



2025 NTRPDC Annual Meeting



The Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission (NTRPDC) recently held its annual meeting at the Towanda Golf Club, bringing together regional leaders and partners to highlight the year's collaboration, investment, and innovation across the region.

This year's event featured a panel of staff leaders who shared successes and how cross-sector partnerships continue to drive progress in community investment, transportation planning, and business and workforce development.

"Our annual meeting is a reminder that our progress is built on collaboration," said Executive Director, Frank Thompson. "By working together, we're making meaningful investments that strengthen our communities and prepare the Northern Tier for long-term success."

Workforce Director Melissa Fleming stressed the importance of growing partnerships that connect students and employers, highlighting the Towanda

Medical Careers Club as an example of successful collaboration through the Northeastern Healthcare Industry Partnership. The Industry Partnership model brings together businesses, educators, and workforce professionals to address shared challenges and strengthen the regional talent pipeline. Fleming also noted that NTRPDC has a unique advantage in having the Workforce Development Board (WDB) and the Local Development District (LDD) working together under one roof, fostering stronger coordination to support business retention and workforce readiness.

Fleming also recognized the Northern Tier Business Education Partnership (NTBEP), now celebrating its 10th year, serving 21 schools with seven career coaches. The program recently received a 2025 Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO).

Cynthia Traore, Business Development Administrator, highlighted the available services and shared the success of McClain Stone, which leveraged multiple NTRPDC services to grow and strengthen its operations. She also noted the success of the Northern Tier Business Summit, which featured Chris Czarnik, a nationally recognized expert in talent recruitment, retention, and workforce strategies. Cynthia emphasized how a commitment to proactive listening leads to solutions to meet the region's needs and underscored the critical role that partnerships play in driving progress.

Economic Development Program Manager Katie Smith shared recent successes from projects supported through grant opportunities, including a USDA grant for a small business to purchase a cider press, a bridge culvert replacement in Lemon Township, a community trail initiative in Factoryville Borough, support from the Wyoming County Healthcare Foundation, and assistance for Geisinger's CT imaging equipment. She also noted that the Northern Tier Regional Planning Organization (RPO) works closely with local partners to coordinate and prioritize projects for Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) funding, ensuring that infrastructure and community improvements align with regional needs.

Regional Planning Program Manager, Brian Baker discussed the critical role of the region's Rural Planning Organization (RPO) in maintaining and improving transportation assets. He explained that the RPO serves as a conduit for prioritizing key projects, including local bridge replacements and preventive maintenance investments. Baker also emphasized that the Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) ensures balanced regional representation and fosters collaboration across all five counties.

Staff Recognitions

Cynthia Traore was honored for 25 years of service with NTRPDC. Finance Director, Amy Benjamin and Operations Manager, Nancy Kulick were recognized for 15 years of service, while Workforce Program Administrator, Jody McCarty and BEP Career Coach, Pat Chappell celebrated 10 years. Additional achievements included Traore earning the Entrepreneurship Development Professional (EDP) credential from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and completing the Appalachian Regional Commission Leadership Institute (ALI). Loan Program Manager, Stacey Urban graduated from the Oklahoma Economic Development Institute (OU EDI). New staff were also recognized, including Business Education Program Manager, Renae Chamberlain and Career Coaches, Cindy DeHaven and

Additional upcoming regional efforts include the development of an interactive agritourism map to showcase farms, markets, and local producers across the five-county region, making it easier for visitors to explore and experience the area's agricultural offerings. NTRPDC was also recently awarded an ARC INSPIRE planning grant to evaluate and expand the Fit4Work Reengagement Project, aiming to better serve individuals in recovery and those impacted by the criminal justice system while fostering recovery-friendly workplaces across the Northern Tier. Through data collection, stakeholder engagement, and workforce analysis, the grant will produce a comprehensive action plan to connect individuals with employment opportunities and support businesses in implementing hiring and retention practices.



NTRPDC Receives \$100,000 from the Appalachian Regional Commission's INSPIRE Initiative to Strengthen Recovery-to-Work Opportunities



The Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission (NTRPDC) has been awarded \$100,000 from the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative. This project is part of an \$11 million award package supporting organizations across Appalachia working to address workforce challenges and economic barriers caused by substance use disorder (SUD).

Through this planning grant, NTRPDC will partner with regional stakeholders to reinvigorate the Fit4Work Reengagement Project, a program that provides workforce preparation services and work-based learning opportunities for individuals in recovery and those connected to the criminal justice system.

"This project represents an important step in aligning workforce development

with recovery support services across our five-county region,” said Melissa Fleming, Workforce Development Director at NTRPDC. “By coordinating services, we can better support individuals in recovery pursue meaningful employment while also helping businesses to adopt recovery-friendly employment practices.”

The initiative will focus on assessing current resources, identifying service gaps, and strengthening collaboration between recovery organizations, workforce programs, and local employers.

The project serves Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, and Wyoming counties in Pennsylvania’s Northern Tier region.

For more information, please contact Melissa Fleming at fleming@northerntier.org.

Taste of the Region Event Showcases Local Skill and Community Spirit



The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC), in partnership with the PREP partners, was thrilled to host the first-ever Taste of the Region event on Saturday, October 4, at Alparon Park in Troy, Bradford County. The event brought together dozens of local vendors and hundreds of attendees eager to experience the region’s best products grown or made right here in the Northern Tier.

Focused on celebrating local agriculture, entrepreneurship, and community collaboration, the event highlighted the diversity and creativity that make our area unique. From freshly brewed coffee and whoopie pies to maple syrup, honey, jewelry, herbal products, and handcrafted items, vendors from across the Northern Tier showcased their skill and dedication to their craft.

The event also provided a valuable platform for small businesses to connect directly with consumers, network with one another, and gain exposure to new markets.

“We were excited to see such strong participation for our first year,” said Stacey Urban. “The enthusiasm from both vendors and visitors shows how much pride our community takes in supporting local business.”

NTRPDC extends a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who supported and participated in the inaugural event.



NTBEP Career Education Mini-Grant Application Opens

NTRPDC has released the 2025–2026 Northern Tier Business Education Partnership (NTBEP) Mini-Grant guidelines and application for career education projects. These grants support innovative career awareness and career education projects that connect youth in grades K–12 with employers and work-based learning opportunities. Eligible applicants include schools, career and technical centers, and employers and providers who work with youth in grades K-12 in Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming counties. Applications are being accepted through January 30, 2026, or until funds are depleted.

To request the guidelines or learn more about the mini-grant opportunity, contact Renae Chamberlain at chamberlain@nortierntier.org.

Grant Award Announcements



Appalachian Regional Commission

Three ARC Area Development grants through the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) Area Development Program have been awarded in the NTRPDC region. The grant program funds projects to strengthen the

economic and community development of Appalachia. It supports initiatives in areas like infrastructure (e.g., broadband, water systems) and business/workforce development (e.g., training, entrepreneurship), aligning with the ARC's strategic goals and requiring community-level input and state-level approval.

Project Title: Wyoming County Cultural Infrastructure

Grantee: Wyoming County Cultural Center, Inc.

Award Amount: \$84,846

Announcement Date: September 2025

Project Summary: With ARC's support, the Wyoming County Cultural Center can hire a full-time cultural programming director and host more events at its upgraded Tunkhannock facility, attracting new visitors and boosting downtown tourism. The Dietrich Theater, the only theater within twenty miles offering cultural films, exhibits, and classes alongside mainstream movies, can leverage increased programming and improved infrastructure to drive economic benefits for local residents and businesses. The project addresses

key needs by expanding staffing and upgrading equipment, aligning with the Center's strategic plan and the 2024 Wyoming County Heart & Soul Plan.

Project Title: Endless Mountains Tourism Expansion

Grantee: Endless Mountains Heritage Region, Inc.

Award Amount: \$75,000

Announcement Date: September 2025

Project Summary: The Endless Mountains Heritage Region, Inc. (EMHR) received \$75,000 in ARC funding for the Endless Mountains Tourism Expansion project to grow outdoor tourism in the state-designated Heritage Area. ARC support will allow EMHR to convert a part-time programming associate into a full-time position to expand and promote events, increase recreation opportunities, and attract over 100 new annual visitors across four counties. Funding will also support historic preservation and grant workshops, as well as expanded outdoor events like river sojourns and cycling tours, driving local economic development and laying the groundwork for National Heritage Area designation.

Project Title: Athens Township Authority Sanitary Sewer System Engineering & Planning

Grantee: Athens Township Authority

Award Amount: \$25,000

Announcement Date: July 2025

Project Summary: The Athens Township Authority (ATA) received \$25,000 in ARC funding for a sewer system engineering and planning study to evaluate infrastructure and identify improvements needed to support commercial and industrial development. The project will focus on Greens Landing, Wilawana Road, and Mile Lane Road, collecting flow and rainfall data, inspecting pump stations, and addressing areas with infiltration issues. The resulting report, including a hydraulic model, will guide future system expansion and support sustainable economic growth.

The Appalachian Region Commission is an economic development partnership agency of the federal government and 13 state governments including Pennsylvania. PA's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) partners with ARC to identify and support projects that will build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in the Appalachian counties of Pennsylvania to reach socioeconomic parity with the nation.

LAUNCH! Your Success



The LAUNCH! Your Success program is a federally funded program for young adults that provides assistance in achieving academic and employment success. LAUNCH! can help with obtaining a GED, providing year-round education and employment opportunities, including summer work experiences. For more information go to [LAUNCH! Your Success](#). You can also check out the [Fall 2025 Newsletter here](#).

BST Employer Newsletter



The Northern Tier Business Services Team distributes a monthly employer newsletter. Click on the link below to read information on local PA CareerLink® events and other employer specific topics.

October 2025 Employer Newsletter

Empowering People. Developing Businesses. Strengthening Communities.

The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC) is the Local Development District (LDD) serving the Pennsylvania counties of Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming. We provide business financing, international trade counseling, government contract assistance, grant writing, transportation planning and workforce development services.

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