Long Bridge into Maine on a Class 1 track. Intermodal (rail-truck) facilities operated both by Pan Am and Conrail in the Boston area and by the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railway in Auburn, ME, are within easy reach of the region. Through these connections, shippers have access by rail to points throughout North America and using Rail Land Bridge services throughout the world.

Marine – Portsmouth is home to the Port Authority of New Hampshire, a division of the Pease Development Authority, a deep-water port with wharves, piers, warehouse space, and rail access. The port handles approximately 4 million tons of cargo each year. The Division of Ports and Harbors Market Street Marine Terminal, located on the Piscataqua River, is the only public access, general cargo terminal on the river. The port is a designated Foreign Trade Zone, a special designation awarded by the U.S. Dept. of Commerce enabling incentives for business to locate within the zone, including the reduction, deferment, or elimination of custom duties on imports.



Sneaky Miles playing at 3S Artspace in Portsmouth, NH.

Culture and Outdoor Recreation

Culture, the arts, and outdoor recreation are thriving contributors to the regional and state economy. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts Agencies estimates that the arts and culture sector employed nearly 23,000 people and contributed \$3.5 billion to the state's economy in 2023, representing over 3% of the state's gross state product and employment. That said, the arts and culture sector value added has only grown 4.6% between 2022 and 2023 in NH, compared with an increase of 7.6% for the nation.

In its most recent budget cycle, NH state lawmakers all but defunded the NH State Council on the Arts, which provides grants to a wide range of arts organizations, cutting its annual funding from around \$1.4 million to \$150,000. Portsmouth's Arts & Cultural Commission "Artist Live/Work Report," October 2025, acknowledges the stress on limited funding for the arts and recommends a few potential funding sources including:






- Federal & State Tax Credits
- Public Grants & Loans
- Philanthropic Support
- Earned & Operating Revenue

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that New Hampshire's outdoor recreation sector accounts for greater than 33,000 jobs and contributed \$4.2 billion to the NH economy in 2024. That same year witnessed the largest increase in NH's outdoor recreation gross domestic product at 3%, compared to 2023, adding 1,300 jobs across the state.



The REDC region boasts a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities, including several state parks (nhstateparks.org) providing oceanfront beaches, forested trails, and freshwater lakes. Municipally operated parks and private campgrounds are also scattered throughout the region. There are also several land conservation organizations stewarding conservation land that allows public recreation. The New Hampshire Land Trust Coalition (nhlhc.org) provides information on land trusts operating in the region.

Arts and Culture Resources


Exeter

-  Seacoast Art Association seacoartist.org
-  Lamont Gallery at Phillips Exeter Academy exeter.edu/lamont-gallery
-  Art Up Front Street Studios & Gallery - artupfrontstreet.com
-  The Word Barn thewordbarn.com
-  American Independence Center aichn.org



Epping

-  Epping Community Theater eppingtheater.org
-  Creative Community Space creativecommunityspace.com






Candia

-  Fitts Museum fittsmuseum.org


Londonderry

-  Aviation Museum of NH nhahs.org
-  Ovation Theatre Company ovationtc.com



Derry

-  Derry Opera House derryoperahouse.org
-  Tupelo Music Hall tupelomusichall.com
-  Derry Museum of History derrymuseumofhistory.org
-  Robert Frost State Historic Site robertfrostfarm.org
-  Stockbridge Theater pinkertonacademy.org/stockbridge-theatre


Greenland

-  Great Bay Discovery Center greatbay.org


Newmarket

-  The Stone Church stonechurchrocks.com
-  Rockingham Ballroom rockinballroom.club




Portsmouth

-  New Hampshire Art Association nhartassociation.org
-  Black Heritage Trail of NH blackheritagetrailnh.org
-  Strawberry Banke Museum strawberrybanke.org
-  New Hampshire Theatre Project nhtheatreproject.org
-  Button Factory Artist Studios buttonfactorystudios.com
-  Jimmy's Jazz & Blues Club jimmysoncongress.com
-  Port City Makerspace portcitymakerspace.com
-  Portsmouth Music and Arts Center pmaonline.org
-  The Music Hall themusichall.org
-  Seacoast Repertory Theater seacoastrep.org
-  3SArtspace 3sarts.org
-  USS Albacore Museum ussalbacore.org


Rye

-  Seacoast Science Center seacoastsciencecenter.org


Hampton

-  Tuck Museum hamptonhistorical.society.org
-  Hampton Beach Casino Ballroom casinoballroom.com
-  Lane House Arts Center lanehousearts.com









Windham

-  Windham Actors Guild windhamactorsguild.com

Salem

-  Salem Old Town Hall Museum windhamactorsguild.com

Nashua

-  Nashua Center for the Arts nashuacenterforthearts.com
-  Keefe Center For The Arts <https://actorsingers.org/keefe-center-for-the-arts/>
-  Nashua Theatre Guild nashuatheatreguild.org
-  Nashua Artists Association nashuaarts.org
-  Positive Street Art positivestreetart.org
-  Picker Artists pickerartists.com
-  Peacock Players peacockplayers.org
-  Symphony New Hampshire symphonynh.org

 Gallery/Art Associations  Art Studios/Maker Space  Performing Arts  Museum  Music

Outdoor Recreation

Check with local municipalities for smaller parks, fields, and play areas.

Nottingham
Pawtuckaway State Park
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/pawtuckaway-state-park>

Northwood
Northwood Meadows State Park
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/northwood-meadows-state-park>

Auburn
NH Audubon Massabesic Center
<https://nhaudubon.org/center-and-events/massabesic-center-auburn/>

Derry
Derry Rail Trail
www.derryrailtrail.org

Londonderry
Kendall Pond Conservation Area
<https://londonderrytrails.org/kendall-pond-conservation-area/>

Litchfield
Litchfield State Forest
https://stateparks.com/litchfield_state_forest_in_new_hampshire.html

Regional
Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/recreational-rail-trails/rockingham-recreational-rail-trail,-portsmouth-bra>

Stratham
Stratham Hill Park
https://www.strathamnh.gov/departments/parks_recreation/stratham_hill_park/index.php
Great Bay Discovery Center
www.greatbay.org

Newington
Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/great-bay>

Regional
NH Seacoast Greenway
www.nhseacoastgreenway.org

New Castle
Great Island Common
<https://www.newcastlenh.org/great-island-common>

Portsmouth
Urban Forestry Center
<https://www.nhdfldncr.nh.gov/urban-community-forestry/urban-forestry-center>

Rye
Isles of Shoals
<https://www.ishra.org/about-isles>
Rye Harbor State Park
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/rye-harbor-state-park>
Wallis Sands State Park
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/wallis-sands-state-park/>
Odiorne Point State Park and Seacoast Science Center
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/odiorne-point-state-park>

Seabrook
Seabrook Beach
<https://seabrooknh.info/beach-information/>

Kingston
Kingston State Park
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/kingston-state-park/>

Windham
Windham Rail Trail
www.windhamrailtrail.org

Nashua
Mine Falls Park
<https://www.nashuanh.gov/491/Mine-Falls-Park>

Hampton
Hampton Beach State Park
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/hampton-beach-state-park>
North Beach
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/north-beach>

North Hampton
North Hampton State Park
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/north-hampton-state-park>

State of the Economy

By Scott Lemos, PhD, Lecturer, Business and Economics, University of New Hampshire

New Hampshire Overview

2025: Slower Growth and Rising External Risks in New Hampshire

In 2025, the New Hampshire economy remained relatively stable, but the pace of growth slowed and the outlook became more uncertain. Employment levels remained above their pre-pandemic benchmarks, and the state continued to benefit from a comparatively low unemployment rate and ongoing strength in sectors such as health care and business services. At the same time, job growth became less broad-based, with weakness emerging in several consumer-facing and goods-producing industries. Recent conditions suggest that New Hampshire has moved beyond the rapid rebound phase of the post-pandemic period and into a slower-growth environment shaped more by structural constraints than recovery momentum. That shift became clearer in 2025, when the state recorded its first year of net job losses since 2020, shedding approximately 6,100 jobs (-0.9%) over the year, with most of the decline concentrated in the private sector.

Labor market conditions also became less favorable over the course of the year. While unemployment in New Hampshire and the REDC region remained below both national and regional averages, rates edged upward through 2024 and 2025, suggesting that labor market conditions were no longer as

tight as they had been during the strongest years of recovery. At the same time, the REDC region continued to post modest employment growth, adding roughly 1,000 jobs (0.2%) in 2025, indicating slightly greater resilience in the regional economy than statewide trends alone would suggest. Even so, the underlying constraints remain familiar: labor force shortages, an aging population, and high housing costs continue to limit the ability of employers to expand, and limit the ability of the state to attract and retain younger workers.

The challenges facing the state are increasingly tied to external pressures as well. Renewed trade uncertainty, higher energy costs, and instability in global supply chains have added new risks for businesses and households. These pressures are especially important in a state with a strong manufacturing base, particularly in aerospace, advanced materials, electronics, and precision components. Manufacturing remains a significant source of relatively high-wage employment in New Hampshire, but it also leaves the state exposed to tariff-related cost increases and weaker global demand. Most recently, the conflict involving Iran contributed to a sharp increase in global oil prices, raising the risk of higher fuel and heating costs in a state that remains heavily dependent on heating oil. While New Hampshire's economic fundamentals remain solid, the outlook in 2026 is shaped increasingly by the interaction of those

strengths with slower job growth, tighter labor supply, and a more volatile national and international environment.

NH Economy in 2025: Growth Continues, but the Pace Has Slowed

Figure 1 shows how the REDC region, New Hampshire, New England, and the national economy performed over the post-pandemic recovery period. All four geographies experienced a sharp employment decline in early 2020, followed by a multi-year recovery. Over the full 2020–2025 period, the U.S. economy remained the strongest performer, followed by New Hampshire. New England lagged

both the nation and New Hampshire, while the REDC region was the weakest of the four overall, remaining near or just below its 2019 employment level through much of 2025.

Even so, in 2025 while NH posted net job losses, the REDC region continued to grow modestly. This marks a break from the earlier recovery phase and points to a more uneven economic environment across the state. Rather than the REDC region continuing to trail New Hampshire, the most recent data suggest that statewide weakness became more pronounced in 2025, while the regional economy showed modest, but still positive, growth.

Figure 1: Change in Total Employment (Index; 2019 = 100) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

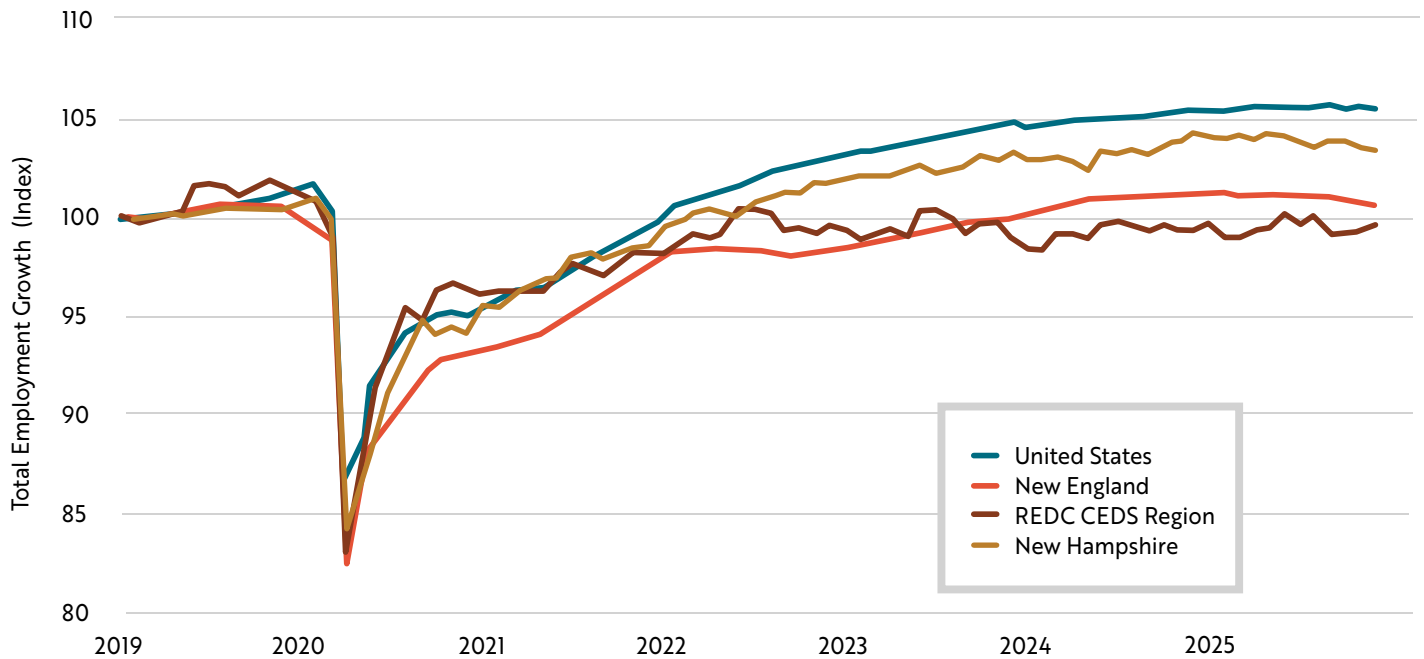
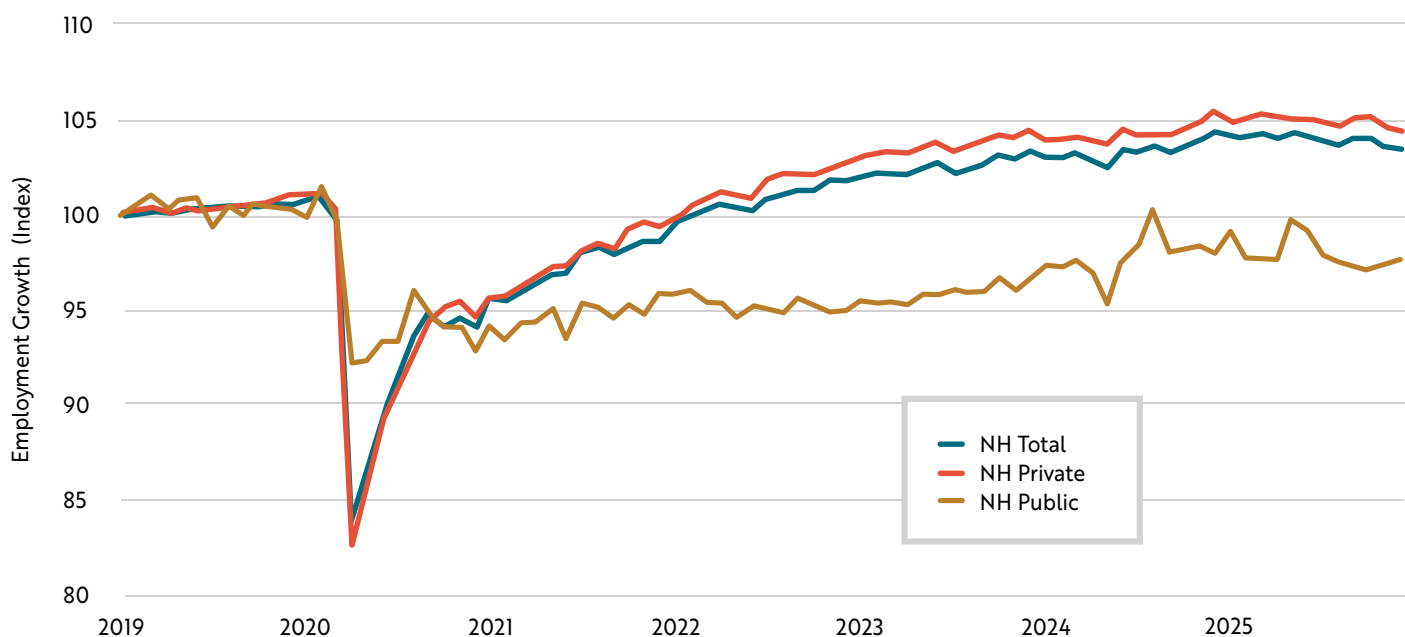


Figure 2 shows total, private, and public employment growth in New Hampshire over the post-pandemic period. All three series fell sharply in early 2020, but their paths since then have differed substantially. From 2021 through 2024, employment growth was driven primarily by the private sector, which rebounded more strongly than public employment and accounted for most of the state’s job gains during the recovery years. That pattern changed in 2025, when

Figure 2: Change in NH Employment: Total, Private, and Public (Index; 2019 = 100)

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



New Hampshire experienced an overall employment decline. Much of that loss was concentrated in the private sector, which shed approximately 5,700 jobs (-0.9%) over the year. Public sector employment, meanwhile, remained well below pre-pandemic levels throughout the period and was still below its 2019 benchmark by late 2025.

This divergence highlights an important feature of New Hampshire’s labor market since the pandemic: the recovery period from 2021 to 2024 was driven overwhelmingly by private employers, while public employment recovered slowly and unevenly. The private sector rebound

reflected gains in industries such as health care, professional services, and other service-producing sectors. By contrast, the flatter path in public employment suggests continued hiring constraints in state and local government, likely reflecting retirements, budget pressures, and ongoing recruitment challenges.

Employment by Industry

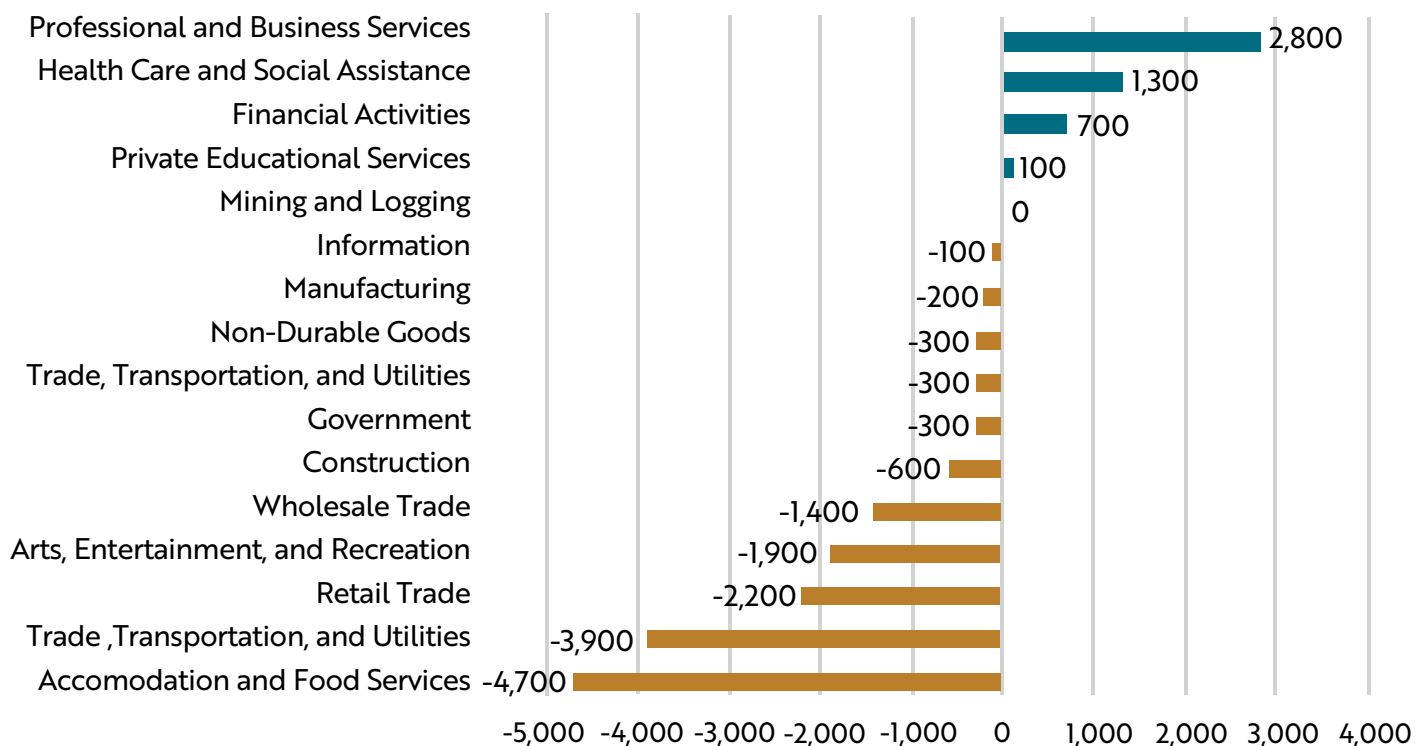
Figure 3 shows net employment change by industry in New Hampshire over the most recent year. The pattern is one of highly uneven growth, with gains concentrated in a relatively small number of sectors and substantial losses in several consumer-facing and goods-producing industries. The

strongest job gains occurred in Professional and Business Services, which added approximately 2,800 jobs, followed by Health Care and Social Assistance (+1,300) and Financial Activities (+700). Most other sectors experienced losses. The largest declines were in Accommodation and Food Services (-4,700 jobs), Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (-3,900), Retail Trade (-2,200), and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (-1,900). Taken together, these trends

suggest that recent employment weakness in New Hampshire has been concentrated in industries tied more directly to consumer spending, travel, and goods movement, while gains have been strongest in professional services, health care, and finance. This pattern is consistent with an economy that continues to grow in selected higher-skill sectors even as broader employment conditions soften across parts of the service economy.

Figure 3: Year-Over-Year Private Sector Job Growth for New Hampshire (2025)

Source: NH Dept. of Employment Security, Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau

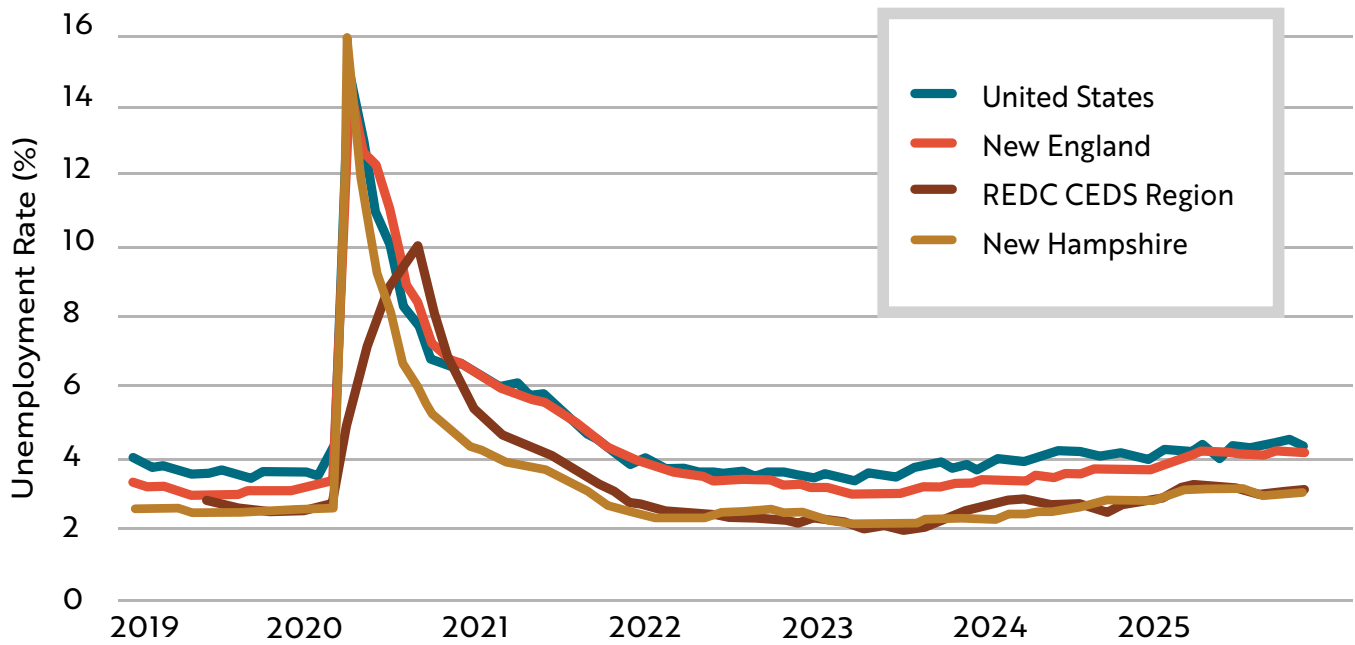


Unemployment

As Figure 4 shows, New Hampshire and the REDC region have continued to maintain unemployment rates below both the national and regional averages throughout most of the post-pandemic period. Prior to the COVID-19 shock, unemployment in both geographies was low and trending downward. The pandemic produced a sharp and unprecedented spike in 2020, with New Hampshire’s unemployment rate temporarily rising above 16%, while the REDC region peaked near 10%. Although the increase was severe across all geographies, both New Hampshire and the REDC region recovered more quickly than the U.S. and New England overall. Since 2022, unemployment in New Hampshire has remained comparatively low, generally in

Figure 4: Unemployment Rate (2019-2025)¹

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



¹ Seasonally-adjusted data was not available for REDC region because of a change in BLS methodology. REDC region data was smoothed using a sixth order polynomial smoothing function.

the 2.6% to 3.1% range, while the United States and New England have been higher, generally around 3.9% to 4.4% by late 2025. More recently, however, both the state and region have seen a modest upward drift in unemployment through 2024 and 2025. By December 2025, New Hampshire's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate had reached 3.1% with the REDC region at 3.3%, indicating that labor market conditions remained relatively tight but somewhat weaker than at their post-recovery lows. These figures suggest that while New Hampshire and the REDC region continued to outperform national and regional labor market conditions, the labor market in 2025 was not quite as tight as it had been in the immediate post-pandemic recovery period.

NH Outlook: Employment Projections through 2032

Figure 5 shows projected employment change by industry in New Hampshire from 2022 to 2032. The long-term outlook points to continued growth across most industries, with especially strong gains in health care and social assistance, which is projected to add approximately 9,143 jobs over the decade. This is by far the largest projected increase of any sector and reflects the continued aging of the population and rising demand for health-related services. The next largest gains are expected in professional, scientific, and technical services (+6,916 jobs) and accommodation and food services (+4,871 jobs), followed by administrative and waste services (+3,687) and wholesale trade (+2,456). Additional growth is projected in construction (+2,158), manufacturing (+2,123),

Figure 5: NH Employment Projections (2022-2032), by Industry Source: NH Dept. of Employment Security



and finance and insurance (+1,948), suggesting that employment growth will extend beyond traditional service sectors.

Retail trade is the only major sector projected to decline, with an expected loss of 1,551 jobs, reflecting longer-term shifts toward e-commerce, automation, and changing consumer behavior. Overall, the projections point to an economy increasingly anchored in health care, professional services, and other service-producing sectors, while still maintaining a meaningful role for manufacturing and construction in the state’s long-run employment base.

2. REDC CEDS Regional Economy

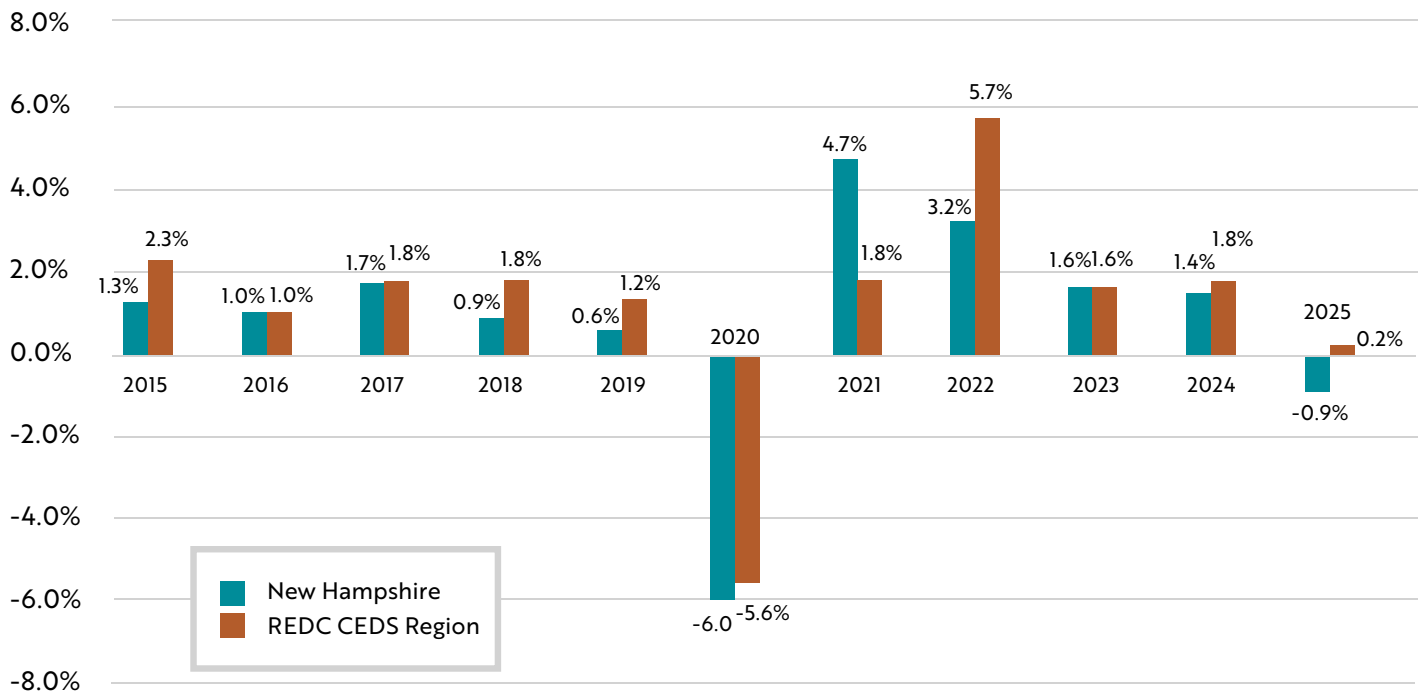
The REDC Region: Growth, Recovery, and Emerging Constraints

Employment growth has continued to vary across regions of New Hampshire. The REDC CEDS region, which includes Rockingham County and five communities in Hillsborough County, has generally been one of the stronger-performing parts of the state over the post-pandemic period, though that advantage narrowed in 2025. While the region continued to show modest job growth, recent data suggest a slower pace of expansion and a more uneven recovery across industries than in the earlier years of the post-pandemic period.

Figure 6 shows annual private sector employment growth in New Hampshire and the REDC region from 2015 through 2025. Over most of this period, the REDC region outperformed the state, posting higher annual growth rates across most years, highlighting the region’s relatively strong private sector performance over the longer run, particularly in the years immediately before and after the pandemic.

Figure 6: Private Sector Job Growth (%) for NH and REDC CEDS Region - 2025

Source: NH Dept. of Employment Security, Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau, Quarterly Employment & Wages.



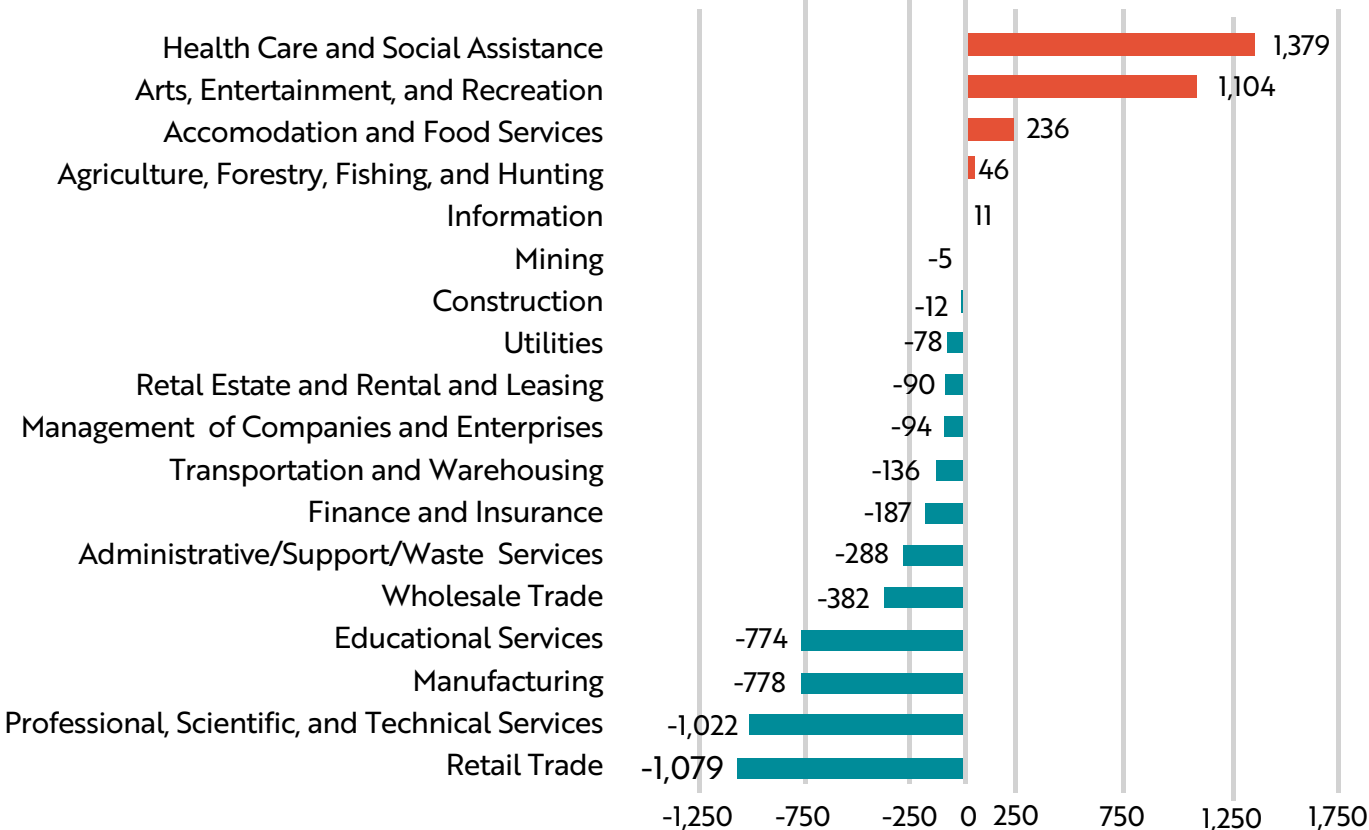
The largest contraction occurred in 2020, when private employment fell by 6.0% statewide and 5.6% in the REDC region. Recovery followed in both geographies, but the timing differed. New Hampshire rebounded more sharply in 2021, growing 4.7% compared with 1.8% in the REDC region, while the REDC region led strongly in 2022. More recently, however, private sector growth has slowed considerably. In 2025, the REDC region posted only 0.2% private sector growth, while New Hampshire experienced a slight decline of -0.9%. These latest figures suggest that the private sector expansion that carried both the state and region through the post-pandemic recovery has weakened materially.

Figure 7 shows year-over-year private sector job change by industry in the REDC CEDS region. The pattern is one of sharp sectoral divergence, with gains concentrated in a small number of service industries and losses spread across a much broader set of sectors. The largest increase occurred in Health Care and Social Assistance, which added approximately 1,379 jobs, followed closely by Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (+1,104). Most other industries posted losses

over the year. The largest declines were in Retail Trade (-1,079 jobs), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (-1,022), Manufacturing (-778), and Educational Services (-774). Taken together, these results suggest that the REDC region’s recent employment growth has depended heavily on health care and a limited number of consumer-facing sectors, while many of the region’s traditional higher-wage and business-oriented industries weakened over the year. This helps explain why overall private sector growth in the region slowed, despite strong gains in a few prominent sectors.

Figure 7: Year-Over-Year Private Sector Job Growth for the REDC CEDS Region – 2025 ²

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



² Due to data constraints, these data include yearly employment changes for the period June 2024 until June 2025.

Economic Outlook Conclusion

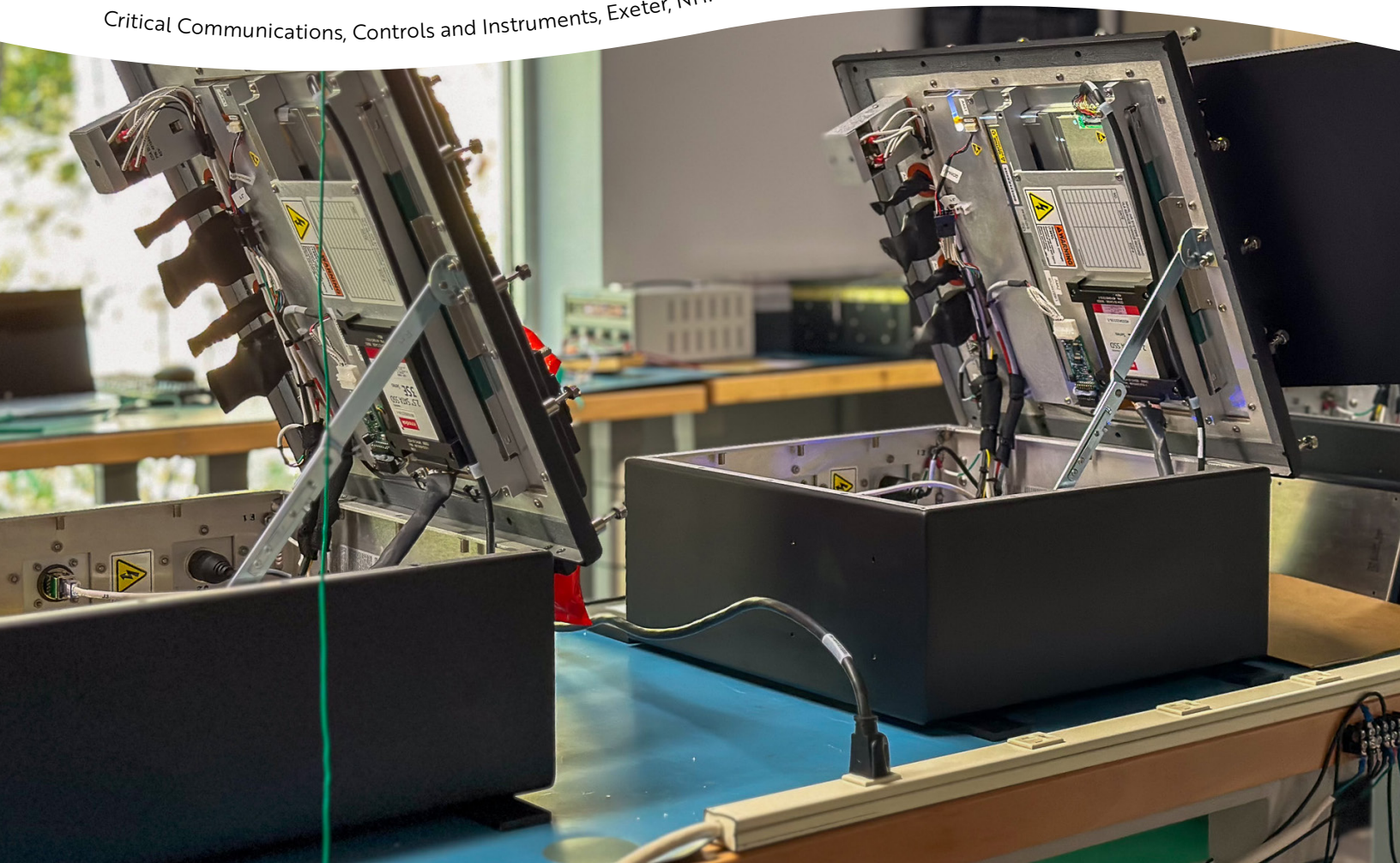
As 2025 unfolded, the New Hampshire economy and the REDC CEDS region remained on relatively stable footing, but the pace of growth slowed and signs of strain became more visible. Employment levels stayed above their pre-pandemic benchmarks, and unemployment rates in both the state and region remained low by historical standards. At the same time,

job growth became less broad-based, with the strongest gains concentrated in health care and selected service sectors, while many consumer-facing, manufacturing, and business-oriented industries saw weaker performance. The economy in 2025 was therefore less a story of rapid recovery and more one of uneven growth across sectors and regions.

Looking ahead, the sustainability of growth in New Hampshire and the REDC region will depend on how well the state navigates a mix of structural and external pressures. Longstanding challenges including labor force shortages, population aging, and housing affordability continue to constrain expansion. These pressures are now being compounded by uncertainty related to international trade, federal fiscal policy, and global energy markets. Tariff risks involving Canada, China, and Mexico remain important for New Hampshire's manufacturing base and other industries tied to imported inputs and export markets. Rising oil prices associated with instability in the Middle East also add uncertainty for households and businesses, particularly in a state that remains heavily dependent on heating oil.

Even with these challenges, New Hampshire retains important economic advantages, including a skilled workforce, a strong manufacturing base, and concentrations in industries such as health care, professional services, and advanced production. The REDC region remains a critical part of that foundation, though recent data suggest that growth there has slowed more noticeably than in the state as a whole. The key issue going forward is not whether New Hampshire has recovered from the pandemic-era downturn, but whether it can sustain growth in a more constrained and uncertain environment.

Critical Communications, Controls and Instruments, Exeter, NH.



Regional Roundup



Rockingham Planning Commission

The Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) is one of nine regional planning commissions in New Hampshire established under RSA 36:46. Its jurisdiction includes 27 of the 36 communities in Rockingham County. As a political subdivision of the State of New Hampshire, the Commission provides advisory support to local governments to promote coordinated planning, orderly growth, efficient land use, and environmental protection.

RPC also serves as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), responsible for carrying out the federally required continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive "3C" metropolitan transportation planning process. In this role, the MPO collaborates with the public and with local, regional, state, and federal partners to develop long- and short-range transportation plans, policies, and priorities that guide local decision-making.

RPC is currently updating the Regional Master Plan, a guiding document for all 27 municipalities in southeastern New Hampshire. This comprehensive plan outlines how the region can work toward a shared vision of being a vibrant place to live, work, and play over the next 20–30 years.

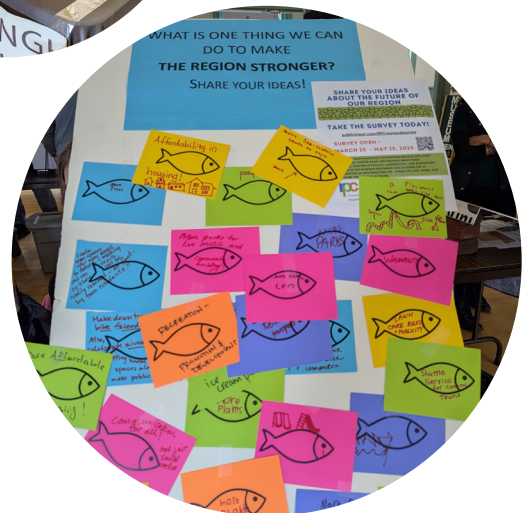
To ensure the plan reflects regional needs and aspirations, RPC is drawing on extensive public engagement—including surveys, workshops, and community events—along with reviews of local master plans, planning studies, and the latest available data. The goal is to support coordinated action on issues that affect the entire region, while recognizing that solutions must be tailored to the unique character of each community.

The updated Regional Master Plan is expected to be completed by the end of 2026 and will build upon RPC's other long-term planning efforts, including the 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan and the 2023 Regional Housing Needs Assessment.



These photos are from a tabling event at the Exeter Alewife Festival in May 2025 to gather ideas about what would make the region stronger.

Photo credit to RPC.

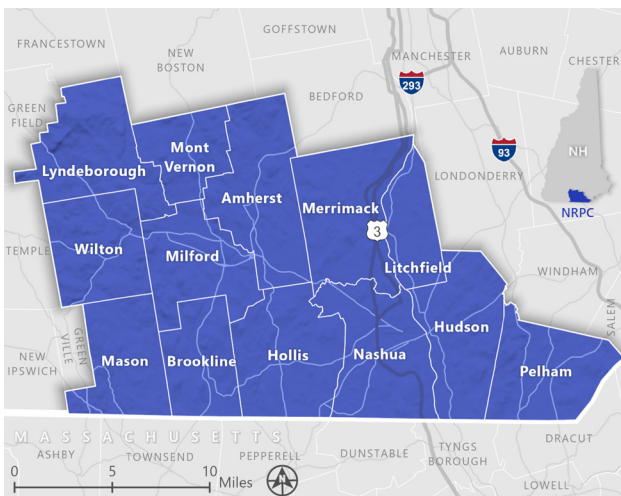




Nashua Regional Planning Commission

Established in 1959, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) is the oldest of New Hampshire's nine regional planning commissions. NRPC serves 13 municipalities including Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Lyndeborough, Mason, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham, and Wilton. The Commission focuses on developing and implementing innovative planning strategies that preserve and improve the quality of life in southern New Hampshire.

NRPC is currently in the process of updating its [Coordinated Regional Plan](#), last updated in 2014, with an emphasis on Economic Development, Housing, Natural Resources Conservation, and Transportation. Adoption of the plan is anticipated for June of 2026. Key findings and recommendations are summarized:

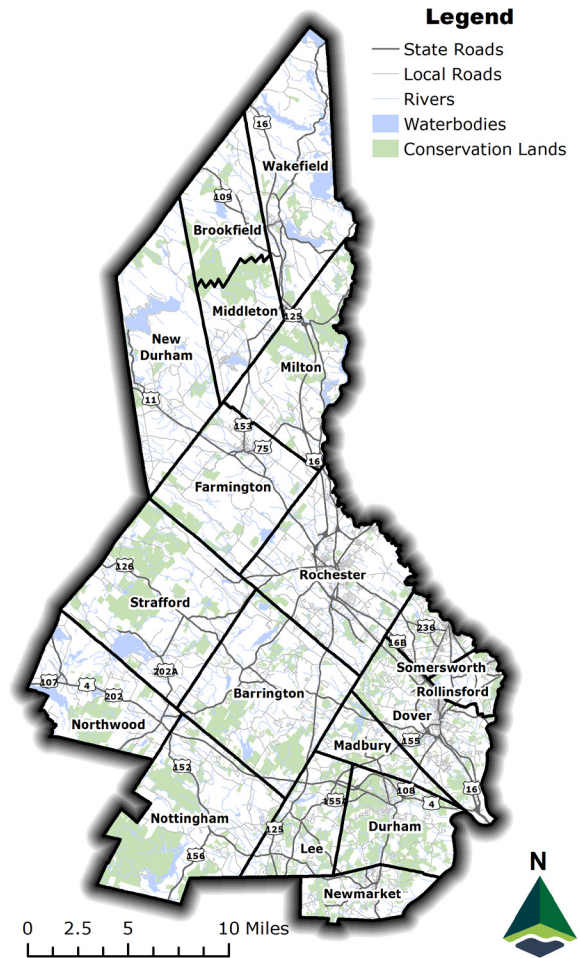


Economic Development – The region's economy faces challenges due to the decline in manufacturing employment, threats to its retail sector due to a growing trend toward online shopping and unknown challenges due to increased automation and the growth of AI. There are also opportunities in the emergence of newer industries such as regenerative medicine, advanced textiles, fintech, robotics, and other technologies. To ensure a strong economy in the years to come, it is essential that the region encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, promotes Workforce Development, preserves strategically located industrially zoned land for industrial purposes, and adopts flexibility in commercial and industrial districts to facilitate relatively seamless transitions between different types of business and industrial uses.

Housing – Housing market and demographic data demonstrate that the demand for housing in the region exceeds supply and as a result, the region has experienced significant increases in housing costs for both owners and renters. For the housing market to return to a healthy balance and accommodate projected population growth, an additional 9,383 units of housing will be required by 2030 (from the base year of 2020) including over 1,000 units of affordable rental housing and 2,000 units of affordable ownership housing. These numbers are daunting and would require a 60% increase in the number of permits issued over the preceding decade.

To address the regions' housing needs, communities should emphasize a balanced approach that encourages higher density development in and around historic downtowns and town centers and existing commercial areas, and welcome alternative housing types.

Transportation – Given limited resources for expanding the transportation system and declines in overall traffic volumes, transportation improvements should emphasize: safety; mobility for all foreseeable users including bicyclists and pedestrian; system preservation & sustainability; improvements to transit; and supporting quality of life & economic vitality, by reducing congestion through signal coordination and eliminating existing bottlenecks.



STRAFFORD

Regional Planning Commission

Strafford Regional Planning Commission

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) region encompasses all the municipalities in Strafford County; Brookfield and Wakefield in Carroll County; and Newmarket, Northwood, and Nottingham in Rockingham County.

SRPC, in addition to being a regional planning commission established by state statute, is also a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Economic Development District (EDD). As an MPO, SRPC plans for and coordinates transportation funding and investments

throughout the region. As an EDD, SRPC works to foster collaboration among economic development stakeholders in the region and develop a regularly updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The Strafford EDD boundaries encompass the SRPC communities in Strafford and Carroll Counties.

SRPC is currently developing an updated comprehensive plan – a forward-looking, long-term, strategic vision and roadmap for the region's future. The plan considers many factors surrounding how we live, work, and move throughout the region and is intended to reflect the values, priorities, needs, and aspirations of the residents, businesses, and communities throughout the region.

Through surveys, workshops, and events across the region, alongside analysis of local master plans and discussions with municipal leadership, SRPC has garnered significant input to create a robust and comprehensive plan that reflects the priorities and aspirations of the region.

FORWARD **THINKING**

A Comprehensive Plan for the Strafford Region

Key takeaways gathered thus far include:

- **Transportation:** a keen interest and prioritization of ensuring that trails, alternatives to driving, safety, and infrastructure are available, accessible, and maintained in good repair.
- **Economic development:** support for small businesses, the workforce, and ensuring communities are affordable and livable were all highlighted priorities.
- **Land use and the environment:** outreach findings consisted of promoting thoughtful and balanced development, preserving historic and cultural resources, and promoting recreation.

The plan is expected to be completed by the end of 2026. Each plan component will include a 30-day public comment period prior to adoption.

Learn more about our comprehensive plan update project on the SRPC website:

www.straffordrpcnh.gov.



Southern NH Planning Commission

As part of its Regional Comprehensive Plan update, the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) is analyzing core “measures of growth” – including people (population/households), homes (housing units), and jobs (employment data). According to the Housing Solutions Lab, when these measures are well aligned, a region is better positioned for achieving desired economic outcomes. When they fall out of balance (for example, when jobs dramatically outpace housing development), workforce recruitment becomes harder, commute times increase, and the overall cost of doing business rises.

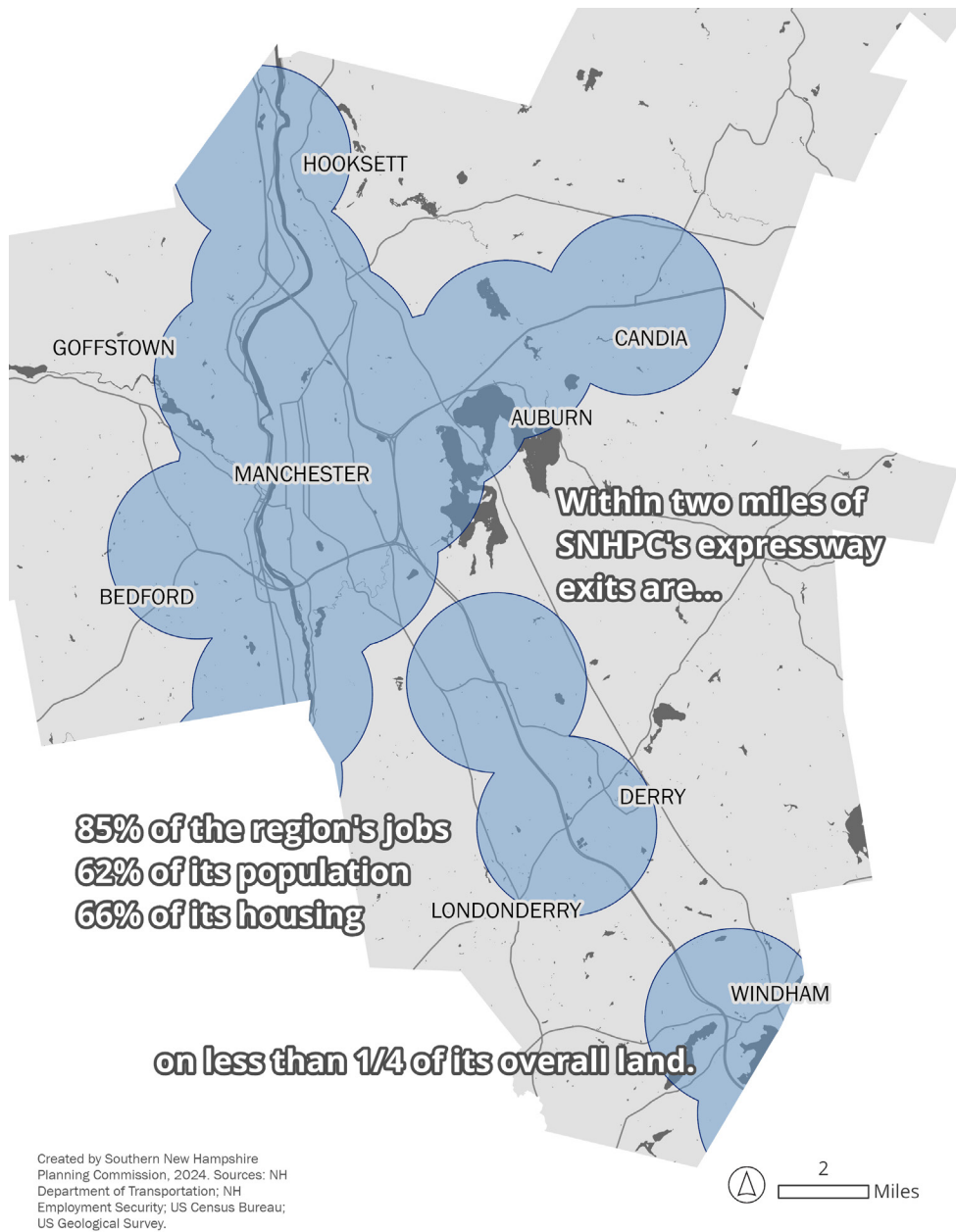
Geospatial mapping of these measures reveals that proximity to major transportation corridors is a key predictor of growth. The map shown illustrates that 85% of the region’s jobs, 62% of the population, and 66% of housing units are located within two miles of a highway exit – in an area that represents less than one-quarter of the region’s total land area.

Existing infrastructure – especially water and sewer service – is another key driver of where higher-intensity housing and employment can occur. These already-

developed areas have the potential to absorb additional growth through infill, redevelopment, and higher land use intensity.

From an economic development perspective, the takeaway is clear. Growth is particularly favorable in areas that are highway accessible, serviced by water and sewer, and where communities have policies in place to expand housing options near job centers.

As part of the Regional Comprehensive Plan, SNHPC will conduct a pilot project with one municipality interested in pursuing “infrastructure-ready” housing opportunities to support future growth and development near employment centers. SNHPC anticipates that targeted housing strategies will enhance the region’s ability to attract and retain employers, support a stable workforce, and utilize existing infrastructure more efficiently.



Economic Resiliency

Economic resiliency and recovery planning are priorities for municipalities and businesses in the REDC region, with an emphasis on transforming how businesses and municipalities conduct daily operations. Economic resilience is defined as the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock all together. Strengthening economic resilience in our regional economy requires the ability of all stakeholders to think about anticipating risk, evaluate how that risk may impact key economic assets, and build a responsive and resilient capacity that serves everyone.

Economic Resiliency is:

- Locally driven – local governments, businesses, and community members have primary responsibility for many resiliency planning decisions, investments, and actions.
- Broad and comprehensive – preparedness is a shared responsibility, and deliberate planning is needed to ensure participation of all members of the community.
- Flexible – enabled the ability to change, evolve, and adapt to alternative strategies.
- Built upon and integrated with other community plans – master plans, hazard mitigation plans, housing plans, economic development strategies, and other planning documents that represent shared priorities and a wide range of goals for the community.

Natural and man-made disaster can strike at any time. Without any warning, a disaster can disrupt the operation of government and business, negatively impacting local economies. Regardless of the disaster,

economic resiliency planning can ensure the region is better equipped to respond, recover, and create new economic opportunities.

Economic resilience practices for municipalities and businesses include:

- Developing a workforce retention program.
- Ensuring a quick response to emergency declarations and accurate assessment of damage.
- Establishing a capital reserve fund.
- Developing a communication plan to expedite the sharing of information with residents, businesses, and customers.
- Ensuring data is backed up and secure in real-time and off site.
- Managing cybersecurity risk.
- Identifying and building local and regional supply chains.
- Completing a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that is understandable, flexible, and exercisable.

For more detailed checklists and additional information on planning for economic resiliency, refer to the Building Economic Resilience in the REDC Region plan at: <https://www.redc.com/resiliency>.

Municipalities in the REDC region are encouraged to participate in the development of the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS is designed to promote economic resiliency and includes priority economic development projects brought forward by towns and cities in the REDC region.

In addition, the REDC offers no-cost business advising to startups, growing companies, and aspiring entrepreneurs, all designed to improve the region's economic resiliency. Business advising services include:

- Business plan development
- Business financials
- Partnerships
- Financial packaging recommendations
- Market research
- Employee guidance
- Credit preparedness
- Logo & brand development
- Graphic design of marketing materials
- Website design & tutelage
- Video creation and editing
- Advice on photography

A full description of the REDC's business advising services is available on the REDC website: www.redc.com/businessadvising.

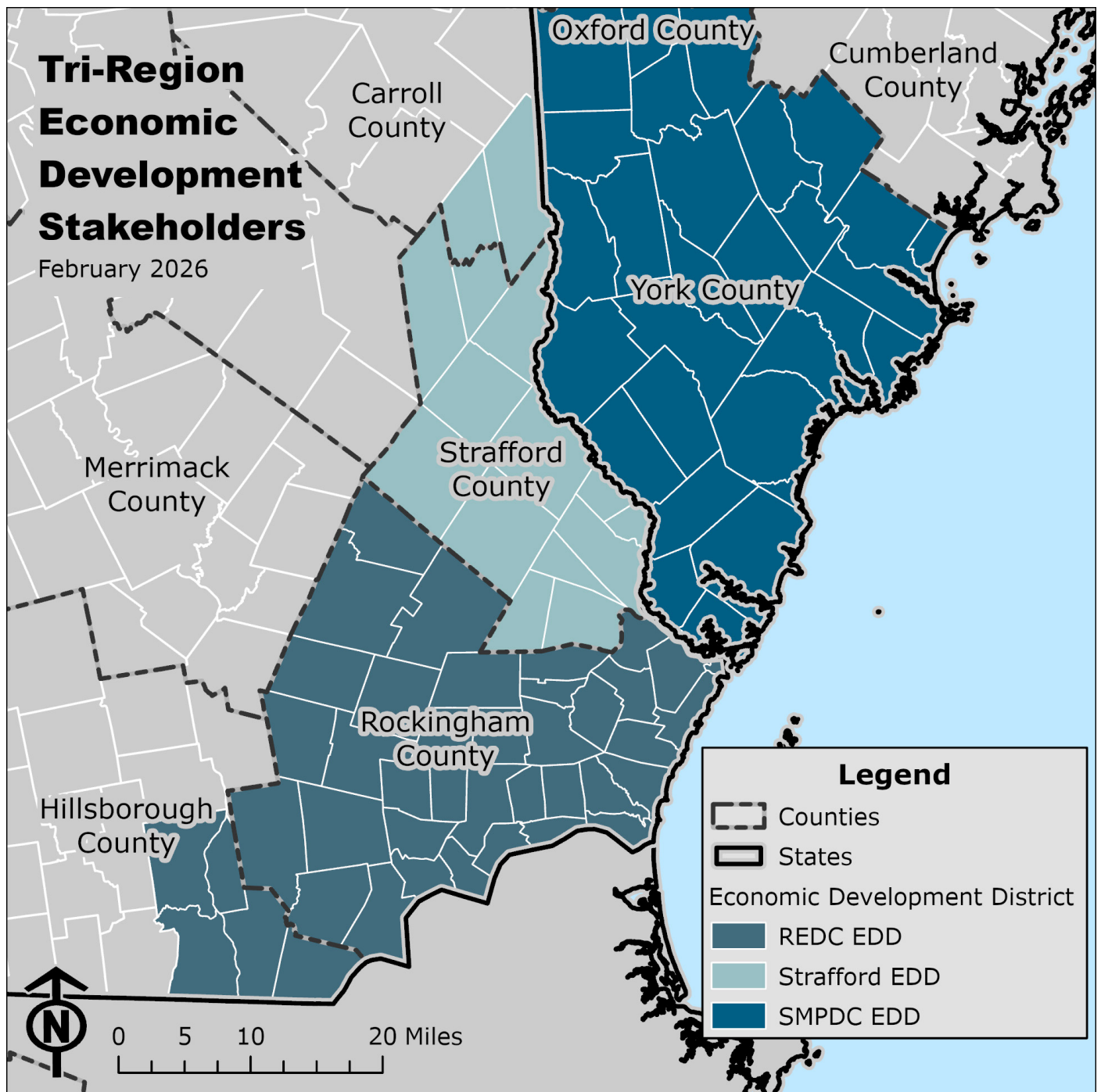
Spotlight: Tri-Region Economic Development Stakeholders (TREDS)

The Tri-Region Economic Development Stakeholders (TREDS) is a collective entity of economic development stakeholders from across southeastern New Hampshire and southern Maine. TREDS represents an evolved and expanded scope of the former Seacoast Economic Development Stakeholders (SEDS), which was first convened by the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) in March 2020 in response to the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

REDC is partnering with SPRC and the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission for this expanded group to effectively bring together stakeholders from across these three Economic Development Districts (EDDs). Communities across these three EDDs have closely integrated economies, and convening stakeholders from this broader geographic region provides shared economic opportunities and increased collaboration.

Attendees represent a variety of local, regional, and statewide perspectives who meet virtually once a month to collaborate, share information and resources, and work together to promote the economic vitality of our communities and region. TREDs members include municipal economic development managers, chamber of commerce directors, staff from planning

commissions and partner organizations, representatives from state agencies and organizations, and representatives from other organizations that play a key role in economic development. TREDs members convene to advance conversations about key issues affecting economic development across the region, including housing, workforce, business operations, childcare, and more.





Vision Statement

Our vision for southern New Hampshire is a region rich in opportunity for all ages with a diverse business climate; a commitment to preserving our cultural, natural, and historic resources; a strong local identity; and convenient access to major thoroughfares and cities. Achieving this future will necessitate collaboration among individuals, businesses, communities, and the state to foster a diverse housing stock, affordable childcare, a skilled workforce, robust and resilient utilities and infrastructure, a business-friendly environment, and strong, welcoming communities.



2025-2029 Priority Areas, Goals, and Strategies

Housing

To develop diversified housing options for people of all incomes, ages, and lifestyles.

- Work with communities, residents, and developers to identify the need for and benefits of a diversified housing stock, including homes of various sizes at multiple price points.
- Partner with housing-focused organizations to support their work advocating for policy at the state and local levels that will facilitate the development of procedural improvements and zoning amendments to support the creation of more housing.
- Educate homebuyers and developers about programs for financing and purchasing.

Resources

- NH Housing Homeownership Resources: www.gonewhampshirehousing.com
- NH Housing Rental Assistance: www.nhhfa.org/rental-assistance
- NH Housing reports: <https://www.nhhfa.org/publications-data/publications-reports/>
- Statewide Housing Needs Assessment: <https://www.nhhfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-NH-Statewide-Housing-Needs-Assessment.pdf>
- Regional Planning Commission Housing Needs Assessments: <https://www.nharpc.org/rhna/>
- NH Zoning Atlas: <https://www.anselm.edu/about/offices-centers-institutes/finance-administration/office-partnerships/initiative-housing-policy-and-practice/new-hampshire-zoning-atlas>
- Community Action Partnership: www.caphr.org
- Home for All: www.homeforall-seacoast.org

Partners

- NH Housing: www.nhhfa.org
- Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast: www.seacoastwhc.org
- Housing Action NH www.housingactionnh.org
- Saint Anselm College <https://www.anselm.edu/about/offices-centers-institutes/finance-administration/office-partnerships/initiative-housing-policy-and-practice>
- Regional Planning Commissions: www.nharpc.org

Childcare

To increase the availability and affordability of and accessibility to childcare.

- Encourage the development of flexible and hybrid childcare models that offer non-traditional options.
- Expand before and after school programs.
- Work with local businesses to create onsite childcare options.
- Encourage zoning amendments to remove barriers for new childcare facilities.

Partners

- NH Connections: www.nh-connections.org
- Rockingham Planning Commission: www.therpc.org
- Strafford Regional Planning Commission: www.straffordrpcnh.gov
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission: www.nashuarpc.org
- Southern NH Regional Planning Commission: www.snhpc.org

Resources

- Department of Health and Human Services Roadmap: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents2/dhhs-roadmap-2025-2027.pdf>
- NH Fiscal Policy Institute Report, The Economic Impact of the Granite State's Child Care Shortage: <https://nhfpi.org/resource/the-economic-impact-of-the-granite-states-child-care-shortage/>
- Strafford RPC Regional Childcare Project: <https://straffordrpcnh.gov/projects/regional-childcare/>
- Strafford RPC Childcare Resource Guide: https://straffordrpcnh.gov/uploads/documents/plans/edd/childcare_2024_resourcepamphlet.pdf
- Strafford RPC Expanding Childcare Access Report https://straffordrpcnh.gov/uploads/documents/plans/edd/childcare_2024_report.pdf
- NH HHS Child Development and Head Start: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/childcare-parenting-childbirth/child-development-and-head-start>
- NH Department of Health and Human Services <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/childcare-parenting-childbirth/child-care-licensing/licensed-child-care-programs>
- Child Care Aware of NH: <https://www.caphr.org/services/child-care-aware>

Infrastructure and Utilities

To invest in infrastructure and utility planning and improvements that strengthen the regional economy and increase resiliency to manmade and natural hazards.

- Encourage project options with a focus on regional cooperation, working collaboratively, or shared local and regional services.
- Maintain and expand the region's public infrastructure and utilities to address the needs of existing businesses and residents, as well as accommodate the needs of new and expanding businesses and residential areas.
- Upgrade public infrastructure and utilities to meet regulatory requirements and increase economic resiliency to disasters and severe weather.
- Encourage projects that seek alternative energy options to increase economic resiliency.

Resources

- NH Department of Transportation Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan: <https://www.dot.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt811/files/inline-documents/typ-2025-2034-complete-book-approved-scenario-1e.8-9-2024.pdf>
- NH Department of Energy: www.energy.nh.gov
- Municipal Hazard Mitigation Plans

Partners

- Rockingham Planning Commission: www.therpc.org
- Strafford Regional Planning Commission: www.straffordrpcnh.gov
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission: www.nashuarpc.org
- Southern NH Regional Planning Commission: www.snhpc.org

Transportation

To invest in a multi-modal transportation network that takes into consideration commuters, traffic congestion, parking, recreation, and tourism.

- Expand public transit systems through investments in bus and rail service as a means to maximize the mobility of the workforce.
- Expand the network of vehicle charging stations.
- Create or expand volunteer driving programs for seniors and others with limited transportation options.
- Provide off-site parking and shuttles to downtowns and tourist areas to address limited parking and reduce traffic congestion.
- Encourage the use of rail trails and bike lanes.
- Support infrastructure projects that improve traffic flow and reduce congestion.

Resources

- NH Department of Transportation: www.dot.nh.gov
- NHCarePath: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/adult-aging-care/nhcarepath/nhcarepath-transportation-resources>
- CommuteSmart NH: www.commutessmartnh.org

Partners

- Rockingham Planning Commission: www.therpc.org
- Strafford Regional Planning Commission: www.straffordrpcnh.gov
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission: www.nashuarpc.org
- Southern NH Regional Planning Commission: www.snhpc.org
- COAST: www.coastbus.org
- Amtrak Downeaster: <https://amtrakdowneaster.com/stations/exeter/>

Workforce Attraction and Retention

To cultivate, support, and expand economic development programs that create jobs and attract and retain a workforce to meet the needs of existing, new, and evolving industries.

- Develop a shared marketing strategy to create jobs in and attract workers to the region.
- Encourage a regional approach for public and emergency services to support communities that lack adequate workforce or funding.
- Facilitate collaboration among the economic development, workforce development, and education sectors to develop training opportunities for the regional workforce.
- Provide vocational, trade, and technical training to high school students to meet the needs of regional employers.
- Provide training to employers on developing a workforce retention plan.

Resources

- Soho Creative Studio Employer Toolkit: <https://redc.com/ceds-2025-2029#employer-toolkit>
- BEA Office of Workforce Opportunity: <https://www.nheconomy.com/office-of-workforce-opportunity>
- New Hampshire Business Gateway: <https://www.nhbusinessgateway.gov/s/>
- ApprenticeshipNH: www.apprenticeshipnh.com
- Community Action Partnership: www.caphr.org
- The New Hampshire Workforce Toolkit for the Outdoor Lifestyle: <https://www.nheconomy.com/office-of-outdoor-recreation/what-we-do/workforce-development/workforcetoolkit>
- Northern Maine Workforce Development Case Study: https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NMDC_Final.pdf

Partners

- NH BEA: www.nheconomy.com/nhworks
- Strafford Regional Planning Commission: www.straffordrpcnh.gov
- Community College System of NH: www.ccsnh.edu
- University of NH Cooperative Extension: <https://extension.unh.edu/community-economic-development/economic-development>

Spotlight: Uncharted Tutoring

Amber Nicole Cannan founded Uncharted Tutoring in 2018, with the purpose of teaching educational concepts and life lessons using art. In 2025 they became a 501c3 with a board of entrepreneurs, scientists, health care professionals, and tech workers. Uncharted “trusts in science, data, and striving to treat the earth and its beings with a shared respect and appreciation.” They listen to experts, stay current with research, and grow as new information becomes available.

They also believe in the power of art. The world of the arts allows people to express themselves, build community, educate one another, and be a driving force in change. Uncharted provides creative opportunities to the people they work with.

Uncharted’s mission is to provide equal opportunity to the New England community, with their home base in Manchester, New Hampshire, and they are looking to expand.

In 2026, Uncharted began work on the Southern NH Workforce Corridor Pilot, a phased 2026 to 2029 workforce development initiative aligned to advanced manufacturing, regenerative medicine through the ReGen Valley Tech Hub, logistics, and technology-enabled production sectors within the REDC region.

The Merrimack–Londonderry–Derry–Nashua corridor represents one of the most concentrated employment zones in southern New Hampshire. It is defined by sustained growth in advanced manufacturing and life sciences, unemployment rates consistently between

2-3%, an aging population, and limited housing supply. Taken together, these conditions signal a structurally tight labor market. They also make one thing clear: long-term competitiveness cannot rely on importing talent alone. It requires developing it internally, earlier, and more intentionally.

This pilot establishes a Grades 1 to 8 workforce development continuum designed to strengthen early STEM identity formation, applied engineering skill-building, and elementary and middle school career pathway awareness aligned directly to corridor industry sectors. It does not wait until high school to introduce opportunity. It builds familiarity and confidence while identity is still forming.

The pilot will be coordinated by the nonprofit Uncharted, a ReGen Valley Tech Hub member organization, in partnership with corridor school districts and regional economic stakeholders. Alignment with Workforce Attraction and Retention priorities remains central throughout the phased 2026 to 2029 implementation.

While the primary objective of this pilot is workforce attraction and retention through early talent development, the program also strengthens regional childcare access and immediate workforce participation by delivering structured programming within school environments where students are already present, extending their time on school campus before guardians need to worry about care or transport.

Learn more about Uncharted Tutoring at www.unchartered.org.



Environment and Natural Resources

To invest in the conservation and management of natural spaces, while creating connections to local economies, improving access for residents and visitors, and building economic resilience to disasters and severe weather.

- Connect rail trails to local business and downtowns via signage.
- Enhance or increase connections from towns to outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Protect natural spaces that provide resilience to natural disasters and severe weather.
- Identify and redevelop Brownfield sites to return them to productive economic use.

Resources

- REDC Brownfields loans and grants: www.redc.com/brownfields
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission: https://www.nashuarpc.org/economic_development/brownfields/indexnew.php
- US Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/brownfields
- NH State Parks: www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/recreational-rail-trails
- PREP Stormwater Toolkit: <https://prepestuaries.org/resources/stormwater-toolkit/>
- Municipal Hazard Mitigation Plans

Partners

- Rockingham Planning Commission: www.therpc.org
- Strafford Planning Commission: www.straffordrpcnh.gov/plan/environment
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission: www.nashuarpc.org
- Southern NH Planning Commission: www.snhpc.org/environmental-energy-planning
- NH Department of Environmental Services: www.des.nh.gov
- University of NH Cooperative Extension: www.extension.unh.edu/natural-resources



The former Milford Cabinet Building in downtown Milford was redeveloped into 18 units of affordable senior housing with assistance from the NRPC Brownfields program.

Spotlight: NRPC Brownfields Program

Since 2004, Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) has worked in partnership with the U.S. EPA and NHDES to identify, assess, and characterize “Brownfields” with the goal of bringing vacant or underutilized properties back into productive use. EPA defines a Brownfield as a property where the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of the property is complicated by the presence or potential presence of petroleum or hazardous substances. It is estimated

there are more than 100 brownfields in the NRPC region. Brownfield sites are often abandoned, vacant, or under-used industrial or commercial properties. They can also be former schools, hospitals, multi-family residential properties, former gas stations, dry cleaners, warehouses, or car dealerships.

Generally, public, or privately owned sites that have real or perceived environmental concerns are eligible to participate in NRPC’s Assessment program. NRPC has

substantial funding available and there is no cost for property owners or applicants to participate. NRPC works with its Qualified Environmental Professional ([Credere Associates](#)) to conduct assessment work including:

- Site Nomination and Eligibility Determination
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
- Preparation of a Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plan
- Phase II Environmental Site Assessment
- Phase III Site Investigation (i.e., Additional Characterization) and Remedial Action Plan
- Reuse Planning

Since the program was renewed in 2019, NRPC Brownfield's Assessment program has completed work, or is in the process of assessing, 19 sites in our region. A complete inventory with site descriptions can be found on our online [Project Portfolio](#).

In 2026, through its nonprofit affiliate, NRPC received a \$1 million grant to establish a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). Through the RLF, NRPC is now able help to finance cleanup work in addition to conducting assessments. In addition, unlike NRPC Assessment funds, Brownfield's RLF funds can be deployed anywhere in

New Hampshire. RLF funds are available to provide low interest loans to property owners and developers to undertake cleanup activities including:

- Excavation, consolidation, or removal of contaminated soils
- Removal of drums, barrel, tanks, or other bulk containers
- Installation of security controls
- Drainage controls
- Capping of contaminated soils
- Using materials to retard the spread of contaminants
- Demolition (only if necessary to conduct remediation beneath the building itself)

Grants may also be available for nonprofit and municipal applicants. For more information on NRPC Brownfields programs, contact Jay Minkarah at jaym@nashuarpc.org.

Community Vibrancy

To strengthen community vibrancy by supporting local businesses, providing diverse housing options, enhancing public spaces, and promoting community and civic engagement.

- Expand access to supportive community-based programs and services. Support recreation departments, libraries, and arts organizations to provide programming.
- Encourage zoning amendments to provide an older population housing options to age in place.
- Create, preserve, and protect public spaces, historic characteristics, and natural and cultural amenities.
- Prioritize walking, pedestrian access, and community connection through the creation and maintenance of sidewalks, pathways, low speeds, and connected streets.
- Encourage updates to municipal master plans and capital improvement programs and projects to increase economic resiliency.
- Strengthen civic involvement and engagement by promoting opportunities for community participation.

Resources

- NH Community Profiles: <https://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/products-and-services/new-hampshire-community-profiles>
- Local Chamber of Commerce Directory: <https://www.uschamber.com/co/chambers/new-hampshire>
- Stay, Work, Play: www.stayworkplay.org
- NH State Council on the Arts: www.nharts.dncr.nh.gov
- NADO: Investing in Rural Downtowns: <https://www.nado.org/ruraldowntowns/>
- NADO: Strategies for Rural and Small-Town Renewal: <https://www.nado.org/from-vacant-to-vibrant-webinar-series/>
- Downtown Revitalization Playbook: www.downtownplaybook.org
- Main Street America: www.mainstreet.org
- Municipal Websites and Newsletters

Partners

- University of NH Cooperative Extension: <https://extension.unh.edu/community-economic-development/community-leadership>
- Rockingham Planning Commission: www.therpc.org
- Strafford Regional Planning Commission: www.straffordrpcnh.gov
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission: www.nashuarpc.org
- Southern NH Regional Planning Commission: www.snhpc.org

Spotlight: Exeter Communicates Differently



The town of Exeter has developed a robust and evolving approach to municipal communication through its community media center, Exeter TV. Headed up by the town’s Media Communications Coordinator, assisted by one full-time Media Technician and one part time Media Technician, the department films 19 boards, committees, and commissions, helping to ensure all government decisions are captured and made accessible.

Exeter TV decided to go beyond merely filming meetings to helping the town communicate on a wide variety of topics. Exeter TV’s main focus is producing a news magazine-style show that comes out every other Friday called “[The Exeter Biweekly Report](#)”. The show features three to six short video segments, including recaps of town meetings, public service announcements, and community stories. The goal of the videos is to help inform residents about what is going on, empowering them with the information they need to get engaged with local government or their community.

The effectiveness of this approach is demonstrated through coverage of key municipal topics. One example involved a short video recap of a meeting of the town’s River Advisory Committee regarding a grant application tied to the proposed removal of the Pickpocket Dam. While the full meeting was publicly posted and broadcast, the three-minute summary highlighting key discussion points and outcomes significantly expanded awareness of the project. This increased visibility contributed to greater public engagement in subsequent meetings and discussions.

[Pickpocket Dam Removal Grant | River Advisory Committee Meeting Minute](#)

In addition to reporting on decisions, Exeter TV places emphasis on explaining how local government functions. Video segments often address both complex and routine topics, ranging from property tax revaluations to seasonal public works operations. During the winter of 2025, staff



documented overnight snow removal efforts, providing a behind-the-scenes look at the work required to maintain safe roadways. By showcasing the personnel, equipment, and challenges involved—particularly within a limited staffing structure—the town was able to foster a deeper understanding among residents. This effort resulted in increased public appreciation and a noticeable reduction in complaints, as residents gained insight into how snow removal priorities are established and executed.

[Public Works vs. the Snow](#)

The videos were just the start of Exeter's increased communication efforts. Coinciding with the creation of the Media Communications Coordinator role, the town launched a biweekly email newsletter highlighting even more important updates, new services, and upcoming events. The town has also taken a renewed interest in

creating a robust social media presence. All of this boils down to the town wanting to break out of the normal conventions of how a town operates and communicates. In the past, important updates were read out loud during poorly attended public meetings or posted on clunky municipal websites. In modern times, it's incumbent upon municipalities to go above and beyond these norms and try to send information straight to their residents—whether it be in an email newsletter, social media, informational videos, or other methods. Increasing communication creates a better understanding of how local towns operate, enabling residents to get involved in the process. It turns critics into cheerleaders, and it builds community.



2026 Priority Project List

2025-2029 Priority Areas

- Housing (H)
- Childcare (C)
- Infrastructure and Utilities (IU)
- Transportation (T)
- Workforce Attraction and Retention (W)
- Environment and Natural Resources (E)
- Community Vibrancy (CV)

Teal: Short-Term List (work ongoing or will begin within 24 months)

Yellow: Intermediate-Term List (work scheduled to begin within the next two to five years)

Red: Long-Term List (project not scheduled or won't begin for at least five years)

Purple: Probation-Period (no update provided)

Project Name	Location/ Sponsor	Priority Areas	Estimated Costs	Estimated Jobs
Halls Village Road Reconstruction	Chester	IU, E	#162 HVR Culvert \$1,230,000 + #256 HVR Culvert \$1,485,000 = \$2,715,000	~18 temporary jobs; retaining ~12 for businesses on HVR
Abbott Court	Derry	H, T	\$40+ million	25 new/ retained
Derry Rail Trail Extension	Derry	T, E	\$970,000	temporary construction jobs
Derry Route 28 Sewer Interception Extension	Derry	IU	\$4.2 million	Unknown
New Police Station and Fire Substation	Exeter	IU, CV	\$18,082,500	N/A
Squamscott River Sewer Siphons & Webster Avenue Pump Station	Exeter	IU	\$13,106,000	N/A
Hampton Wastewater Treatment Plant	Hampton	IU	Phase 2: \$15,700,000	Unknown: but will retain jobs and allow for future development
Winnacunnet Road Reconstruction	Hampton	IU	\$12,705,000	N/A
Hampton Route 1A Improvements	Hampton/ Hampton Beach Area Commission	IU, T	Phase 1: engineering & partial construction \$9.9 million; Phase 2: construction \$52-70 million	Unknown
Hampton U.S. 1/NH 101 Interchange Realignment	Hampton/ RPC	IU, T	\$8.1 million (2029 dollars)	Unknown



Portsmouth Priority Project for 1035 Lafayette project – photo of Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA) Executive Director Craig Welch, Betty Lane and Reverend Steve Falci of Christ Church, HAVEN Executive Director Kathy Beebe, on site at the Christ Episcopal Church, which will be home to 44 units of affordable housing and HAVEN, as statewide domestic and sexual violence support organization.
Photo credit to Portsmouth Housing Authority.



Nashua Priority Project Nimco – Demolition of the former Nimco site in Nashua began in 2025. This former brownfield site will be redeveloped into housing.
Photo credit to city of Nashua.



Groundbreaking at the former Mohawk Tannery site – Photo from left: Wincrest Properties President Bernie Plante, Thorndike Development President Lloyd Geisinger, New Hampshire Governor Kelly Ayotte, EPA New England Administrator Mark Sanborn, and Nashua Mayor Jim Donchess at the Mohawk Tannery groundbreaking ceremony.
Photo credit to Dan Splaine Photography, with permission to reprint from city of Nashua.



Architectural renderings of the proposed Nashua Library renovations. Created by designLAB. (<https://www.nashualibrary.org/294/Building-Renovation-Project>)

Rendering provided by city of Nashua.

Architectural renderings of the proposed Nashua Library renovations. Created by designLAB. (<https://www.nashualibrary.org/294/Building-Renovation-Project>).

Rendering provided by city of Nashua.



Updated rendering of the Salem Police Station project.

Rendering provided by town of Salem.



Rendering of Salem Depot Park provided by the town of Salem.



Project Name	Location/ Sponsor	Priority Areas	Estimated Costs	Estimated Jobs
The Village on Technology Hill PUD	Londonderry	H, C, W, CV	Total construction cost estimated at \$160 million	300+ jobs
Woodmont Commons Project	Londonderry	H, IU, W	Unknown	Phase I: 600 new jobs; Remaining Phases: over 3,000 new jobs
Imagine Main Street	Nashua	T, CV	\$30+ million	None
Nimco Redevelopment	Nashua	H, E	Demolition: \$1.5 million; Construction: Unknown	25
Nashua Public Library	Nashua	CV	\$35-50 million	45
Mohawk Tannery Cleanup & Development	Nashua	H, E	Cleanup: \$27 million; Site development: \$300+ million	15
Redevelopment of Elm Street School	Nashua	H, CV	\$50 million	20
McIntyre Road Bridge Replacement (formerly McIntyre Road Bridge Study and Intersection Design)	Newington	IU, E	\$2,776,227	Unknown
Newington Port Roadway Improvements	Newington/ Newington and Portsmouth	IU	\$3,294,783	Unknown
1035 Lafayette Rd. Workforce Housing Development	Portsmouth/ Portsmouth Housing Authority	H, C, T, E, CV	Approx. \$28.5 million	Unknown, Temporary construction jobs, property management & maintenance, childcare center, HAVEN center services
Sherburne School Workforce Housing Development	Portsmouth/ Portsmouth Housing Authority	H, IU, T, CV	Phase 1: \$36.5 million (includes infrastructure upgrades); Phase 2: unknown.	Unknown, Temporary construction jobs.
U.S. Route 1 Sidepath Construction	Portsmouth	CV	\$19.2 to \$24.9 million	Unknown/ Indirect

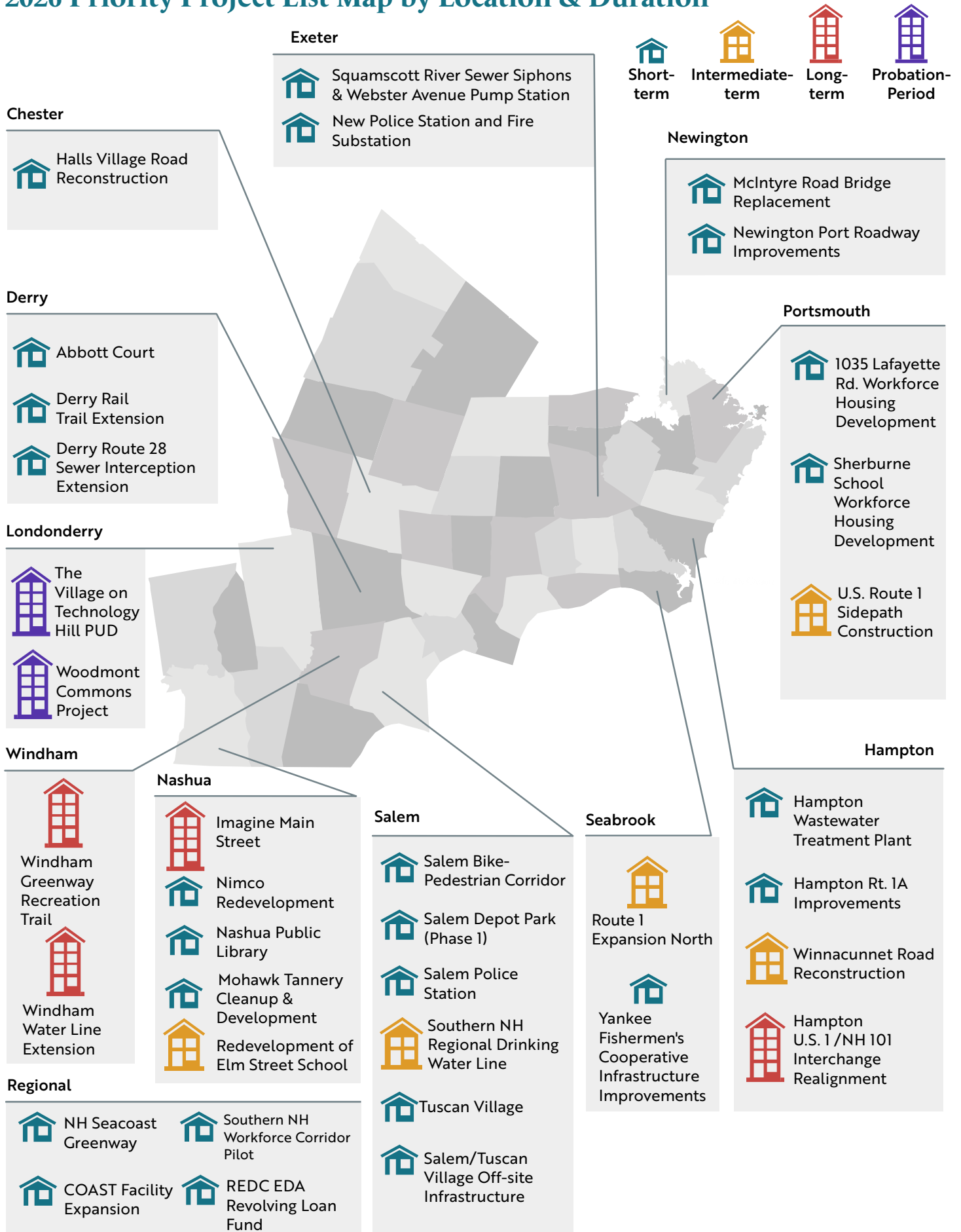
Project Name	Location/ Sponsor	Priority Areas	Estimated Costs	Estimated Jobs
Salem Bike-Pedestrian Corridor	Salem	T, E, CV	Completed Phases (I-III, VI): \$3.2 million; Phases IV - V \$1.2 million; Phases VII+: unknown	Unknown
Salem Depot Park (Phase 1)	Salem	CV	\$1,059,576	N/A
Salem Police Station	Salem	IU, CV	\$38.6 million	Retain 250 jobs
Southern NH Regional Drinking Water Line	Salem (Salem portion)	IU	\$30+ million	Hundreds
Tuscan Village	Salem/ Tuscan Village Development	H, IU, CV	\$1 billion	This project is anticipated to create and retain roughly 5,000 permanent jobs in a wide variety of sectors, including retail, hospitality, food, health care, and professional sectors.
Salem/Tuscan Village Off-site Infrastructure (Depot Village)	Salem	IU, T	\$10 million	250
Route 1 Expansion North	Seabrook	IU	\$3.8 million (Total cost in TYP: \$4.317 million)	10
Yankee Fishermen's Cooperative Infrastructure	Seabrook	W	Phases Remaining 1) \$20,000 2) \$86,676 3) Unknown	This project will save approx. 40 small businesses (fishing boats) and 4 employees.
Windham Greenway Recreation Trail	Windham	T, E, CV	\$2.4 million	Temporary construction jobs.
Windham Water Line Extension	Windham	IU	\$11.56 million	Unknown
COAST Facility Expansion	Seacoast Region/ COAST	T	\$19.54 million	Unknown
NH Seacoast Greenway	Seacoast Region/ RPC	T, E	Hampton-Portsmouth: \$9.6 million; Seabrook-Hampton: \$7.5 million	Unknown

Project Name	Location/ Sponsor	Priority Areas	Estimated Costs	Estimated Jobs
REDC EDA Revolving Loan Fund	Region & State/ REDC	W, CV	\$2 million	250+ created and retained by companies receiving loans
Southern NH Workforce Corridor Pilot (Grades 1–8 Advanced Manufacturing & ReGen Valley Talent Pipeline)	Region/ Uncharted	C, W, E	\$250,000 – \$400,000 total corridor investment (2026–2029 CEDS cycle); \$8,000 per cohort unit; illustrative midpoint scenario approximately \$350,000.	Two to eight part-time, possibility to expand to full-time.

PROJECTS REMOVED

Project Name	Location/ Sponsor	Priority Area/s	Status	Final Costs	Jobs Creation
Wason Pond Recreation Area Bridge Replacement	Chester	IU, E, CV	Completed April 2026.	Phases 1/2: \$64,000, Phase 3: \$389,000	12 temporary construction jobs
Epping Road Economic Development Initiative	Exeter	IU	Construction activities were completed in 2025.	\$6,364,000	0
Bicentennial Wall Reconstruction	Hampton	IU, E, CV	Completed in 2025.	Final Cost: \$2,659,780	0
Kings Hwy Flood Control Improvements	Hampton	IU	Completed May 2026.	\$4,305,390	0
Kingston Landfill Community Solar Farm	Kingston	IU	Withdrawn due to cost.	N/A	0
Salem Master Plan Update	Salem	CV	Completed April 2025.	\$150,000	5
Career Pathway Program	Seacoast - Manchester areas / Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce	W	Project finished Spring 2025.	\$342,550 + \$2,000 for scholarships.	UNK

2026 Priority Project List Map by Location & Duration



REDC Action Plan

With the development of the region's CEDS, REDC will work to support and implement projects, programs, and activities that promote economic development and opportunity throughout southern New Hampshire. REDC will continue to meet its obligations as an Economic Development District (EDD) by coordinating and implementing economic development activities in the district; carrying out economic development research, planning, implementation, and advisory functions identified in the CEDS; and coordinating the development and implementation of the CEDS with other local, state, federal, nonprofit, and private organizations.

In 2025, REDC developed a new set of Goals and Strategies, which will guide our activities during the five-year cycle from 2025-2029. REDC will use the following Action Plan to direct our activities and implementation of the CEDS on an annual basis. The action items are divided into three categories: private sector investment through REDC lending; implementation of the five-year goals through the planning process, community engagement, and priority projects; and the promotion of economic development opportunities and resiliency.

Private Sector Investment

- Invest in startups and expanding businesses that create jobs.
 - Invest in startups and expanding businesses that retain jobs.
 - Invest in a broad spectrum of startups and expanding businesses to foster a resilient economy.
 - Invest in startups and expanding businesses that return private dollars into the region's economy.
- ### Implementation of the CEDS Five-Year Goals
- Continue the ongoing grassroots economic development planning through the CEDS process.
 - Expand the capacity of the Strategy Committee to engage a broad representation of the region.
 - Meet with representatives from communities to identify critical infrastructure and community needs.
 - Continue to work with municipalities and private developers to redevelop Brownfield sites and encourage economic growth.
 - Develop, sponsor, and/or attend events and programs that address one or more of the CEDS Priority Areas.
 - Identify projects, programs, and activities that address one or more of the CEDS Priority Areas via the CEDS Priority Project process and by increasing outreach to local communities and stakeholders.
 - Work with communities to foster implementation of Priority Projects. Provide technical assistance to the

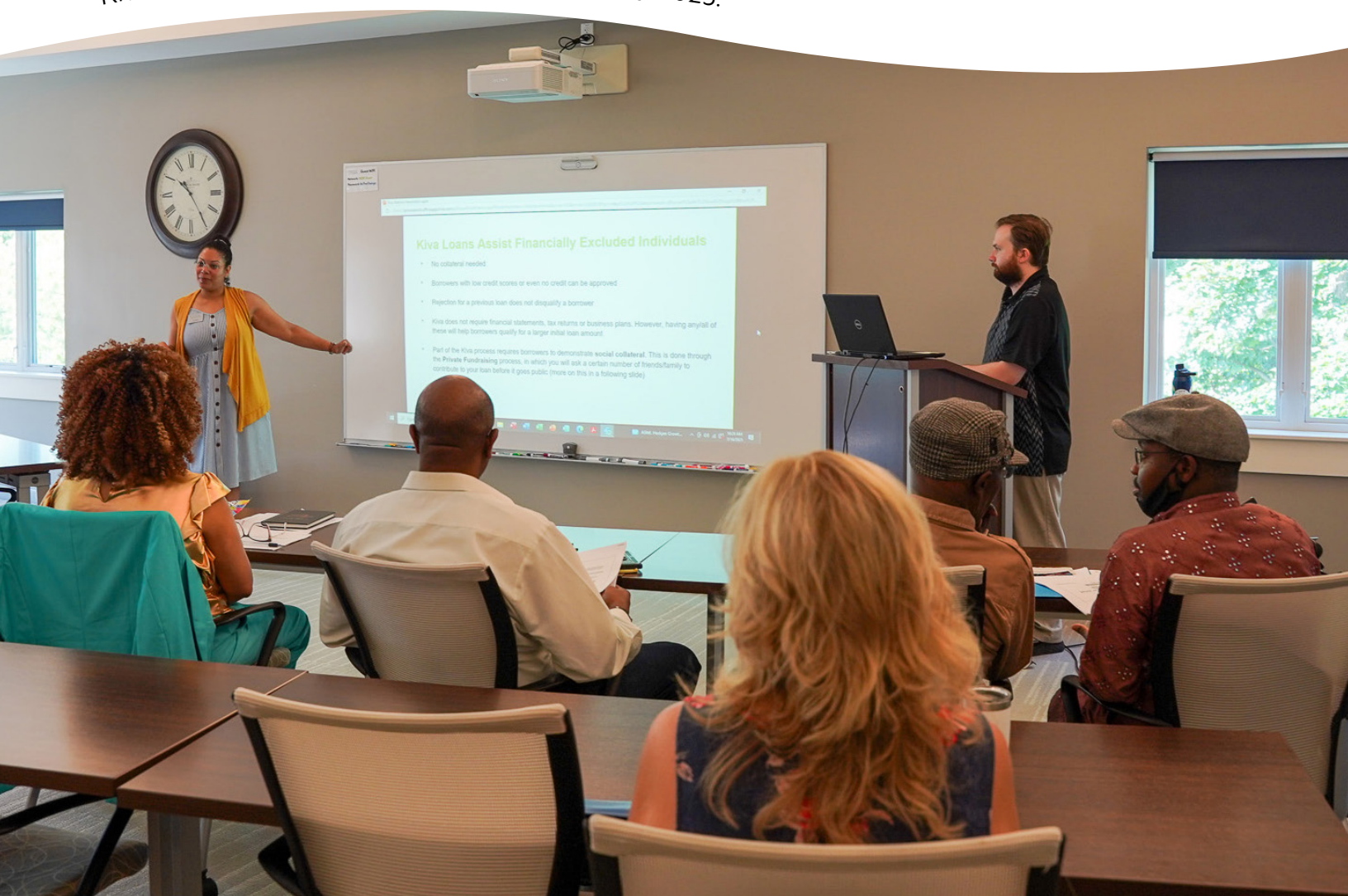
proponents of Priority Projects as needed. Identify key Priority Projects that are eligible for EDA funding opportunities. Provide grant writing and management assistance as needed for these projects.

- Identify and highlight Priority Projects that are complete.

Promote Economic Development and Resiliency

- Provide technical assistance for startups and expanding businesses that create jobs. Assist clients with resiliency planning and economic recovery post-disruption.
- Promote the Kiva lending program.
- Provide technical assistance for Kiva clients.
- Develop, sponsor, and/or attend events and programs that support economic development and resiliency on the local, regional, and state level. Support regional resiliency and mitigation planning efforts.

Kiva Workshop at REDC Training Center in July 2025.



Evaluation Framework

REDC evaluates the success of its work in developing and implementing the CEDS using a variety of performance measures. These measures are divided into three categories: private sector investment through REDC lending; implementation of the five-year goals through the planning process, community engagement, and priority projects; and the promotion of economic development and opportunities.

Tasks for Private Sector Investment	Measure
Invest in startups and expanding businesses that create jobs	Number of jobs created
Invest in startups and expanding businesses that retain jobs	Number of jobs retained
Invest in a broad spectrum of startups and expanding businesses to foster a resilient economy	Number and types of investments
Invest in startups and expanding businesses that return private dollars into the region's economy	Private dollars leveraged
Tasks for CEDS 5-Year Goals	Measure
Grassroots economic development planning	Number of CEDS Strategy Committee meetings
Expand the capacity of the Strategy Committee to engage a broad representation of the region	Number/types of attendees at Strategy Committee meetings
Meet with representatives from communities to identify infrastructure and community needs	Number of outreach engagements to discuss projects/needs
Develop/sponsor/attend events and programs that address one or more of the CEDS Priority Areas	Number and type of events addressing Priority Areas with REDC support/attendance
Identify local and regionally significant economic development construction, planning, and program projects that address Priority Areas	Number /Types of new Priority Projects
Work with communities to foster implementation of Priority Projects	Number of Priority Projects Started/Progress
Identify and highlight Priority Projects that are complete	Number of Priority Projects Completed
Tasks for Promoting Economic Development	Measure
Provide TA for startups and expanding businesses that create jobs	Number of clients receiving TA
Promote Kiva lending program	Number of Kiva loan applications
Provide TA for Kiva clients	Number of Kiva clients receiving coaching; Number of Kiva loans 100% funded
Develop/sponsor/attend events and programs that support local/regional ED	Number and type of ED events with REDC support/attendance

Strategy Committee

The first step in creating a successful Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is to form a strategy committee that is a broad-based representation of the major interests of the region. REDC began with the previous year's CEDS Strategy Committee as a starting point to develop this year's committee. We worked with our partners and the Regional Planning Commissions to refine the roster. REDC staff, the members of the 2026 Strategy Committee, and support staff are listed below.

REDC Staff



Daniel Gray
Executive Vice
President
Dan@redc.com



Stephanie Santos
Executive Vice
President
Stephanie@redc.com



Jennifer Kimball
CEDS Planner
Jennifer@redc.com



Laura Harper Lake
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Angel Paradis
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Angel@redc.com



Adam Moaratty
Program Coordinator
Adam@redc.com



Chad Linehan
Business Advisor
Chad@redc.com



Nicole Kingsbury
Controller
Nicole@redc.com

Consultants

Name	Organization	Email
Scott Lemos	Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics	scott.r.lemos@gmail.com

Partnering Agencies

Name	Organization	Email
Jay Minkarah, Executive Director	Nashua Regional Planning Commission	jaym@nashuarpc.org
Tim Roache, Executive Director	Rockingham Planning Commission	troache@therpc.org
Nathan Miller, Executive Director	Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission	nmiller@snhpc.org
Jen Czysz, Executive Director	Strafford Regional Planning Commission	jczysz@StraffordRPCnh.gov

Long-time Executive Director Sylvia von Aulock retired in May 2026. REDC thanks Sylvia for her hard work and dedication to the region and wishes her well in her retirement.





CEDS Committee Meeting at Old Town Hall, Salem, NH.

Committee

Name	Organization
Nate Bernitz	UNH Cooperative Extension
Crayton Brubaker	Town of Salem
Amber Nicole Cannan	Uncharted Tutoring
David Choate	Colliers International
Sean Clancy	City of Portsmouth
Glenn Coppelman	Evergreen Farm / Kingston
Bev Donovan	Town of Derry
Lisa Fellows-Weaver	Town of Northwood
Andrew Hadik	Town of Chester
Liz Hannum	City of Nashua
Karen Immel	NH BEA
Bart McDonough	Newmarket / Workforce Housing Coalition
Maeve Nolan	Workforce Housing Coalition
Michael Polizzotti	Strafford Regional Planning
Peter Rayno	Rockland Trust / Hudson-Nashua
Elizabeth Robidoux	Town of Derry
Ben VanCamp	Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
Darren Winham	Town of Exeter
DJ Withee	Town of Windham

Meetings

Details	Agenda
Meeting #1 November 19, 2025 Old Town Hall, Salem, NH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Economic Development in Salem● Changes to the EDA Planning Grant Conditions and Overview of 2026 CEDS Update Process● Discussion of top topics impacting the local economy
Meeting #2 February 11, 2026 Phoenix Tailings, Exeter, NH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Economic Development in Exeter● Programs and Products available with CDFA● Overview of Phoenix Tailings● Tour of Phoenix Tailings
Meeting #3 April 15, 2026 Cask & Vine, Derry, NH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Presentation on Uncharted Tutoring and Workforce Development● Economic Development in Derry● Presentation of proposed projects and updates of existing projects for the 2026 Priority Project List● Approval of the 2026 Priority Project List● Overview of Cask & Vine● Tour of Cask & Vine● Tour & Review of Abbott Court Project
Meeting #4 June 17, 2026 REDC Training Center, Raymond	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review/Approval of the 2026 CEDS Update● GRIT TO GROW presentation● KIVA presentation

Amber Nicole Cannan of Uncharted Tutoring presenting to CEDS Committee.



REDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Scott Zeller, Chairman of the Board

Dianne Connolly, Vice Chairman of the Board

Thomas Conaton, Treasurer & Secretary

Board Members

Nancy Carmer

Mike Decelle

Stephen Falzone

Dwight Feeney

Robert McDonald

John Randolph

George Sioras

Mike Decelle and André Garron retired from the Board in March 2026.

Biographies of each board member
can be found at www.redc.com/about.

Data charts and sources can be found at www.redc.com/ceds-2025.

The Regional Economic Development Center is a nonprofit regional development corporation located in southern New Hampshire. REDC serves new, growing, and challenged businesses within our service territory. Whether you need to find a lending partner, finance an expansion, or need assistance with restructuring, REDC can help. REDC assists municipalities with strategic planning, economic development training, and assistance with infrastructure projects through the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).



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