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Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Structural Features and Function

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SUMMARY

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This report describes the structure, activities, legislative history, and funding history of the eight federal regional commissions and authorities:

- the Appalachian Regional Commission;
- the Delta Regional Authority;
- the Denali Commission;
- the Great Lakes Authority;
- the Northern Border Regional Commission;
- the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority;
- the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission; and
- the Southwest Border Regional Commission.

All eight 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 all of 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 eight 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; Northern Border Regional Commission; the Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC); and the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission. The Great Lakes Authority is not yet active since it does not have a confirmed federal co-chair. The funding authorization Northern Great Plains Regional Authority lapsed at the end of FY2018 and it was not reauthorized.

The regional commissions and authorities each received $5 million to $200 million in annual appropriations in FY2024 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).

Contents

Figures

Tables

Appendixes

Contacts

Introduction

Congress authorized eight federal regional commissions and authorities to address instances of major economic distress in certain defined socioeconomic regions (**Table A-1**):

- the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC);
- the Delta Regional Authority (DRA);
- the Denali Commission;
- the Great Lakes Authority (GLA);
- the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC);
- the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority (NGPRA);
- the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC); and
- the Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC).

The first such federal regional commission, the Appalachian Regional Commission, was founded in 1965. The other commissions and authorities may have roots in the intervening decades, but were not founded until 1998 (Denali), 2000 (Delta Regional Authority), and 2002 (the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority). The most recent commissions—Northern Border Regional Commission, Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, and Southwest Border Regional Commission—were authorized in 2008; the Great Lakes Authority was authorized in 2022.[1] The NGPRA and GLA are currently inactive.

Seven of the eight entities currently receive annual appropriations: ARC, DRA, GLA, the Denali Commission, the NBRC, the SBRC, and the SCRC. Both the SCRC and SBRC were inactive until 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 GLA received its first appropriation in FY2024, but lacks a Senate-confirmed federal co-chair.[2]

The federal regional commissions are functioning examples of place-based and intergovernmental approaches to economic development, which receive regular congressional interest.[3] The federal regional commissions and authorities integrate federal and state economic development priorities alongside regional and local considerations (see **Figure A-1**). As federally chartered agencies created by acts of Congress, the federal regional commissions and authorities depend on

[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] 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. See The White House, "President Biden Announces Key Nominees," May 2, 2024, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/05/02/president-biden-announces-key-nominees-72/.

[3] 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.

congressional appropriations for their activities and administration, and are subject to congressional oversight.

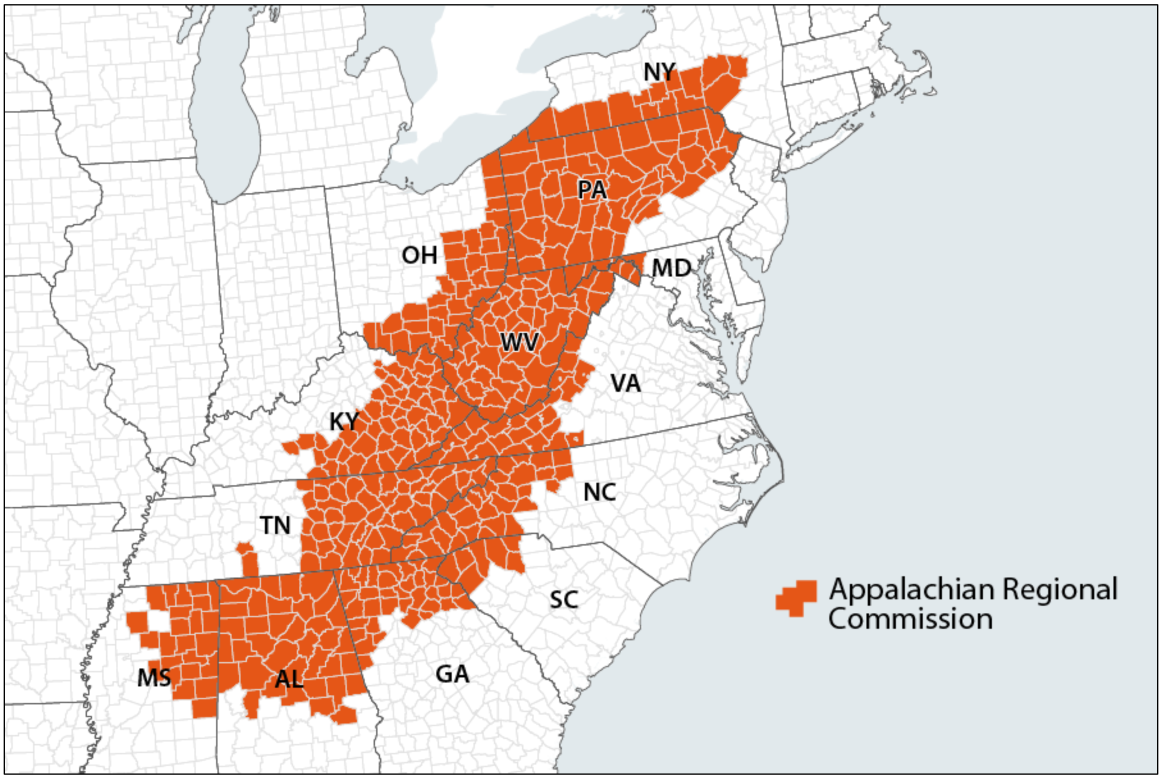
Certain strategic emphases and programs have evolved over time in each of the functioning federal regional commissions and authorities. However, their overarching missions to address economic distress have not changed, and their associated activities have broadly remained consistent to those goals as funding has allowed. In practice, the functioning federal regional commissions and authorities 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 eight federally chartered regional commissions and authorities.

Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission was established in 1965 to address economic distress in the Appalachian region.[4] 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.

[4] 40 U.S.C. §§14101-14704.

Figure 1. Map of the Appalachian Regional Commission



Source: Compiled by CRS using data from Esri Data and Maps and Appalachian Regional Commission.

Overview of Structure and Activities

Commission Structure

According to the authorizing legislation, the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, as amended,[5] 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."[6] 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.

Strategic Plan

According to authorizing legislation and the ARC code,[7] 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,

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[5] P.L. 89-4.

[6] Appalachian Regional Commission, *ARC Code*, 2022, https://www.arc.gov/arc-code.

[7] Ibid. 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.

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.[8]

There are 74 ARC-associated LDDs. They may be conduits for funding for other eligible organizations, and may also themselves be ARC grantees.[9] State and local governments, governmental entities, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for ARC investments, including both federal- and state-designated tribal entities. Notably, 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.[10]

ARC's strategic plan is a five-year document, reviewed annually, and revised as necessary. The current strategic plan, adopted in October 2021,[11] 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.[12]

Designating Distressed Areas

The ARC is statutorily obligated to allocate at least 50% of funding to distressed areas.[13] The ARC is also statutorily obligated to designate counties by level of economic distress.[14] 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:[15] (1) three-year average unemployment rates; (2) per capita market income; and (3) poverty rates. These factors are calculated into a composite

[8] 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).

[9] Appalachian Regional Commission, *Local Development Districts*, https://www.arc.gov/local-development-districts/.

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

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

[12] See, for example, state plans available at Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachian States*, https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-states/.

[13] 40 U.S.C. §14524.

[14] 40 U.S.C. §14526.

[15] Appalachian Regional Commission, *Classifying Economic Distress in Appalachian Counties*, https://www.arc.gov/classifying-economic-distress-in-appalachian-counties.

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:[16]

- *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 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 Activities[17]

ARC makes grant investments through the following core programs:[18]

- **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).[19]
- **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.[20]
- **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.[21]

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

[17] 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.

[18] Appalachian Regional Commission, *About ARC Grants*, https://www.arc.gov/about-arc-grants/; and *Grants and Opportunities,* https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities.

[19] 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/.

[20] Appalachian Regional Commission, Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization Initiative, https://www.arc.gov/power.

[21] Appalachian Regional Commission, *Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems Initiative*, https://www.arc.gov/sud.

- **Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE).** ARC established the ARISE initiative in 2022 to support large-scale, multi-state projects.[22]
- **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 DOL.[23]

In addition to its grant programs, ARC activities include various partnerships and ongoing initiatives (e.g., the J-1 Visa waiver program, the Appalachian Regional Energy Hub Initiative, and various academies and institutes).[24] ARC collaborates with federal, state, and local agencies to develop the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) and Local Roads program.[25] Additionally, ARC's research office issues Requests for Proposals for research and evaluation contracts on topics directly affecting economic development in the Appalachian region.[26]

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 USDA Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP) grants to support rural economic development activities in the Appalachian region.[27] Other federal and interagency working group partners include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), among others.[28]

Legislative History

Appalachian Regional Development Act

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Appalachian Regional Development Act,[29] which created the ARC to address the President's Appalachian Regional Commission (PARC)

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[22] Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies,* https://www.arc.gov/arise.

[23] 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.

[24] See Appalachian Regional Commission, *Grants and Opportunities*, https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities.

[25] 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.

[26] Appalachian Regional Commission, *Research and Data*, https://www.arc.gov/research-and-data.

[27] P.L. 118-42 provided $8 million for the ARC, DRA, NBRC, and SBRC regions for RCAP projects. See also USDA, "USDA Invests $550,211 to Expand and Strengthen Workforce Development in West Virginia," July 11, 2023, https://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/news-release/usda-invests-550211-expand-and-strengthen-workforce-development-west-virginia.

[28] 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.

[29] P.L. 89-4.

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.[30]

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.[31] The amendments also included provisions to expand public participation in ARC plans and programs. 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.[32] 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

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[30] 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.

[31] P.L. 94-188.

[32] P.L. 105-393.

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.[33] 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.[34]

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,[35] or 80% for distressed counties and 70% for "at-risk" counties. The act introduced special project categories, including

- 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.[36] The legislation also expanded ARC's service area. Ten counties in four states were added to the ARC.

[33] P.L. 107-149.

[34] P.L. 110-371.

[35] 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.

[36] 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.

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.[37]

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.[38] Additionally, three counties in two states were added to the ARC. [39]

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 federal regional commissions and authorities. Its funding increased 174% from approximately $73 million in FY2008 to $200 million in FY2023 (excluding advanced appropriations provided by the IIJA). In FY2024, 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 IIJA authorized appropriations of $200 million for the ARC for each of FY2022 through FY2026, and Division J appropriated the authorized level of funding.[40] 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.[41] 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

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

[38] Division A, §11506 of P.L. 117-58.

[39] 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).

[40] P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III. The IIJA 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).

[41] P.L. 114-113.

region.[42] In FY2023 and FY2024, Congress directed ARC to allocate $65 million each year to the POWER Initiative.[43]

Table 1. ARC: Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2014-FY2024

$ in millions

	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22[a]	FY23	FY24
Appropriated Funding	90.0	146.0	152.0	155.0	165.0	175.0	180.0	395.0	400.00	400.00
Authorized Funding	110.0	110.0	110.0	110.0	110.0	110.0	110.0	200.0	200.00	200.00

Sources: Authorized funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from P.L. 110-234, P.L. 113-79, P.L. 115-334, and P.L. 116-159. Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from: P.L. 113-76; P.L. 113-235; P.L. 114-113; 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, and P.L. 118-42.

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

a. FY2022 includes $195 million provided through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103, Division D, Title IV). FY2022 and FY2023 appropriated funding amounts include $200 million for each fiscal year provided by the 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.[44] The DRA aims to "improve regional economic opportunity by helping to create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of the 10 million people"[45] in 252 designated counties and parishes in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee (**Figure 2**).

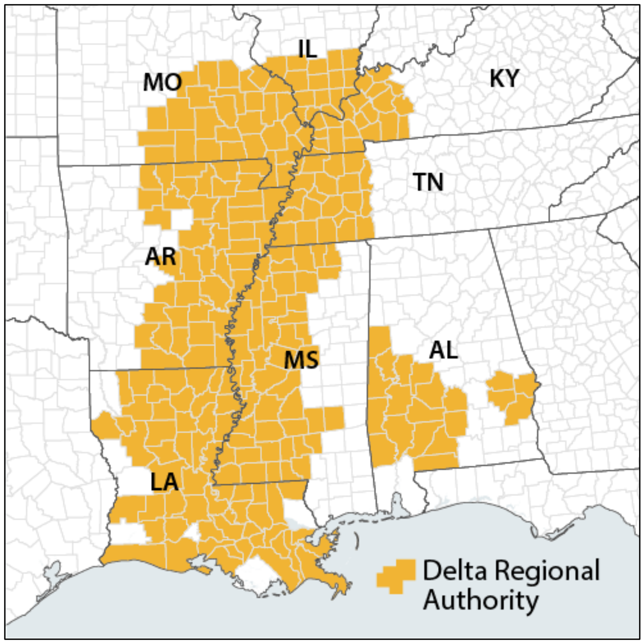
[42] For more information on the POWER Initiative, see CRS Report R46015, *The POWER Initiative: Energy Transition as Economic Development*, by Julie M. Lawhorn; and The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *FACT SHEET: The Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization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

[43] 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.

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

[45] Delta Regional Authority, *About Delta Regional Authority*, https://dra.gov/about.

Figure 2. Map of the Delta Regional Authority



Source: Compiled by CRS using data from Esri Data and Maps.

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.[46]

Entities that are eligible to apply for DRA funding include

1. state and local governments (state agencies, cities and counties/parishes);
2. public bodies; and
3. nonprofit entities.

These entities must apply for projects that operate in or are serving residents and communities within the 252 counties/parishes of the DRA's jurisdiction. Unlike the other federal regional commissions and authorities, 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.[47]

[46] 7 U.S.C. §2009aa.

[47] Of the 252 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.[48]

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.[49]

DRA projects are developed in coordination with its 45 LDDs,[50] which are multicounty economic development organizations financially supported by the DRA and advise on local priorities. LDDs "provide technical assistance, application support and review, and other services" to the DRA and entities applying for funding. LDDs receive 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.[51]

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.[52]

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;[53] half of those funds must target transportation and basic infrastructure.[54] As of FY2024, 227 of

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.

[48] 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.

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

[50] Delta Regional Authority, *Local Development Districts*, https://dra.gov/resources/local-development-districts.

[51] Delta Regional Authority, *2024 Congressional Budget Justification*, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DRA-FY-2024-Budget-Justification-Report-10-March-2023-FINAL.pdf.

[52] Delta Regional Authority, *Map Room*, https://dra.gov/map-room.

[53] 7 U.S.C. §2009aa–5(b).

[54] 7 U.S.C. §2009aa–5(d).

DRA's counties and parishes are economically distressed and 136 are in persistent poverty.[55] 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).[56] The DRA also analyzes census tracts in order to designate isolated areas of non-distressed counties or parishes as distressed.[57]

Recent Activities[58]

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.[59]

DRA categorizes its core programs as critical infrastructure or human infrastructure programs. Critical infrastructure programs include[60]

- the States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP);
- the Community Infrastructure Fund; and
- the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA) Program.[61]

Human infrastructure programs include[62]

- the Workforce Grant Programs (e.g., the Delta Workforce Grant Program, the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) program);[63]

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

[56] 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.

[57] See 7 U.S.C. §2009aa–5(a) and Delta Regional Authority, *Map Room,* https://dra.gov/map-room.

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

[59] 7 U.S.C. §2009aa.

[60] 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, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/DRA-FY-2025-Buget-Justification-FINAL_Updated03072025.pdf. For a summary of DRA's critical infrastructure programs, see https://dra.gov/programs/critical-infrastructure/.

[61] 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.

[62] For a summary of DRA's human infrastructure programs, see https://dra.gov/programs/human-infrastructure.

[63] 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;[64] 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).[65]

DRA collaborates with various federal agencies on programs and initiatives. Since 2003, Congress has directed USDA to provide funding to DRA for USDA Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP) grants to support rural economic development activities in the DRA region.[66] Other federal partners include the Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Department of Defense (DoD), DoL, and HRSA, among others.[67]

States' Economic Development Assistance Program

The principal investment tool used by the DRA is the States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP), which is used to fund grants for basic public infrastructure; transportation infrastructure; business development and entrepreneurship; and workforce training and education.[68] The DRA's SEDAP funding is made available to each state according to a four-factor, formula-derived allocation that balances geographic breadth, population size, and economic distress. The factors and their respective weights are calculated as follows:

- Equity Factor (equal funding among eight states), 50%;
- Distressed Population (DRA counties/parishes), 20%;
- Distressed County Area (DRA counties/parishes), 20%; and
- Population Factor (DRA counties/parishes), 10%.[69]

DRA investments are awarded from state allocations. SEDAP applications are accepted through an online portal and reviewed by LDDs for completeness. Projects are then sorted by priority. The Board of Governors, through their Designees and Alternates, review a list of eligible projects to make project selections. According to the DRA, after the Federal Co-Chair and Governors agree on the project selections for each state, "a formal vote is requested to approve the projects then a

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[64] 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/.

[65] Delta Regional Authority, *Programs*, https://dra.gov/programs.

[66] P.L. 118-42 provided $8 million for the ARC, DRA, NBRC, and SBRC regions for RCAP projects. 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.

[67] Delta Regional Authority, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/DRA-FY-2025-Buget-Justification-FINAL_Updated03072025.pdf.

[68] Delta Regional Authority, *2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/DRA-FY-2025-Buget-Justification-FINAL_Updated03072025.pdf.

[69] Ibid.

grant agreement, notice to proceed letter, and grant manual is provided to the grantees after that."[70] While all projects must be associated with one of the DRA's four funding priorities, additional prioritization determines the rank order of awards, which include county-level distress designations; adherence to at least one of the federal priority eligibility criteria (see below); adherence to at least one of the DRA Regional Development Plan goals (from the strategic plan); and adherence to at least one of the state's DRA priorities.

In recent years, the federal priority eligibility criteria were as follows:

- Innovation and small business
- Regional impact
- Multiple funding partners
- Emergency funding need
- Registered apprenticeship
- Infrastructure
- Merging and consolidating public utilities
- Broadband infrastructure
- Water or wastewater rate study (i.e., projects with accredited rate study)

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 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.

Notably, 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. 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 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.[71]

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[70] Ibid.

[71] 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.

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.[72]

110th Congress

- The 2008 farm bill (P.L. 110-234) reauthorized the DRA from FY2008 through FY2012 and added 12 parishes to the DRA region.[73]

113th Congress

- The 2014 farm bill (P.L. 113-79) reauthorized the DRA through FY2018.[74]

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.[75]

118th Congress

- Section 215 of the Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891) would repeal the sunset (or termination of authority) provision for DRA's authority and would authorize funding each fiscal year through FY2029. S. 3891 would also allow
  - the executive director, a non-federal employee of the authority, to assume the duties of the federal co-chair and the alternate federal co-chair in the event that both positions are vacant;
  - the collection of fees for the Delta Doctors program and the authority to "retain and expend those fees"; and
  - grants to Indian Tribes; among other changes (see "The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891)").

Funding History

Under "farm bill" legislation, the DRA has consistently received funding authorizations of $30 million annually since it was first authorized.[76] However, the actual appropriations provided have fluctuated over the years. Although the DRA was appropriated $20 million in the same legislation authorizing its creation,[77] that amount was halved in 2002,[78] and continued a downward trend to a

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

[73] 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.

[74] P.L. 113-79, the Agricultural Act of 2014.

[75] 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.

[76] 7 U.S.C. §2009aa–12.

[77] P.L. 106-554.

[78] P.L. 107-66.

low point of $5 million in FY2004, rebounding in FY2006 to $12 million, where it stabilized until FY2016 (see **Table 2**). In FY2022, the IIJA provided the DRA with $150 million in supplemental appropriations—five times its annual appropriation at the time. As of April 2024, the DRA plans to continue to allocate 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.[79]

Table 2. DRA: Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2014-FY2024

$ in millions

	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22[a]	FY23	FY24
Appropriated Funding	12.00	12.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	30.00	30.00	180.10	30.1	31.1
Authorized Funding	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.0	—

Sources: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from the following: P.L. 111-85; P.L. 112-10; P.L. 112-74; P.L. 113-6; P.L. 113-76; P.L. 113-235; P.L. 114-113; 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, and P.L. 118-42.

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

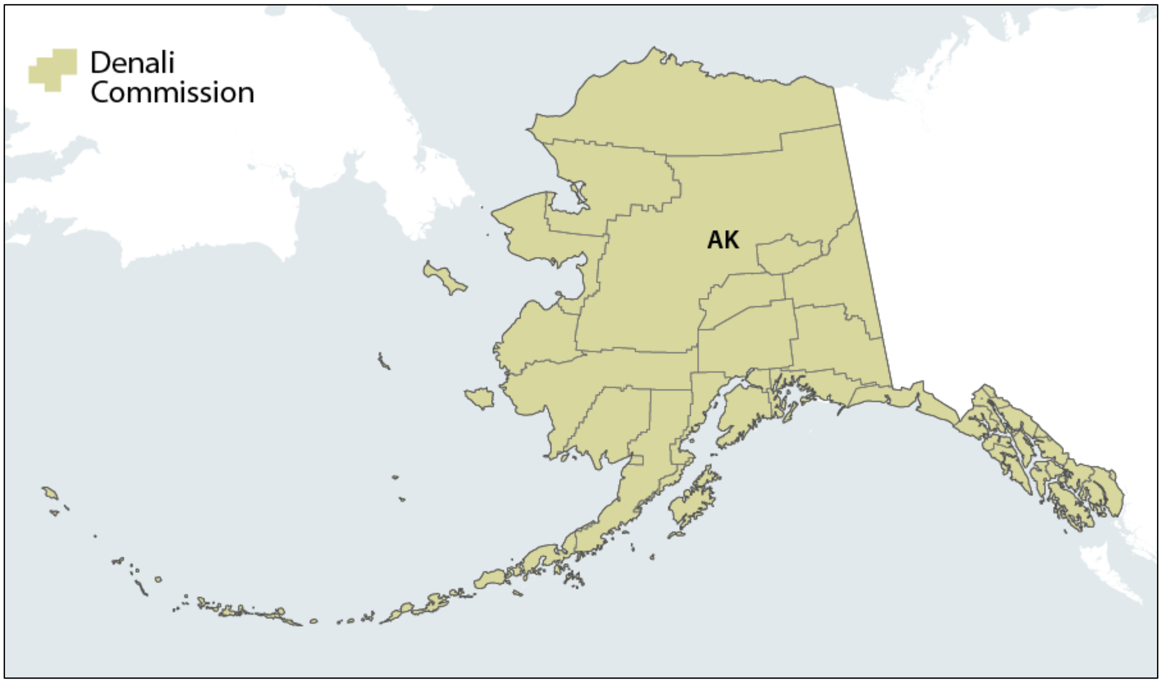
The Denali Commission was established in 1998 to support rural economic development in Alaska.[80] It is "designed to provide critical utilities, infrastructure, and economic support throughout Alaska." The Denali Commission is unique among these commissions and authorities as a single-state entity. 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.[81]

[79] 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, https://dra.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/DRA-FY-2025-Buget-Justification-FINAL_Updated03072025.pdf. The DRA's FY2025 CBJ also notes that it will use 4% of IIJA funding to cover administrative expenses.

[80] P.L. 105-277.

[81] 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



Source: Compiled by CRS using data from Esri Data and Maps.

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.[82] For decades, the commission has provided substantial funding to coastal infrastructure protection and energy infrastructure and fuel storage projects.[83] The commission continues to invest in energy and bulk fuel programs and climate adaptation activities.[84] In FY2020, the commission reopened its general economic development and workforce development portfolios.[85]

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-

[82] 42 U.S.C. §3121 note.

[83] Denali Commission, *Programs*, https://www.denali.gov/programs/.

[84] 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."

[85] Denali Commission, *Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2027*, pp. 19-20, https://www.denali.gov/strategic-plans/.

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.[86]

These structural novelties offer a different model compared to the organization typified by the ARC and broadly adopted by the other functioning federal regional commissions and authorities. 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.[87] 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.[88]

Designating Distressed Areas

The Denali Commission's authorizing statute obligates the commission to address economic distress in rural areas of Alaska.[89] As of 2018, 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."

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 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.

[86] P.L. 105-277.

[87] Denali Commission, *Work Plans*, https://www.denali.gov/work-plans/.

[88] Denali Commission, *Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2027*, https://www.denali.gov/strategic-plans/.

[89] P.L. 105-277.

Recent Activities[90]

The Denali Commission's scope is more constrained compared to the other federal regional commissions and authorities. 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.[91] 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.[92] In 2015, the commission launched the village infrastructure protection program launched to address community infrastructure threatened by erosion, flooding and permafrost degradation.[93] 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.[94] However, since FY2020, the commission reports that it has renewed its partnerships and activities that focus on general economic development and economic development.[95]

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.[96] However, the commission's FY2023 and FY2024 Work Plans and the FY2022-FY2026 IIJA Work Plan indicate support for these and related activities.[97] The Denali Commission will 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;[98]

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

[91] Denali Commission, *Denali Commission Investment Summary*, March 2022, https://www.denali.gov/programs/.

[92] 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, *FY2024 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 8, https://02e11d.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Congressional-Budget-Justification-Fiscal-Year-2024-Final.pdf.

[93] Denali Commission, *Village Infrastructure Protection*, https://www.denali.gov/programs/village-infrastructure-protection/.

[94] 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/.

[95] Denali Commission, *Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2027*, pp. 19-20, https://www.denali.gov/strategic-plans/.

[96] Denali Commission, *Other Programs*, https://www.denali.gov/programs/other-programs/.

[97] Denali Commission, *Work Plans*, https://www.denali.gov/work-plans/.

[98] 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;[99] and
- The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Liability (TAPL) trust fund, for the commission's bulk fuel safety and security activities.[100]

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.[101]

Legislative History

106th Congress

- In 1999, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2000 (P.L. 106-113) authorized the 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, prohibited using more than 5% of appropriated funds for administrative expenses, and 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.

108th Congress

- 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.[102]

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

[99] 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.

[100] The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Liability (TAPL) trust fund provides approximately $3 million each year in FY2023 and FY2024. See Denali Commission, *Funding*, https://www.denali.gov/about/funding-2/; and *FY2024 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 7, https://02e11d.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Congressional-Budget-Justification-Fiscal-Year-2024-Final.pdf.

[101] 42 U.S.C. 3121 note, §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.

[102] 42 U.S.C. §3121 note.

part of its surface transportation efforts, which were active from 2005 through 2009.[103]

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) extends funding authorization for five years to carry out the Denali Access System Program.[104] The act also allows the Denali Commission to consider funding from another federal agency as no longer subject to requirements previously attached to those funds, including any regulatory actions by the transferring agency.[105]

118th Congress

- Section 213 of the Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891) would allow the commission's funds to be considered nonfederal match for certain programs and would provide the Denali Commission with leasing authority. The bill would also remove the commission's special functions pertaining to rural utilities; establish the Denali Housing Fund that may be used for grants and loans (including $5 million authorized to be appropriated for each of FY2025 through FY2029); and authorize funding through FY2029.[106] See "The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891)."

Funding History

Under its authorizing statute, the Denali Commission received authorizations for $20 million for FY1999,[107] and "such sums as necessary" for FY2000 through FY2003. Legislation passed in

[103] 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.

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

[105] Division A, §11507(b) of P.L. 117-58.

[106] Sec. 213 and Sec. 214.

[107] P.L. 105-277.

2003 extended the commission's uncapped funding authorization through 2008.[108] Its authorization lapsed after 2008; reauthorizing legislation was introduced in 2007,[109] but was not enacted. The commission continued to receive annual appropriations for FY2009 and several years thereafter.[110] In 2016, legislation was enacted reauthorizing the Denali Commission through FY2021 with a $15 million annual authorization through FY2021.

Between FY2014 and FY2024, annual appropriations for the Denali Commission averaged $15.5 million. In FY2022, the IIJA provided the Denali Commission with $75 million in supplemental appropriations—approximately five times its annual appropriation at the time (**Table 3**).[111] 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.[112] As noted, the Denali Commission is authorized to receive transfers from other federal agencies.[113]

Table 3. Denali Commission: Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2014-FY2024

$ in millions

	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22[a]	FY23	FY24
Appropriated Funding	10.00	10.00	11.00	15.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	90.1	17.0	17.0
Authorized Funding	—	—	—	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	—	—	—

Sources: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from the following: P.L. 111-85; P.L. 112-10; P.L. 112-74; P.L. 113-6; P.L. 113-76; P.L. 113-235; P.L. 114-113; 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, and P.L. 118-42. Amounts provided by the Trans Atlantic 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 amounts include $15.1 million provided through annual appropriations (P.L. 117-103). FY2022 appropriated funding amounts include $75 million from Division J, Title III of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58). FY2022 amounts do not include amounts authorized to be appropriated in Division A of P.L. 117-58 pertaining to the Denali Access System Program.

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 (GLA). The structure and functions of the GLA are based on the model of the NBRC, SCRC, and SBRC, which were established in the

[108] P.L. 108-7, §504.

[109] S. 1368, 110th Cong. (2007).

[110] P.L. 111-8.

[111] P.L. 114-322.

[112] 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).

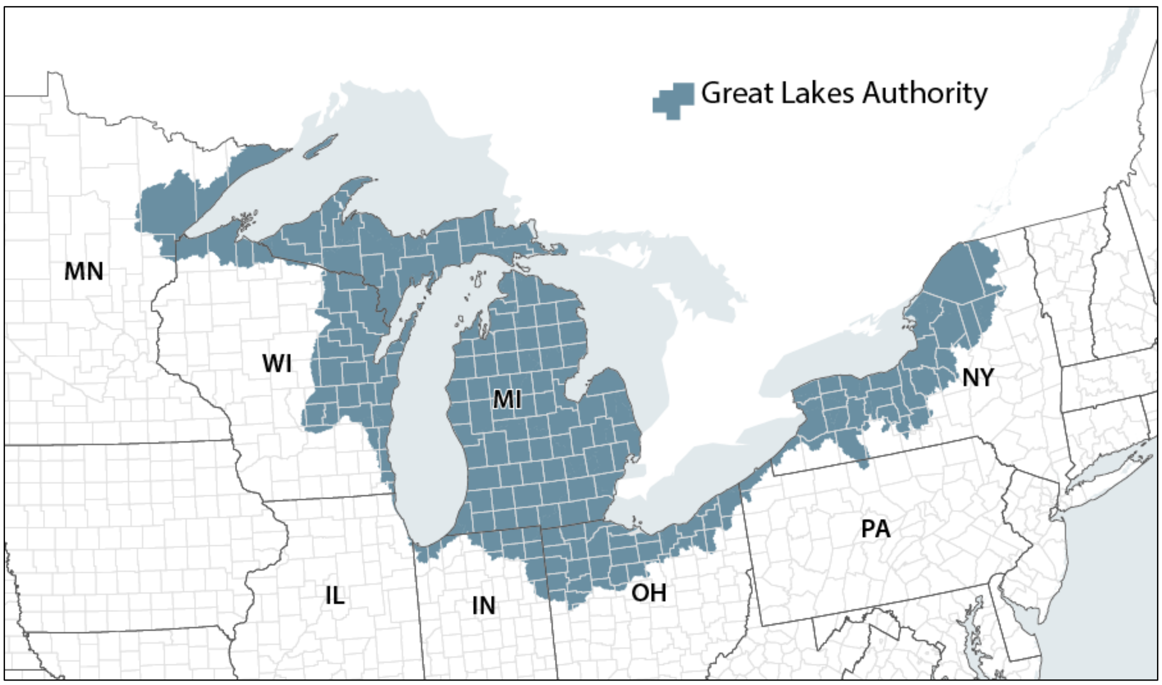
[113] 42 U.S.C. §3121 note. See, for example, a summary of the funding transferred and the transferring agencies in the Denali Commission's FY2025 *Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 13, https://02e11d.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Denali-Commission-CJ-2025-Final.pdf.

Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (i.e., 2008 farm bill).[114] 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 for the GLA.[115] The federal co-chair position must be presidentially nominated and Senate confirmed; as of the date of this publication the Senate has not yet confirmed the nominee.

The geographic boundaries of the authorized commissions' regions are defined in statute, usually using county-based designations. The GLA differs in that its service region is defined in statute based on federal definitions of the area's watershed (see **Figure 4**) so that the region

> shall consist of 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.

Figure 4. Map of the Great Lakes Authority



Source: Map created by CRS based on terms in P.L. 117-328 and U.S. Geological Survey data.

Notes: The GLA region consists of areas in the watershed of the Great Lakes and Great Lakes System in states specifically designated in the statute.

Overview of Structure and Activities

As authorized, the GLA would share a structure with the NBRC, the Southeast Regional Commission, and the Southwest Border Regional Commission, as all four share common statutory authorizing language modeled after the ARC.

114 P.L. 110-234.

115 The White House, "President Biden Announces Key Nominees," May 2, 2024, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/05/02/president-biden-announces-key-nominees-72/.

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. 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, the Southeast Regional Commission, and the Southwest Border Regional Commission.[116]

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 nominated a federal co-chair for the GLA. For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11744, *Forming a Funded Federal Regional Commission*, by Julie M. Lawhorn.

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

- The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891) would change aspects of the GLA's governance structure and administrative powers, allow for GLA funds to be considered nonfederal match for other programs, allow GLA to transfer funds to and from federal agencies, expand authorized programs, increase the authorized funding level to $40 million for each of FY2025 through FY2029, clarify how the GLA region is defined, and make other changes (see "The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891)").

Funding History

In FY2024, the Great Lakes Authority received first-time funding of $5 million.

[116] 40 U.S.C. §15302.

Table 4. Great Lakes Authority
Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2023-FY2024

$ in millions

	FY23[a]	FY24
Appropriated Funding	—	5.0
Authorized Funding	33.0	—

Source: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from P.L. 118-42.

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

a. In FY2023, P.L. 117-328 established the GLA.

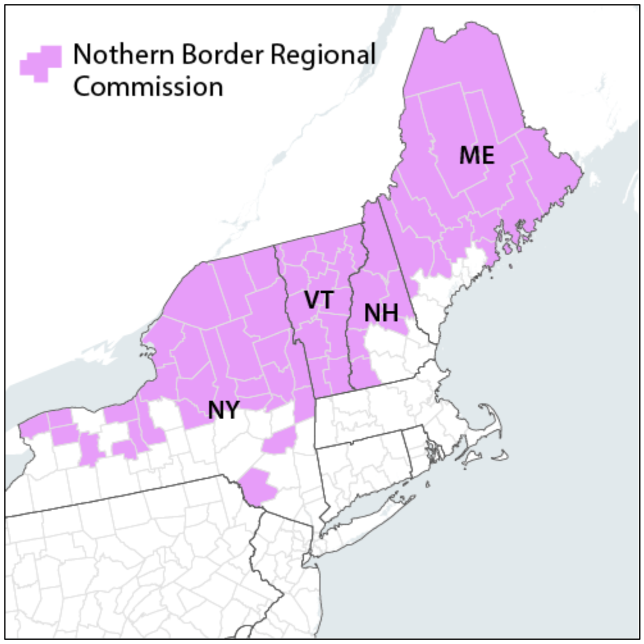
Northern Border Regional Commission

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) was created by the 2008 farm bill.[117] The act also created the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) and the Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC). All three commissions share common authorizing language modeled after the ARC.

The NBRC is the only one of the three new 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 (**Figure 5**).

[117] P.L. 110-234, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

Figure 5. Map of the Northern Border Regional Commission



Source: Compiled by CRS using data from Esri Data and Maps and NBRC, *Assessing Distress in NBRC Counties,* https://www.nbrc.gov/content/distressed-counties.

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

The stated mission of the NBRC is "to catalyze regional, collaborative, and transformative community economic development approaches that alleviate economic distress and position the region for economic growth."[118] 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 (**Table D-5**).

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.[119]

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.

[118] Northern Border Regional Commission, *About the NBRC*, http://www.nbrc.gov/content/about.

[119] Northern Border Regional Commission, *About the NBRC*, http://www.nbrc.gov/content/about.

Strategic Plan

The NBRC's activities are guided by a five-year strategic plan,[120] which is developed through "extensive engagement with NBRC stakeholders" alongside "local, state, and regional economic development strategies already in place." The 2017-2022 strategic plan lists three goals:

1. modernizing infrastructure;
2. creating and sustaining jobs; and
3. anticipating and capitalizing on shifting economic and demographic trends.[121]

The strategic plan also lists five-year performance goals, which are

- 5,000 jobs created or retained;
- 10,000 households and businesses with access to improved infrastructure;
- 1,000 businesses representing 5,000 employees benefit from NBRC investments;
- 7,500 workers provided with skills training;
- 250 communities and 1,000 leaders engaged in regional leadership, learning and/or innovation networks supported by the NBRC; and
- 3:1 NBRC investment leverage.[122]

The strategic plan also takes stock of various socioeconomic trends in the northern border region, including (1) population shifts; (2) distressed communities; and (3) changing workforce needs.

The NBRC member states generally use state economic development plans to outline their states' funding priorities for NBRC projects.[123] The next five-year plan for 2024-2029 will be available in Fall 2024.[124]

Designating Distressed Areas

The NBRC is unique in that it is statutorily obligated to assess distress according to economic as well as demographic factors (**Table D-5**). 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."[125] 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.[126]

120 Northern Border Regional Commission, *2017-2022 Strategic Plan*, Concord, NH, 2017, http://www.nbrc.gov/content/strategic-plan.

121 Northern Border Regional Commission, *Northern Border Regional Commission: 2017-2022 Strategic Plan*, http://www.nbrc.gov/uploads/004%20RESOURCES/Five%20Yr%20Strat%20Plan/NBRC%20Strategic%20Plan%2C%20Full%20Study.pdf.

122 Northern Border Regional Commission, *2017-2022 Strategic Plan*, Concord, NH, 2017, p. 6.

123 See, for example, state plans available at Northern Border Regional Commission, *Resources*, https://www.nbrc.gov/content/resources.

124 See Northern Border Regional Commission, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 7, https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/FY25%20Budget%20Justification.pdf.

125 P.L. 110-234.

126 See 40 U.S.C. §15302(b) and Northern Border Regional Commission, *NBRC Annual Economic and Demographic Research for Fiscal Year 2021: To Determine Categories of Distress Within the NBRC Service Area*, Concord, NH, March 2021, https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/Resource%20Guides/
(continued...)

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.[127]

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

- Primary Distress Categories
  - Percent of population below the poverty level
  - Unemployment rate
  - Percent change in population
- Secondary Distress Categories
  - Percent of population below the poverty level
  - 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 Activities[128]

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; partially funded by IIJA appropriations);

NBRC%20Annual%20Economic%20%26%20Demographic%20Research%20for%20Fiscal%20Year%202021_FINAL.pdf.

[127] Northern Border Regional Commission, *NBRC Annual Economic and Demographic Research for Fiscal Year 2021: To Determine Categories of Distress Within the NBRC Service Area*, Concord, NH, March 2021, https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/Resource%20Guides/NBRC%20Annual%20Economic%20%26%20Demographic%20Research%20for%20Fiscal%20Year%202021_FINAL.pdf.

[128] 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.

- Forest Economy Program (formerly the "Regional Forest Economy Partnership" Program);
- Timber for Transit Program;
- comprehensive planning for states; and
- other programs and initiatives (e.g., the J-1 Visa program, LDD Partnership program).[129]

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.[130] Since 2019, Congress has directed USDA to provide approximately $2-3 million annually to NBRC for USDA Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP) grants to support rural economic development activities in the NBRC region.[131] Other federal partners include EDA, EPA, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and HRSA.[132]

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.[133] The program provides approximately $5.8 million to each state for such activities.[134] Eligible applicants include units of local government, 501(c) organizations, Native American tribes, and the four state governments. Catalyst projects may require matching funds of up to 50%

[129] Northern Border Regional Commission, *Program Areas*, https://www.nbrc.gov/content/program-areas.

[130] Northern Border Regional Commission, *Partnership Opportunities*, https://www.nbrc.gov/content/program-areas, and Department of Labor, *Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Initiative*, https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/dislocated-workers/grants/workforce-opportunity.

[131] P.L. 118-42 provided $8 million for the ARC, DRA, NBRC, and SBRC regions for RCAP projects. According to a NBRC press release,

> The awards being made through this partnership will support community-driven initiatives in each state with a particular focus on outdoor recreation, business support and workforce development efforts. Congress has provided funds to the NBRC since 2019 for this partnership, which advances the strategic objectives of both agencies.
>
> See Northern Border Regional Commission, "Northern Border Regional Commission and USDA Rural Development Announce $2.85 Million for Economic Development Projects in Four States," December 11, 2023, https://www.nbrc.gov/articles/147.

[132] See Northern Border Regional Commission, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 8, https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/FY25%20Budget%20Justification.pdf; and Northern Border Regional Commission, *Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) Program*, https://www.nbrc.gov/content/RERC.

[133] Northern Border Regional Commission, *Catalyst Program*, https://www.nbrc.gov/content/Catalyst.

[134] Northern Border Regional Commission, *FY2022 Annual Report*, https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/Annual%20Reports/NBRC-2022-Annual-Report_Final-Web.pdf.

depending on the level of distress. The Catalyst program is funded in part by IIJA appropriations.[135]

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.[136] In FY2018, Congress directed NBRC to allocate $3 million to address the decline in forest-based economies throughout the region.[137] Each fiscal year from FY2019 to FY2023, Congress directed NBRC to allocate $4 million for the forest-based initiatives.[138] In FY2022, NBRC revised its forest program priorities with input from regional stakeholders and renamed the initiative the Forest Economy Program.[139]

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."[140]

State Capacity Grants

The NBRC may provide funding through non-competitive grants to assist states in developing comprehensive economic and infrastructure development plans for their NBRC counties. These initiatives are undertaken in collaboration with LDDs, localities, institutions of higher education, and other relevant stakeholders.[141]

Local Development Districts (LDD)

The NBRC uses multicounty LDDs to advise on local priorities, identify opportunities, conduct outreach, and administer grants, from which the LDDs receive fees. LDDs receive 2% of the NBRC grant award for their administrative work.[142]

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[135] Northern Border Regional Commission, *Catalyst Program*, https://www.nbrc.gov/content/Catalyst.

[136] Northern Border Regional Commission, *FY2022 Annual Report*, https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/Annual%20Reports/NBRC-2022-Annual-Report_Final-Web.pdf.

[137] Northern Border Regional Commission, *Regional Forest Economy Partnership: Notice of Funding Opportunity*, http://www.nbrc.gov/uploads/RegionalForestEconomyParternship(5).pdf.

[138] Northern Border Regional Commission, *Northern Border Regional Commission Announces 2020 Regional Forest Economy Partnership Grant Round*, July 1, 2020, https://www.nbrc.gov/articles/94; and *2021 Regional Forest Economy Partnership Overview*, https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/2021_RFEP_Documents/2021%20RFEP%20Program%20Overview%20FINAL.pdf.

[139] The program was formerly called the "Regional Forest Economy Partnership Program." Northern Border Regional Commission, *FY2022 Annual Report*, https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/Annual%20Reports/NBRC-2022-Annual-Report_Final-Web.pdf.

[140] Northern Border Regional Commission, *Timber for Transit*, https://www.nbrc.gov/content/t4t.

[141] Northern Border Regional Commission, *Comprehensive Planning Investments for States*, http://www.nbrc.gov/content/planning-for-states.

[142] Northern Border Regional Commission, *Northern Border Regional Commission, Grant Administration, Compliance and Monitoring Manual*, February 2023, https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/Resource%20Guides/Compliance%20Manual%20February%2023%20FINAL.pdf.

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.[143]
- 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.[144] H.R. 3246 won a broader range of support, which included 18 co-sponsors in addition to the original bill sponsor, and passed the House by a vote of 264-154 on October 4, 2007.
- 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.[145] 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

- The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891) would change aspects of the NBRC's governance structure and administrative powers, allow for NBRC funds to be considered nonfederal match for other programs, allow NBRC to transfer funds to and from federal agencies, expand authorized programs, increase the authorized funding level to $40 million for each of

[143] 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].

[144] The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007, H.R. 3246.

[145] Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, P.L. 110-234.

FY2025 through FY2029, and make other changes (see "The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891)").

Funding History

Since its creation, the NBRC has received consistent authorizations of appropriations (**Table 5**). 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); and $33 million for each of FY2019 through FY2023 (P.L. 115-334).

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 (**Table 5**). The NBRC's appropriated funding level—excluding supplemental appropriations—increased from $1.5 million in FY2013 to $40 million in FY2023. 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 FY2024, NBRC received $41 million in annual appropriations.

Table 5. NBRC: Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2014-FY2024

$ in millions

	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22[a]	FY23	FY24
Appropriated Funding	5.0	5.0	7.5	10.0	15.0	20.0	25.0	30.0	185.00	40.0	41.0
Authorized Funding	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0	—

Sources: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from the following: P.L. 113-76; P.L. 113-235; P.L. 114-113; 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, and P.L. 118-42.

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

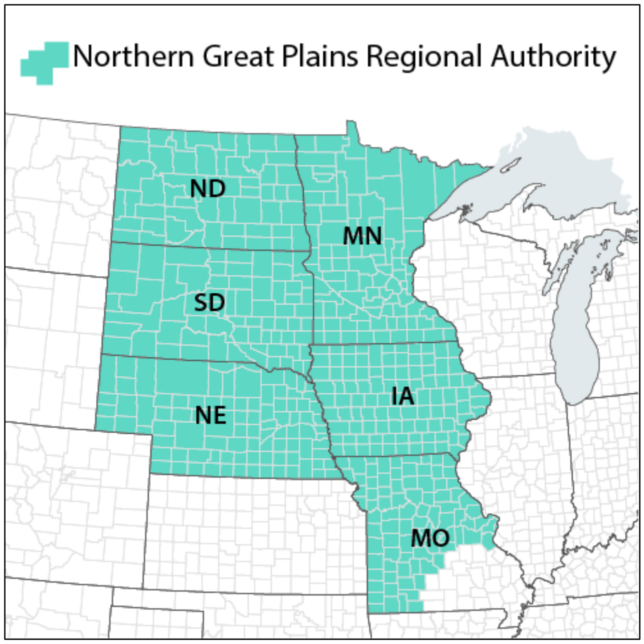
a. FY2022 amounts include $35 million provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103, Division D, Title IV). FY2022 appropriated funding amounts also include $150 million provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III).

Northern Great Plains Regional Authority

The Northern Great Plains Regional Authority was created by the 2002 farm bill.[146] 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.

146 P.L. 107-171.

Figure 6. Map of the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority



Source: Compiled by CRS using the NGPRA jurisdiction defined in P.L. 107-171 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 its only annual appropriation from Congress. The NGPRA's funding authorization lapsed at the end of FY2018; it was not reauthorized.

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 federal regional commissions and authorities 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,[147] but is currently defunct.

Activities

Under its authorizing statute,[148] 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 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.[149] 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

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[147] W.K. Kellogg Foundation, *Grants: Northern Great Plains, Inc.*, https://www.wkkf.org/grants/grant/2007/09/the-meadowlark-project-a-leadership-laboratory-on-the-future-of-the-northern-great-plains-3004879.

[148] P.L. 107-171.

[149] 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.

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.

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.
- 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

- The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891) would repeal the sunset provision and reauthorize the NGRPA. The bill would also authorize appropriations through FY2029.[150]

Funding History

The NGPRA was authorized to receive $30 million annually from FY2002 to FY2018. It received appropriations once for $1.5 million in FY2004.[151] Its authorization of appropriations lapsed at the end of FY2018.

Southeast Crescent Regional Commission

The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) was created by the 2008 farm bill,[152] 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.[153] On December 8, 2021, the U.S. Senate confirmed the SCRC's first federal co-chairperson, thereby allowing the SCRC to convene and begin other activities.[154]

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[150] S. 3891, Sec. 216.

[151] P.L. 108-199.

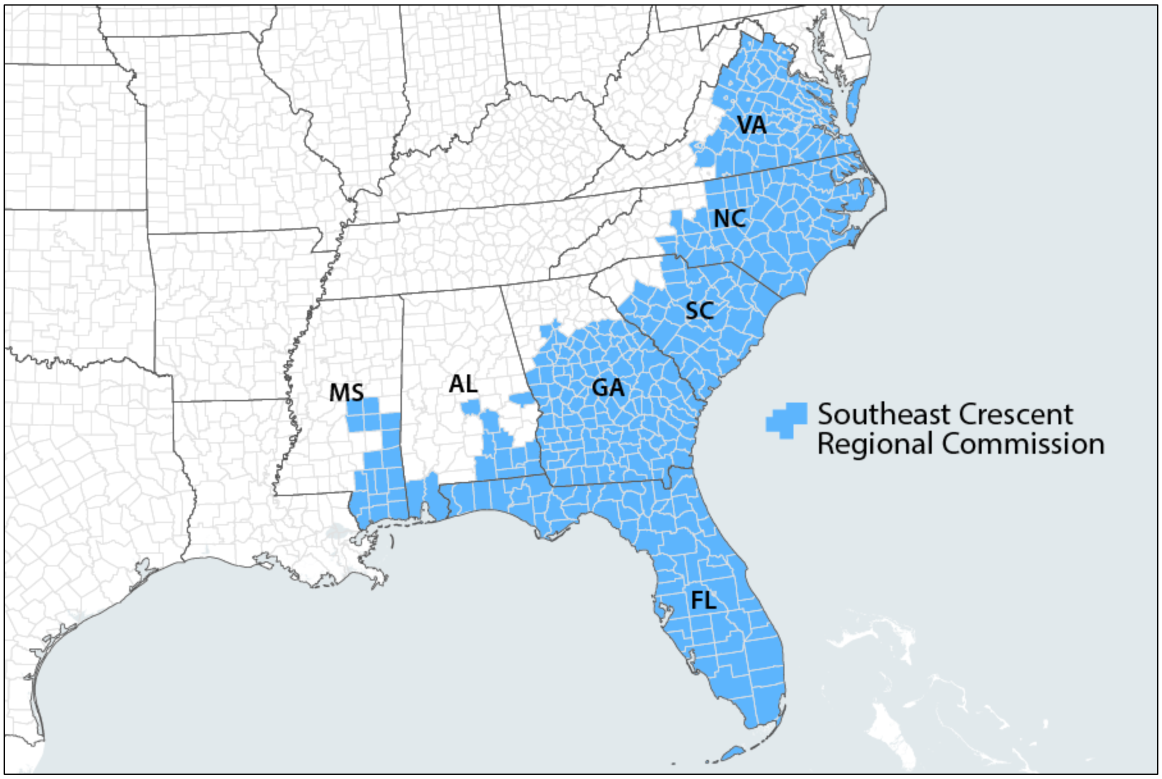
[152] P.L. 110-234.

[153] For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11744, *Forming a Funded Federal Regional Commission*, by Julie M. Lawhorn.

[154] 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.

The SCRC was created to address economic distress in areas of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida (**Figure 7**) not served by the ARC or the DRA (**Table D-7**).

Figure 7. Map of the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdiction defined in P.L. 110-234 and Esri Data and Maps and SCRC, *SCRC Counties by Economic Designation,* https://scrc.gov.

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 NBRC, the GLA, and the Southwest Border Regional Commission; all four 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 U.S. Senate confirmed the first federal co-chair for the SCRC.

Strategic Plan

The SCRC developed its bylaws and its first strategic plan for the period FY2023-FY2027.[155] 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 Southwest Border Regional Commission, as all three share common statutory authorizing language.[156] 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:

- *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.[157]

The SCRC also designates isolated areas of distress in attainment counties.[158] The SCRC is required to allocate 50% of its total appropriations to projects in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.[159]

[155] Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, "Southeast Crescent Regional Commission: Bylaws," August 2022, https://scrc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SCRC-Bylaws-Final.pdf; and "Southeast Crescent Regional Commission: Strategic Plan (FY2023-FY2027)," December 2022, https://scrc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SCRC-Strategic-Plan-Final.pdf.

[156] 40 U.S.C. §15302.

[157] Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, "SCRC Economic Designation of Counties & Isolated Areas," https://scrc.gov.

[158] Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, "FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification," p. 17, https://scrc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SCRC-FY-2025-Budget-Justification-Final.pdf.

[159] 40 U.S.C. §15302(b).

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. The SCRC administers 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.[160]

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.

In 1994, the Southern Rural Development Commission Act was introduced in the House Agricultural Committee, which would provide the statutory basis for a "Southern Black Belt Commission."[161] 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 accompanying legislative efforts until the SCRC was authorized in 2008.[162]

The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891) was introduced in the 118th Congress, which would change aspects of the SCRC's governance structure and administrative powers, allow for SCRC funds to be considered nonfederal match for other programs, allow the SCRC to transfer funds to and from federal agencies, expand authorized programs, increase the authorized funding level to $40 million for each of FY2025 through FY2029, and make other changes (see "The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891)").

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.[163] 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 for FY2023 and FY2024. Congress also provided $5 million in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III) in FY2022[164] (**Table 6**). Prior to the confirmation of the federal co-chair in FY2022, the SCRC was unable to form, despite receiving annual appropriations.[165]

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160 SCRC, "Southeast Crescent Regional Commission," https://scrc.gov; and SCRC, *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification,* https://scrc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/SCRC-FY-2025-Budget-Justification-Final.pdf.

161 H.R. 3901.

162 40 U.S.C. §15731.

163 40 U.S.C. §15751.

164 P.L. 116-260 and P.L. 117-58.

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

Table 6. SCRC: Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2014-FY2024

$ in millions

	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22[a]	FY23	FY24
Appropriated Funding	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00	10.00	20.0	20.0
Authorized Funding	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	33.00	33.00	33.00	33.00	33.0	—

Sources: Appropriated funding amounts compiled by CRS using data from the following: P.L. 113-76; P.L. 113-235; P.L. 114-113; 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, and P.L. 118-42.

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).

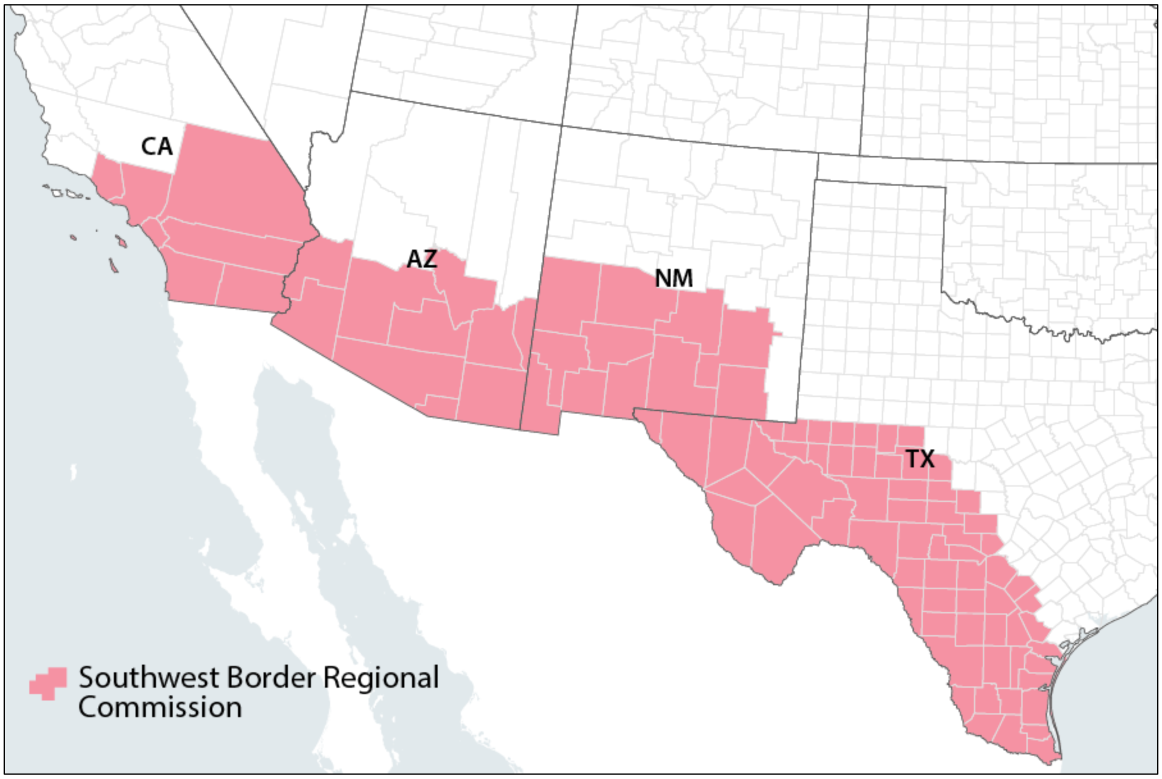
Southwest Border Regional Commission

The Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC) 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) 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 (**Figure 8**; **Table D-8**). On December 6, 2022, the U.S. Senate confirmed the SBRC's first federal co-chairperson, thereby allowing the SCRC to convene and begin other activities.[166]

[166] Congress.gov, "Nomination: Juan Eduardo Sanchez—Southwest Border Regional Commission," PN2450, https://www.congress.gov/nomination/117th-congress/2450.

Figure 8. Map of the Southwest Border Regional Commission



Source: Compiled by CRS using the jurisdictional data defined in P.L. 110-234 and Esri Data and Maps.

Overview of Structure and Activities

Commission Structure

The SBRC shares an organizing structure with the GLA, the NBRC, and the SCRC, as all four 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 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

As of the date of publication, the SBRC is developing, but has not yet published, a strategic plan.

Designating Distressed Areas

As authorized, the SBRC shares an approach to designating distressed areas that is similar to that of the NBRC and the SCRC, as all three share common statutory authorizing language.[167] For instance, like the GLA, NBRC, and SCRC, the SBRC is required to designate isolated areas of

[167] 40 U.S.C. §15302.

distress in attainment counties and to allocate 50% of its total appropriations to projects in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.[168]

Recent Activities

The U.S. Senate confirmed the SBRC's first federal co-chair in December 2022, which marked an essential step for starting the commission's operations.[169] As of the date of publication, the SBRC has begun operations and plans to open its first grant competition in fall or winter 2024. In FY2024, Congress directed USDA to provide funding to SBRC for USDA Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP) grants to support rural economic development activities in the SBRC region.[170]

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,[171] 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, the DRA, the NGPRA, and the SCRC.

109th Congress

- In 2006, the proposed Southwest Regional Border Authority Act would have created the "Southwest Regional Border Authority" (H.R. 5742), similar to S. 458 in 2003.

110th Congress

- In 2007, 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.
- Upon House passage, the Senate incorporated authorizations for the establishment of the NBRC, SCRC, and SBRC in the 2008 farm bill. The 2008

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168 40 U.S.C. §15302(b).

169 For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11744, *Forming a Funded Federal Regional Commission*, by Julie M. Lawhorn.

170 P.L. 118-42 provided $8 million for the ARC, DRA, NBRC, and SBRC regions for RCAP projects.

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

farm bill authorized annual appropriations of $30 million for FY2008 through FY2012 for all three of the new organizations.

117th Congress

- The U.S. Senate confirmed the SBRC's first federal co-chair in December 2022.[172]

118th Congress

- Section 207 of the Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891) would add counties to the SBRC region, and Section 210 of the bill would waive matching requirements for Indian tribes and *colonias* in the SBRC region.[173] The bill would also change aspects of the SBRC's governance structure and administrative powers, allow for SBRC funds to be considered nonfederal match for other programs, allow SBRC to transfer funds to and from federal agencies, expand authorized programs, increase the level of authorized appropriations to $40 million for each of FY2025 through FY2029, and make other changes (see "The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891)").

Funding History

Congress authorized annual funding of $30 million for the SBRC from FY2008 to FY2018 and $33 million for each fiscal year from FY2019 through FY2023.[174] 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. Congress provided $5 million for the SBRC for each of FY2023 (P.L. 117-328) and FY2024 (P.L. 118-42).

Table 7. SBRC: Appropriated Funding and Authorized Funding Level, FY2014-FY2024

$ in millions

	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22[a]	FY23	FY24
Appropriated Funding	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.25	3.75	5.0	5.0
Authorized Funding	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	33.00	33.00	33.00	33.0	33.0	—

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, and P.L. 118-42.

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

[172] Congress.gov, "Nomination: Juan Eduardo Sanchez—Southwest Border Regional Commission," PN2450, https://www.congress.gov/nomination/117th-congress/2450.

[173] S. 3891, Sec. 207 would add Guadalupe County, Texas, to the SBRC region as well as the following New Mexico counties: Bernalillo, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Guadalupe, Roosevelt, Torrance, and Valencia.

[174] 40 U.S.C. §15751.

a. FY2022 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 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title III).

Reauthorization of Select Regional Commissions and Authorities

There are two types of authorizations for federal entities: authorization of appropriations, which generally provide a guideline for the resources anticipated to be needed for an entity; and operational or organizational authorization, which establishes the entity and provides it certain authority in law to operate. Funding authorizations may lapse with relatively little effect, as the congressional action of providing appropriations provides a de facto authority for an agency to do as directed by the appropriation. However, some operating authorizations include "sunset provisions," which terminate an entity's legal authority to operate on a certain date, which positively shuts down their ability to function.

The authorizing statutes for the ARC, DRA, and NGPRA include such sunset provisions. Policymakers may choose to allow these provisions to take effect, extend the date of the sunset to a later date, or remove the sunset provisions entirely. In recent years, the operational authorizations of the ARC and DRA have been extended for periods ranging from one to several years. For example, the operational authorization for the ARC was to expire on October 1, 2021. However, the IIJA (P.L. 117-58) extended the authorization for the ARC until October 1, 2026.[175] In other cases, the sunset dates were suspended through appropriations laws. For instance, the authorization for the DRA was set to expire on October 1, 2023;[176] however, the sunset date was suspended by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42).[177] The operating authorization for the NGPRA expired October 1, 2018.[178]

In contrast, the operating authority for the NBRC,[179] the GLA,[180] the Denali Commission,[181] the SCRC,[182] and the SBRC[183] is indefinite and does not have a sunset date.

The statutory authorization of appropriations for the Denali Commission was provided through FY2021.[184] Such authorization ended after FY2018 for the NGPRA[185] and after FY2023 for the

175 P.L. 117-58, Sec. 11506(g).

176 See Section 382N of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, which is codified at 7 U.S.C. §2009aa–13.

177 Prior to the enactment of P.L. 118-42, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 (Div. A of P.L. 118-15, as amended by P.L. 118-35) extended the appropriations provided by the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2023 (Div. D of P.L. 117-328), which had suspended the DRA's sunset date.

178 See 7 U.S.C. 2009bb–13.

179 See 40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.

180 See 40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.

181 42 U.S.C. §3121 note.

182 See 40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.

183 See 40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.

184 42 U.S.C. §3121 note.

185 See 7 U.S.C. 2009bb–12.

DRA,[186] GLA, NBRC, SBRC and SCRC.[187] The IIJA (P.L. 117-58, Sec. 11506(f)) provided the authorization of appropriations for the ARC through FY2026.[188]

The Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891)

S. 3891 was introduced in the 118th Congress and would amend the authorities, authorizations, and/or authorization of appropriations for all of the regional commissions and authorities except for the ARC. The bill would also establish two new regional commissions under Title 40—the Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission and the Southern New England Regional Commission. Among S. 3891's provisions affecting existing federal regional commissions and authorities are those that would:

- repeal the sunset dates for the DRA and the NGPRA;[189]
- add counties to the regions of the NBRC and SBRC and clarify how the GLA region is defined;[190]
- waive matching requirements for Indian tribes and *colonias* in the SBRC region;[191]
- allow the DRA's executive director, a nonfederal employee, to assume the duties of the federal co-chair and the alternate federal co-chair in the event that both positions are vacant and allow the DRA to make grants to Indian tribes;[192] and
- authorize and expand programs, such as the Denali Housing Fund and Demonstration Health Projects.

Among the ramifications for the GLA, NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC, the bill would

- allow transfer of funds to and from other federal agencies (subject to certain conditions);[193]
- expand the existing economic and infrastructure development grant program (40 U.S.C. §15501) to authorize additional efforts undertaken to support extreme weather resilience and promote the production of housing to meet economic development and workforce needs;[194]
- authorize the collection, retention, and use of fees for services provided (this would apply to Delta Regional Authority programs as well);[195]

[186] See 7 U.S.C. §2009aa-12 for the authorization of appropriations for the DRA.

[187] See 40 U.S.C. §15751 for the authorization of appropriations for GLA, NBRC, SCRC, and SBRC.

[188] See 40 U.S.C. §14703.

[189] See S. 3891, Secs. 216(b) and 215(b).

[190] S. 3891, Sec. 207.

[191] S. 3891, Sec. 210.

[192] S. 3891, Sec. 215.

[193] S. 3891, Sec. 203. The Denali Commission may accept transferred funds from other federal agencies (see 42 U.S.C. §3121 note.).

[194] Sec. 204.

[195] See Sec. 215 for the provision pertaining to the DRA. See Sec. 202 for the provision pertaining to the GLA, NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC as well as the two new commissions proposed to be established by S. 3891.

- allow funding to be considered nonfederal matching funds for other federal grant programs (this would apply to the Denali Commission as well);[196] and
- provide leasing authority (this would apply to the Denali Commission as well).[197]

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 federal regional commissions and authorities 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. The intergovernmental structure allows for strategic-level economic development initiatives to be launched at the federal level and implemented across multi-state jurisdictions with extensive state and local input, and more adaptable to regional needs.

The federal regional commissions and authorities 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 federal regional commissions and authorities, both active and inactive, potentially raise questions about the efficacy and equity of federal economic development policies.

[196] See Sec. 213(b) for the provision pertaining to the Denali Commission. See Sec. 205 for the provision pertaining to the GLA, NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC as well as the two new commissions proposed to be established by S. 3891.

[197] See Sec. 213(b)(1) for the provision pertaining to the Denali Commission. See Sec. 202(c)(4) for the provision pertaining to the GLA, NBRC, SBRC, and SCRC as well as the two new commissions proposed to be established by S. 3891.

Appendix A. Basic Information at a Glance

Table A-1. Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities

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

	Year Authorized	Number of States	Counties	FY2024 Appropriations (P.L. 118-42)
ARC	1965	13	423 counties in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and the entire state of West Virginia	$200.0[a] (an additional $200.0 million of advance appropriations provided in FY2023 from the IIJA (P.L. 117-58) also becomes available
DRA	2000	8	252 counties in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee	$31.1
Denali Commission	1998	1	Entire state of Alaska	$17.0
GLA	2022	8	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.	$5.0
NBRC	2008	4	60 counties in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont	$41.0
NGPRC	2002	6	86 counties in Missouri and the entire states of Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, and South Dakota	N/A
SCRC	2008	7	428 counties in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia not already served by the ARC or DRA, and the entire state of Florida	$20.0
SBRC	2008	4	93 counties in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas	$5.0

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. 110-234; P.L. 107-171; P.L. 110-234; and P.L. 110-234.

Notes:

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.

Table A-2. Statutory Citations for Operating Authorizations and Authorizations of Appropriations

Commission or Authority	Operating Authorization of the Commission or Authority	Authorization of Appropriations
ARC	40 U.S.C. §14301	40 U.S.C. §14703
DRA	7 U.S.C. §§2009aa-1 et seq.	7 U.S.C. §2009aa-12
Denali Commission	42 U.S.C. §3121 note	42 U.S.C. §3121 note
GLA	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.	40 U.S.C. §15751
NBRC	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.	40 U.S.C. §15751
NGPRC	7 U.S.C. §§2009bb-1 et seq.	7 U.S.C. §2009bb-12
SCRC	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.	40 U.S.C. §15751
SBRC	40 U.S.C. §§15301 et seq.	40 U.S.C. §15751

Source: Compiled by CRS.

Notes: The table citations for authorizing statutes and authorizations of appropriations for the regional commissions and authorities. The information above shows two types of authorizations, which are distinct: (1) the operating authorization of the commission or authority, and (2) the authorization of appropriations. 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.*

Figure A-1. Structure and Activities of the Commissions and Authorities

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

Sources: 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 March 2023, the GLA does not have a federal co-chair and is not yet active.

Contact Information

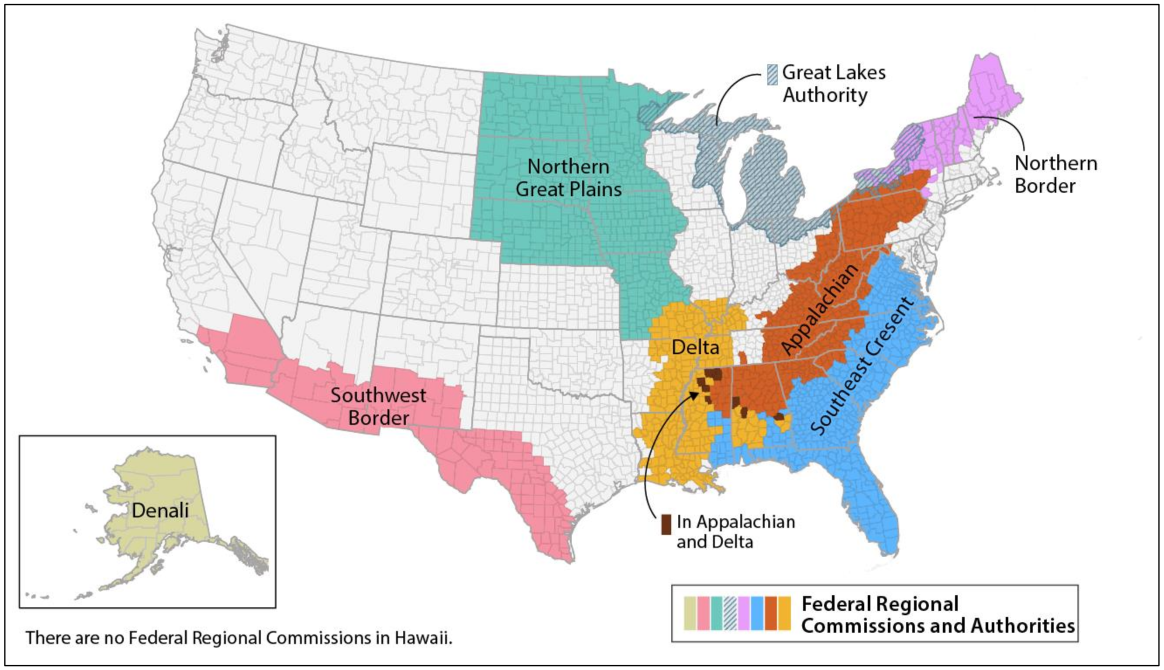
(for selected commissions and authorities)

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
Denali Commission	550 W 7th 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://https://scrc.gov/

Appendix B. Map of Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities

Figure B-1. National Map of the Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities

by county or watershed



Source: Compiled by CRS using data from the various commissions and authorities and Esri Data and Maps.

Appendix C. Historical Appropriations

Table C-1. Historical Appropriations: Federal Regional Commissions (FY1986-FY2023)

$ in millions

Fiscal Year	Legislation	ARC	Denali	DRA	GLA	NGPRA	NBRC	SBRC	SCRC
1986	P.L. 99-141	130.00	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
1988	P.L. 100-202	107.00	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
1990	P.L. 101-101	150.00	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
1992	P.L. 102-104	190.00	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
1994	P.L. 103-126	249.00	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
1996	P.L. 104-46	170.00	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
1998	P.L. 105-62	170.00	(Authorized)[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1999	P.L. 105-245	66.40	20.00	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
2001	P.L. 106-377	66.40	30.00	20.00[b]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2002	P.L. 107-66	71.29	38.00	10.00	N/A	(Authorized)[c]	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
2004	P.L. 108-137 / P.L. 108-100[d]	66.00	55.00	5.00	N/A	1.50	N/A	N/A	N/A
2005	P.L. 108-447	66.00	67.00	6.05	N/A	1.50[e]	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

Source: Tabulated by CRS from appropriations legislation.

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

a. P.L. 105-277.

b. The DRA was authorized in FY2001 (P.L. 106-554) and received its initial appropriations in that same fiscal year (P.L. 106-337).

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 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).

Appendix D. Service Areas of Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities

Appalachian Regional Commission

Table D-1. Statutory Jurisdiction of ARC

State	County
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	County
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	Barbour, Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Cabell, Calhoun, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Gilmer, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lewis, Lincoln, Logan, Marion, Marshall, Mason, McDowell, Mercer, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Nicholas, Ohio, Pendleton, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Raleigh, Randolph, Ritchie, Roane, Summers, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood, Wyoming

Source: Information compiled by CRS from ARC data, https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-counties-served-by-arc.

Note: 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.

Delta Regional Authority

Table D-2. Statutory Jurisdiction of DRA

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, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Tangipahoa, Tensas, Union, Vermillion, 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: Compiled by CRS from the Delta Regional Authority.

Note: 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	Counties
Alaska	Entire state of Alaska

Source: Compiled by CRS from the Denali Commission.

Great Lakes Authority

Table D-4. Statutory Jurisdiction of GLA

counties that are partially or entirely in the GLA region

State	County
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: Tabulated by CRS based on terms in P.L. 117-328 and U.S. Geological Survey data.

Notes: The GLA region consists of areas 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.

Northern Border Regional Commission

Table D-5. Statutory Jurisdiction of NBRC

counties

State	County
Maine	Androscoggin, Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, Washington

State	County
New Hampshire	Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, 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, Seneca, Sullivan, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Yates
Vermont	Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Rutland, Washington, Windham, Windsor

Source: Compiled and tabulated by CRS from NBRC data.

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

Northern Great Plains Regional Authority

Table D-6. Statutory Jurisdiction of NGPRA

states and counties

	NGPRA Jurisdiction
Iowa	Entire State
Minnesota	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	Entire State
North Dakota	Entire State
South Dakota	Entire State

Source: Tabulated by CRS with information from P.L. 107-171.

Note: Missouri jurisdiction represents all those counties not currently included in the DRA.

Southeast Crescent Regional Commission

Table D-7. Statutory Jurisdiction of SCRC

states and counties

	SCRC Jurisdiction
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, White, Whitfield, Wilcox, Wilkes, Wilkinson, Worth
Florida	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, Clay, 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, Rutherford, 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: Tabulated by CRS by 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).

Southwest Border Regional Commission

Table D-8. Statutory Jurisdiction of SBRC

states and counties

	SBRC Jurisdiction
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	Catron, Chaves, Dona Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Lincoln, Luna, Otero, Sierra, Socorro
Texas	Atascosa, Bandera, Bee, Bexar, Brewster, Brooks, Cameron, Coke, Concho, Crane, Crockett, Culberson, Dimmit, Duval, Ector, Edwards, El Paso, Frio, Gillespie, Glasscock, 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: Tabulated by CRS with information from P.L. 110-234.

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