

Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Structural Features and Function

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Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Structural Features and Function

This report describes the structure, activities, legislative history, and funding history of the 11 federal regional commissions and authorities. Those commissions and authorities are the

- Appalachian Regional Commission;
- Delta Regional Authority;
- Denali Commission;
- Great Lakes Authority;
- Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission;
- Northern Border Regional Commission;
- Northern Great Plains Regional Authority;
- Northwest Regional Commission;
- Southern New England Regional Commission;
- Southeast Crescent Regional Commission; and
- Southwest Border Regional Commission.

Most of the regional commissions and authorities are modeled after the Appalachian Regional Commission structure, which is composed of a federal co-chair appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, and the member state governors, of which one is appointed the state co-chair. This structure is broadly replicated in the other commissions and authorities, albeit with notable variations and exceptions to local contexts. In addition, the service areas for the federal regional commissions and authorities are defined in statute and thus can only be amended or modified through congressional action. While the exact service areas have shifted over time, the general areas of service, as well as the services provided, have not changed significantly.

Of the 11 federal regional commissions and authorities, six could be considered active and functioning as of the date of publication: the Appalachian Regional Commission; the Delta Regional Authority; the Denali Commission; the Northern Border Regional Commission; the Southwest Border Regional Commission; and the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission. The Great Lakes Authority, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission, the Northwest Regional Commission, and the Southern New England Regional Commission are not yet active, and they do not have a confirmed federal co-chair. The funding authorization for the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority (NGPRA) lapsed at the end of FY2018 and it was not reauthorized until FY2025. The NGPRA also lacks a confirmed federal co-chair and is not active.

Eight of the regional commissions and authorities each received \$1 million to \$200 million in annual appropriations in FY2026 for their various activities. Each of the six functioning regional commissions and authorities engage in economic development to varying extents and address multiple programmatic activities in their respective service areas. These activities may include, but are not limited to, basic infrastructure; energy; ecology/environment and natural resources; workforce; and business development/entrepreneurship.

Though they are federally chartered, receive congressional appropriations for their administration and activities, and include an appointed federal representative in their respective leadership structures (the federal co-chair and his/her alternate, as applicable), the federal regional commissions and authorities are quasi-governmental partnerships between the federal government and the constituent state(s) of a given authority or commission. This partnership structure includes substantial input and efforts at the sub-state level, and represents a unique federal approach to economic development.

The federal regional commissions and authorities provide a model of functioning economic development approaches that are place-based, intergovernmental, and multifaceted in their programmatic orientation (e.g., infrastructure, energy, environment/ecology, workforce, business development).

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Introduction

The 11 federal regional commissions and authorities (FRCAs) are:

- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC);
- Delta Regional Authority (DRA);
- Denali Commission;
- Great Lakes Authority (GLA);
- Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission (MARC);
- Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC);
- Northern Great Plains Regional Authority (NGPRA);
- Northwest Regional Commission (NRC);
- Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC);
- Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC); and
- Southern New England Regional Commission (SNERC).

Congress authorized most FRCAs to address instances of major economic distress in certain defined socioeconomic regions (see **Table A-1**).

The first such federal regional commission, the ARC, was founded in 1965. The other commissions and authorities may have roots in the intervening decades, but were not founded until 1998 (Denali Commission), 2000 (DRA), and 2002 (the NGPRA). The NBRC, SCRC, and SBRC were authorized in 2008; the GLA was authorized in 2022.¹ The MARC and SNERC were authorized in 2025; the NRC received initial appropriations in 2026.²

Six FRCAs are currently active, meaning they are engaged in economic development activities in their service areas, have received recent appropriations, and have a Senate-confirmed federal co-chair (or equivalent) in place. These are the ARC, DRA, Denali Commission, NBRC, SCRC, and SBRC. Five FRCAs are currently inactive, and do not have all of those features at this time: the MARC, NGPRA,³ NRC, SNERC, and GLA.⁴

Eight of the entities currently receive annual appropriations: ARC, DRA, GLA, the Denali Commission, NBRC, NRC, SBRC, and SCRC. Both SCRC and SBRC were inactive until

¹ The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328) amended 40 U.S.C. §15301(a) to establish the Great Lakes Authority (GLA). The GLA does not yet have a federal co-chair. See Division O, Title IV, §401 of P.L. 117-328.

² The Economic Development Reauthorization Act (EDRA) of 2024 (P.L. 118-272, Division B, Title II) amended 40 U.S.C. §15301(a) to establish the Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission (MARC) and Southern New England Regional Commission (SNERC). The MARC and SNERC do not yet have a federal co-chair and have not received appropriations. P.L. 119-74 provided appropriations for “expenses necessary to establish a Northwest Regional Commission.” As of the date of publication, the Northwest Regional Commission does not yet have a federal co-chair and is not active.

³ The NGPRA has not received appropriations since FY2005 and does not have a federal co-chair.

⁴ The GLA received its first appropriation in FY2024, and on May 2, 2024, President Biden nominated a federal co-chair for the GLA. The federal co-chair is a presidentially nominated and Senate-confirmed position. In November 2024, the nomination was reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW), and in January 2025, the nomination was returned to the President under the provisions of Senate Rule XXXI, paragraph 6 of the Standing Rules of the Senate. See PN1694—Nomination of Matthew Kaplan for Great Lakes Authority, 118th Congress (2023-2024), <https://www.congress.gov/nomination/118th-congress/1694>; and the White House, “President Biden Announces Key Nominees,” May 2, 2024, <https://www.bidenwhitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/05/02/president-biden-announces-key-nominees-72/>.

relatively recently. The SCRC received regular annual appropriations since FY2010, but lacked a Senate-confirmed federal co-chair until December 2021. The SBRC received its first appropriation in FY2021, and lacked a federal co-chair until December 2022. Confirmation of the SCRC and SBRC federal co-chairs allowed these two commissions to convene and begin their activities.

The annual Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies (E&W) appropriations act provides funding for select FRCAs. Full-year FY2027 E&W appropriations have not been enacted. On September 2, 2026, the President signed into law the Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2027 (P.L. 119-103). P.L. 119-103 provides FY2027 funding on a temporary basis through December 11, 2026, for the FRCAs that were funded in the FY2026 appropriation act (P.L. 119-74) at the same rate and under the same conditions (see Division A). P.L. 119-103 also extends the ARC's authorization and funding authorization through FY2027 and extends funding authorizations for two specific ARC initiatives through FY2027 (see Division C) through the extension period.

The Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-74) provided \$324 million in total annual appropriations for select FRCAs, an increase of about 1% from their FY2025 enacted level of \$319 million.⁵ The FY2026 appropriations measure also provided funding for a new Northwest Regional Commission (NRC), which—once established—would cover Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. As of the date of this report, the commission does not have a federal co-chair and is not active.⁶

The FRCAs are functioning examples of place-based and intergovernmental approaches to economic development, which receive regular congressional interest.⁷ The FRCAs integrate federal and state economic development priorities alongside regional and local considerations. As federally chartered agencies created by acts of Congress, the FRCAs depend on congressional appropriations for their activities and administration, and are subject to congressional oversight.

Certain strategic emphases and programs have evolved over time in each of the functioning FRCAs. However, their overarching missions to address economic distress have not changed, and their associated activities have broadly remained consistent to those goals as funding has allowed. In practice, the FRCAs engage in their respective economic development efforts through multiple program areas, which may include, but are not limited to basic infrastructure; energy; ecology/environment and natural resources; workforce; and business development/entrepreneurship. This report describes the structure, recent activities, legislative history, and funding history of the federally chartered regional commissions and authorities.

“Subtitle V” Regional Commissions

⁵ P.L. 119-4.

⁶ P.L. 119-74 provided appropriations for “expenses necessary to establish a Northwest Regional Commission” and that the funding for the commission “shall be used to carry out activities authorized for other regional Commissions by subtitle V of title 40, United States Code.” The commission is not active.

⁷ See, for example, recent congressional interest and legislative action on new place-based programs such as the Department of Commerce Recompete and Technology and Innovation Hub programs (authorized in FY2022 by P.L. 117-167); Opportunity Zones (CRS Report R45152, *Tax Incentives for Opportunity Zones*, by Donald J. Marples); and New Market Tax Credits (CRS Report RL34402, *New Markets Tax Credit: An Introduction*, by Donald J. Marples), and previous federal and congressional action on “Promise Zones” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Promise Zones Overview*, <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/promise-zones/promise-zones-overview/>); as well as various legislation relating to the federal regional commissions and authorities themselves. See also CRS In Focus IF12409, *What Is Place-Based Economic Development?*, by Adam G. Levin.

The GLA, MARC, NBRC, NRC, SBRC, SCRC, and SNERC are all authorized by 40 U.S.C. Subtitle V, as amended, leading some experts to group them as “Subtitle V FRCAs.” These FRCAs have the most in common with each other in terms of structure, administrative powers, and programs. The four Subtitle V FRCAs authorized *prior* to the enactment of the EDRA included the GLA, NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC.

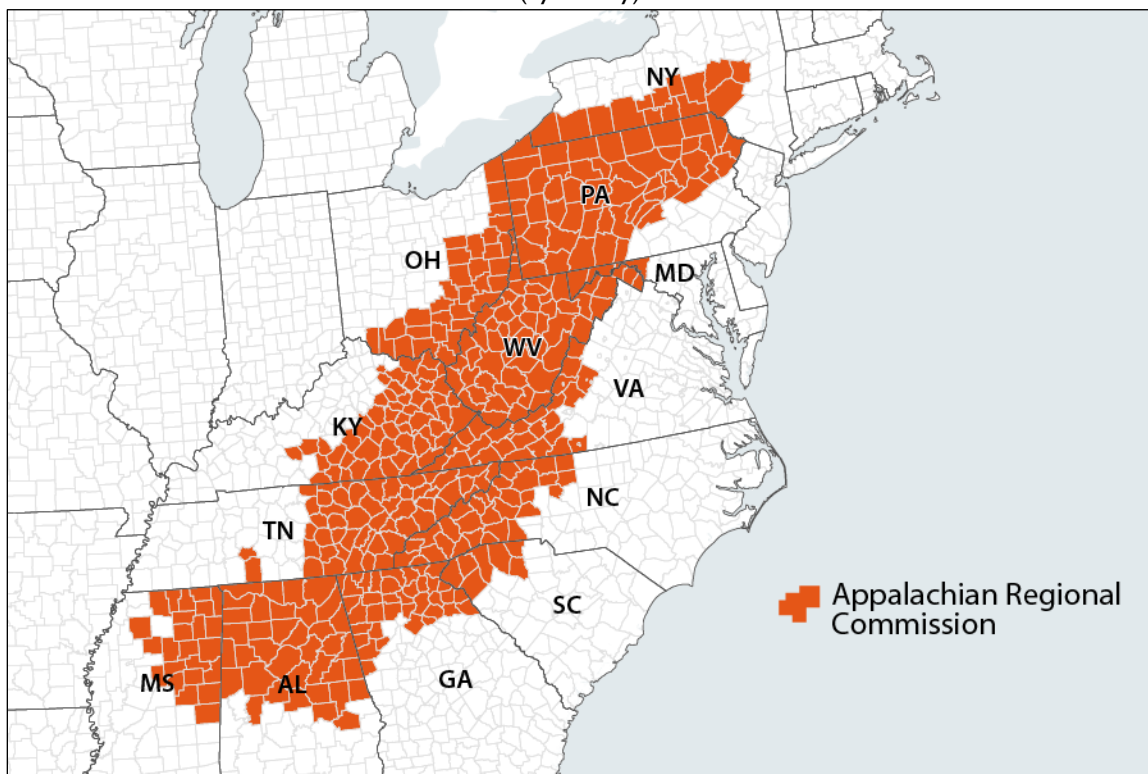
In FY2025, P.L. 118-272 amended 40 U.S.C. §15301(a) to establish two new Subtitle V FRCAs—the MARC and SNERC.

In FY2026, P.L. 119-74 provided appropriations “for expenses necessary to establish a Northwest Regional Commission located in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana,” and noted that the funding for the commission “shall be used to carry out activities authorized for other regional Commissions by subtitle V of title 40, United States Code.”

Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission was established in 1965 to address economic distress in the Appalachian region.⁸ The ARC’s jurisdiction spans 423 counties in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (**Figure 1**). The ARC was originally created to address severe economic disparities between Appalachia and that of the broader United States; recently, its mission has grown to include regional competitiveness in a global economic environment.

Figure 1. Map of the Appalachian Regional Commission
(by county)



Source: Compiled by CRS using data from 40 U.S.C. §14102, Esri Data and Maps, and the Appalachian Regional Commission, “About the Appalachian Region,” <https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/>.

⁸ 40 U.S.C. §§14101-14704.

Overview of Structure and Activities

Commission Structure

According to the authorizing legislation, the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, as amended,⁹ the ARC is a federally chartered, regional economic development entity led by a federal co-chair, whose term is open-ended, and the 13 participating state governors, of which one serves as the state co-chair for a term of “at least one year.”¹⁰ The federal co-chair is appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The authorizing act also allows for the appointment of federal and state alternates to the commission. The ARC is a federal-state partnership, with administrative costs shared equally by the federal government and member states, while economic development activities are funded by congressional appropriations.

There are 74 ARC-associated LDDs. They may be conduits for funding for other eligible organizations, and may also themselves be ARC grantees.¹¹ State and local governments, governmental entities, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for ARC investments, including both federal- and state-designated tribal entities. State-designated tribal entities that are not federally recognized (or “lack federal recognition”) are nevertheless eligible to receive ARC funding. This is rare, as usually federal funding requires federal recognition.¹²

Strategic Plan

According to authorizing legislation and the ARC Code,¹³ the ARC’s programs abide by a Regional Development Plan (RDP), which includes documents prepared by the states and the commission. The RDP is comprised of the ARC’s strategic plan, its bylaws, member state development plans, each participating state’s annual strategy statement, the commission’s annual program budget, and the commission’s internal implementation and performance management guidelines.

The RDP integrates local, state, and federal economic development priorities into a common regional agenda. Through state plans and annual work statements, states establish goals, priorities, and agendas for fulfilling them. State planning typically includes consulting with local development districts (LDDs), which are multicounty organizations that are associated with and financially supported by the ARC and advise on local priorities.¹⁴

⁹ P.L. 89-4.

¹⁰ Appalachian Regional Commission, *ARC Code*, 2022, <https://www.arc.gov/arc-code>.

¹¹ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Local Development Districts*, <https://www.arc.gov/local-development-districts/>.

¹² See U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Indian Issues: Federal Funding for Non-Federally Recognized Tribes*, 12-348, April 2012, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/600/590102.pdf>.

¹³ Appalachian Regional Commission, *ARC Code*, 2022. The ARC Code reflects ARC decisions and current ARC policy. The ARC Code is a statement of ARC decisions adopted through resolutions and motions. Under Section 101(b) of the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA), the ARC Code cannot be modified or revised without a quorum of governors.

¹⁴ LDDs are not exclusive to the ARC. The DRA and NBRC also make use of them, and other inactive commissions and authorities are authorized to organize and/or support them. Designated LDDs may also be organized as Economic Development Administration (EDA)-designated economic development districts (EDDs), which serve a similar purpose. They may also be co-located with Small Business Administration-affiliated small business development centers (SBDCs).

ARC's strategic plan is a five-year document, reviewed annually, and revised as necessary. The current strategic plan, adopted in October 2021,¹⁵ prioritizes five investment goals:

1. entrepreneurial and business development;
2. workforce development;
3. infrastructure development;
4. natural and cultural assets; and
5. leadership and community capacity.

The ARC's 13 member states also develop four-year plans and annual strategy statements that outline their states' funding priorities for ARC projects.¹⁶

Designating Distressed Areas

The ARC is statutorily obligated to allocate at least 50% of funding to distressed areas.¹⁷ The ARC is also statutorily obligated to designate counties by level of economic distress.¹⁸ Distress designations influence funding priority and determine grant match requirements. Using an index-based classification system, the ARC compares each county within its jurisdiction with national averages based on three economic indicators:¹⁹ (1) three-year average unemployment rates; (2) per capita market income; and (3) poverty rates. These factors are calculated into a composite index value for each county, which are ranked and sorted into designated distress levels. Each distress level corresponds to a given county's ranking relative to that of the United States as a whole. These designations are defined as follows by the ARC, starting from "worst" distress:²⁰

- *distressed* counties, or those with values in the "worst" 10% of U.S. counties;
- *at-risk*, which rank between worst 10% and 25%;
- *transitional*, which rank between worst 25% and best 25%;
- *competitive*, which rank between "best" 25% and best 10%; and
- *attainment*, or those which rank in the best 10%.

The designated level of distress is statutorily tied to allowable funding levels by the ARC (funding allowance), the balance of which must be met through grant matches from other funding sources (including potentially other federal funds) unless a waiver or special dispensation is permitted: distressed (80% funding allowance, 20% grant match); at-risk (70%); transitional (50%); competitive (30%); and attainment (0% funding allowance). Exceptions can be made to grant match thresholds. Attainment counties may be able to receive funding for projects where sub-county areas are considered to be at higher levels of distress, and/or in those cases where the

¹⁵ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachia Envisioned: A New Era of Opportunity, Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026*, <https://www.arc.gov/strategicplan/>.

¹⁶ See, for example, state plans available at Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachian States*, <https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-states/>.

¹⁷ 40 U.S.C. §14524. ARC reports that it generally provides over 50% of its appropriations to distressed counties and areas. In FY2024, 73% of its appropriations were awarded to projects in distressed counties or areas. See Appalachian Regional Commission, *FY 2026 Congressional Justification*, p. 11, <https://www.arc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/ARC-FY-2026-Congressional-Justification.pdf>.

¹⁸ 40 U.S.C. §14526.

¹⁹ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Classifying Economic Distress in Appalachian Counties*, <https://www.arc.gov/classifying-economic-distress-in-appalachian-counties>.

²⁰ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Distressed Designation and County Economic Status Classification System*, <https://www.arc.gov/distressed-designation-and-county-economic-status-classification-system>.

inclusion of an attainment county in a multi-county project would benefit one or more nonattainment counties or areas. In addition, special allowances may reduce or discharge matches, and match requirements may be met with other federal funds.

Recent Activities²¹

ARC makes grant investments through the following core programs:²²

- **Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE).** ARC established the ARISE initiative in 2022 to support large-scale, multi-state projects.²³
- **Appalachian Regional Energy Hub Initiative.** ARC launched a grant program to fund energy hub research and implementation projects in FY2024.²⁴
- **Area Development** (i.e., the “base” grant program). This funding is for building community capacity and supporting economic growth broadly. This program also provides funding for local development districts (LDDs), access to capital initiatives, and funding for business development revolving loan funds (RLFs).²⁵
- **Initiative for Substance Abuse Mitigation (INSPIRE).** INSPIRE funding is provided to initiatives designed to address challenges related to substance use disorder (SUD), such as efforts to support workforce entry or re-entry and other recovery ecosystem projects.²⁶
- **Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative.** The POWER Initiative provides funding for ARC communities disproportionately affected by the downturn of the coal industry.²⁷
- **Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Grant Initiative.** ARC partners with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration to design workforce development initiatives, with funding provided through the Department of Labor (DOL).²⁸

²¹ Activities and programs in this section are illustrative examples and not comprehensive. For information on additional Appalachian Regional Commission activities, see <https://www.arc.gov>.

²² Appalachian Regional Commission, *About ARC Grants*, <https://www.arc.gov/about-arc-grants/>; and *Grants and Opportunities*, <https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities>.

²³ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies*, <https://www.arc.gov/arise>.

²⁴ The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) authorized ARC to fund energy hub activities. See Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachian Regional Energy Hub Initiative*, <https://arc.gov/energyhub>.

²⁵ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Area Development*, <https://www.arc.gov/area-development-program/>. For more information on revolving loan funds, see CRS In Focus IF11449, *Economic Development Revolving Loan Funds (ED-RLFs)*, by Julie M. Lawhorn. For information about ARC’s Access to Capital Program, see Appalachian Regional Commission, *Access to Capital Program*, <https://arc.gov/access-to-capital-program/>.

²⁶ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems Initiative*, <https://www.arc.gov/sud>.

²⁷ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization Initiative*, <https://www.arc.gov/power>. For additional information, see CRS Report R46015, *The POWER Initiative: Energy Transition as Economic Development*, by Julie M. Lawhorn.

²⁸ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities*, <https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/worc/>; and Department of Labor, *Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Initiative*, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/dislocated-workers/grants/workforce-opportunity>.

In addition to its grant programs, ARC activities include various partnerships and ongoing initiatives (e.g., the J-1 Visa waiver program,²⁹ READY Appalachia,³⁰ and various academies and institutes).³¹ ARC collaborates with federal, state, and local agencies to develop the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) and Local Roads program.³² Additionally, ARC's research office issues Requests for Proposals for research and evaluation contracts on topics directly affecting economic development in the Appalachian region.³³

ARC collaborates with various federal agencies on programs and initiatives. In recent years, Congress has directed the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide approximately \$2-\$3 million annually to ARC for projects that meet the purposes of USDA Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP). The funding is used to support rural economic development

²⁹ Appalachian Regional Commission, *J-1 Visa Waivers*, <https://www.arc.gov/j-1-visa-waivers/>.

³⁰ In FY2025, ARC provided five grant opportunities designed to strengthen economically distressed communities through the READY Appalachia initiative. The grants supported projects intended to build individual, organizational, and/or community capacity. Appalachian Regional Commission, *Ready Appalachia*, <https://www.arc.gov/ready/>.

³¹ See Appalachian Regional Commission, *Grants and Opportunities*, <https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities>.

³² 40 U.S.C. §14501. Congress authorized construction of the Appalachian Development Highway System as part of ARC's original enabling legislation in 1965. See also "Appalachian Development Highway System Program (ADHS; IIJA Division J, Title VIII)," in CRS Report R47022, *Federal Highway Programs: In Brief*, by Robert S. Kirk; Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachian Development Highway System*, <https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-development-highway-system>; and *Transportation in Appalachia*, <https://www.arc.gov/transportation-in-appalachia>.

³³ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Research and Data*, <https://www.arc.gov/research-and-data>.

activities in the Appalachian region.³⁴ Other federal partners include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Defense (DOD),³⁵ the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), among others.³⁶

Legislative History

Appalachian Regional Development Act

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Appalachian Regional Development Act,³⁷ which created the ARC to address the President's Appalachian Regional Commission (PARC) recommendations, and added counties in New York and Mississippi. The ARC was directed to administer or assist in the following initiatives:

- The creation of the Appalachian Development Highway System;
- Establishing "Demonstration Health Facilities" to fund health infrastructure;
- Land stabilization, conservation, and erosion control programs;
- Timber development organizations, for purposes of forest management;
- Mining area restoration, for rehabilitating and/or revitalizing mining sites;
- A water resources survey;
- Vocational education programs; and
- Sewage treatment infrastructure.

The Council of Appalachian Governors

Prior to the establishment of ARC, in 1960, the Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia governors formed the Council of Appalachian Governors to highlight Appalachia's extended economic distress and to press for increased federal involvement. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy formed the President's Appalachian Regional Commission (PARC) and charged it with developing an economic development program for the region. PARC's report, issued in 1964, called for the creation of an independent agency to coordinate federal and state efforts to address infrastructure, natural resources, and human capital issues in the region. The PARC also included some Ohio counties as part of the Appalachian region.³⁸

Major Amendments to the ARC

Appalachian Regional Development Act Amendments of 1975

In 1975, the ARC's authorizing legislation was amended to require that state governors themselves serve as the state representatives on the commission, overriding original statutory language in which governors were permitted to appoint designated representatives.³⁹ The amendments also included provisions to expand public participation in ARC plans and programs.

³⁴ For example, in FY2026, P.L. 119-37 provided \$10 million for the ARC, DRA, NBRC, and SBRC regions for any Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) purposes (as described in section 381E(d) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act).

³⁵ The Department of Defense is "using a secondary Department of War designation," under Executive Order 14347 dated September 5, 2025. See <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/09/10/2025-17508/restoring-the-united-states-department-of-war>.

³⁶ Appalachian Regional Commission, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, pp. 6-7, <https://www.arc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/FY-2025-ARC-Budget-Congressional-Justification.pdf>.

³⁷ P.L. 89-4.

³⁸ Appalachian Regional Commission, *ARC History*, <https://www.arc.gov/about/ARCHistory.asp>; and Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachia: A Report by the President's Appalachian Regional Commission, 1964*, April 1964.

³⁹ P.L. 94-188.

They also required states to consult with local development districts and local governments and authorized federal grants to the ARC to assist states in enhancing state development planning.

Appalachian Regional Development Reform Act of 1998

Legislative reforms in 1998 introduced county-level designations of distress.⁴⁰ The legislation organized county-level distress into three bands, from “worst” to “best”: distressed counties; competitive counties; and attainment counties. The act imposed limitations on funding for economically strong counties: (1) “competitive,” which could only accept ARC funding for 30% of project costs (with the 70% balance being subject to grant match requirements); and (2) “attainment,” which were generally ineligible for funding, except through waivers or exceptions.

In addition, the act withdrew the ARC’s legislative mandate for certain programs, including the land stabilization, conservation, and erosion control program; the timber development program; the mining area restoration program; the water resource development and utilization survey; the Appalachian airport safety improvements program (a program added in 1971); the sewage treatment works program; and amendments to the Housing Act of 1954 from the original 1965 act.

Appalachian Regional Development Act Amendments of 2002

Legislation in 2002 expanded the ARC’s ability to support LDDs, introduced an emphasis on ecological issues, and provided for a greater coordinating role by the ARC in federal economic development activities.⁴¹ The amendments also provided new stipulations for the ARC’s grant making, limiting the organization to funding 50% of project costs or 80% in designated distressed counties. The amendments also expanded the ARC’s efforts in human capital development projects, such as through various vocational, entrepreneurial, and skill training initiatives.

The Appalachian Regional Development Act Amendments of 2008

The Appalachian Regional Development Act Amendments of 2008 made adjustments to the ARC’s grant authorities and extended its geographic reach. The amendments included

1. various limitations on project funding amounts and commission contributions;
2. the establishment of an economic and energy development initiative;
3. the expansion of county designations to include an “at-risk” designation; and
4. the expansion of the number of counties under the ARC’s jurisdiction.⁴²

The 2008 amendments introduced funding limitations for ARC grant activities as a whole, as well as to specific programs. According to the 2008 legislation, “the amount of the grant shall not exceed 50 percent of administrative expenses.” However, at the ARC’s discretion, an LDD that included a “distressed” county in its service area could provide for 75% of administrative expenses of a relevant project, or 70% for “at-risk” counties. Eligible activities could only be funded by the ARC at a maximum of 50% of the project cost,⁴³ or 80% for distressed counties and 70% for “at-risk” counties. The act introduced special project categories, including

⁴⁰ P.L. 105-393.

⁴¹ P.L. 107-149.

⁴² P.L. 110-371.

⁴³ Where allowable, nonappropriated funds—such as those from states or localities—or even other non-ARC federal funds may be used to fund the balance of the project costs.

- demonstration health projects;
- assistance for proposed low- and middle-income housing projects;
- the telecommunications and technology initiative;
- the entrepreneurship initiative; and
- the regional skills partnership.

Finally, the “economic and energy development initiative” provided for the ARC to fund activities supporting energy efficiency and renewable technologies. The legislation expanded distress designations to include an “at-risk” category, or counties “most at risk of becoming economically distressed.” This raised the number of distress levels to five.⁴⁴ The legislation also expanded ARC’s service area. Ten counties in four states were added to the ARC.

The SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (P.L. 115-271) of 2018

The SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (the SUPPORT Act, P.L. 115-271), enacted in June 2018, authorized the ARC to support projects and activities that address substance abuse, including opioid abuse, in the region.⁴⁵

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) of 2021

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), enacted in November 2021, extended the ARC’s authorization and provided funding for it through FY2026.

Division A of the IIJA authorized appropriations at \$200 million a year for each fiscal year through FY2026. Within those overall authorized appropriations, the act specifically authorized the ARC to use \$20 million annually for expansion of high-speed broadband activities (an increase from \$10 million annually) and directed ARC to allocate \$5 million annually for newly authorized Appalachian Regional Energy Hub activities. The act addressed the ARC’s broadband authorization, and outlined additional aspects of the agency’s broadband and regional energy hub initiatives. The act also required congressional notification for grants over \$50,000.⁴⁶

Additionally, three counties in two states were added to the ARC.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ The five designations of distress are: distressed, at-risk, transitional, competitive, and attainment. The “transitional” designation is not defined in statute, unlike the other four categories, but it is utilized as part of the five-level distress criteria nonetheless.

⁴⁵ P.L. 115-271, Title VIII, Subtitle E—Treating Barriers to Prosperity, §8062.

⁴⁶ Division A, § 11506 of P.L. 117-58.

⁴⁷ Union County, SC; Catawba County, NC; and Cleveland County, NC, were added to the ARC region (Division A, §11506(a) of P.L. 117-58).

The Economic Development Reauthorization Act (EDRA) of 2024

The ARC was not reauthorized in EDRA. As aforementioned, the ARC was reauthorized in the IJA (P.L. 117-58) through FY2026.⁴⁸ However, EDRA allowed ARC (and other FRCA) funding to be used for the nonfederal match in EDA projects.⁴⁹

Funding History

The ARC is a federal-state partnership, with administrative costs shared equally by the federal government and states, while economic development activities are federally funded. The ARC is also the highest-funded of the FRCAs. Its funding increased 174% from approximately \$73 million in FY2008 to \$200 million in FY2026 (excluding advanced appropriations provided by the IJA). In FY2026, annual and supplemental appropriations for the ARC totaled over four times the amount provided in FY2015 (see **Table 1**).

As noted above, Division A of the IJA authorized appropriations of \$200 million for the ARC for each of FY2022 through FY2026, and Division J appropriated the authorized level of funding.⁵⁰ The \$1 billion appropriation in Division J is made available in equal \$200 million shares across each of the five fiscal years, and each tranche remains available until it is expended.

The ARC's funding growth is attributable to incremental increases in appropriations along with an increase in annual appropriations set aside since FY2016 to support the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative.⁵¹ The POWER Initiative began in 2015 to provide economic development funding for addressing economic and labor dislocations caused by energy transition principally in coal communities in the Appalachian region.⁵² In FY2023, FY2024, and FY2026, Congress directed ARC to allocate \$65 million each year to the POWER Initiative.⁵³

⁴⁸ The Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2027 (P.L. 119-103, enacted September 2, 2026), provides FY2027 funding on a temporary basis for the FRCAs that were funded in the FY2026 appropriation act (P.L. 119-74) at the same rate and under the same conditions through December 11, 2026 (see Division A). P.L. 119-103 also includes provisions covering the extension period that extend the ARC's authorization and funding authorization through FY2027 and provisions that extend funding authorizations for two specific ARC initiatives through FY2027 (see Division C).

⁴⁹ P.L. 118-272, Section 2215.

⁵⁰ P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III. The IJA also provided \$1.25 billion over five years (FY2022-FY2026) for the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) through the Federal Highway Administration (P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title VIII).

⁵¹ P.L. 114-113.

⁵² For more information on the POWER Initiative, see CRS Report R46015, *The POWER Initiative: Energy Transition as Economic Development*, by Julie M. Lawhorn; and The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *FACT SHEET: The Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative*, March 27, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/27/fact-sheet-partnerships-opportunity-and-workforce-and-economic-revitaliz>.

⁵³ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative*, <https://www.arc.gov/funding/POWER.asp>. For FY2023 amounts, see Senator Patrick Leahy, "Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Leahy, Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Regarding H.R. 2617, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023," Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 168, no. 198 (December 20, 2022), S8417, <https://www.congress.gov/117/crec/2022/12/20/168/198/CREC-2022-12-20-pt1-PgS7819-2.pdf>. For FY2024, amounts were specified in the House and Senate Appropriations Committee reports—see H.Rept. 118-126, p. 185, <https://www.congress.gov/118/crpt/hrpt126/CRPT-118hrpt126.pdf>, and S.Rept. 118-72, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRPT-118srpt72/html/CRPT-118srpt72.htm>. For FY2026, see Representative Tom Cole, "Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Cole, Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, Regarding H.R. 6938, Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026," (continued...)

**Table I.ARC:Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level,
FY2017-FY2026**

(\$ in millions)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Appropriated Funding	152	155	165	175	180	395	400	400	400	400
Authorized Funding	110	110	110	110	110	200	200	200	200	200

Sources: Authorized funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from P.L. 110-234, P.L. 113-79, P.L. 115-334, P.L. 116-159, and P.L. 117-58. Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from P.L. 115-31, P.L. 115-141, P.L. 115-244, P.L. 116-94, P.L. 116-260, P.L. 117-58, P.L. 117-103, P.L. 117-328, P.L. 118-42, P.L. 119-4, and P.L. 119-74

Notes: For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-I**. The appropriated funding amounts for FY2022-FY2026 include \$200 million for each fiscal year provided by the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III). The IIJA provided \$200 million in advance appropriations for the ARC in each fiscal year from FY2022 through FY2026. FY2022 amounts do not include appropriations in Division A of P.L. 117-58 pertaining to the Appalachian Development Highway System (P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title VIII).

Delta Regional Authority

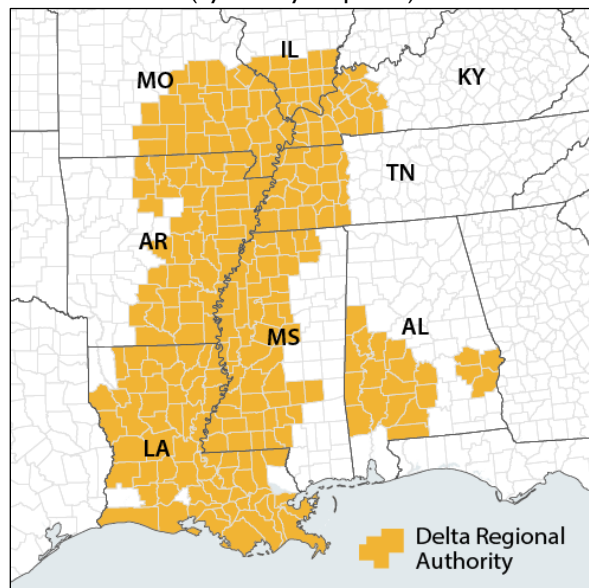
The Delta Regional Authority was established in 2000 to address economic distress in the Mississippi River Delta region.⁵⁴ The DRA aims to “create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of those that reside in the region,”⁵⁵ which includes 255 designated counties and parishes in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee (Figure 2).

Congressional Record, House, vol. 172, no. 5 (January 8, 2026), p. H446, <https://www.congress.gov/119/crec/2026/01/08/172/5/CREC-2026-01-08-bk3.pdf#page=192>.

⁵⁴ P.L. 106-554, Appendix D, Title V—Lower Mississippi River Region.

⁵⁵ Delta Regional Authority, *About Delta Regional Authority*, <https://dra.gov/about>.

Figure 2. Map of the Delta Regional Authority
(by county or parish)



Source: Compiled by CRS using data from 7 U.S.C. §2009aa, Esri Data and Maps, and the Delta Regional Authority, "Service Area Map," <https://dra.gov/map-room/>.

Overview of Structure and Activities

Authority Structure

Like the ARC, the DRA is a federal-state partnership that shares administrative expenses equally, while activities are federally funded. The DRA consists of a federal co-chair appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, and the eight state governors, of which one is state co-chair. The governors are permitted to appoint a designee to represent the state, who also generally serves as the state alternate.⁵⁶

Entities that are eligible to apply for DRA funding opportunities include state and local governments (state agencies, cities, and counties/parishes); nonprofit entities, including special purpose districts; regional and economic development organizations; community and faith-based organizations; colleges, trade schools, and minority-serving institutions; and federally recognized tribes.⁵⁷

These entities must apply for projects that operate in or are serving residents and communities within the 255 counties/parishes of the DRA's jurisdiction. Unlike other FRCAs, the DRA's service area is defined not in any one piece of legislation but through multiple legislative developments (see "Legislative History"). In addition, there appears to be a mechanism for adding counties/parishes to the Authority administratively based on bill text in the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 from the 103rd Congress (P.L. 103-433), which incorporated H.R. 4043, the Lower Mississippi Delta Initiatives Act of 1994 as Title XI of the bill.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ 7 U.S.C. §2009aa.

⁵⁷ Delta Regional Authority, *Programs*, <https://dra.gov/programs/>.

⁵⁸ Of the counties reported by the DRA to fall within its service area, 219 were incorporated through P.L. 100-460. (continued...)

Strategic Plan

Funding determinations are assessed according to the DRA's authorizing statute, its strategic plan, distress designations, and state priorities. The DRA strategic plan articulates the authority's high-level economic development priorities. The current strategic plan—*Navigating the Currents of Opportunity: Delta Regional Development Plan IV*—was released in February 2023 for the 2023-2027 period.⁵⁹

The strategic plan lists four primary goals:

1. Invest in public infrastructure;
2. Nurture local workforce ecosystems;
3. Promote business growth and entrepreneurship; and
4. Support community place-making and capacity-building.

States provide development plans that reflect the economic development goals and priorities of member states and LDDs.⁶⁰

DRA projects are developed in coordination with its 45 LDDs.⁶¹ LDDs are multicounty economic that advise on local priorities, identify opportunities, conduct outreach, and administer grants. LDDs may receive financial assistance from the DRA, including administrative fees paid from awarded DRA funds, which are calculated as 5% of the first \$100,000 of an award, and 1% for all dollars above that amount.⁶² DRA launched the LDD Community Support Pilot Program in 2023 to expand assistance and activities with LDDs.⁶³

Designating Distressed Areas

The DRA determines a county or parish as distressed on an annual basis through the following criteria:

1. an unemployment rate of 1% higher than the national average for the most recent 24-month period; and
2. a per capita income of 80% or less than the national per capita income.⁶⁴

The DRA designates counties as either distressed or not, and distressed counties received priority funding from DRA grant making activities. By statute, the DRA directs at least 75% of funds to distressed counties and parishes and isolated areas within non-distressed counties and parishes;⁶⁵

Another 20 counties in Alabama were included in P.L. 106-554 (16 counties) and P.L. 107-171 (four counties). P.L. 110-234 added 10 Louisiana parishes and two Mississippi counties. By this count, one county appears to have been included administratively.

⁵⁹ Delta Regional Authority, *Navigating the Currents of Opportunity: Delta Regional Development Plan IV*, February 2023, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/APPROVED_DRA-RDP-IV_20230215.pdf.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Delta Regional Authority, *Regional Development Plan: State Economic Development Plans*, <https://dra.gov/about/strategic-development-plan>.

⁶¹ Delta Regional Authority, *Local Development Districts*, <https://dra.gov/resources/local-development-districts>; and *FY2025 Performance and Accountability Report*, p. 49, <https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/DRA-FY2025-PAR-FINAL.pdf>.

⁶² Delta Regional Authority, *2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 23, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/DRA-FY-2025-Budget-Justification-FINAL_Updated03072025.pdf.

⁶³ Delta Regional Authority, *2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 28.

⁶⁴ Delta Regional Authority, *Map Room*, <https://dra.gov/map-room>.

⁶⁵ 7 U.S.C. §2009aa-5(b).

half of those funds must target transportation and basic infrastructure.⁶⁶ As of FY2024, 227 of DRA's counties and parishes are economically distressed and 136 are in persistent poverty.⁶⁷ The DRA notes that a county may experience persistent poverty if it has poverty rates of 20% of the population, or more, for at least 30 years (per the USDA Economic Research Service).⁶⁸ The DRA also analyzes census tracts in order to designate isolated areas of non-distressed counties or parishes as distressed.⁶⁹

Recent Activities⁷⁰

By statute, DRA is required to provide funding for the following four categories:

- Basic public infrastructure in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress;
- Transportation infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating economic development in the region;
- Business development, with emphasis on entrepreneurship; and
- Job training or employment-related education, with emphasis on the use of existing public educational institutions located in the region.⁷¹

DRA categorizes its core programs as critical infrastructure or human infrastructure programs. Critical infrastructure programs include⁷²

- the States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP);
- the Community Infrastructure Fund; and
- the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA) Program.⁷³

Human infrastructure programs include⁷⁴

- the Workforce Grant Programs (e.g., the Delta Workforce Grant Program, the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) program);⁷⁵

⁶⁶ 7 U.S.C. §2009aa–5(d).

⁶⁷ Delta Regional Authority, *2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 23.

⁶⁸ Delta Regional Authority, *Navigating the Currents of Opportunity: Delta Regional Development Plan IV*, February 2023, p. 5, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/APPROVED_DRA-RDP-IV_20230215.pdf.

⁶⁹ See 7 U.S.C. §2009aa–5(a) and Delta Regional Authority, *Map Room*.

⁷⁰ Activities and programs in this section are illustrative examples and not comprehensive. For information on other DRA activities, see <https://dra.gov>.

⁷¹ 7 U.S.C. §2009aa.

⁷² DRA also provides funding to local development districts for their assistance in administering States' Economic Development Assistance Programs and other technical assistance services. See *2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 10. For a summary of DRA's critical infrastructure programs, see <https://dra.gov/programs/critical-infrastructure/>.

⁷³ Since FY2016, Congress has directed the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to partner with DRA to “advance economic growth by assisting communities and regions experiencing chronic high unemployment and low per capita income to create an environment that fosters innovation, promotes entrepreneurship, and attracts increased private capital investment.” DRA and EDA executed an MOA, which calls for EDA to invest \$3 million into projects identified by DRA through the Authority's SEDAP application cycle. See DRA's FY2023 CBJ, pp. 23-24.

⁷⁴ For a summary of DRA's human infrastructure programs, see <https://dra.gov/programs/human-infrastructure>.

⁷⁵ The Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) program is administered in partnership with and supported by the Department of Labor. For more information about DRA's WORC activities, see <https://dra.gov/programs/human-infrastructure/workforce/worc/>.

- the Delta Health Collaborative Programs (e.g., the Delta Doctors Program;⁷⁶ the Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program);
- the Delta Leadership Institute; and
- the Delta Capacity-Building Programs (e.g., the Delta Research; the Delta Summit; the Local Development Districts (LDD) Pilot Program; the Strategic Planning Grant Program).

Additional DRA activities include various partnerships and ongoing initiatives (e.g., the Innovative Readiness Training program, academies and institutes).⁷⁷

DRA collaborates with various federal agencies on programs and initiatives. Since 2003, Congress has directed USDA to provide funding to DRA for any USDA Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP) purposes that support rural economic development activities in the DRA region.⁷⁸ Other federal partners include the Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Department of Defense, Department of State, DOL, and HRSA, among others.⁷⁹

States' Economic Development Assistance Program

The principal investment tool used by the DRA is the States' Economic Development Assistance Program, which is used to fund grants for basic public infrastructure; transportation infrastructure; business development and entrepreneurship; and workforce training and education.⁸⁰ The SEDAP funding is made available to each state according to an allocation that has been approved by the Authority.⁸¹ While all projects must be associated with one of the DRA's four funding priorities, additional review criteria include county-level distress designations; adherence to at least one of the DRA Regional Development Plan goals (from the strategic plan); and alignment with an existing local, regional or state economic development plan and/or workforce strategy.⁸²

Legislative History

In 1988, the Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY1989 (P.L. 100-460) appropriated \$2 million and included language that authorized the

⁷⁶ The Delta Doctors program is designed to address the health disparities and high levels of health professional shortages by granting J-1 visa waivers for physicians who are willing to provide medical services in distressed DRA communities. See Delta Regional Authority, *Delta Doctors*, <https://dra.gov/programs/human-infrastructure/health/delta-doctors/>.

⁷⁷ Delta Regional Authority, *Programs*, <https://dra.gov/programs>.

⁷⁸ For example, P.L. 119-37 provided \$10 million for the ARC, DRA, NBRC, and SBRC regions for any RCAP purpose (as described in section 381E(d) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act). According to a 2023 DRA budget document,

Each year DRA allocates a portion of the RCAP dollars to fund various Authority programs and region-wide projects priorities by the Federal Co-Chair. Examples of funded programs/projects: Delta Leadership Institute, Delta Small Business Academy, and Delta Summit.

See Delta Regional Authority, *2023 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 21, <https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FY-2023-Budget-Justification-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

⁷⁹ Delta Regional Authority, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*.

⁸⁰ Delta Regional Authority, *2025 Congressional Budget Justification*.

⁸¹ Delta Regional Authority, *2025 Congressional Budget Justification*.

⁸² Delta Regional Authority, *States' Economic Development Assistance Program Notice of Funding Availability*, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-Delta-Regional-Authority-SEDAP-NOFA-Announcement_July2025.pdf.

creation of the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission. The LMDDC was a DRA predecessor tasked with studying economic issues in the Delta and developing a 10-year economic development plan. The LMDDC consisted of two commissioners appointed by the President as well as the governors of Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. The commission was chaired by then-Governor William J. Clinton of Arkansas, and the LMDDC released interim and final reports before completing its mandate in 1990. Later, in the White House, the Clinton Administration continued to show interest in an expanded federal role in Mississippi Delta regional economic development.

P.L. 100-460's \$2 million in appropriations were made available to "carry out H.R. 5378 and S. 2836, the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Act, as introduced in the House of Representatives on September 26, 1988, and in the Senate on September 27, 1988." Using this language, those previously un-enacted bills were "incorporated by reference" and enacted. P.L. 100-460 also provided a definition of the Lower Mississippi Delta region through the incorporation of H.R. 5378 and S. 2836 (110th Congress). In 1994, Congress enacted the Lower Mississippi Delta Region Heritage Study Act, which built on the LMDDC's recommendations. In particular, the 1994 act saw the Department of the Interior conduct a study on key regional cultural, natural, and heritage sites and locations in the Mississippi Delta region.

106th Congress

- In 1999 and 2000, several bills that included legislative text to establish the DRA were introduced and referred to committees (i.e., H.R. 2911, S. 1622, and S. 2936). In March 2000, the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies, held a special hearing on "Economic Development in the Mississippi Delta" that included discussions of the proposed DRA, as well as H.R. 2911, and S. 1622.⁸³
- In 2000, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY2001 (P.L. 106-554) included language authorizing the creation of the DRA based on the seven participating states of the LMDDC, with the addition of Alabama and 16 of its counties and Natchitoches Parish in Louisiana.⁸⁴

107th Congress

- The 2002 farm bill (P.L. 107-171) amended voting procedures for DRA states, provided new funds for Delta regional projects, and added four additional Alabama counties to the DRA.⁸⁵

108th Congress

- The Southern Empowerment and Economic Development Act to authorize the Delta Black Belt Regional Authority (H.R. 678) would have amended the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2009aa(1)) to rename the DRA as the Delta Black Belt Regional Authority (DBBRA). Among other

⁸³ U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies, *Economic Development in the Mississippi Delta*, S. Hrg. 106-825, 106th Cong., 2nd sess., March 14, 2000, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-106shrg63943/pdf/CHRG-106shrg63943.pdf>.

⁸⁴ P.L. 106-554. This law added the following Alabama counties: Pickens, Greene, Sumter, Choctaw, Clarke, Washington, Marengo, Hale, Perry, Wilcox, Lowndes, Bullock, Macon, Barbour, Russell, and Dallas.

⁸⁵ P.L. 107-171, the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. This law added Butler, Conecuh, Escambia, and Monroe counties.

changes, the legislation would have extended the geography of the region to include parts of the area now covered by the SCRC as well as areas in other states. The bill was referred to several committees and subcommittees and was not enacted.

- The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2003 (H.R. 3196) would have reauthorized the DRA as the “Delta Regional Commission.” The bill was referred to several committees and subcommittees and was not enacted.

109th Congress

- The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2005 (H.R. 1349) would have reauthorized the DRA as the “Delta Regional Commission.” The bill was not enacted.⁸⁶
- The Southern Empowerment and Economic Development Act (H.R. 5082) would have amended the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to rename the DRA as the Delta Black Belt Regional Authority (DBBRA). The legislation would have extended the region to include parts of the area now covered by the SCRC as well as areas in other states. The bill was referred to several committees and subcommittees and was not enacted.

110th Congress

- The 2008 farm bill (P.L. 110-234) reauthorized the DRA from FY2008 through FY2012 and added 10 parishes in Louisiana and two counties in Mississippi to the DRA region.⁸⁷

113th Congress

- The 2014 farm bill (P.L. 113-79) reauthorized the DRA through FY2018.⁸⁸

115th Congress

- The 2018 farm bill (P.L. 115-334), reauthorized the DRA from FY2019 to FY2023, and emphasized Alabama’s position as a “full member” of the DRA.⁸⁹

118th Congress

The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-272, Division B, Title II, Subtitle B) made several changes to the DRA. EDRA

⁸⁶ Representative James L. Oberstar, “Introducing the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act,” Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 151, no. 33 (March 17, 2005), E475-E476, <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/volume-151/issue-33/extensions-of-remarks-section/article/E475-2>.

⁸⁷ P.L. 110-234, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. This law added Beauregard, Bienville, Cameron, Claiborne, DeSoto, Jefferson Davis, Red River, St. Mary, Vermillion, and Webster Parishes in Louisiana; and Jasper and Smith Counties in Mississippi.

⁸⁸ P.L. 113-79, the Agricultural Act of 2014.

⁸⁹ P.L. 115-334, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. See CRS In Focus IF11126, *2018 Farm Bill Primer: Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018*, by Renée Johnson and Jim Monke.

- repealed the sunset (or termination of authority) provision for DRA's authority;⁹⁰
- authorized funding each fiscal year from FY2025 through FY2029;
- authorized the DRA to collect fees for the Delta Doctors program and keep and spend those fees;
- authorized Indian Tribes as eligible recipients of economic and community development grants;
- authorized the executive director, a nonfederal employee of the authority, to assume the duties of the federal co-chair and the alternate federal co-chair for purposes of continuation of normal operations in the event that both positions are vacant;⁹¹
- added Sabine, Vernon, and Terrebonne Parishes in Louisiana to the DRA region; and
- allowed DRA (and other FRCA) funding to be used for the nonfederal match in EDA projects.⁹²

Funding History

The DRA consistently received funding authorizations of \$30 million annually since it was first authorized in FY2001 through FY2023.⁹³ EDRA provided a funding authorization of \$40 million for each fiscal year from FY2025 through FY2029 (see **Table 2**).⁹⁴ However, the actual appropriations provided have fluctuated over the years. Although the DRA was appropriated \$20 million in the same legislation authorizing its creation,⁹⁵ that amount was halved in 2002,⁹⁶ and continued a downward trend to a low point of \$5 million in FY2004, rebounding in FY2006 to \$12 million, where it stabilized until FY2016 (see **Table C-1**).

DRA received supplemental appropriations in FY2022 and FY2025. In FY2022, the IIJA provided the DRA with \$150 million in supplemental appropriations—five times its annual appropriation at the time.⁹⁷ In FY2025, the American Relief Act, 2025 (P.L. 118-158) provided \$1.51 billion to the U.S. Economic Development Administration for disaster economic recovery, with \$10 million of that amount to be transferred to the DRA. P.L. 118-158 states that the funding is “for economic adjustment assistance related to flood mitigation, disaster relief, long-term

⁹⁰ The Economic Development Reauthorization Act (EDRA) of 2024 repealed 7 U.S.C. §2009aa–13.

⁹¹ As noted in CRS In Focus IF11396, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Operations*,

The commission structure is comprised of a federal co-chair and the state governors of member states or their designated representative (of which one serves as state co-chair). The commission is supplemented by professional staff to carry out organizational activities. While largely considered independent federal agencies, most commission members and staff are not federal employees. The main exception is the federal co-chair, that co-chair's alternate, and that co-chair's direct staff.

⁹² P.L. 118-272, Section 2215.

⁹³ 7 U.S.C. §2009aa–12.

⁹⁴ P.L. 118-272.

⁹⁵ P.L. 106-554.

⁹⁶ P.L. 107-66.

⁹⁷ The DRA allocated IIJA funding to five program areas: (1) SEDAP; (2) Community Infrastructure Fund; (3) Delta Workforce Grant Program; (4) Strategic Planning; and (5) LDD Pilot Program. See Delta Regional Authority, *Performance and Accountability Report September 30, 2022*, p. 22, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/DRA_FY2022_PAR_Final12.pdf. Estimates for the program allocations of the DRA's IIJA spend plan are included in the Delta Regional Authority, *2025 Congressional Budget Justification* (CBJ), p. 6. The DRA's FY2025 CBJ also notes that it will use 4% of IIJA funding to cover administrative expenses.

recovery, and restoration of infrastructure in areas that received a major disaster designation as a result of hurricanes, wildfires, severe storms and flooding, tornadoes, and other natural disasters occurring in calendar years 2023 and 2024 under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. §§5121 et seq.).”⁹⁸ DRA and other FRCAs support disaster economic recovery projects. However, in recent years, DRA and other FRCAs generally have not received supplemental funding for disaster economic recovery activities and have not received transferred funding provided through EDA.

In FY2026, P.L. 119-74 provided the DRA with \$32 million in annual appropriations.

Table 2. DRA: Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2017-FY2026
(\$ in millions)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Appropriated Funding	25.0	25.0	25.0	30.0	30.0	180.1 ^a	30.1	31.1	31.1	32.0
Authorized Funding	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	—	40.0	40.0

Sources: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from the following: P.L. 115-31, P.L. 115-141, P.L. 115-244, P.L. 116-94, P.L. 116-260, P.L. 117-58, P.L. 117-328, P.L. 118-42, P.L. 119-4, and P.L. 119-74.

Notes: For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-1**.

- a. FY2022 includes \$30.1 million provided through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103, Division D, Title IV). FY2022 appropriated funding amounts also include \$150 million from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III).

Denali Commission

The Denali Commission was established in October 1998 to support rural economic development in Alaska.⁹⁹ It is “designed to provide critical utilities, infrastructure, and economic support throughout Alaska.” The Denali Commission is unique among these commissions and authorities as a single-state entity. It is also unique because it primarily uses federal funding for administrative expenses, rather than a combination of federal and state contributions for these expenses.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ For additional information, see CRS Insight IN12632, *Delta Regional Authority Disaster Economic Recovery Funding (P.L. 118-158)*, by Julie M. Lawhorn.

⁹⁹ P.L. 105-277.

¹⁰⁰ For additional information, see CRS In Focus IF12165, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Administrative Expenses*, by Julie M. Lawhorn.

Figure 3. Map of the Denali Commission
(by borough or census area)



Source: Compiled by CRS using data from 42 U.S.C. §3121 note, Esri Data and Maps, and the Denali Commission, “Denali Commission Story,” <https://denali.gov/>.

Overview of Structure and Activities

The commission’s statutory mission includes promoting rural development, providing power generation and transmission facilities, modern communication systems, water and sewer systems and other infrastructure needs, and providing workforce and other economic development assistance to distressed rural regions in Alaska.¹⁰¹ For decades, the commission has provided substantial funding to coastal infrastructure protection and energy infrastructure and fuel storage projects.¹⁰² The commission continues to invest in energy and bulk fuel programs and climate adaptation activities.¹⁰³ In FY2020, the commission reopened its general economic development and workforce development portfolios.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ 42 U.S.C. §3121 note.

¹⁰² Denali Commission, *Programs*, <https://www.denali.gov/programs/>.

¹⁰³ See, for example, Denali Commission, *Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2027*, which notes that

The Commission has invested \$50 million in climate adaptation projects/initiatives through the VIP Program, leveraging nearly \$60 million of other funding contributions. Over forty villages have received assistance because of Commission initiatives since the program was created in 2016.

The plan indicates that partners include numerous state and federal agencies, universities, and philanthropic organizations, and that “A significant amount of the funding referenced above has been used to assist with relocating Newtok.”

¹⁰⁴ Denali Commission, *Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2027*, pp. 19-20, <https://www.denali.gov/strategic-plans/>.

Commission Structure

The Denali Commission’s structure is unique as the only commission with a single-state mandate. The commission is comprised of seven members (or a designated nominee), including the federal co-chair, appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce; the Alaska governor, who is state co-chair (or his/her designated representative); the University of Alaska president; the Alaska Municipal League president; the Alaska Federation of Natives president; the Alaska State AFL-CIO president; and the Associated General Contractors of Alaska president.¹⁰⁵

These structural novelties offer a different model compared to the organization typified by the ARC and broadly adopted by the other functioning FRCAs. For example, the federal co-chair’s appointment by the Secretary of Commerce, and not the President with Senate confirmation, allows for a potentially more expeditious appointment of a federal co-chair.

Annual Work Plan and Strategic Plan

The Denali Commission is required by law to create an annual work plan, which solicits project proposals, guides activities, and informs a five-year strategic plan.¹⁰⁶ The work plan is reviewed by the federal co-chair, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Office of Management and Budget, and is subject to a public comment period.

The latest strategic plan, released in March 2024, lists seven strategic goals and objectives:

1. infrastructure for distressed communities;
2. village infrastructure protection and climate resiliency;
3. energy, including storage, production, heating, and electricity;
4. workforce development;
5. transportation;
6. sanitation, health facilities, housing, and broadband programs; and
7. innovation and collaboration.¹⁰⁷

Designating Distressed Areas

The Denali Commission’s authorizing statute obligates the commission to address economic distress in rural areas of Alaska.¹⁰⁸ The commission utilizes two overlapping standards to assess distress: a “surrogate standard,” adopted by the commission in 2000, and an “expanded standard.” These standards are applied to rural communities in Alaska and assessed by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL&WD), Research and Analysis Section. DOL&WD uses the most current population, employment, and earnings data available to identify Alaska communities and Census Designated Places considered “distressed.”¹⁰⁹

Appeals can be made to community distress determinations, but only through a demonstration that DOL&WD data or analysis was erroneous, invalid, or outdated. New information “must

¹⁰⁵ P.L. 105-277.

¹⁰⁶ Denali Commission, *Work Plans*, <https://www.denali.gov/work-plans/>.

¹⁰⁷ Denali Commission, *Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2027*, <https://www.denali.gov/strategic-plans/>.

¹⁰⁸ P.L. 105-277.

¹⁰⁹ Denali Commission, *2025 Distressed Communities Report*, <https://denali.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2025DistressedCommunitiesReport.pdf>.

come from a verifiable source, and be robust and representative of the entire community and/or population.” Appeals are accepted and adjudicated only for the same reporting year in question.

Recent Activities¹¹⁰

The Denali Commission’s scope is more constrained compared to the other FRCAs. Since the Denali Commission’s founding, bulk fuel safety and security, energy reliability and security, transportation system improvements, and health care projects have commanded the vast majority of Commission projects.¹¹¹ In recent years, the Denali Commission’s core programs have focused on grants for energy reliability and security and bulk fuel safety and security projects.¹¹² In 2015, the commission launched the village infrastructure protection program launched to address community infrastructure threatened by erosion, flooding, and permafrost degradation.¹¹³ The Denali Commission has generally funded fewer “traditional” economic development projects, such as housing, workforce development, and general economic development activities, due to funding constraints.¹¹⁴ On an occasional basis since FY2020, the commission has reported that it supported certain economic development activities.¹¹⁵

For several years before the enactment of the IIJA, the Denali Commission had not received dedicated funding for transportation, sanitation, health facilities, housing, broadband, and general economic development activities.¹¹⁶ However, the commission’s FY2023, FY2024, and FY2025 Work Plans and the FY2022-FY2026 IIJA Work Plan indicate support for these and related activities.¹¹⁷ The Denali Commission is to allocate IIJA funding to the following activities: (1) infrastructure; (2) village infrastructure protection; (3) energy reliability and security; (4) emergency fund; and (5) workforce and economic development.

In recent years, the Denali Commission has received funding from other state and federal sources, aside from its own appropriation. Other sources for activities administered by the Denali Commission have included

- The State of Alaska, through the Federal Highway Administration, for planning, design, and construction of road and other surface transportation infrastructure in Alaska Native villages and rural communities;¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰ Activities and programs in this section are illustrative examples and not comprehensive. For information on additional Denali Commission activities, see <https://www.denali.gov>.

¹¹¹ Denali Commission, *Denali Commission Investment Summary*, March 2022, <https://www.denali.gov/programs/>.

¹¹² The Denali Commission has made energy and bulk fuel its primary infrastructure theme since it was created in 1998. The types of projects currently being funded include the design and construction of replacement bulk fuel storage facilities, upgrades to community power generation and distribution systems (including interties), and energy efficiency related initiatives. See Denali Commission, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 8, https://x11.6e7.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/DenaliCommissionCJ2025Final_withAddendum_Final.pdf.

¹¹³ Denali Commission, *Village Infrastructure Protection*, <https://www.denali.gov/programs/village-infrastructure-protection/>.

¹¹⁴ Denali Commission, *Other Programs*, <https://www.denali.gov/programs/other-programs/> (accessed April 23, 2021) and Denali Commission, *Denali Commission Investment Summary*, March 2022, <https://www.denali.gov/programs/>.

¹¹⁵ Denali Commission, *Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2027*, pp. 19-20, <https://www.denali.gov/strategic-plans/>.

¹¹⁶ Denali Commission, *Other Programs*, <https://www.denali.gov/programs/other-programs/>.

¹¹⁷ Denali Commission, *Work Plans*, <https://www.denali.gov/work-plans/>.

¹¹⁸ Denali Commission’s *Strategic Plan*, p. 15, https://02e11d.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/FY23-27StrategicPlanFINAL_v21.pdf.

- Various federal agencies, such as the EPA, Department of Health and Human Services, USDA, and others;¹¹⁹
- The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Liability (TAPL) trust fund, for the commission's bulk fuel safety and security activities,¹²⁰ and
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, for a three-year project to upgrade bulk fuel infrastructure in rural communities.¹²¹

The Denali Commission also uses its transfer authority to receive funding from other federal agencies, which it uses to issue grants on the agencies' behalf.¹²²

Legislative History

105th Congress

- The Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (P.L. 105-277, enacted October 21, 1998) established the Denali Commission to support rural economic development in Alaska. P.L. 105-277 also established an annual transfer of interest from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (from the investment of the TAPL)¹²³ to the Denali Commission and directed that it be used by the Denali Commission "to repair or replace bulk fuel storage tanks in Alaska which are not in compliance with federal law."

106th Congress

- The 1999 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 106-31, Title I, Section 105) authorized the Denali Commission to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements, award grants, and make payments "necessary to carry out the purposes of the commission." The act also established the federal co-chair's compensation schedule, and prohibited using more than 5% of appropriated funds for administrative expenses. P.L. 106-31 amended the Inspector General Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-452) to require the Denali Commission to have an Inspector General.
- In 1999, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2000 (P.L. 106-113) established "demonstration health projects" as authorized activities and authorized the Department of Health and Human Services to make grants to the commission to that effect.

¹¹⁹ Amounts provided by other federal agencies through FY2023 are provided in the Denali Commission's *Strategic Plan*, pp. 21-22, https://02e11d.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/FY23-27StrategicPlanFINAL_v21.pdf.

¹²⁰ The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Liability (TAPL) trust fund provides approximately \$3 million each year in FY2024 and FY2024. See Denali Commission, *Funding*, <https://www.denali.gov/about/funding-2/>; and *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 7, https://x11.6e7.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/DenaliCommissionCJ2025Final_withAddendum_Final.pdf.

¹²¹ Denali Commission, *Denali Commission Awards \$100 Million to Address Urgent Fuel Infrastructure Needs in Rural Alaska*, July 17, 2025, https://denali.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-07-17pressrelease_Final_v3.pdf.

¹²² 42 U.S.C. §3121 note, Section 311. See also Denali Commission, *FY2024 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 8, <https://02e11d.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Congressional-Budget-Justification-Fiscal-Year-2024-Final.pdf>.

¹²³ P.L. 101-380 established the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund.

108th Congress

- The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004 (P.L. 108-7) authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to make payments to the Denali Commission to address deficiencies in solid waste disposal sites.
- The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004 (P.L. 108-199) created an Economic Development Committee within the commission chaired by the Alaska Federation of Natives president, and included the Alaska Commissioner of Community and Economic Affairs, a representative of the Alaska Bankers Association, the chairman of the Alaska Permanent Fund, a representative from the Alaska Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from each region.
- The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (P.L. 108-447) authorized the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to make payments to the commission for docks, waterfront development, and related infrastructure development.¹²⁴

109th Congress

- In 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, or SAFETEA-LU (P.L. 109-59), established the Denali Access System Program among the commission's authorized activities. The program was part of its surface transportation efforts, which were active from 2005 through 2009.¹²⁵

112th Congress

- 2012's Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, or MAP-21 (P.L. 112-141), authorized the commission to accept funds from federal agencies, allowed it to accept gifts or donations of "service, property, or money" on behalf of the U.S. government, and included guidance regarding gifts.

114th Congress

- In 2016, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, or the WIIN Act (P.L. 114-322), reauthorized the Denali Commission through FY2021, and established a four-year term for the federal co-chair (with allowances for reappointment), but provided that other members were appointed for life. The act also allowed for the Secretary of Commerce to appoint an interim federal co-chair, and included clarifying language on the nonfederal status of commission staff and ethical issues regarding conflicts of interest and disclosure.

117th Congress

- Division A of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58) extended funding authorization for five years to carry out the Denali Access System Program.¹²⁶ The act also allowed the Denali Commission to consider funding from another federal agency as no longer subject to requirements

¹²⁴ 42 U.S.C. §3121 note.

¹²⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Fact Sheet on Highway Provisions: Denali Access System Program*, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/denali.htm>.

¹²⁶ The IIJA authorized \$20 million to be appropriated for each of FY2022 through FY2026 to carry out the Denali Access System Program (P.L. 117-58, Division A, §11507(a)).

previously attached to those funds, including any regulatory actions by the transferring agency.¹²⁷

118th Congress

EDRA (P.L. 118-272) made several changes to the Denali Commission's authorizing statute. EDRA

- provided the Denali Commission with leasing authority (including the lease of office space for any term);¹²⁸
- allowed the commission's funds to be considered nonfederal matching funds when used as matching funds for EDA projects and in other federal programs (unless otherwise prohibited);¹²⁹
- repealed the commission's special function related to rural utilities;¹³⁰
- codified the U.S. Department of Agriculture's authority to make interagency transfers to the Denali Commission to address solid waste disposal site issues—in addition to direct lump sum payments, which were previously authorized;¹³¹
- established a new program, the Denali Housing Fund, which may be used for loans or grants for planning, construction, or rehabilitation housing activities for low- and moderate-income (LMI) households in rural Alaska villages;¹³² and
- established the authorized funding level of \$40 million for each of fiscal years FY2025 through FY2029 (including \$5 million for the Denali Housing Fund).¹³³

Funding History

Under its authorizing statute, the Denali Commission received authorizations for \$20 million for FY1999,¹³⁴ and “such sums as necessary” for FY2000 through FY2003. Legislation passed in 2003 extended the commission's uncapped funding authorization through 2008.¹³⁵ Its authorization lapsed after 2008; reauthorizing legislation was introduced in 2007,¹³⁶ but was not enacted. The commission continued to receive annual appropriations for FY2009 and several years thereafter.¹³⁷ In 2016, legislation was enacted reauthorizing the Denali Commission through

¹²⁷ P.L. 117-58, Division A, §11507(b).

¹²⁸ P.L. 118-272, Section 2251.

¹²⁹ P.L. 118-272, Section 2215 and Section 2251.

¹³⁰ P.L. 118-272, Section 2251 removed subsection (a) from Section 307 of the Denali Commission Act of 1998 (42 U.S.C. 4321 note; P.L. 105-277), which was

Rural Utilities.—In carrying out its functions under this title, the Commission shall as appropriate, provide assistance, seek to avoid duplicating services and assistance, and complement the water and sewer wastewater programs under section 306D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926d) and section 303 of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 (33 U.S.C. 1263a).

¹³¹ P.L. 118-272, Section 2251.

¹³² P.L. 118-272, Section 2252.

¹³³ P.L. 118-272, Section 2251 and Section 2252. EDRA provided the authorization for appropriations; it did not provide appropriations of budget authority to the Denali Commission.

¹³⁴ P.L. 105-277.

¹³⁵ P.L. 108-7, §504.

¹³⁶ S. 1368, 110th Cong. (2007).

¹³⁷ P.L. 111-8.

FY2021 with a \$15 million annual authorization through FY2021. EDRA authorized appropriations for the Denali Commission at \$40 million for each fiscal year from FY2025 through FY2029 (including \$5 million for the Denali Housing Fund).¹³⁸

Between FY2017 and FY2026, annual appropriations for the Denali Commission averaged \$17.4 million. In FY2022, the IIJA provided the Denali Commission with \$75 million in supplemental appropriations—approximately five times its annual appropriation at the time (see **Table 3**).¹³⁹ In addition to annual appropriations, the Denali Commission also receives funding from the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Liability (TAPL), the state of Alaska, and other federal agencies.¹⁴⁰ As noted, the Denali Commission is authorized to receive transfers from other federal agencies.¹⁴¹

**Table 3. Denali Commission:
Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2017-FY2026**
(\$ in millions)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Appropriated Funding	15.0	30.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	90.1 ^a	17.0	17.0	17.0	18.0
Authorized Funding	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	—	—	—	40.0 ^b	40.0 ^b

Sources: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from the following: P.L. 115-31, P.L. 115-141, P.L. 115-244, P.L. 116-94, P.L. 116-260, P.L. 117-58, P.L. 117-103, P.L. 117-328, P.L. 118-42, P.L. 119-4, and P.L. 119-74. Amounts provided by the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Liability Fund, the state of Alaska, and other federal agencies through FY2023 are listed in the Denali Commission's *Strategic Plan*, p. 10, https://02e11d.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/FY23-27StrategicPlanFINAL_v21.pdf.

Notes: For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-1**.

- a. FY2022 appropriated funding amounts include \$15.1 million provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103, Division D, Title IV). FY2022 appropriated funding amounts also include \$75 million provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III).
- b. Amounts authorized by P.L. 118-272 include \$35 million for the Denali Commission and \$5 million for the Denali Housing Fund for each of FY2025-FY2029.

Great Lakes Authority

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328, Division O, Title IV, §401) amended 40 U.S.C. §15301(a) to establish the Great Lakes Authority. The structure and functions of the GLA are based on the model of the NBRC, SCRC, and SBRC, which were established in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (i.e., 2008 farm bill).¹⁴² The authorizing legislation requires that before the GLA may convene, the President must nominate and the Senate must confirm a federal co-chairperson. On May 2, 2024, President Biden nominated a federal co-chair

¹³⁸ P.L. 118-272, Section 2251 and Section 2252.

¹³⁹ P.L. 114-322.

¹⁴⁰ Denali Commission, *Strategic Plan*, p. 10, https://02e11d.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/FY23-27StrategicPlanFINAL_v21.pdf. For information about the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Liability (TAPL) fund, see the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1999 (P.L. 105-277).

¹⁴¹ 42 U.S.C. §3121 note. See, for example, a summary of the funding transferred and the transferring agencies in the Denali Commission's FY2025 *Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 13, <https://02e11d.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Denali-Commission-CJ-2025-Final.pdf>.

¹⁴² P.L. 110-234.

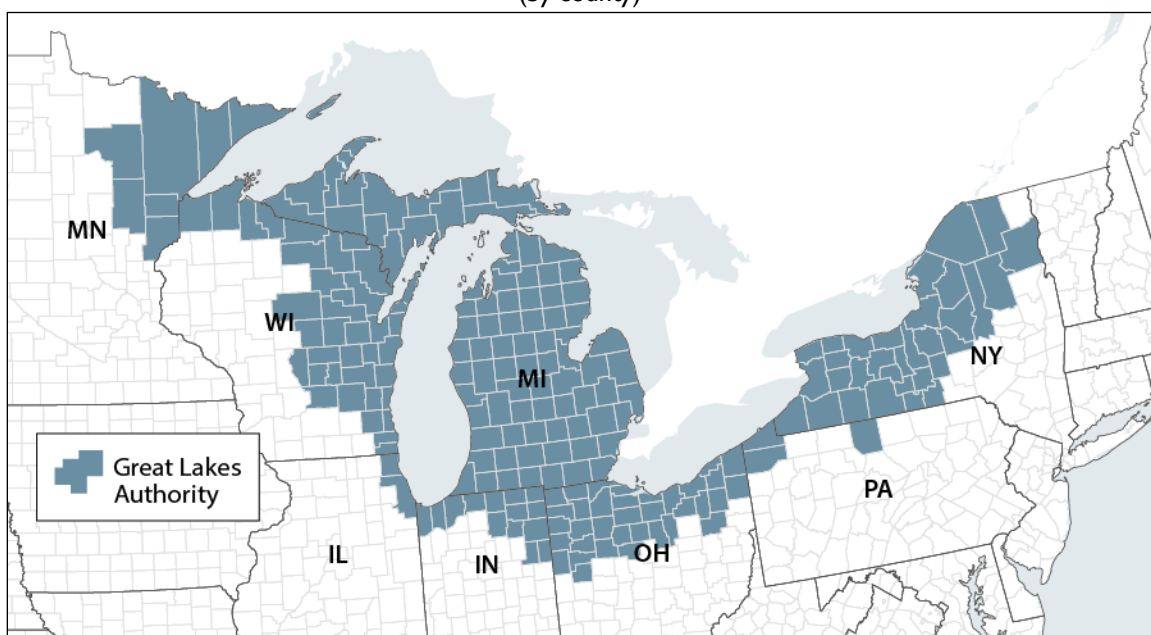
for the GLA.¹⁴³ However, the nominee was not confirmed by the Senate. As of the date of this publication, President Trump has not nominated a federal co-chair.

The geographic boundaries of the GLA consist of

the counties which contain, in part or in whole, the areas in the watershed of the Great Lakes and the Great Lakes System (as such terms are defined in section 118(a)(3) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1268(a)(3)), in each of the following States: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.¹⁴⁴

The GLA region includes counties that are also in the NBRC and NGRPA regions (see **Table D-4**).

Figure 4. Map of the Great Lakes Authority
(by county)



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 40 U.S.C. §15734 and U.S. Geological Survey data.

Note: The GLA region consists of counties—in areas specifically designated by statute—within the watershed of the Great Lakes and Great Lakes System.

Overview of Structure and Activities

As authorized, the GLA would share a structure with the NBRC, MARC, SBRC, SCRC, and SNERC, as all share common statutory authorizing language modeled after the ARC.

Authority Structure

As authorized, the GLA would consist of a federal co-chair, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, along with the participating state governors (or their designated representatives), of which one would be named by the state representatives as state co-chair.

¹⁴³ The White House, *President Biden Announces Key Nominees*, May 2, 2024, <https://www.bidenwhitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/05/02/president-biden-announces-key-nominees-72/>.

¹⁴⁴ P.L. 118-272.

There is no term limit for the federal co-chair. However, the state co-chair is limited to two consecutive terms, but may not serve a term of less than one year.

Strategic Plan

As of the date of publication, the GLA is not active and has not published a strategic plan.

Designating Distressed Areas

As authorized, the GLA would share an approach to designating distressed areas that is similar to that of the NBRC, MARC, SBRC, SCRC, and SNERC.¹⁴⁵

Recent Activities

The GLA is not currently active. The presidential nomination and Senate confirmation of a federal co-chair is an essential step for the GLA to start operations; as of the date of publication, the President has not nominated a federal co-chair for the GLA. For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11744, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Authorization*.

Legislative History

117th Congress

- P.L. 117-328 amended 40 U.S.C. §15301(a) to establish the GLA. The structure and functions of the GLA are based on the model of the NBRC, SCRC, and SBRC, which were established in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-234).

118th Congress

- EDRA (P.L. 118-272) extended the funding authorization for the GLA and expanded the definition of the region by specifying that it shall include entire counties rather than parts of counties. Under the prior version of the law, the GLA region covered only parts of certain counties because it was defined as consisting of “areas in the watershed of the Great Lakes and the Great Lakes System.” For a summary of other changes to the GLA’s authorizing statute in EDRA, see “Changes to Subtitle V FRCAs.”

Funding History

Although EDRA did not provide direct funding for GLA, it did include an authorization of appropriations for GLA of \$40 million for each of FY2025 through FY2029 (P.L. 118-272).¹⁴⁶

In FY2024, the GLA received first-time funding of \$5 million. P.L. 119-4 provided continuing appropriations for the GLA for FY2025 at the same level of funding that was provided in FY2024. GLA also received \$5 million in FY2026.

¹⁴⁵ 40 U.S.C. §15702.

¹⁴⁶ 40 U.S.C. §15751.

Table 4. Great Lakes Authority
Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2023-FY2026
 (\$ in millions)

	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026
Appropriated Funding	—	5.0	5.0	5.0
Authorized Funding	33.0	—	40.0	40.0

Source: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from P.L. 118-42, P.L. 119-4, and P.L. 119-74.

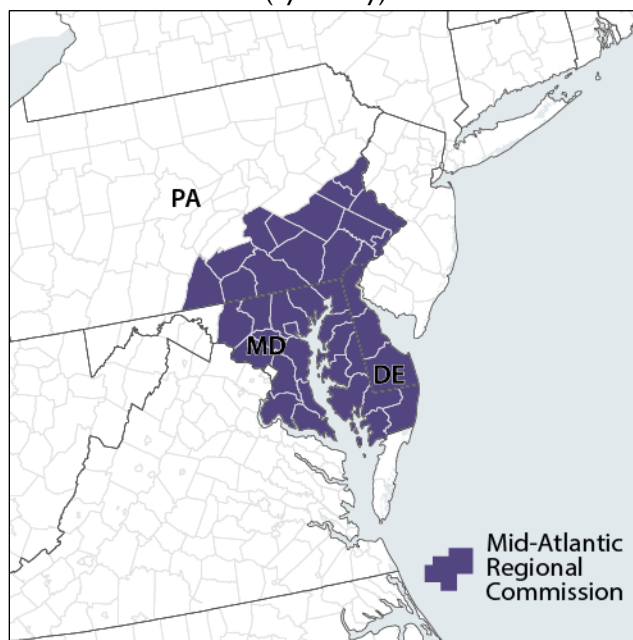
Notes: The GLA was authorized in FY2023 (P.L. 117-328). For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-1**.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission

P.L. 118-272 amended 40 U.S.C. §15301(a) to establish the Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission. The structure and functions of the MARC are based on the model of the NBRC, SBRC and SCRC, which were established in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (i.e., 2008 farm bill).¹⁴⁷ The authorizing legislation requires that before the MARC may convene, the President must nominate and the Senate must confirm a federal co-chairperson. As of the date of this publication a President has not nominated a federal co-chair.

The geographic boundaries of MARC include the entire state of Delaware, 20 counties in Maryland, and 15 counties in Pennsylvania (see **Table D-5** and **Figure 5**).

Figure 5. Map of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission Region
 (by county)



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 40 U.S.C. §15735 and Esri Data and Maps.

¹⁴⁷ P.L. 110-234.

Overview of Structure and Activities

As authorized, the MARC would share a structure with the GLA, NBRC, SBRC, SCRC, and SNERC.

Authority Structure

As authorized, the MARC would consist of a federal co-chair, appointed by a President with the advice and consent of the Senate, along with the participating state governors (or their designated representatives), of which one would be named by the state representatives as state co-chair. There is no term limit for the federal co-chair. However, the state co-chair is limited to two consecutive terms, but may not serve a term of less than one year.

Strategic Plan

As of the date of publication, the MARC is not active and has not published a strategic plan.

Designating Distressed Areas

As authorized, the MARC would share an approach to designating distressed areas that is similar to that of the GLA, NBRC, SBRC, SCRC, and SNERC.¹⁴⁸ Generally speaking, the statutory requirements require the FRCAs to designate all counties (including isolated areas within counties) by their relative level of economic distress. The highest level of distress is considered “distressed” and the least distressed are considered “attainment.”

Four of the Subtitle V FRCAs (i.e., FRCAs authorized by 40 U.S.C. §§15101 et seq.) are authorized to provide funding in attainment counties for administrative expenses of local development districts and for multicounty projects that may include areas in attainment counties (i.e., GLA, NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC). EDRA waived these exceptions for the Maryland and Pennsylvania portions of the MARC.¹⁴⁹

Recent Activities

The MARC is not currently active. A presidential nomination and Senate confirmation of a federal co-chair is one of several essential steps for the MARC to start operations. For more information, see “Steps for Commission Formation” in CRS In Focus IF11744, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Authorization*.

Legislative History

In the 118th Congress, EDRA (P.L. 118-272) established the MARC and authorized funding for each fiscal year from FY2025 through FY2029.

¹⁴⁸ 40 U.S.C. §15702.

¹⁴⁹ EDRA also waived these exceptions for the SNERC. See 40 U.S.C. §15702(c)(3).

Funding History

Although EDRA did not provide direct funding for MARC, it did include an authorization of appropriations for MARC of \$40 million for each of FY2025 through FY2029 (P.L. 118-272).¹⁵⁰ As of the date of this publication, the MARC has not received appropriations.

**Table 5. Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission
Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2025-FY2026**

	(\$ in millions)	
	FY2025	FY2026
Appropriated Funding	—	—
Authorized Funding	40.0	40.0

Notes: The MARC was authorized in FY2025 (P.L. 118-272). For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-1**.

Northern Border Regional Commission

The Northern Border Regional Commission was created by the 2008 farm bill.¹⁵¹ The act also created the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. All three commissions share common authorizing language modeled after the ARC.

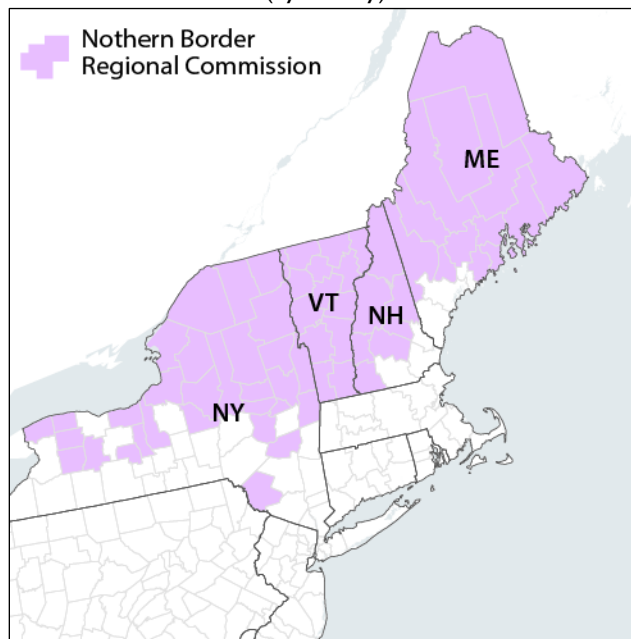
The NBRC is the only one of these three commissions that has been both reauthorized and received progressively increasing annual appropriations since it was established in 2008. The NBRC was founded to alleviate economic distress in the northern border areas of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and, as of 2018, the entire state of Vermont (see **Figure 6**).¹⁵² The NBRC region includes counties that are also in the ARC and GLA regions (see **Table D-5** and **Figure B-1**).

¹⁵⁰ 40 U.S.C. §15751.

¹⁵¹ P.L. 110-234, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

¹⁵² The 2008 farm bill (P.L. 110-234) included six of Vermont's 14 total counties in the definition of the NBRC region. In FY2018, P.L. 115-334 added the remaining eight Vermont counties to the definition of the NBRC region. See 40 U.S.C. §15733.

Figure 6. Map of the Northern Border Regional Commission
(by county)



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 40 U.S.C. §15733, Esri Data and Maps, and NBRC, “Member States,” <https://www.nbrc.gov/member-states>.

Note: Vermont is the only state with all counties within the NBRC’s jurisdiction.

The stated mission of the NBRC is “to catalyze community vitality and economic prosperity in the northern border region with flexible funding and strategic support.”¹⁵³ Eligible counties within the NBRC’s jurisdiction may receive funding “for community and economic development” projects pursuant to regional, state, and local planning and priorities (see **Table D-6**).

Overview of Structure and Activities

Commission Structure

The NBRC is led by a federal co-chair, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, and four state governors, of which one is appointed state co-chair. There is no term limit for the federal co-chair. The state co-chair is limited to two consecutive terms, but may not serve a term of less than one year. Each of the four governors may appoint an alternate; each state also designates an NBRC program manager to handle the day-to-day operations of coordinating, reviewing, and recommending economic development projects to the full membership.¹⁵⁴

While program funding depends on congressional appropriations, administrative costs are shared equally between the federal government and the four states of the NBRC. Through commission votes, applications are ranked by priority, and are approved in that order as grant funds allow.

¹⁵³ Northern Border Regional Commission, *About NBRC*, <http://www.nbrc.gov/content/about>.

¹⁵⁴ Northern Border Regional Commission, *About NBRC*.

The NBRC also uses multicounty LDDs to advise on local priorities, identify opportunities, conduct outreach, and administer grants, from which the LDDs may receive fees. NBRC launched the LDD Partnership Program in 2023 to expand assistance and activities with LDDs.¹⁵⁵

Strategic Plan

The NBRC's activities are guided by a five-year strategic plan, which is developed through "extensive engagement with NBRC stakeholders" alongside "local, state, and regional economic development strategies already in place." The NBRC's 2024-2029 strategic plan lists five focus areas: (1) communication and collaboration; (2) programs and funding; (3) systems and processes; (4) diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; and (5) capacity building. The plan highlights several funding priorities as well, including transportation and basic public infrastructure; telecommunications, workforce, technology, entrepreneurship and business development; basic health care in distressed communities; natural resources; resiliency; renewable and alternative energy; housing; and childcare and early education.¹⁵⁶

The strategic plan also takes stock of various socioeconomic trends in the northern border region, including an increase in the population over the age of 60 years, an increase in remote workers that may consider relocating to the region, changes in industry dynamics, and other opportunities and challenges unique to the region.¹⁵⁷

Designating Distressed Areas

The NBRC is statutorily obligated to assess distress according to economic as well as demographic factors. These designations are made and refined annually. The NBRC defines levels of "distress" for counties that "have high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration" and "are the most severely and persistently economic distressed and underdeveloped."¹⁵⁸ The NBRC is required to designate isolated areas of distress in attainment counties and allocate 50% of its total appropriations to projects in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.¹⁵⁹

The NBRC's county designations are as follows, in descending levels of distress:

- *Distressed* counties (80% maximum funding allowance);
- *Transitional* counties (50%); and
- *Attainment* (0%).

Transitional counties are defined as counties that do not exhibit the same levels of economic and demographic distress as a distressed county, but suffer from "high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration." Attainment counties are not allowed to be funded by the NBRC except for those projects that are located within an "isolated area of distress," or have been granted a waiver.¹⁶⁰

Distress is calculated in tiers of primary and secondary distress categories, with each category having three factors:

¹⁵⁵ Northern Border Regional Commission, *How LDDs Work with NBRC*, <https://www.nbrc.gov/how-ldds-work-nbrc>.

¹⁵⁶ Northern Border Regional Commission, *Northern Border Regional Commission: 2024-2029 Strategic Plan*.

¹⁵⁷ Northern Border Regional Commission, *Northern Border Regional Commission: 2024-2029 Strategic Plan*.

¹⁵⁸ P.L. 110-234.

¹⁵⁹ See 40 U.S.C. §15702(b) and *Project Eligibility and Match Determination*, <https://www.nbrc.gov/project-eligibility-and-match-determinationf>.

¹⁶⁰ Northern Border Regional Commission, *Project Eligibility and Match Determination*.

- Primary Distress Categories
 - Percent of population below the poverty level
 - Unemployment rate
 - Percent change in population
- Secondary Distress Categories
 - Percent of population with a bachelor's degree or higher
 - Median household income
 - Percent of secondary and/or seasonal homes

The NBRC assesses each county annually to determine the classification. The three classifications of economic distress are

- Distressed counties (i.e., counties with at least three qualifying factors (of the six total factors) and at least one factor from each category);
- Transitional counties (i.e., counties with at least one factor from either category); and
- Attainment counties (i.e., counties that show no measures of distress).

Recent Activities¹⁶¹

All projects are required to address at least one of the NBRC's four authorized program areas and its five-year strategic plan. The NBRC's main program areas include

- the Catalyst program (formerly the state economic and infrastructure development (SEID) program);
- Forest Economy Program (formerly the "Regional Forest Economy Partnership" Program);
- Timber for Transit Program; and
- other programs and initiatives (e.g., the J-1 Visa program, LDD Partnership program).¹⁶²

NBRC collaborates with various federal agencies on certain programs and initiatives. For instance, NBRC partners with the U.S. DOL's Employment and Training Administration to design workforce development initiatives through the DOL's Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Grant Initiative.¹⁶³ Since 2019, Congress has directed USDA to provide approximately \$2-3 million annually to NBRC for any USDA Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP) purposes that support rural economic development activities in the NBRC

¹⁶¹ Activities and programs in this section are illustrative examples and not comprehensive. For information on additional Northern Border Regional Commission activities, see <https://www.nbrc.gov>.

¹⁶² The Catalyst, Forest Economy, and Timber for Transit programs are considered competitive programs. See Northern Border Regional Commission, *Competitive Programs*, <https://www.nbrc.gov/competitive-programs>.

¹⁶³ Northern Border Regional Commission, *Partnership Programs*, <https://www.nbrc.gov/partnership-programs>, and Department of Labor, *Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Initiative*, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/dislocated-workers/grants/workforce-opportunity>.

region.¹⁶⁴ Other federal partners include EDA, EPA, the Federal Highway Administration, and HRSA.¹⁶⁵

Catalyst Program

The NBRC's Catalyst investment program is the chief mechanism for investing in economic development programs in the participating states. The Catalyst program funds infrastructure (e.g., transportation, telecommunications, and basic public infrastructure) and non-infrastructure activities. Non-infrastructure activities may include job skills training, skills development and employment-related education, entrepreneurship, technology, and business development projects, as well as projects designed to improve basic health care, nutrition and food security, and other public services. Funding may also support projects designed to promote resource conservation, tourism, recreation, and preservation of open space consistent with economic development goals.¹⁶⁶ In recent years, states have received additional funding through the Catalyst program due to supplemental funding provided by IJA appropriations.¹⁶⁷ Eligible applicants include units of local government, 501(c) organizations, federally-recognized Indian Tribes, the four state governments, and career technical centers and universities. Catalyst projects may require matching funds of up to 50% depending on the level of distress.

Forest Economy Program (FEP)

The FEP is an NBRC program designed to support the forest-based economy and to assist in the forest industry's evolution to include new technologies and viable business models across the four-state NBRC region.¹⁶⁸ In FY2018, Congress directed NBRC to allocate \$3 million to address the decline in forest-based economies throughout the region.¹⁶⁹ Each fiscal year from FY2019 to FY2023 and in FY2026, Congress directed NBRC to allocate \$4 million for the forest-based

¹⁶⁴ For example, P.L. 119-37 provided \$10 million for the ARC, DRA, NBRC, and SBRC regions for any Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) purposes (as described in section 381E(d) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act).

See also Northern Border Regional Commission, "\$1.8 Million Awarded for Economic Development Support Through Northern Border Regional Commission, USDA Rural Development Partnership," December 22, 2025, <https://www.nbrc.gov/articles/178>.

¹⁶⁵ See Northern Border Regional Commission, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 8, <https://www.nbrc.gov/sites/default/files/2026-06/FY25%20Budget%20Justification.pdf>; and Northern Border Regional Commission, *Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) Program*, <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/RERC>.

¹⁶⁶ Northern Border Regional Commission, *Catalyst Program*, <https://www.nbrc.gov/Catalyst>.

¹⁶⁷ Northern Border Regional Commission, *Catalyst Program*.

¹⁶⁸ Northern Border Regional Commission, *FY2024 Annual Report*, p. 13, <https://www.nbrc.gov/sites/default/files/2026-06/NBRC-2024-Annual-Report-Web-version%20%281%29.pdf>.

¹⁶⁹ Representative Tom Cole, "Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Freling-Huysen, Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, Regarding the House Amendment to Senate Amendment on H.R. 1625," *Congressional Record*, House, vol. 164, no. 50 (March 22, 2018), p. H2504, <https://www.congress.gov/crc/2018/03/22/CREC-2018-03-22-bk2.pdf>.

initiatives.¹⁷⁰ In FY2022, NBRC revised its forest program priorities with input from regional stakeholders and renamed the initiative the Forest Economy Program.¹⁷¹

Timber for Transit

The NBRC launched the Timber for Transit program in FY2024. The program provides funding for activities that promote the use of high-value forest products in transportation infrastructure and enhance climate resilience in rural communities. The purpose of the program is to “advance the use of wood-based materials and composites (advanced wood materials) through applied research and demonstration projects that showcase the suitability of such materials to transportation and transportation adjacent infrastructure.”¹⁷²

Legislative History

110th Congress

- The NBRC was first proposed in the Northern Border Economic Development Commission Act of 2007 (H.R. 1548), introduced on March 15, 2007. H.R. 1548 proposed the creation of a federally chartered, multi-state economic development organization—modeled after the ARC—covering designated northern border counties in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. The bill would have authorized the appropriation of \$40 million per year for FY2008 through FY2012 (H.R. 1548). The bill received regional co-sponsorship from Members of Congress representing areas in the northern border region.¹⁷³
- The NBRC was reintroduced in the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007 (H.R. 3246), which would have authorized the NBRC, the SCRC, and the SBRC, and reauthorized the DRA and the NGPRA (discussed in the next section) in a combined bill. H.R. 3246 had 18 co-sponsors in addition to the original bill sponsor, and passed the House by a vote of 264-154 on October 4, 2007.¹⁷⁴
- Upon House passage, H.R. 3246 was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The Senate incorporated authorizations for the

¹⁷⁰ For FY2026 amounts, for example, see Representative Tom Cole, “Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Cole, Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, Regarding H.R. 6938, Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026,” *Congressional Record*, House, vol. 172, no. 5 (January 8, 2026), p. H446, <https://www.congress.gov/119/crec/2026/01/08/172/5/CREC-2026-01-08-bk3.pdf#page=192>.

¹⁷¹ The program was formerly called the “Regional Forest Economy Partnership Program.” See Northern Border Regional Commission, *FY2022 Annual Report*, https://www.nbrc.gov/sites/default/files/2026-06/NBRC-2022-Annual-Report_Final-Web.pdf.

¹⁷² Northern Border Regional Commission, *Timber for Transit*, <https://www.nbrc.gov/t4t>.

¹⁷³ The bill was introduced by Rep. Hodes, Paul [D-NH-2] and co-sponsored by: Rep. Arcuri, Michael A. [D-NY-24]; Rep. Allen, Thomas H. [D-ME-1]; Rep. McHugh, John M. [R-NY-23]; Rep. Michaud, Michael H. [D-ME-2]; Rep. Shea-Porter, Carol [D-NH-1]; and Rep. Welch, Peter [D-VT-At Large].

¹⁷⁴ On May 3, 2007, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management convened a hearing on the new proposed regional commissions prior to the enactment of the 2008 farm bill. See House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, *The Southeast Crescent Authority, the Northern Border Economic Development Commission, and Southwest Regional Border Authority*, H.Hrg 110-36, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg35918/pdf/CHRG-110hhrg35918.pdf>.

establishment of the NBRC, SCRC, and the SBRC in the 2008 farm bill.¹⁷⁵ The 2008 farm bill authorized annual appropriations of \$30 million for FY2008 through FY2012 for all three new commissions.

115th Congress

- The only major changes to the NBRC since its creation were made in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334, “2018 farm bill”), which authorized the state capacity building grant program.
- In addition, the 2018 farm bill expanded the NBRC to include the following counties: Belknap and Cheshire counties in New Hampshire; Genesee, Greene, Livingston, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Orleans, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Sullivan, Washington, Warren, Wayne, and Yates counties in New York; and Addison, Bennington, Chittenden, Orange, Rutland, Washington, Windham, and Windsor counties in Vermont, making it the only state entirely within the NBRC.

118th Congress

- EDRA (P.L. 118-272) extended the funding authorization for the NBRC and added four counties to its region: Lincoln County in Maine, Merrimack County in New Hampshire, and Schoharie and Wyoming Counties in New York.
- EDRA made other changes to the NBRC’s authorizing statute which are summarized in “Changes to Subtitle V FRCAs.”

Funding History

Since its creation, the NBRC has received consistent authorizations of appropriations (see **Table 6**). The 2008 farm bill authorized the appropriation of \$30 million for the NBRC for each of FY2008 through FY2013 (P.L. 110-234); the same in the 2014 farm bill for each of FY2014 through FY2018 (P.L. 113-79); \$33 million for each of FY2019 through FY2023 (P.L. 115-334); and \$40 million for each of FY2025 through FY2029 (P.L. 118-272).

Due to its statutory linkages to the SCRC and SBRC, all three commissions also share common authorizing legislation and identical funding authorizations. Congress has funded the NBRC since FY2010 (see **Table 6**). The NBRC’s appropriated funding level—excluding supplemental appropriations—increased from \$1.5 million in FY2013 to \$40 million in FY2023 (see **Table C-1**). In FY2022, the NBRC, like other commissions, received five times the amount of their FY2021 annual appropriations in the Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act (Division J, Title III of P.L. 117-58). In FY2026, NBRC received \$42 million in annual appropriations.

Table 6. NBRC:Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2017-FY2026

(\$ in millions)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Appropriated Funding	10.0	15.0	20.0	25.0	30.0	185.0 ^a	40.0	41.0	41.0	42.0
Authorized Funding	30.0	30.0	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0	—	40.0	40.0

¹⁷⁵ Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, P.L. 110-234.

Sources: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from the following: P.L. 115-31, P.L. 115-141, P.L. 115-244, P.L. 116-94, P.L. 116-260, P.L. 117-58, P.L. 117-103, P.L. 117-328, P.L. 118-42, P.L. 119-4, and P.L. 119-74.

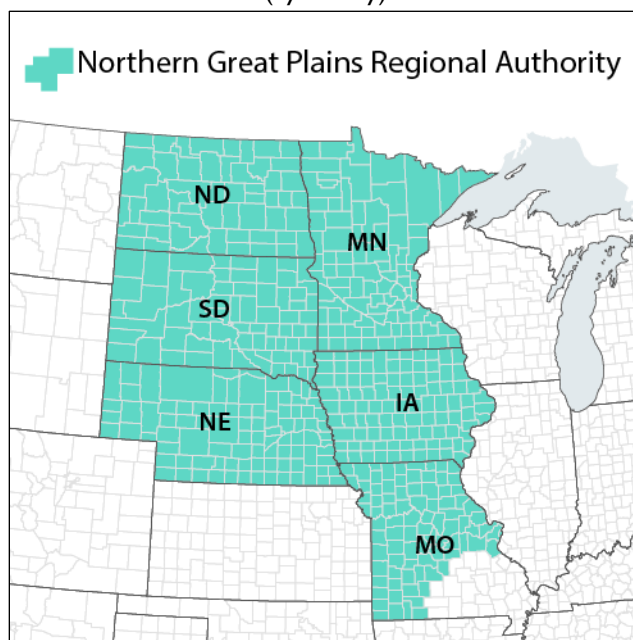
Notes: For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-1**.

- a. FY2022 amounts include \$35 million provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103, Division D, Title IV). FY2022 appropriated funding amounts also include \$150 million provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III).

Northern Great Plains Regional Authority

The Northern Great Plains Regional Authority was created by the 2002 farm bill.¹⁷⁶ The NGPRA was created to address economic distress in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri (other than counties included in the Delta Regional Authority), North Dakota, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

Figure 7. Map of the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority
(by county)



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 7 U.S.C. §2009bb and Esri Data and Maps.

Note: Missouri's jurisdiction was defined as those counties not already included in the DRA.

The NGPRA appears to have been briefly active shortly after it was created, when it received a total of \$3 million in annual appropriations from Congress in FY2004 and FY2005.¹⁷⁷ The NGPRA's funding authorization lapsed at the end of FY2018, and it was reauthorized with the enactment of P.L. 118-272. The NGPRA region includes counties that are also in the GLA region (see **Table D-7** and **Figure B-1**).

¹⁷⁶ P.L. 107-171.

¹⁷⁷ See P.L. 108-199 and P.L. 108-447.

Structure and Activities

Overview of Structure and Activities

The NGPRA featured broad similarities to the basic structure shared among most of the federal regional authorities and commissions, being a federal-state partnership led by a federal co-chair (appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate) and governors of the participating states, of which one was designated as the state co-chair.

Unique to the NGPRA were certain structural novelties reflective of regional socio-political features. The NGPRA also included a Native American tribal co-chair, who was the chairperson of an Indian tribe in the region (or their designated representative), and appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The tribal co-chair served as the “liaison between the governments of Indian tribes in the region and the [NGPRA].” No term limit is established in statute; the only term-related proscription is that the state co-chair “shall be elected by the state members for a term of not less than 1 year.”

Another novel feature among the FRCAs was also the NGPRA’s statutory reliance on a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation—Northern Great Plains, Inc.—in furtherance of its mission. While Northern Great Plains, Inc. was statutorily organized to complement the NGPRA’s activities, it effectively served as the sole manifestation of the NGPRA concept and rationale while it was active, given that the NGPRA was only once appropriated funds and never appeared to exist as an active organization. The Northern Great Plains, Inc. was active for several years, and reportedly received external funding,¹⁷⁸ but is currently defunct.

Activities

Under its authorizing statute,¹⁷⁹ the federal government would initially fund all administrative costs in FY2002, which would decrease to 75% in FY2003, and 50% in FY2004. Also, the NGPRA would have designated levels of county economic distress; 75% of funds were reserved for the most distressed counties in each state, and 50% reserved for transportation, telecommunications, and basic infrastructure improvements. Accordingly, non-distressed communities were eligible to receive no more than 25% of appropriated funds.

The NGPRA was also structured to include a network of designated, multi-county LDDs at the sub-state levels. As with its sister organizations, the LDDs would have served as nodes for project implementation and reporting, and as advisors to their respective states and the NGPRA as a whole.

Legislative History

103rd Congress

- The Northern Great Plains Rural Development Act (P.L. 103-318), which became law in 1994, established the Northern Great Plains Rural Development Commission to study economic conditions and provide economic development planning for the Northern Great Plains region. The commission was comprised of the governors (or designated representative) from the Northern Great Plains

¹⁷⁸ Bush Foundation, *Annual Review 2005*, p. 27, <https://www.bushfoundation.org/app/uploads/2024/12/gsmay2006.pdf>.

¹⁷⁹ P.L. 107-171.

states of Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, and South Dakota (prior to Missouri's inclusion), along with one member from each of those states appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

104th Congress

- The Agricultural, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1995 (P.L. 103-330) provided \$1,000,000 to carry out the Northern Great Plains Rural Development Act. The commission produced a 10-year plan to address economic development and distress in the five states. After a legislative extension (P.L. 104-327), the report was submitted in 1997.¹⁸⁰ The Northern Great Plains Initiative for Rural Development (NGPIRD), a nonprofit 501(c)(3), was established to implement the commission's advisories.

107th Congress

- The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, or 2002 farm bill (P.L. 107-171), authorized the NGPRA, which superseded the commission. The statute also created Northern Great Plains, Inc., a 501(c)(3), as a resource for regional issues and international trade, which supplanted the NGPIRD with a broader remit that included research, education, training, and issues of international trade.

108th Congress

- The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2003 (H.R. 3196) would have reauthorized the NGPRA as the "Northern Great Plains Regional Commission." The bill was referred to several committees and subcommittees and was not enacted.

109th Congress

- The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2005 (H.R. 1349) would have reauthorized the NGPRA as the "Northern Great Plains Regional Commission." The bill was not enacted.¹⁸¹

110th Congress

- The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, or 2008 farm bill (P.L. 110-246), extended the NGPRA's authorization through FY2012. The legislation also expanded the authority to include areas of Missouri not covered by the DRA, and provided mechanisms to enable the NGPRA to begin operations even without the Senate confirmation of a federal co-chair, as well as in the absence of a confirmed tribal co-chair.

¹⁸⁰ Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, "Great Plains Commission Completes Work, Looks to Region's Future," Minneapolis, MN, April 1, 1997, <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications/fedgazette/great-plains-commission-completes-work-looks-to-regions-future>.

¹⁸¹ Representative James L. Oberstar, "Introducing the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act," Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 151, no. 33 (March 17, 2005), E475-E476, <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/volume-151/issue-33/extensions-of-remarks-section/article/E475-2>.

- The Agricultural Act of 2014, or 2014 farm bill (P.L. 113-79), reauthorized the NGPRA and the DRA, and extended their authorizations from FY2012 to FY2018.

118th Congress

- EDRA (P.L. 118-272) repealed the NGPRA’s sunset provision and reauthorized the NGPRA. The law also authorized appropriations for NGPRA through FY2029.¹⁸²

Funding History

The NGPRA was authorized to receive \$30 million annually from FY2008 to FY2018 and \$40 million annually from FY2025 to FY2029.¹⁸³ Its authorization of appropriations lapsed at the end of FY2018, and was reauthorized in FY2025 through EDRA.¹⁸⁴ It received \$1.5 million in appropriations each year in FY2004 and FY2005.¹⁸⁵

Table 7. Northern Great Plains Regional Authority Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2025-FY2026

	(\$ in millions)	
	FY2025	FY2026
Appropriated Funding	—	—
Authorized Funding	\$40	\$40

Source: Authorized funding amount compiled by CRS using data from P.L. 118-272.

Note: For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-1**.

Northwest Regional Commission

Congress typically establishes FRCAs in an authorization act before providing appropriations. This has not been the case with a new FRCA for the northwest region of the United States. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-74, Division B, Title IV) provided \$1 million for “expenses necessary to establish a Northwest Regional Commission located in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana” and indicated that the funding for the commission “shall be used to carry out activities authorized for other regional Commissions by subtitle V of title 40, United States Code.” The House Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committees have not reported legislation for the Northwest Regional Commission (NRC) that is similar to authorizing legislation for other FRCAs.

The service areas for the previously authorized FRCAs are also generally defined in statute. As noted, P.L. 119-74 indicated that the commission would cover Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana and did not list counties or a sub-region for the NRC service area. As of the date of publication, the NRC is not active.

¹⁸² EDRA repealed 7 U.S.C. §2009bb–13, which had previously terminated the NGPRA’s authorization after FY2018.

¹⁸³ 7 U.S.C. §2009bb–12.

¹⁸⁴ P.L. 118-272.

¹⁸⁵ P.L. 108-199 and P.L. 108-447.

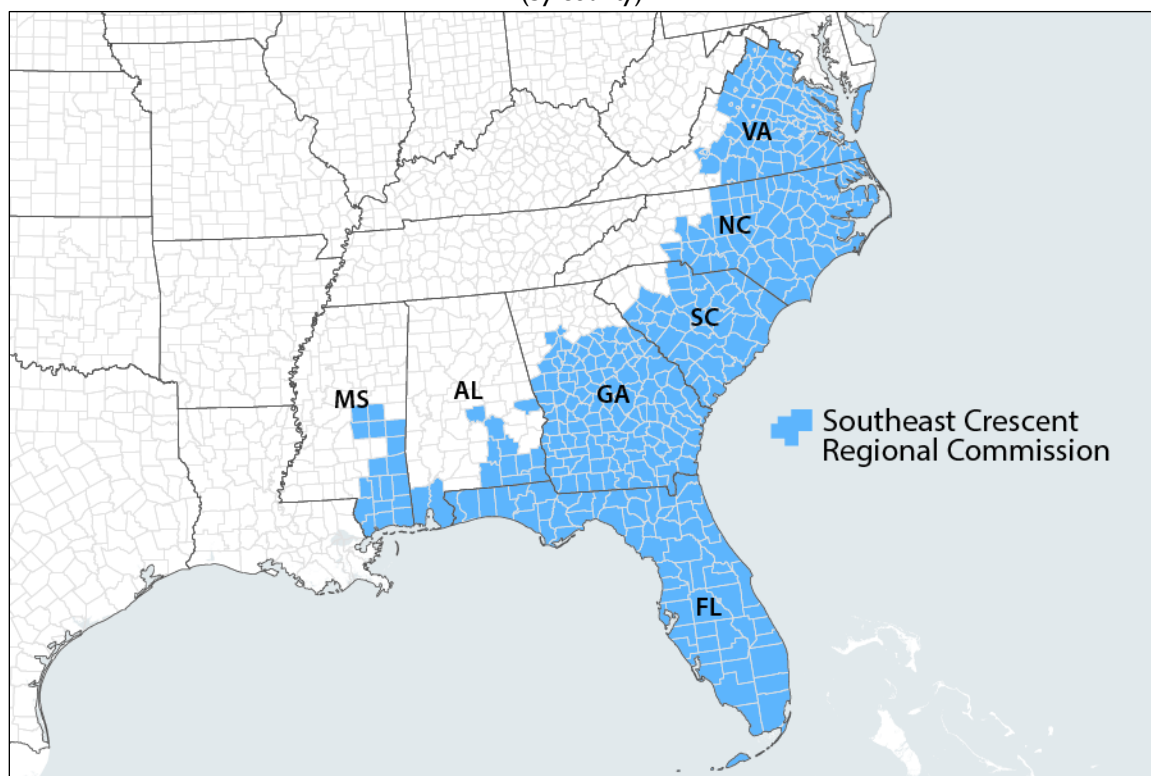
Southeast Crescent Regional Commission

The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission was created by the 2008 farm bill,¹⁸⁶ which also created the NBRC and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. All three commissions share common authorizing language modeled after the ARC.

The SCRC received regular appropriations of \$250,000 annually from FY2010 through FY2020 but did not form during that time due to the absence of an appointed federal co-chair.¹⁸⁷ On December 8, 2021, the Senate confirmed the SCRC's first federal co-chairperson, thereby allowing the SCRC to convene and begin other activities.¹⁸⁸

The SCRC was created to address economic distress in areas of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida (see **Figure 8**) not served by the ARC or the DRA (see **Table D-8**).

Figure 8. Map of the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission
(by county)



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdiction defined in 40 U.S.C. §1573I, Esri Data and Maps, and SCRC, "SCRC Counties by Economic Designation," <https://scrc.gov>.

¹⁸⁶ P.L. 110-234.

¹⁸⁷ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11744, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Authorization*.

¹⁸⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, *Hearing on the Nominations of Christopher Frey to be Assistant Administrator for Research and Development, at the Environmental Protection Agency and Jennifer Clyburn Reed to be Federal Co-Chair of the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission*, 117th Cong., 1st sess., October 27, 2021, <https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/hearings?ID=A654BF51-1207-411A-BD0E-914CCFBDB60B>, and Congress.gov, "Nomination: Jennifer Clyburn Reed—Southeast Crescent Regional Commission," PN957, <https://www.congress.gov/nomination/117th-congress/957>.

Notes: The SCRC is statutorily defined as including those counties in the named states that are not already included in the ARC or the DRA. Florida is the only state with all counties defined as being within the SCRC. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58; enacted November 15, 2021) added three counties that were previously in the SCRC region to the ARC region.

Overview of Structure and Activities

Commission Structure

The SCRC shares an organizing structure with the GLA, MARC, NBRC, SBRC, and SNERC; all share common statutory authorizing language modeled after the ARC.

The SCRC consists of a federal co-chair, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, along with the participating state governors (or their designated representatives), of which one would be named by the state representatives as state co-chair. There is no term limit for the federal co-chair. However, the state co-chair is limited to two consecutive terms, but may not serve a term of less than one year. In December 2021, the Senate confirmed the first federal co-chair for the SCRC. Prior to the confirmation of the federal co-chair in FY2022, the SCRC was unable to form, despite receiving annual appropriations.¹⁸⁹

Strategic Plan

The SCRC developed its bylaws and its first strategic plan for the period FY2023-FY2027.¹⁹⁰ The plan includes the following goals:

1. critical infrastructure,
2. health and support services access and outcomes,
3. workforce capacity,
4. entrepreneurial and business development activities,
5. affordable housing stock and access, and
6. environmental conservation, preservation, and access.

Designating Distressed Areas

As authorized, the SCRC shares an approach to designating distressed areas that is similar to that of the NBRC and the SBRC, as all share common statutory authorizing language.¹⁹¹ The SCRC uses an index-based classification system, the SCRC compared each county within its jurisdiction with national averages based on three economic indicators: (1) three-year average unemployment rates; (2) per capita market income; and (3) poverty rates. These factors are calculated into a composite index value for each county, which are ranked and sorted into designated distress levels. Each distress level corresponds to a given county's ranking relative to that of the United States as a whole. These designations are defined as follows by the SCRC, starting from the highest level of distress:

¹⁸⁹ According to statute, a federal co-chair is required for the formation of a commission quorum and making decisions. 40 U.S.C. §15302.

¹⁹⁰ Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, *Southeast Crescent Regional Commission: Bylaws*, April 2023, https://scrc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/scrc-bylaws-revised_april_2023.pdf; and *Southeast Crescent Regional Commission: Strategic Plan (FY2023-FY2027)*, December 2022, Revised July 2025, https://scrc.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/strategic_plan_updated_april_2025.pdf.

¹⁹¹ 40 U.S.C. §15702.

- *Distressed* counties, which are the most severely and persistently economically distressed and underdeveloped. They also have high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration.
- *Transitional*, which are counties that are economically distressed and underdeveloped or have recently suffered high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration.
- *Attainment*, which are counties in the region that are not designated as distressed or transitional counties under this subsection.¹⁹²

The SCRC also designates isolated areas of distress in attainment counties.¹⁹³ The SCRC is required to allocate 50% of its total appropriations to projects in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.¹⁹⁴

Recent Activities

In addition to the development of bylaws and strategic plan, the SCRC hired its first chief of staff in 2022 and continued to add staff in subsequent years. In recent years, the SCRC has administered the State Economic and Infrastructure Development (SEID) Grant Program, a Local Development District (LDD) Capacity Building program, a state Capacity Cooperative program, and a J-1 visa program.¹⁹⁵

Legislative History

The SCRC concept was first introduced by university researchers working on rural development issues in 1990 at Tuskegee University's Annual Professional Agricultural Worker's Conference for 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Universities.¹⁹⁶

In 1994, the Southern Rural Development Commission Act was introduced in the House Agricultural Committee, which would have provided the statutory basis for a "Southern Rural Development Commission."¹⁹⁷ While the concept was not reintroduced in Congress until the 2000s, various nongovernmental initiatives sustained discussion and interest in the concept in the intervening period. Supportive legislation was reintroduced in 2002, which touched off other

¹⁹² Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, *FY2025 Annual Report*, https://scrc.gov/sites/default/files/Reports-2026/southeast_crescent_regional_commission_2025_annual_report.pdf; "SCRC Economic Designation of Counties & Isolated Areas," <https://scrc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/scrc-economic-designation-methodology.pdf>.

¹⁹³ Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 17, https://scrc.gov/sites/default/files/Reports-2024/scrc_fy_2025_budget_justification_final.pdf.

¹⁹⁴ 40 U.S.C. §15702(b).

¹⁹⁵ Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, *Southeast Crescent Regional Commission*, <https://scrc.gov>; "Grants and Programs," <https://grants.scrc.gov/>; *FY2025 Annual Report*, https://scrc.gov/sites/default/files/Reports-2026/southeast_crescent_regional_commission_2025_annual_report.pdf; and Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*.

¹⁹⁶ Legislation introduced in the early 2000s also cited a University of Georgia study, entitled "Dismantling Persistent Poverty in the Southeastern United States," that measured "sustained persistent poverty over 3 census periods" in the Delta Black Belt region. See Carl Vinson Institute of Government, *It's a Matter of Wealth: Dismantling Persistent Poverty in the Southeastern United States*, University of Georgia, 2003.

¹⁹⁷ H.R. 3901 proposed the establishment of a "Southern Rural Development Commission" would have focused on rural economic development in specified counties and parishes in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

accompanying legislative efforts until the SCRC was authorized in 2008.¹⁹⁸ The legislative efforts are summarized below.

107th Congress

- H.R. 3618 would have established the “SouthEast Crescent Authority (SECA),” which had similar, but not identical structure and authorities to what would later become authorizing legislation for the SCRC. The bill would have authorized annual appropriations of \$40 million for FY2003 through FY2007. The bill was referred to several committees and subcommittees and was not enacted.
- In 2002, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management held a hearing (“The Delta Regional Authority and Southeast Crescent Authority: Progress and Prospects For Regional Development Authorities”) to receive testimony regarding the DRA (which had been recently authorized) and to receive testimony regarding the SECA.¹⁹⁹

108th Congress

- The Southern Empowerment and Economic Development Act to authorize the Delta Black Belt Regional Authority (H.R. 678) would have amended the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2009aa(1)) to rename the DRA as the Delta Black Belt Regional Authority (DBBRA). Among other changes, the legislation would have extended the geography of the region to include parts of the area now covered by the SCRC as well as areas in other states. The bill was referred to several committees and subcommittees and was not enacted.
- The SouthEast Crescent Authority Act of 2003 (H.R. 141) and the Southern Regional Commission Act of 2003 (S. 527) would have also established the SECA and the Southern Regional Commission, respectively. The bills were not enacted.
- The SCRC was reintroduced in the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2003 (H.R. 3196), which would have authorized the SCRC. The bill was referred to several committees and subcommittees and was not enacted.

109th Congress

- The Southern Empowerment and Economic Development Act (H.R. 5082) would have amended the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to rename the DRA as the DBBRA. The legislation would have extended the region to include parts of the area now covered by the SCRC as well as areas in other states. The bill was referred to several committees and subcommittees and was not enacted.

¹⁹⁸ 40 U.S.C. §15731.

¹⁹⁹ House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, *The Delta Regional Authority and Southeast Crescent Authority: Progress and Prospects for Regional Development Authorities*, 107th Congress, 2nd sess., September 12, 2002. For a summary of the hearing, see House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, *Summary of Legislative and Oversight Activities*, H.Rept. 107-793, 107th Congress, 2nd sess., <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRPT-107hrpt793/html/CRPT-107hrpt793.htm>.

- The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2005 (H.R. 1349) would have established the SCRC and SBRC. The bill also proposed to reauthorize the DRA and NGPRA. The bill was not enacted.²⁰⁰
- House and Senate versions of the SouthEast Crescent Authority Act of 2005 (H.R. 20, S. 1865) would have established the SECA and were referred to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, respectively. On July 12, 2006, the House Subcommittee held a hearing on H.R. 20 (and other bills).²⁰¹ No further action was taken.

110th Congress

- The Southern Empowerment and Economic Development Act to authorize the Delta Black Belt Regional Authority (H.R. 2403) would have amended the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to rename the DRA as the DBBRA. The legislation would have extended the geography of the region to include parts of the region now covered by the SCRC and other states. The bill was referred to several committees and subcommittees and was not enacted.
- Bills introduced in the House and Senate as the SouthEast Crescent Authority Act of 2007 (H.R. 66 and S. 503, respectively) would have established the SECA, which continued to have similar, but not identical structure and authorities to what would later become authorizing legislation for the SCRC. These bills were not enacted.
- On May 3, 2007, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management convened a hearing on the SECA and other regional commissions prior to the enactment of the 2008 farm bill.²⁰²
- In July 2007, the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007 (H.R. 3246) was introduced to authorize the SCRC as well as the NBRC and the SBRC and reauthorize the DRA and the NGPRA in a combined bill.²⁰³ As noted above, upon House passage, the Senate incorporated authorizations for the

²⁰⁰ Representative James L. Oberstar, "Introducing the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act," Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 151, no. 33 (March 17, 2005), E475-E476, <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/volume-151/issue-33/extensions-of-remarks-section/article/E475-2>.

²⁰¹ Representative Shuster (PA) introduced the hearing proceedings by noting: "Certain parts of the Southeast, Southwest, and Northeast have high unemployment, low per capita income, and lack the necessary healthcare, education, and water and wastewater facilities. Numerous proposals have been introduced to create economic development commissions using an ARC model for success. We will hear from proponents of these new regional authorities today." See House Subcommittee on Economic Development, *The Reauthorization of the Appalachian Regional Commission and Legislative Proposals to Create Additional Regional Economic Development Authorities*, Serial No. 109-88.

²⁰² See House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, *The Southeast Crescent Authority, the Northern Border Economic Development Commission, and Southwest Regional Border Authority*, H.Hrg 110-36, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg35918/pdf/CHRG-110hhrg35918.pdf>. Notably, the hearing referred to the entity that would later become the SCRC as the "Southeast Crescent Authority."

²⁰³ H.R. 3246 had 18 co-sponsors in addition to the original bill sponsor, and passed the House by a vote of 264-154 on October 4, 2007.

establishment of the NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC in the 2008 farm bill, enacted May 22, 2008.²⁰⁴

118th Congress

- EDRA (P.L. 118-272) extended the funding authorization and made other changes to the SCRC’s authorizing statute—see “Changes to Subtitle V FRCAs.”

Funding History

Congress authorized \$30 million funding levels for each year from FY2008 to FY2018 and \$33 million for each year from FY2019 through FY2023.²⁰⁵ EDRA (P.L. 118-272) authorized appropriations for the SCRC at \$40 million for each fiscal year from FY2025 through FY2029.²⁰⁶

Congress appropriated \$250,000 in each fiscal year from FY2010 to FY2020. However, for FY2021, Congress provided an annual appropriation of \$1 million, which was followed by \$5 million in FY2022 and \$20 million each of fiscal years FY2023 - FY2026. Congress also provided \$5 million in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III) in FY2022²⁰⁷ (see **Table 8**).

Table 8. SCRC: Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2017-FY2026

(\$ in millions)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Appropriated Funding	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00	10.00 ^a	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Authorized Funding	30.00	30.00	33.00	33.00	33.00	33.00	33.00	—	40.00	40.00

Sources: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from the following: P.L. 115-31, P.L. 115-141, P.L. 115-244, P.L. 116-94, P.L. 116-260, P.L. 117-58, P.L. 117-103, P.L. 117-328, P.L. 118-42, P.L. 119-4, and P.L. 119-74.

Notes: For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-1**.

- a. FY2022 appropriated funding amounts include \$5 million provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103, Division D, Title IV). FY2022 appropriated funding amounts also include \$5 million provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III).

Southern New England Regional Commission

P.L. 118-272 amended 40 U.S.C. §15301(a) to establish the Southern New England Regional Commission. The structure and functions of the SNERC are based on the model of the NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC, which were established in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (i.e., 2008 farm bill).²⁰⁸ The authorizing legislation requires that before the SNERC may convene,

²⁰⁴ Upon House passage, H.R. 3246 was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The Senate incorporated authorizations for the establishment of the NBRC, SCRC, and the SBRC in the 2008 farm bill, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, P.L. 110-234. The 2008 farm bill authorized annual appropriations of \$30 million for FY2008 through FY2012 for all three new commissions.

²⁰⁵ 40 U.S.C. §15751.

²⁰⁶ 40 U.S.C. §15751.

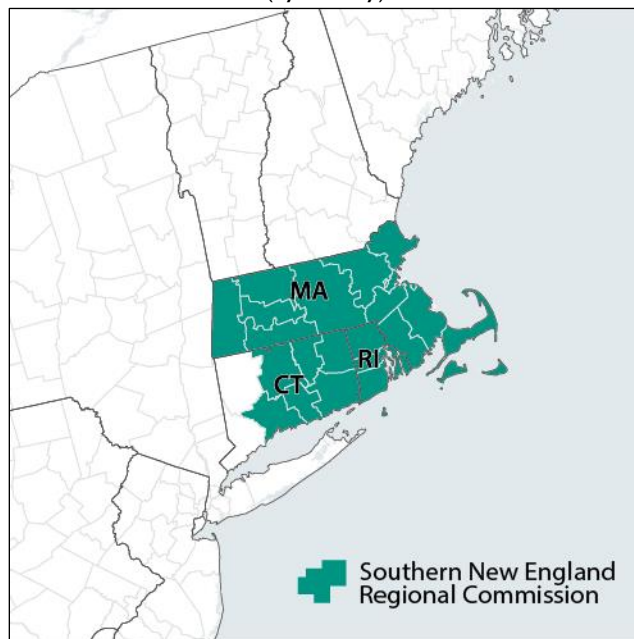
²⁰⁷ P.L. 116-260 and P.L. 117-58.

²⁰⁸ P.L. 110-234.

the President must nominate and the Senate must confirm a federal co-chair. As of the date of this publication a President has not nominated a federal co-chair.

The geographic boundaries of the SNERC include the entire states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island and six counties in Connecticut (see **Table D-9** and **Figure 9**).

Figure 9. Map of the Southern New England Regional Commission Region
(by county)



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 40 U.S.C. §15736 and Esri Data and Maps.

Notes: All counties in Massachusetts and Rhode Island are within the SNERC jurisdiction. Connecticut abolished its county governments in 1960, and the U.S. Census Bureau in 2022 began to use the state's nine planning regions as county-equivalent units "for purposes of collecting, tabulating, and disseminating statistical data." See State of Connecticut, Secretary of the State, "Section VI: Counties," <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Register-Manual/Section-VI/Counties—Table-of-Contents>; and U.S. Census Bureau, "Change to County-Equivalents in the State of Connecticut," 87 *Federal Register* 34235, Final Notice, June 6, 2022, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/06/06/2022-12063/change-to-county-equivalents-in-the-state-of-connecticut>. The boundaries of Connecticut's eight historical counties continue to be used in some contexts as geographical references, e.g., P.L. 118-272 stated that the SNERC region shall include (1) each county in the State of Rhode Island, (2) Hartford, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, Tolland, and Windham Counties in Connecticut, and (3) each county in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. See State of Connecticut, "CT Counties," <https://geodata.ct.gov/datasets/ctmaps::ct-counties/about>.

Overview of Structure and Activities

As authorized, the SNERC would share a structure with the GLA, MARC, NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC.

Authority Structure

As authorized, the SNERC would consist of a federal co-chair, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, along with the participating state governors (or their designated representatives), of which one would be named by the state representatives as state co-chair. There is no term limit for the federal co-chair. However, the state co-chair is limited to two consecutive terms, but may not serve a term of less than one year.

Strategic Plan

As of the date of publication, the SNERC is not active and has not published a strategic plan.

Designating Distressed Areas

As authorized, the SNERC would share an approach to designating distressed areas that is similar to that of the GLA, MARC, NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC.²⁰⁹ Generally speaking, statutes require the FRCAs to designate all counties (including isolated areas within counties) by their relative level of economic distress. The highest level of distress is considered “distressed” and the least distressed are considered “attainment.”

Other Subtitle V FRCAs (i.e., GLA, NBRC, SBRC, SCRC) are authorized to provide funding in attainment counties for administrative expenses of local development districts and for multicounty projects that may include areas in attainment counties. EDRA waived these exceptions for the SNERC.²¹⁰

Recent Activities

The SNERC is not currently active. The presidential nomination and Senate confirmation of a federal co-chair is an essential step for the SNERC to start operations. For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11744, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Authorization*.

Legislative History

Some Members of Congress introduced bills to establish a SNERC in the 116th-118th Congresses.²¹¹ In the 118th Congress, P.L. 118-272 (EDRA) established the SNERC and authorized funding each fiscal year from FY2025 through FY2029.

Funding History

Although EDRA did not provide direct funding for SNERC, it did include an authorization of appropriations for SNERC of \$40 million for each of FY2025 through FY2029 (P.L. 118-272).²¹² As of the date of publication, the SNERC has not received appropriations.

**Table 9. Southern New England Regional Commission
Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2025-FY2026**

	(\$ in millions)	
	FY2025	FY2026
Appropriated Funding	—	—
Authorized Funding	40.0	40.0

Notes: The SNERC was authorized in FY2025 (P.L. 118-272). For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-1**.

²⁰⁹ 40 U.S.C. §15702.

²¹⁰ EDRA also waived these exceptions for the Maryland and Pennsylvania portions of the MARC. See 40 U.S.C. §15702(c)(3).

²¹¹ See H.R. 5124 (116th Congress); H.R. 2134 and S. 900 (117th Congress); and H.R. 10339 (118th Congress).

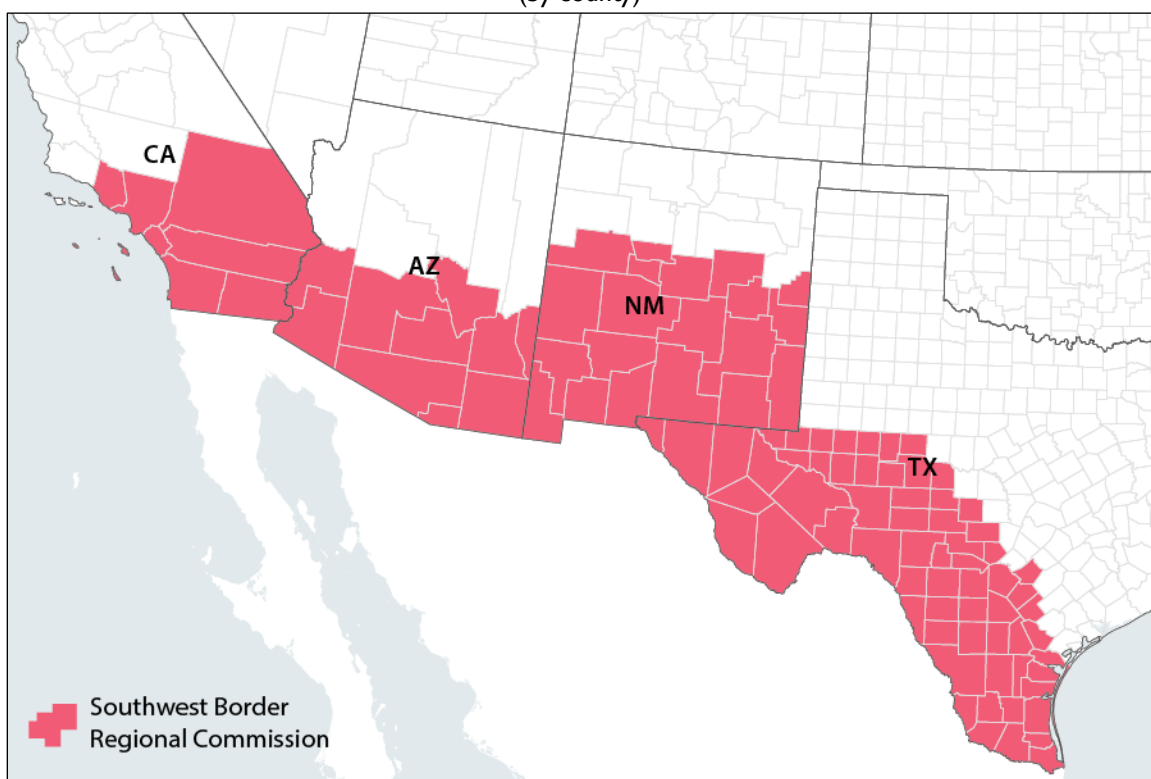
²¹² 40 U.S.C. §15751.

Southwest Border Regional Commission

The Southwest Border Regional Commission was created with the enactment of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, or the 2008 farm bill (P.L. 110-234), which also created the NBRC and the SCRC. All three commissions (and the GLA, MARC, and SNERC) share common statutory authorizing language modeled after the ARC.

The SBRC was created to address economic distress in the southern border regions of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas (see **Figure 10** and **Table D-10**). On December 6, 2022, the Senate confirmed the SBRC's first federal co-chairperson, thereby allowing the SBRC to convene and begin other activities.²¹³

Figure 10. Map of the Southwest Border Regional Commission
(by county)



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data defined in 40 U.S.C. §15732 and Esri Data and Maps.

Overview of Structure and Activities

Commission Structure

The SBRC shares an organizing structure with the GLA, MARC, NBRC, SCRC, SNERC as all share common statutory authorizing language modeled after the ARC.

By statute, the SBRC consists of a federal co-chair, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, along with the participating state governors (or their designated

²¹³ Congress.gov, *Nomination: Juan Eduardo Sanchez—Southwest Border Regional Commission*, PN2450, <https://www.congress.gov/nomination/117th-congress/2450>.

representatives), of which one would be named by the state representatives as state co-chair. As enacted in statute, there is no term limit for the federal co-chair. However, the state co-chair is limited to two consecutive terms, but may not serve a term of less than one year.

Strategic Plan

In January 2025, the SBRC published its inaugural strategic plan for FY2025-FY2030, which includes goals focused on underserved communities; regional competitiveness; workforce and economic mobility; resiliency, local capacity, and infrastructure; and efficiency and impact.²¹⁴

Designating Distressed Areas

As authorized, the SBRC shares an approach to designating distressed areas that is similar to that of the GLA, MARC, NBRC, SCRC, and SNERC as all share common statutory authorizing language.²¹⁵ For instance, like these FRCAs, the SBRC is required to designate isolated areas of distress in attainment counties and to allocate 50% of its total appropriations to projects in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.²¹⁶

Recent Activities

The Senate confirmed the SBRC's first federal co-chair in December 2022, which marked an essential step for starting the commission's operations.²¹⁷ The SBRC announced its first grant competition in March 2025.²¹⁸

Legislative History

The concept of an economic development agency focusing on the southwest border region has existed at least since 1976, though the SBRC was established through more recent efforts.

- Executive Order 13122 in 1999 created the Interagency Task Force on the Economic Development of the Southwest Border,²¹⁹ which examined issues of socioeconomic distress and economic development in the southwest border regions and advised on federal efforts to address them.

108th Congress

- In February 2003, a "Southwest Regional Border Authority" was proposed in S. 458. A companion bill, H.R. 1071, was introduced in March 2003. The SBRC was reintroduced in the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2003 (H.R. 3196), which would have authorized the SBRC, and the SCRC and reauthorized the DRA and NGPRA.

²¹⁴ SBRC, *Strategic Plan 2025*, <https://sbrc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/SBRC-5-YEAR-PLAN-.pdf>.

²¹⁵ 40 U.S.C. §15702.

²¹⁶ 40 U.S.C. §15702(b).

²¹⁷ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11744, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Authorization*, by Julie M. Lawhorn.

²¹⁸ SBRC, *Grant Program*, <https://sbrc.gov/grants-programs-2/>.

²¹⁹ Executive Order 13122, *Interagency Task Force on the Economic Development of the Southern Border*, 64 *Federal Register* 29201-29202, May 25, 1999.

109th Congress

- The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2005 (H.R. 1349) would have established the SBRC and SCRC. The bill also proposed to reauthorize the DRA and the NGPRA. The bill was not enacted.²²⁰
- In 2006, the proposed Southwest Regional Border Authority Act (H.R. 5742) would have created the “Southwest Regional Border Authority.”

110th Congress

- The SBRC was reintroduced in the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007 (H.R. 3246), which would have authorized the SBRC, the SCRC, and the NBRC, and reauthorized the DRA and the NGPRA in a combined bill.
- On May 3, 2007, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management convened a hearing on the SBRC, and other regional commissions prior to the enactment of the 2008 farm bill.²²¹
- In July 2007, the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007 (H.R. 3246) was introduced to authorize the SBRC, the SCRC, and the NBRC, and reauthorize the DRA and the NGPRA in a combined bill.²²²
- Upon House passage, the Senate incorporated authorizations for the establishment of the NBRC, SCRC, and SBRC in the 2008 farm bill.²²³ The 2008 farm bill authorized annual appropriations of \$30 million for FY2008 through FY2012 for all three of the new organizations.

117th Congress

- The Senate confirmed the SBRC’s first federal co-chair in December 2022.²²⁴

118th Congress

- EDRA (P.L. 118-272) extended the funding authorization for the SBRC and added 10 counties to its region: Bernalillo, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Guadalupe, Lea, Roosevelt, Tarrant, and Valencia Counties in New Mexico and Guadalupe

²²⁰ Representative James L. Oberstar, “Introducing the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act,” Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 151, no. 33 (March 17, 2005), E475-E476, <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/volume-151/issue-33/extensions-of-remarks-section/article/E475-2>.

²²¹ See House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, *The Southeast Crescent Authority, the Northern Border Economic Development Commission, and Southwest Regional Border Authority*, H.Hrg. 110-36, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg35918/pdf/CHRG-110hhrg35918.pdf>. Notably, the hearing referred to the entity that would later become the SBRC as the “Southwest Regional Border Authority.”

²²² H.R. 3246 had 18 co-sponsors in addition to the original bill sponsor, and passed the House by a vote of 264-154 on October 4, 2007.

²²³ Upon House passage, H.R. 3246 was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The Senate incorporated authorizations for the establishment of the NBRC, SCRC, and the SBRC in the 2008 farm bill, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, P.L. 110-234. The 2008 farm bill authorized annual appropriations of \$30 million for FY2008 through FY2012 for all three new commissions.

²²⁴ Congress.gov, *Nomination: Juan Eduardo Sanchez—Southwest Border Regional Commission*, PN2450, <https://www.congress.gov/nomination/117th-congress/2450>.

County in Texas. EDRA made other changes to the NBRC's authorizing statute which are summarized in "Changes to Subtitle V FRCAs."

Funding History

Congress authorized annual funding of \$30 million for the SBRC from FY2008 to FY2018; \$33 million for each fiscal year from FY2019 through FY2023; and \$40 million for each fiscal year from FY2025 through FY2029 (P.L. 118-272).²²⁵ For FY2021, Congress provided \$250,000 for the SBRC through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260). For FY2022, Congress provided \$1.25 million for the SBRC through the IIJA (Division J, Title III of P.L. 117-58) and \$2.5 million through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103). The IIJA provided the SBRC with an increase in appropriations that was five times the amount of its annual appropriation in FY2021. In FY2024, Congress directed USDA to provide funding for the first time to SBRC for any USDA Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP) purposes to support rural economic development activities in the SBRC region.²²⁶ Congress provided \$5 million for the SBRC for each fiscal year between FY2023 and FY2025. In FY2026, P.L. 119-74 provided \$5.5 million in appropriations for SBRC.

Table 10. SBRC: Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2017-FY2026

(\$ in millions)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Appropriated Funding	—	—	—	—	0.25	3.75 ^a	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.50
Authorized Funding	30.00	30.00	33.00	33.00	33.00	33.00	33.00	—	40.00	40.00

Sources: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from P.L. 116-260, P.L. 117-58, P.L. 117-103, P.L. 117-328, P.L. 118-42, P.L. 119-4, and P.L. 119-74.

Note: For an expanded historical and comparative view of appropriations, see **Table C-1**.

- a. FY2022 appropriated funding amounts include \$2.5 million provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103, Division D, Title IV). FY2022 appropriated funding amounts also include \$1.25 million provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III).

The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-272)

As aforementioned, EDRA established two new FRCAs and made revisions to the authorizing statutes for seven of the existing FRCAs. EDRA also explicitly repealed the termination of authority provisions for the DRA and NGRPA.²²⁷ EDRA did not address the ARC, which was reauthorized by the IIJA in FY2021. In general, EDRA

- expanded the geography of FRCAs to cover parts of four additional states that previously did not have counties included in a FRCA region (i.e., parts of Connecticut and the entire states of Delaware, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island)

²²⁵ 40 U.S.C. §15751.

²²⁶ P.L. 119-37 provided \$10 million for the ARC, DRA, NBRC, and SBRC regions for projects that meet the purposes of USDA RCAP projects.

²²⁷ See P.L. 118-272, Section 2253 and Section 2254.

- by (1) adding counties or parts of counties to the regions of four FRCAs (i.e., DRA, GLA, NBRC, SBRC), and (2) establishing two new FRCAs, the MARC and the SNERC;
- amended non-programmatic authorities and requirements (e.g., temporary leadership positions, cost sharing, and fees);²²⁸
 - authorized new programs (e.g., state capacity building program); and
 - authorized a total of \$1.8 billion for nine FRCAs through FY2029.

Changes resulting from the enactment of EDRA to the DRA, Denali Commission, and NGPRA are summarized in the “Legislative History” sections above. See below for a summary of the provisions affecting Subtitle V FRCAs.

Sunset Provision and ARC’s Operating Authorization

The authorizing statute for the ARC continues to include a sunset provision.²²⁹ Policymakers may choose to allow this provision to take effect, extend the date of the sunset, or remove the sunset provision entirely. In recent years, Congress extended the ARC’s operational authorization for periods of several years. The ARC’s operational authorization was to expire on October 1, 2021. However, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58, Subtitle B) extended the authorization for the ARC until October 1, 2026.²³⁰

The Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2027 (P.L. 119-103, enacted September 2, 2026), provides FY2027 funding on a temporary basis for the FRCAs that were funded in the FY2026 appropriation act (P.L. 119-74) at the same rate and under the same conditions through December 11, 2026 (see Division A). P.L. 119-103 includes provisions covering the extension period that extend the ARC’s authorization and funding authorization through FY2027 (see Division C). P.L. 119-103 also includes provisions covering the extension period that extend funding authorizations for two specific ARC initiatives through FY2027 (see Division C).

Changes to Subtitle V FRCAs

EDRA changed several aspects of the programs, decisionmaking, governance, and other requirements and authorities of the six Subtitle V FRCAs. EDRA

- authorized the Subtitle V FRCAs to administer a demonstration health project program²³¹ and state capacity grant building program;²³²

²²⁸ For example, EDRA authorized the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to consider all FRCA-sourced funding as nonfederal funding when used as matching funds for EDA projects—see P.L. 118-272, Section 2215. EDRA also provided the DRA and the Subtitle V FRCAs with new or expanded authorities to collect, retain, and use fees—see P.L. 118-272, Section 2242(c) and Section 2253.

²²⁹ 40 U.S.C. §14704.

²³⁰ Prior to the enactment of P.L. 117-58, P.L. 116-159 extended the period of authorization for the ARC from October 1, 2020 to October 1, 2021. Prior to the enactment of P.L. 116-159, P.L. 114-94 extended the period of authorization for the ARC from October 1, 2012 to October 1, 2020.

²³¹ Prior to EDRA’s enactment, the ARC and Denali Commission were authorized to administer demonstration health project programs as well. For the authorization of the ARC’s demonstration health project, see 40 U.S.C. §14502. For the authorization of the Denali Commission’s demonstration health project, see Section 307 of the Denali Commission Act of 1998 (42 U.S.C. 4321 note).

²³² Prior to EDRA’s enactment, the NBRC was already authorized to administer a state capacity building grant program designed to address capacity challenges. EDRA extended the NBRC’s authority to administer the program. Prior to EDRA, FRCAs had administered other types of capacity building initiatives under existing program authorities. For instance, the ARC has administered READY Appalachia since 2022, an initiative designed to build individual, organizational, and community capacity in the Appalachian Region and the DRA administered several capacity-building programs.

- allowed funding to be considered as a nonfederal match in other federal programs (unless otherwise prohibited)²³³
- authorized the FRCAs to collect, retain, and spend fees;²³⁴
- allowed state alternate members to select a designee that may vote in their absence, provided that the executive director is notified a week before the applicable vote;²³⁵
- allowed state alternate members or their designees to vote on FRCA decisions—prior to EDRA, decisions by Subtitle V FRCAs required the affirmative vote of the federal co-chair and a majority of the state members;²³⁶
- allowed state members, state alternate members, or their designees' votes may count towards a quorum—prior to EDRA, state alternative members and their designees did not count towards a quorum;²³⁷
- authorized the transfer of funds to and from other Federal agencies (unless otherwise prohibited);²³⁸
- allowed the federal co-chair to designate a nonfederal employee of the FRCAs to take on a temporary acting role as federal co-chair if there are vacancies in both the federal co-chair and the alternate federal co-chair roles;²³⁹
- clarified that any request to the head of any federal agency, state agency, or local government to detail to the FRCAs shall not require reimbursement to the agency or local government;
- changed the requirement from every 90 to every 180 days after the end of the fiscal year for the submission of the annual report to the President and to Congress;
- changed the annual meeting requirements to allow for state alternate designees to count towards the majority of the state members and allow for in-person or virtual attendance; and

²³³ See P.L. 118-272, Section 2244. EDRA also provided a similar authority to the Denali Commission—see P.L. 118-272, Section 2251(b).

²³⁴ EDRA also provided a similar authority to the DRA. See P.L. 118-272, Section 2242(c).

²³⁵ P.L. 118-272, Section 2242(a).

²³⁶ P.L. 118-272, Section 2242(b)(1).

²³⁷ P.L. 118-272, Section 2242(b)(2). Previously, the statute dealing with quorums stated that “a State alternate member shall not be counted toward the establishment of a quorum.” Section 2242 specified that the FRCAs’ quorum decisions shall include the federal co-chair or alternate federal co-chair (unchanged) and “a majority of *State members or alternate State members, including designees* (exclusive of members representing States delinquent under section 15304(c)(3)(C))” [emphasis added].

²³⁸ P.L. 118-272, Section 2243.

²³⁹ See EDRA (P.L. 118-272, Division B, Title II, Subtitle B, Section 2242(a)(2)). Prior to EDRA’s enactment, the provision related to “succession” allowed the federal co-chair to designate a *federal* employee for the temporary acting federal co-chair role. EDRA substituted “an employee” for “a Federal employee” in the statute. As noted in CRS In Focus IF11396, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Operations*:

The commission structure is comprised of a federal co-chair and the state governors of member states or their designated representative (of which one serves as state co-chair). The commission is supplemented by professional staff to carry out organizational activities. While largely considered independent federal agencies, most commission members and staff are not federal employees. The main exception is the federal co-chair, that co-chair’s alternate, and that co-chair’s direct staff.

- repealed the requirement to have government relations offices in the District of Columbia.²⁴⁰

Concluding Notes

Given their geographic reach, broad activities, and integrated intergovernmental structures, the federal regional commissions and authorities are a significant element of federal economic development efforts. At the same time, as organizations that are largely governed by the respective state-based commissioners, the FRCAs are not typical federal agencies but federally chartered entities that integrate federal funding and direction with state and local economic development priorities.

This structure provides Congress with a flexible platform to support economic development efforts. In particular, the intergovernmental structure allows for strategic-level economic development initiatives to be launched at the federal level, implemented across multi-state jurisdictions with extensive state and local input, and adapted more readily to regional needs.

The FRCAs reflect an emphasis by the federal government on place-based economic development strategies sensitive to regional and local contexts. However, the geographic specificity and varying functionality of the statutorily authorized FRCAs, both active and inactive, potentially raise questions about the efficacy and equity of federal economic development policies.

In recent years, some policymakers and outside groups have asserted that FRCAs provide a targeted approach to rural economic development that integrates significant federal, state, and local input.²⁴¹ Some Members of Congress attributed the FRCAs' intergovernmental coordination as contributing to the FRCAs' successes in economic development and highlighted the FRCAs' unique state-federal partnership model, as well as their work with EDA, local development districts, and educational institutions.²⁴²

Other observers and policymakers are critical of FRCAs generally or of their current framework, arguing that they are duplicative, inefficient, and an unnecessary involvement of the federal government in local economic development. Those opposing FRCAs, including some Members of Congress and outside groups, have sought to clarify how and to what extent the FRCAs duplicate or coordinate with other federal economic development programs.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ P.L. 118-272, Section 2242(c)(4).

²⁴¹ Anthony Pipa, et al., "Unlocking Investment in Distressed Rural Places," The Brookings Institution, January 13, 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/unlocking-investment-in-distressed-rural-places/>; Senate EPW Committee, *America's Regional Commissions: Sharing Best Practices in Regional and Economic Development*, 118th Cong., 2nd sess., September 18, 2024, <https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2024/9/america-s-regional-commissions-sharing-best-practices-in-regional-and-economic-development>; and Tyler Morin and Mark Partridge, "The Impact of Small Regional Economic Development Commissions: Is There Any Bang After Just a Few Bucks?" *Economic Development Quarterly*, vol. 35, issue 1 (February 2021), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/0891242420972475>.

²⁴² House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, *Regional Commissions: A Review of Federal Economic Development Program Effectiveness*, Serial No. 118-32, p. 34.

²⁴³ House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, *Smarter Spending, Stronger Results: Reducing Duplication and Ensuring Effectiveness Through Economic Development Reforms*, 119th Cong., 2nd sess. January 22, 2026; "Chairman Perry Statement from Hearing on Economic Development Program Reforms," January 22, 2026, (continued...)

The Trump Administration's FY2026 and FY2027 budget requests proposed to eliminate the DRA, Denali Commission, GLA, NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC. According to the FY2026 request, "States and local governments are better positioned to fund and address unique regional and geographic economic development challenges."²⁴⁴

Congress has occasionally passed legislation to reauthorize the FRCAs and to create new FRCAs. Such legislation has typically provided authorizations of funding levels; updated or added programs or requirements; and addressed changing socioeconomic and technological conditions.²⁴⁵ In light of recent changes provided in EDRA, Congress may be interested in tracking the implementation of new programs, roles, and coordination activities, and the impact of these implementations on communities.²⁴⁶

<https://transportation.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx>; and House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, *Regional Commissions: A Review of Federal Economic Development Program Effectiveness*, Serial No. 118-32, pp. 2-3, 9, 35.

²⁴⁴ White House, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), "Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Budget Request," May 2, 2025, p. 40, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Budget-Request.pdf#page=42>; and "Fiscal Year 2027 Budget of the U.S. Government - Appendix," https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/appendix_fy2027.pdf#page=1182.

²⁴⁵ There are two parts to authorizations for federal entities: authorization of appropriations, which generally provide a guideline for the anticipated resource needs for an entity or activity; and operational or organizational authorization, which may establish an entity and/or provide it certain authority in law to operate. Either part of an authorization may lapse. Although an expired authorization can present a procedural obstacle for the consideration of appropriations, including such funding in an appropriations act provides a de facto extension of the authorization. Some operating authorizations may include "sunset provisions," which terminate an entity's legal authority to operate after a certain date, which could positively shut down their ability to function if not extended. For additional information, see CRS Report R46497, *Authorizations and the Appropriations Process*, by James V. Saturno.

²⁴⁶ Although EDRA implementation may not be complete as of the date of publication, FRCAs have initiated activities associated with several new programs authorized by the legislation.

Appendix A. Basic Information at a Glance

Table A-1. Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities

(\$ in millions; entities in **bold** are active)

	Year Authoriz- ed	Numb- er of States	Counties	2020 Population	FY2026 Appropriations (P.L. 119-74)
ARC	1965	13	423 counties in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (includes the entire state of West Virginia)	26.2 million	\$200.0 ^a (an additional \$200.0 million of advance appropriations provided in FY2023 from the IJA [P.L. 117-58] also becomes available)
DRA	2000	8	255 counties in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee	10.0 million	\$32.0
Denali Commission	1998	1	Entire state of Alaska	0.7 million	\$18.0
GLA	2022	8	214 counties in the watershed of the Great Lakes and the Great Lakes System (as such terms are defined in Section 118(a)(3) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1268(a)(3)), in each of the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.	32.2 million	\$5.0
MARC	2025	3	38 counties in Maryland and Pennsylvania and the entire state of Delaware	14.2 million	—
NBRC	2008	4	64 counties in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont (includes the entire state of Vermont)	4.4 million	\$42.0
NGPRA	2002	6	86 counties in of Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota (includes the entire states of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota)	18.0 million	—
NRC ^b	2026	4	Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and Washington ^b		\$1.0

	Year Authorized	Number of States	Counties	2020 Population	FY2026 Appropriations (P.L. 119-74)
SCRC	2008	7	428 counties in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia not already served by the ARC or DRA (includes the entire state of Florida)	51.4 million	\$20.0
SBRC	2008	4	103 counties in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas	36.3 million	\$5.5
SNERC	2025	3	25 counties in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island (includes the entire state of Massachusetts and Rhode Island)	10.6 million	—

Sources: Data compiled by CRS from relevant legislation and official sources of various federal regional commissions and authorities. Authorizing statutes include, in order of tabulation, P.L. 89-4; P.L. 106-554; P.L. 105-277; P.L. 117-328; P.L. 118-272, P.L. 110-234; P.L. 107-171; P.L. 119-74; P.L. 110-234; P.L. 110-234, and P.L. 118-272. Population data are CRS calculations using jurisdictional data in FRCAs' authorizing statutes and U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census of Population and Housing, Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table P2, Urban and Rural, accessed via censusapi R package on September 3, 2026.

Notes: A dash (“—”) indicates that no appropriation was provided.

- a. IIJA advance supplemental appropriations for ARC become available each year from FY2022 through FY2026, in \$200 million tranches. IIJA supplemental appropriations for the DRA, Denali Commission, NBRC, SCRC, and SBRC were made available as lump sums in FY2022. All supplemental appropriations in P.L. 117-58 for regional commissions and authorities are available until expended.
- b. P.L. 119-74 provided FY2026 appropriations for a new Northwest Regional Commission, which—once established—would cover Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. As of the date of this report, the commission does not have a federal co-chair and is not active. P.L. 119-74 provided funding for a “Northwest Regional Commission located in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana” and did not identify specific sub-regions or counties within those states.

Table A-2. Statutory Citations for FRCA Operating Authorizations

Commission or Authority	Operating Authorization of the Commission or Authority
ARC	40 U.S.C. §14301
DRA	7 U.S.C. §§2009aa-1 et seq.
Denali Commission	42 U.S.C. §3121 note
GLA	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.
MARC	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.
NBRC	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.
NGPRA	7 U.S.C. §§2009bb-1 et seq.
NRC	40 U.S.C. §§15301 note*
SCRC	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.
SBRC	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.
SNERC	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.

Source: Compiled by CRS.

Notes: The information above shows the operating authorization of the commission or authority. For more information, see CRS Report RS20371, *Overview of the Authorization-Appropriations Process*, by Bill Heniff Jr.; and CRS Report R46497, *Authorizations and the Appropriations Process*, by James V. Saturno, which includes a section on *The Relationship of Appropriations to Authorizations*.

* The NRC does not have a statutory authorization comparable to the other FRCAs. In FY2026, P.L. 119-74 provided funding “for expenses necessary to establish a Northwest Regional Commission located in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana,” and noted that the funding “shall be used to carry out activities authorized for other regional Commissions by subtitle V of title 40, United States Code.”

Figure A-I. Structure and Activities of the Commissions and Authorities

		ARC	DRA	Denali	GLA	MARC	NBRC	NGPRA	SCRC	SNERC	SBRC
Structure	Currently Functioning	◆	◆	◆			◆		◆		◆
	Local Development Districts	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Multi-State	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Tiers of Designated Distress	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Non-Traditional Representation			◆				◆			
	Allows for Alternates	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Activities	Basic Infrastructure	◆	◆	◆			◆		◆		◆
	Workforce Development	◆	◆				◆		◆		◆
	Energy and Renewables	◆	◆	◆			◆		◆		◆
	Business Development	◆	◆				◆		◆		◆
	Transportation	◆	◆	◆			◆		◆		◆
	Broadband	◆	◆				◆		◆		◆

Source: Compiled by CRS with information from the federal regional commissions and authorities.

Notes: For the commissions and authority that are not considered to be functioning, structural characteristics are tabulated according to their statutory design. As noted, the first federal co-chair of the SCRC was confirmed in December 2021, and the first federal co-chair of the SBRC was confirmed in December 2022. As of the date of this publication, the GLA, MARC, NGPRA, NRC, and SNERC do not have a federal co-chair and are not yet active. P.L. 119-74 provided funding “For expenses necessary to establish a Northwest Regional Commission located in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana,” and noted that the funding “provided to the Northwest Regional Commission shall be used to carry out activities authorized for other regional Commissions by subtitle V of title 40, United States Code.”

Contact Information

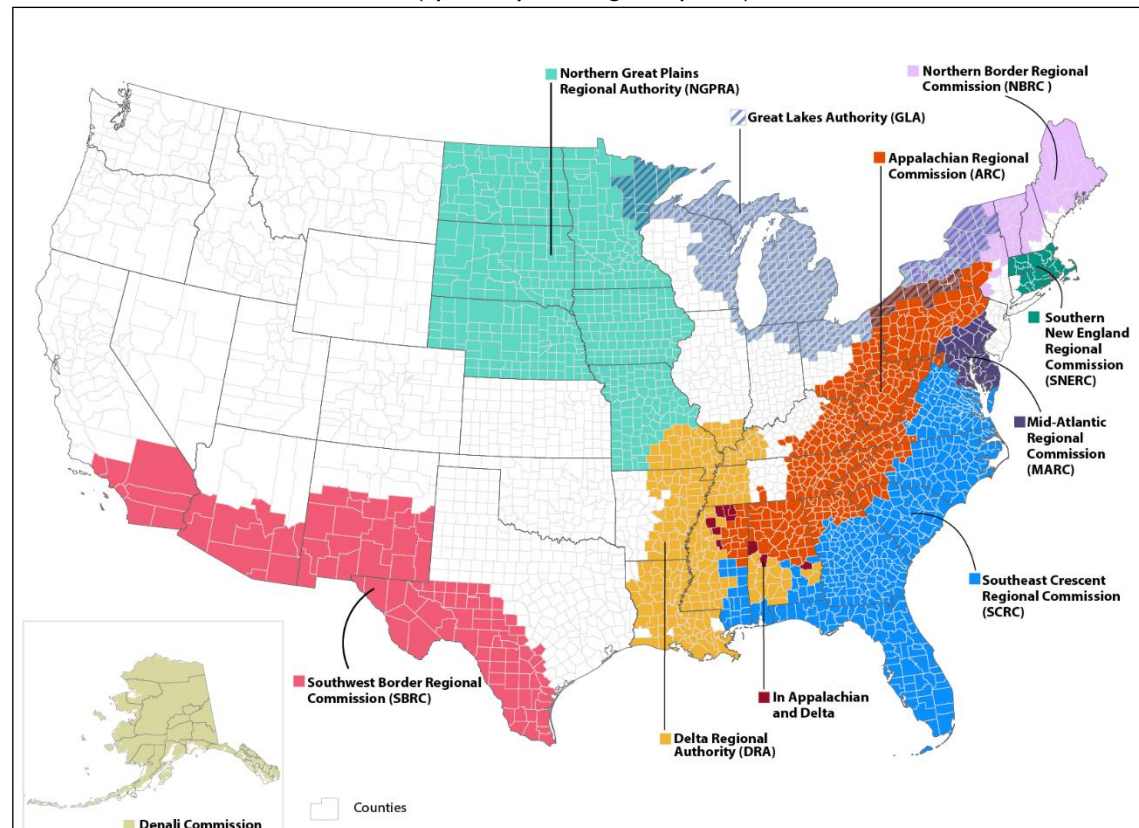
(for selected commissions and authorities)

Contact	Address/Phone/Website
Appalachian Regional Commission	1666 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 700 Washington, DC 20009-1068 Phone: (202) 884-7700 Website: http://www.arc.gov
Delta Regional Authority	236 Sharkey Avenue Suite 400 Clarksdale, MS 38614 Phone: (662) 624-8600 Website: http://www.dra.gov

Contact	Address/Phone/Website
Denali Commission	550 W 7 th Avenue Suite 1230 Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone: (907) 271-1414 Website: http://www.denali.gov
Northern Border Regional Commission	James Cleveland Federal Building, Suite 1201 53 Pleasant Street Concord, NH 03301 Phone: (603) 369-3001 Website: http://www.nbrc.gov
Southeast Crescent Regional Commission	1901 Assembly Street Suite 370 Columbia, SC 29201 Phone: (202) 599-8310 Website: https://scrc.gov/
Southwest Border Regional Commission	3655 Research Drive, Genesis Center-C New Mexico State University Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001 Website: https://sbrc.gov

Appendix B. Map of Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities

Figure B-1. National Map of the Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities
(by county, borough, or parish)



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in the authorizing legislation of the various commissions and authorities and Esri Data and Maps.

Notes: There are no federal regional commissions or authorities in Hawaii or U.S. Territories. The Northwest Regional Commission is not included in the map above. P.L. 119-74 provided funding for a “Northwest Regional Commission located in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana” and did not identify specific sub-regions or counties within those states.

Appendix C. Historical Appropriations

Table C-1. Historical Appropriations: Federal Regional Commissions (FY1986-FY2026)
(\$ in millions)

Fiscal Year	Legislation	ARC	Denali	DRA	GLA	MARC	NGPRA	NBRC	NRC	SBRC	SNERC	SCRC
1986	P.L. 99-141	130.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1987	P.L. 99-591	105.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1988	P.L. 100-202	107.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1989	P.L. 100-371	110.70	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1990	P.L. 101-101	150.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1991	P.L. 101-514	170.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1992	P.L. 102-104	190.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1993	P.L. 102-377	190.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1994	P.L. 103-126	249.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1995	P.L. 103-316	282.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1996	P.L. 104-46	170.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1997	P.L. 104-206	160.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1998	P.L. 105-62	170.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
1999	P.L. 105-245	66.40	(Authorized) ^a 20.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
2000	P.L. 106-60	66.40	20.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
2001	P.L. 106-377	66.40	30.00	(Authorized) ^b 20.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
2002	P.L. 107-66	71.29	38.00	10.00	N/A	N/A	(Authorized) ^c	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
2003	P.L. 108-7	71.29	48.00	8.00	N/A	N/A	—	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A

Fiscal Year	Legislation	ARC	Denali	DRA	GLA	MARC	NGPRA	NBRC	NRC	SBRC	SNERC	SCRC
2004	P.L. 108-137 /P.L. 108-199 ^d	66.00	55.00	5.00	N/A	N/A	1.50	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
2005	P.L. 108-447	66.00	67.00	6.05	N/A	N/A	1.49 ^e	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
2006	P.L. 109-103	65.47	50.00	12.00	N/A	N/A	—	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
2007	P.L. 110-5 ^f	65.47	50.00	12.00	N/A	N/A	—	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
2008	P.L. 110-161	73.03	21.80	11.69	N/A	N/A	—	(Authorized) ^g		(Authorized) ^g	N/A	(Authorized)
2009	P.L. 111-8	75.00	11.80	13.00	N/A	N/A	—	—		—	N/A	—
2010	P.L. 111-85	76.00	11.97	13.00	N/A	N/A	—	1.50		—	N/A	0.25
2011	P.L. 112-10 ^h	68.40	10.70	11.70	N/A	N/A	—	1.50		—	N/A	0.25
2012	P.L. 112-74	68.26	10.68	11.68	N/A	N/A	—	1.50		—	N/A	0.25
2013	P.L. 113-6 ⁱ	68.26	10.68	11.68	N/A	N/A	—	1.50		—	N/A	0.25
2014	P.L. 113-76	80.32	10.00	12.00	N/A	N/A	—	5.00		—	N/A	0.25
2015	P.L. 113-235	90.00	10.00	12.00	N/A	N/A	—	5.00		—	N/A	0.25
2016	P.L. 114-113	146.00	11.00	25.00	N/A	N/A	—	7.50		—	N/A	0.25
2017	P.L. 115-31	152.00	15.00	25.00	N/A	N/A	—	10.00		—	N/A	0.25
2018	P.L. 115-141	155.00	30.00	25.00	N/A	N/A	—	15.00		—	N/A	0.25
2019	P.L. 115-244	165.00	15.00	25.00	N/A	N/A	—	20.00		—	N/A	0.25
2020	P.L. 116-94	175.00	15.00	30.00	N/A	N/A	—	25.00		—	N/A	0.25
2021	P.L. 116-260	180.00	15.00	30.00	N/A	N/A	—	30.00		0.25	N/A	1.00
2022	P.L. 117-103, P.L. 117-58 ^{j, k}	395.00	90.10	180.10	N/A	N/A	—	185.00		3.75	N/A	10.00
2023	P.L. 117-328, P.L. 117-58 ^k	400.00	17.00	30.10	(Authorized) ^l	N/A	—	40.00		5.00	N/A	20.00
2024	P.L. 118-42, P.L. 117-58 ^k	400.00	17.00	31.10	5.0	N/A	—	41.00		5.00	N/A	20.00

Fiscal Year	Legislation	ARC	Denali	DRA	GLA	MARC	NGPRA	NBRC	NRC	SBRC	SNERC	SCRC
2025	P.L. 119-4 ^m , P.L. 117-58 ^k	400.00	17.00	31.10	5.0	(Authorized) ⁿ	—	41.00		5.00	(Authorized) ⁿ	20.00
2026	P.L. 119-74, P.L. 117-58 ^k	400.00	18.00	32.00	5.00	—	—	42.00	1.00 ^o	5.50	—	20.00

Source: Tabulated by CRS from appropriations legislation.

Notes: FY2025 annual appropriations for FY2025 have not yet been resolved as of the date of this publication. A dash (“—”) indicates that no appropriation was provided. N/A is used to indicate that an appropriation was not applicable (i.e., for years prior to a FRCA’s authorization).

- a. The Denali Commission was authorized in FY1999 (P.L. 105-277) and received its initial appropriations in that same fiscal year (P.L. 105-245).
- b. The DRA was authorized in FY2001 (P.L. 106-554) and received its initial appropriations in that same fiscal year (P.L. 106-377).
- c. P.L. 107-171.
- d. For FY2004, the NGPRA received appropriations in separate legislation from the rest of the federal regional commissions.
- e. The NGPRA was appropriated separately from the other federal regional commission, which can be found in Section 759 of the same legislation.
- f. FY2007 appropriations were provided to the federal regional commissions under full-year continuing resolution legislation.
- g. In FY2008, P.L. 110-234 established the NBRC, the SBRC, and the SCRC.
- h. For FY2011, appropriations for the ARC, Denali, and the DRA were appropriated separately from the broader appropriations legislation under a continuing resolution. The NBRC, however, was subject to the continuing resolution.
- i. FY2013 and FY2025 appropriations were provided to the federal regional commissions under continuing resolution legislation.
- j. FY2022 appropriated funding amounts include funding provided in Division J, Title III of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58). Amounts do not include appropriations in Division A of P.L. 117-58 pertaining to the Appalachian Development Highway System.
- k. Division J, Title III of the IIJA provided \$1 billion in appropriations for the ARC, divided into \$200 million tranches, one for each of FY2022 through FY2026. Of the regional commissions funded in the IIJA, the ARC was the only one to receive such a structured appropriation; all other commissions received their appropriation solely in FY2022. All IIJA funds remain available until expended.
- l. The GLA was authorized in FY2023 (P.L. 117-328, Division O, Title IV, §401).
- m. With the exception of advance appropriations provided by P.L. 117-58, FY2025 appropriations were provided to most federal regional commissions under full-year continuing resolution legislation.
- n. The MARC and SNERC were authorized in FY2025 (P.L. 118-272, Title II, Division B, Subtitle B).
- o. P.L. 119-74 provided funding for a “Northwest Regional Commission located in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana” (see Division B, Title IV).

Appendix D. Service Areas of Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities

Appalachian Regional Commission

Table D-1. Statutory Jurisdiction of ARC

State	Counties
Alabama	Bibb, Blount, Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Chilton, Clay, Cleburne, Colbert, Coosa, Cullman, De Kalb, Elmore, Etowah, Fayette, Franklin, Hale, Jackson, Jefferson, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Macon, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, Pickens, Randolph, St. Clair, Shelby, Talladega, Tallapoosa, Tuscaloosa, Walker, Winston
Georgia	Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Dade, Dawson, Douglas, Elbert, Fannin, Floyd, Forsyth, Franklin, Gilmer, Gordon, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Haralson, Hart, Heard, Jackson, Lumpkin, Madison, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, Walker, White, Whitfield
Kentucky	Adair, Bath, Bell, Boyd, Breathitt, Carter, Casey, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Edmonson, Elliott, Estill, Fleming, Floyd, Garrard, Green, Greenup, Harlan, Hart, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lewis, Lincoln, McCreary, Madison, Magoffin, Martin, Menifee, Metcalfe, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Nicholas, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Powell, Pulaski, Robertson, Rockcastle, Rowan, Russell, Wayne, Whitley, Wolfe
Maryland	Allegany, Garrett, Washington
Mississippi	Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Itawamba, Kemper, Lee, Lowndes, Marshall, Monroe, Montgomery, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Webster, Winston, Yalobusha
New York	Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
North Carolina	Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Davie, Forsyth, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, McDowell, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Stokes, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin, Yancey
Ohio	Adams, Ashtabula, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Carroll, Clermont, Columbiana, Coshocton, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mahoning, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Vinton, Washington
Pennsylvania	Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Blair, Bradford, Butler, Cambria, Cameron, Carbon, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Fulton, Greene, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Juniata, Lackawanna, Lawrence, Luzerne, Lycoming, McKean, Mercer, Mifflin, Monroe, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Pike, Potter, Schuylkill, Snyder, Somerset, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Venango, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Westmoreland, Wyoming
South Carolina	Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union
Tennessee	Anderson, Bledsoe, Blount, Bradley, Campbell, Cannon, Carter, Claiborne, Clay, Cocke, Coffee, Cumberland, De Kalb, Fentress, Franklin, Grainger, Greene, Grundy, Hamblen, Hamilton, Hancock, Hawkins, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Lawrence, Lewis, Loudon, McMinn, Macon, Marion, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Overton, Pickett, Polk, Putnam, Rhea, Roane, Scott, Sequatchie, Sevier, Smith, Sullivan, Unicoi, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Washington, White

State	Counties
Virginia	Alleghany, Bath, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe
	The following independent cities in Virginia are also within the Appalachian Region and are merged with an adjacent or surrounding county for the purposes of data analysis and grant management: Bristol (Washington County), Buena Vista (Rockbridge County), Covington (Alleghany County), Galax (Carroll County), Lexington (Rockbridge County), Martinsville (Henry County), Norton (Wise County), and Radford (Montgomery County)
West Virginia	Every county in the state of West Virginia (i.e., entire state)

Source: Information compiled by CRS using data from 40 U.S.C. §14102, Esri Data and Maps, and the Appalachian Regional Commission, “About the Appalachian Region,” <https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/>.

Notes: In Mississippi, the counties in regions covered by both the ARC and DRA include Benton, Marshall, Montgomery, Panola, Tippah, Union, and Yalobusha counties. In Alabama, the counties in ARC and DRA regions include Hale, Macon, and Pickens counties. In Pennsylvania, the counties in ARC and GLA regions include Crawford, Erie, and Potter. In New York, the nine counties in ARC and GLA regions include Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Cortland, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins. In Ohio, the counties in ARC and GLA regions include Ashtabula and Trumbull. Schoharie County in New York is in the ARC and NBRC regions.

Delta Regional Authority

Table D-2. Statutory Jurisdiction of DRA
(states, counties, and parishes)

State	Counties and Parishes
Alabama	Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Escambia, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Pickens, Russell, Sumter, Washington, Wilcox
Arkansas	Arkansas, Ashley, Baxter, Bradley, Calhoun, Chicot, Clay, Cleveland, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Dallas, Desha, Drew, Fulton, Grant, Greene, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lee, Lincoln, Lonoke, Marion, Mississippi, Monroe, Ouachita, Phillips, Poinsett, Prairie, Pulaski, Randolph, Searcy, Sharp, St. Francis, Stone, Union, Van Buren, White, Woodruff
Illinois	Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Saline, Union, White, Williamson
Kentucky	Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Henderson, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, McCracken, McLean, Marshall, Muhlenberg, Todd, Trigg, Union, Webster
Louisiana	Acadia, Allen, Ascension, Assumption, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Bienville, Caldwell, Cameron, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, De Soto, East Baton Rouge, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Franklin, Grant, Iberia, Iberville, Jackson, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, La Salle, Lafourche, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Orleans, Ouachita, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Sabine, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Tangipahoa, Tensas, Terrebonne, Union, Vermillion, Vernon, Washington, Webster, West Baton Rouge, West Carroll, West Feliciana, Winn

State	Counties and Parishes
Mississippi	Adams, Amite, Attala, Benton, Bolivar, Carroll, Claiborne, Coahoma, Copiah, Covington, De Soto, Franklin, Grenada, Hinds, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jasper, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lawrence, Leflore, Lincoln, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Montgomery, Panola, Pike, Quitman, Rankin, Sharkey, Simpson, Smith, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Tunica, Union, Walthall, Warren, Washington, Wilkinson, Yalobusha, Yazoo
Missouri	Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Crawford, Dent, Douglas, Dunklin, Howell, Iron, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Oregon, Ozark, Pemiscot, Perry, Phelps, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Shannon, Ste. Genevieve, St. Francois, Stoddard, Texas, Washington, Wayne, Wright
Tennessee	Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Dyer, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, Madison, McNairy, Obion, Shelby, Tipton, Weakley

Source: Information compiled by CRS using data from 7 U.S.C. §2009aa, Esri Data and Maps, and the Delta Regional Authority, “Service Area Map,” <https://dra.gov/map-room/>.

Notes: In Mississippi, the counties in regions covered by both the ARC and DRA include Benton, Marshall, Montgomery, Panola, Tippah, Union, and Yalobusha counties. In Alabama, the counties in ARC and DRA regions include Hale, Macon, and Pickens counties.

Denali Commission

Table D-3. Statutory Jurisdiction of Denali Commission

State	Boroughs and Census Areas
Alaska	Every borough or census area in the state of Alaska (i.e., entire state)

Source: Information compiled by CRS using data from 42 U.S.C. §3121 note and Denali Commission, “Denali Commission Story,” <https://denali.gov/>.

Great Lakes Authority

Table D-4. Statutory Jurisdiction of GLA

(states and counties)

State	Counties
Illinois	Cook, Lake
Indiana	Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Lake, LaPorte, Noble, Porter, St. Joseph, Steuben, Wells, Whitley
Michigan	Alcona, Alger, Allegan, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Baraga, Barry, Bay, Benzie, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Clare, Clinton, Crawford, Delta, Dickinson, Eaton, Emmet, Genesee, Gladwin, Gogebic, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Houghton, Huron, Ingham, Ionia, Iosco, Iron, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kalkaska, Kent, Keweenaw, Lake, Lapeer, Leelanau, Lenawee, Livingston, Luce, Mackinac, Macomb, Manistee, Marquette, Mason, Mecosta, Menominee, Midland, Missaukee, Monroe, Montcalm, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oakland, Oceana, Ogemaw, Ontonagon, Osceola, Oscoda, Otsego, Ottawa, Presque Isle, Roscommon, Saginaw, Sanilac, Schoolcraft, Shiawassee, St. Clair, St. Joseph, Tuscola, Van Buren, Washtenaw, Wayne, Wexford
Minnesota	Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Lake, Pine, St. Louis
New York	Allegany,* Cattaraugus,* Cayuga , Chautauqua,* Chemung,* Cortland,* Erie, Essex , Franklin , Genesee , Hamilton , Herkimer , Jefferson , Lewis , Livingston , Madison , Monroe, Niagara , Oneida , Onondaga, Ontario, Orleans , Oswego , Schuyler,* Seneca , St. Lawrence , Steuben,* Tioga,* Tompkins,* Wayne , Wyoming, Yates
Ohio	Allen, Ashland, Ashtabula,* Auglaize, Crawford, Cuyahoga, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Geauga, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Huron, Lake, Lorain, Lucas, Marion, Medina, Mercer, Ottawa, Paulding, Portage, Putnam, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Stark, Summit, Trumbull,* Van Wert, Williams, Wood, Wyandot
Pennsylvania	Crawford,* Erie,* Potter*
Wisconsin	Adams, Ashland, Bayfield, Brown, Calumet, Columbia, Dodge, Door, Douglas, Florence, Fond du Lac, Forest, Green Lake, Iron, Kenosha, Kewaunee, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marathon, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Milwaukee, Oconto, Oneida, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Portage, Racine, Shawano, Sheboygan, Vilas, Washington, Waukesha, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago

Source: Information compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 40 U.S.C. §15734.

Notes: The GLA region consists of counties in the watershed of the Great Lakes and Great Lakes System in states specifically designated in the statute. The watershed of the Great Lakes and the Great Lakes System is defined in Sec. 118(a)(3) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. §1268(a)(3)). Fourteen counties marked by asterisk (*) are also in the ARC region. Eighteen counties marked in bold text are also in the NBRC region. All seven counties in Minnesota are in the NGPRA region.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission

Table D-5. Statutory Jurisdiction of MARC

(states and counties)

State	Counties
Delaware	Every county in the state of Delaware (i.e., entire state)
Maryland	Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester
Pennsylvania	Adams, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, York

Source: Information compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 40 U.S.C. §15735.

Note: Delaware is the only MARC state with all counties within the MARC jurisdiction.

Northern Border Regional Commission

Table D-6. Statutory Jurisdiction of NBRC

(states and counties)

State	Counties or County-Equivalents
Maine	Androscoggin, Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, Washington
New Hampshire	Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, Merrimack, Sullivan
New York	Cayuga , Clinton, Essex , Franklin , Fulton, Genesee , Greene, Hamilton , Herkimer , Jefferson , Lewis , Livingston , Madison , Montgomery, Niagara , Oneida , Orleans , Oswego , Rensselaer, Saratoga, St. Lawrence , Schenectady, Schoharie, Seneca , Sullivan, Warren, Washington, Wayne , Wyoming, Yates
Vermont	Every county in the state of Vermont (i.e., entire state)

Source: Information compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 40 U.S.C. §15733 and NBRC, "Northern Border Region," <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/northern-border-region>.

Notes: Vermont is the only NBRC state with all counties within the NBRC jurisdiction. Schoharie County is in the NBRC and ARC regions. Eighteen counties marked in bold text are also in the GLA region.

Northern Great Plains Regional Authority

Table D-7. Statutory Jurisdiction of NGPRA

(states and counties)

State	Counties
Iowa	Every county in the state of Iowa (i.e., entire state)
Minnesota	Every county in the state of Minnesota (i.e., entire state)
Missouri (counties)	Adair, Andrew, Atchison, Audrain, Barry, Barton, Bates, Benton, Boone, Buchanan, Caldwell, Callaway, Camden, Carroll, Cass, Cedar, Chariton, Christian, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Cole, Cooper, Dade, Dallas, Daviess, DeKalb, Franklin, Gasconade, Gentry, Greene, Grundy, Harrison, Henry, Hickory, Holt, Howard, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Laclede, Lafayette, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Linn, Livingston, Macon, Maries, Marion, McDonald, Mercer, Miller, Moniteau, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Newton, Nodaway, Osage, Pettis, Pike, Platte, Polk, Pulaski, Putnam, Ralls, Randolph, Ray, Saline, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby, St. Charles, St. Clair, St. Louis, St. Louis City , Stone, Sullivan, Taney, Vernon, Warren, Webster, Worth
Nebraska	Every county in the state of Nebraska (i.e., entire state)
North Dakota	Every county in the state of North Dakota (i.e., entire state)
South Dakota	Every county in the state of South Dakota (i.e., entire state)

Source: Information compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 7 U.S.C. §2009bb(4).

Note: NGPRA's jurisdiction in Missouri was defined as those counties not already included in the DRA. St. Louis City is an independent city in Missouri that is also within the NGPRA region. It is considered a county equivalent and is separate from St. Louis County. See U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files/2010/geo/state-local-geo-guides-2010/missouri.html>.

Southeast Crescent Regional Commission

Table D-8. Statutory Jurisdiction of SCRC

(states and counties)

State	Counties
Alabama	Autauga, Baldwin, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Lee, Mobile, Montgomery County, Pike
Georgia	Appling, Atkinson, Bacon, Baker, Baldwin, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bibb, Bleckley, Brantley, Brooks, Bryan, Bulloch, Burke, Butts, Calhoun, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Chattahoochee, Clarke, Clay, Clayton, Clinch, Cobb, Coffee, Colquitt, Columbia, Cook, Coweta, Crawford, Crisp, De Kalb, Decatur, Dodge, Dooly, Dougherty, Early, Echols, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Fayette, Fulton, Glascock, Glynn, Grady, Greene, Hancock, Harris, Henry, Houston, Irwin, Jasper, Jeff Davis, Jefferson, Jenkins, Johnson, Jones, Lamar, Lanier, Laurens, Lee, Liberty, Lincoln, Long, Lowndes, Macon, Marion, McDuffie, McIntosh, Meriwether, Miller, Mitchell, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Muscogee, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Peach, Pierce, Pike, Pulaski, Putnam, Quitman, Randolph, Richmond, Rockdale, Schley, Screven, Seminole, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taliaferro, Tattnall, Taylor, Telfair, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Toombs, Treutlen, Troup, Turner, Twiggs, Upson, Walton, Ware, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Webster, Wheeler, Wilcox, Wilkes, Wilkinson, Worth
Florida	Every county in the state of Florida (i.e., entire state)
Mississippi	Clarke, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Jones, Lamar, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Pearl River, Perry, Scott, Stone, Wayne
North Carolina	Alamance, Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Cabarrus, Camden, Carteret, Caswell, Chatham, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Davidson, Duplin, Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gaston, Gates, Granville, Greene, Guilford, Halifax, Harnett, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Iredell, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Lincoln, Martin, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Onslow, Orange, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Person, Pitt, Randolph, Richmond, Robeson, Rockingham, Rowan, Sampson, Scotland, Stanly, Tyrrell, Union, Vance, Wake, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Wilson
South Carolina	Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Chester, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Florence, Georgetown, Greenwood, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Kershaw, Lancaster, Laurens, Lee, Lexington, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Newberry, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda, Sumter, Williamsburg, York
Virginia	Accomack, Albemarle, Alexandria city , Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Arlington, Augusta, Bedford, Brunswick, Buckingham, Campbell, Caroline, Charles City*, Charlotte, Charlottesville city , Chesapeake city , Chesterfield, Clarke, Colonial Heights city , Culpeper, Cumberland, Danville city , Dinwiddie, Emporia city , Essex, Fairfax, Fairfax City , Falls Church city, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Franklin, Franklin city , Frederick, Fredericksburg city , Gloucester, Goochland, Greene, Greensville, Halifax, Hampton city , Hanover, Harrisonburg city , Henrico, Hopewell city , Isle Of Wight, James City*, King And Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Loudoun, Louisa, Lunenburg, Lynchburg city , Madison, Manassas city , Manassas Park city , Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Nelson, New Kent, Newport News city , Norfolk city , Northampton, Northumberland, Nottoway, Orange, Page, Petersburg city , Pittsylvania, Poquoson city , Portsmouth city , Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Prince William, Rappahannock, Richmond, Richmond city , Roanoke, Roanoke city , Rockingham, Shenandoah, South Boston city , Southampton, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Staunton city , Suffolk city , Surry, Sussex, Virginia Beach city , Warren, Waynesboro city , Westmoreland, Williamsburg city , Winchester city , York

Source: Information compiled by CRS by using the jurisdiction defined in 40 U.S.C. §15731 and cross-referencing relevant state counties against ARC and DRA jurisdictions, and SCRC, “FY23 County and County Equivalent Listings by State,” <https://scrc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SCRC-County-Listing-By-State.pdf>.

Notes: In Virginia, independent cities (in **bold**) are considered counties for U.S. census purposes and are eligible for independent inclusion. Virginia counties with an asterisk (*) are named as cities, but are actually counties (e.g., James City County). With the exception of Florida, which has no coverage in another federally chartered regional commission or authority, SCRC jurisdiction encompasses all member state counties that are not part of the DRA and/or the ARC (see 40 U.S.C. §15731).

Southern New England Regional Commission

Table D-9. Statutory Jurisdiction of SNERC
(states and counties)

State	Counties
Connecticut	Hartford, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, Tolland, Windham
Massachusetts	Every county in the commonwealth of Massachusetts (i.e., entire state)
Rhode Island	Every county in the state of Rhode Island (i.e., entire state)

Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data in 40 U.S.C. §15736 and Esri Data and Maps.

Notes: All counties in Massachusetts and Rhode Island are within the SNERC jurisdiction. Connecticut abolished its county governments in 1960, and the U.S. Census Bureau in 2022 began to use the state's nine planning regions as county-equivalent units "for purposes of collecting, tabulating, and disseminating statistical data." See State of Connecticut, Secretary of the State, "Section VI: Counties," <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Register-Manual/Section-VI/Counties—Table-of-Contents>; and U.S. Census Bureau, "Change to County-Equivalents in the State of Connecticut," 87 *Federal Register* 34235, Final Notice, June 6, 2022, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/06/06/2022-12063/change-to-county-equivalents-in-the-state-of-connecticut>. The boundaries of Connecticut's eight historical counties continue to be used in some contexts as geographical references, e.g., P.L. 118-272 stated that the SNERC region shall include (1) each county in the State of Rhode Island, (2) Hartford, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, Tolland, and Windham Counties in Connecticut, and (3) each county in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. See State of Connecticut, "CT Counties," <https://geodata.ct.gov/datasets/ctmaps::ct-counties/about>.

Southwest Border Regional Commission

Table D-10. Statutory Jurisdiction of SBRC
(states and counties)

State	Counties
Arizona	Cochise, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Maricopa, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, Yuma
California	Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Ventura
New Mexico	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Dona Ana, Eddy, Grant, Guadalupe, Hidalgo, Lea, Lincoln, Luna, Otero, Roosevelt, Sierra, Socorro, Torrance, Valencia
Texas	Atascosa, Bandera, Bee, Bexar, Brewster, Brooks, Cameron, Coke, Concho, Crane, Crockett, Culberson, Dimmit, Duval, Ector, Edwards, El Paso, Frio, Gillespie, Glasscock, Guadalupe, Hidalgo, Hudspeth, Irion, Jeff Davis, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Karnes, Kendall, Kenedy, Kerr, Kimble, Kinney, Kleberg, La Salle, Live Oak, Loving, Mason, Maverick, McMullen, Medina, Menard, Midland, Nueces, Pecos, Presidio, Reagan, Real, Reeves, San Patricio, Shleicher, Sutton, Starr, Sterling, Terrell, Tom Green, Upton, Uvalde, Val Verde, Ward, Webb, Willacy, Wilson, Winkler, Zapata, Zavala

Source: Information compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data defined in 40 U.S.C. §15732 and Esri Data and Maps.

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