

NEW ENGLAND BOARD of HIGHER EDUCATION



Mission: The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) advances equitable postsecondary outcomes through convening, research and programs for students, institution leaders, and policymakers.

NEBHE's strategic priorities are

- **Affordability:** Advance innovative, strategic alliances to increase affordability and financial sustainability;
- **Equity:** Expand equity-focused practices throughout postsecondary education;
- **Alignment:** Expand connections between postsecondary education and high-demand talent needs.

About NEBHE

NEBHE was founded in 1955, when six visionary New England governors – realizing that the future prosperity of New England rested on higher education – committed their states to the shared pursuit of academic excellence. Soon thereafter, NEBHE was approved by New England's six state legislatures and authorized by the U.S. Congress.

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NEW ENGLAND PRISON EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE (NEPEC)

The New England Prison Education Collaborative (NEPEC) is a regional initiative directed by the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE). Funded by a five-year, \$6.7 million grant from Ascendium Education Group, NEPEC supports the region in building upon recommendations from the *2023 Report of the New England Commission on the Future of Higher Education in Prison*, which included numerous individuals representing Vermont.

Impact

- **Cross-Agency State Strategic Planning:** Strategic planning has concluded in two states (New Hampshire and Maine). As of March 2026, the planning work has commenced in an additional state (Massachusetts). The goal is to support the creation of cross-agency strategic plans in all six New England states by FY 2028.
 - In each of the two states that have concluded this work, there is additional private funding in the approval pipeline for support of carrying out the statewide priorities highlighted through each process.

- **Accelerator Grants:** On April 30, 2026, NEPEC released its Request for Proposals for Cycle 2 of its Accelerator Grants. In this cycle, NEPEC will award \$400,000 to four New England postsecondary institutions to support the transferability of credits earned in carceral facilities. NEPEC will also release an invitation-only Request for Applications to Cycle 1 awardees, inviting them to apply for one of four \$25,000 sustainability grants. In Cycle 1, NEPEC awarded \$500,000 to five institutions to address ecosystem gaps. At least one additional grant cycle is planned.
 - These Requests for Proposals are developed in collaboration with NEPEC's Higher Education Working Group, which CCV's Bryan O'Connor co-chaired in its inaugural year.

- **White Paper:** In February 2026, NEPEC released its inaugural white paper on common challenges faced by reentering students and the strategies institutions are using to support returning learners. Work for the second white paper will begin in the summer of 2026 and will focus on credit mobility for currently and formerly incarcerated learners.

NEW GRANT: LEARN-AND-EARN ECOSYSTEM

NEBHE and the Burning Glass Institute received a \$370,000 grant from the Strada Education Foundation to support the first phase of the Learn-and-Earn internship challenge, designed to build a sustainable and scalable internship ecosystem across the six New England states. This project’s goal is to create 10,000 new paid, high quality Learn-and-Earn internships for postsecondary students over the next three years.

The initiative will increase awareness of the economic value of internships, spur policy development, and foster equity in work-based learning experiences. Ultimately, it will contribute to the national discourse on internships as a bridge between academic training and career readiness. Its forthcoming report (Summer 2026) will provide innovative analyses of the supply and demand dimensions of paid internships and its relationship to entry-level hiring in all six New England states—identifying opportunities for expanding internships and collaborative partnerships.

NEW ENGLAND TRANSFER GUARANTEE

The Vermont Transfer Guarantee saw its inaugural cohort of students transfer to participating four-year institutions during the 2024-2025 academic year. The aim of NEBHE’s credit mobility work has been to smooth the transfer path and mitigate credit and financial loss to students on their path from community college to a four-year degree. NEBHE’s implementation of the Guarantee this space was supported by grants from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Balfour Foundation, the Davis Educational Foundation, and the Teagle Foundation.

- **Impact: In the first full year of the initiative, 293 unique students** transferred from the Community College of Vermont (CCV) to one of five participating four-year institutions in Vermont: Champlain College, Champlain College Online, Norwich University, St. Michael’s College, and Vermont State University.
 - NEBHE has committed to continue collecting deidentified student-level data on an annual basis and issue a “highlights” report with state-level enrollment and student success data for the Guarantee in Vermont and the other New England states beyond the life of the grants that funded implementation.
 - The next iteration will be based on data that the NEBHE team will collect in June 2026.

- NEBHE is currently working to support CCV in efforts to establish an optional data-sharing agreement as an addendum to the agreement that four-year institutions sign to participate in the Vermont Transfer Guarantee.

Impact: NEBHE made a \$25,000 subgrant to CCV to support outreach, communications, and content development efforts that elevate awareness of Vermont Transfer Guarantee transfer opportunities and strengthen alignment with regional transfer goals. This subgrant focuses on student-centered storytelling, digital and print outreach, and strategic promotion of existing transfer pathways and partnerships.

TUITION BREAK

In the 2024-25 academic year over 9,000 New England residents benefited from NEBHE's Tuition Break program, attending the region's two-year, four-year, and graduate institutions at a discounted tuition rate in one of 3,000 available programs.

- **Impact: 482 Vermont students saved an average of \$5,978** in academic year 2024-25.
- **\$11.8 million in total tuition and fee revenue went to institutions in Vermont from 685 incoming students** during the same period.
- **All of Vermont's public institutions participate.**
- For additional information, see attachment: Detailed Benefit Sheet VT NEBHE 2025.

STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENTS

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) creates a nationally recognized voluntary framework that allows states, territories, and institutions to work together to expand access, quality, and oversight in distance education while reducing unnecessary costs and bureaucracy. NEBHE oversees the SARA membership of the six New England states, plus New Jersey and New York and collaborates closely with other regions to negotiate and advance policies that support the seamless implementation of these agreements while also sustaining our regional efforts to bring together regulators, accreditors, and distance education professionals in a collaborative network.

- **Impact: 13 institutions in the state of Vermont** participate in SARA, serving approximately 7,041 Vermont residents.

- **Just over 3,200 students outside of Vermont** are enrolled by SARA- participating institutions in VT.
- Approximately **1,600 students are enrolled in Out of State Learning Placements** in the state of VT.

Complaints Dashboard: <https://nc-sara.org/complaint-reports-dashboard/>

Sign up for our Quarterly Newsletter here: <https://tinyurl.com/NSARAnewsletter>

POLICY & RESEARCH

The NEBHE Policy & Research Team informs leaders in higher education and government through research, policy analysis, and capacity building. Publications focus on topics related to the three strategic priorities such as a policy brief on college student mental health, a series on the impact of higher education for each New England state and the region's economy, and higher education and workforce data snapshots and dashboards.

Semi-annually, NEBHE convenes the **Legislative Advisory Committee**, comprised of legislative delegates to the NEBHE Board and additional sitting legislators from each state with an interest in higher education, to strengthen state higher education policymaking in New England.

An additional example of NEBHE's convening capability is the process NEBHE coordinated in 2021 that resulted in the [Final Report of the Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont](#). For additional information, see the attachment.

Over the last three years, NEBHE has piloted an initiative aimed at the development of new programs and credentials for Connecticut's workers in fields like cybersecurity, mobile application development and game development called the Connecticut Higher Education Tech Talent Accelerator. In the current phase of the initiative, NEBHE is awarding grants to institutions of higher education to create and deliver credentials in Artificial Intelligence to students and workers in Connecticut. For details, see <https://nebhe.org/connecticut-tta/>.

OPEN EDUCATION

NEBHE strongly believes that all students deserve unfettered access to their learning materials on the first day of class, regardless of their financial situation. We continue to work closely with our public and independent institutions, states, and regional compact partners to learn how we can best step up to support the ever-changing landscape of open

education. NEBHE's work in this area is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

- **Impact:**

- No-Cost Course Marking – provided \$90,000 in grants to six institutions in New England that have 29% Pell-Eligible student body to implement filters in their registration process to share with students which courses use no-cost and OER materials to ensure price transparency and student agency at time of registration.
- NEBHE's support has enabled these institutions to significantly expand faculty knowledge and use of OER in addition to ensuring equitable access to courses with materials relevant to student experiences that help close the achievement gap between lower-income and higher-income learners.
- OER Creation or Adaptation Program – supporting five faculty in New England with funding to create or significantly adapt OER for their courses in Mathematical Epidemiology, Graduate level legislative simulation, Undergraduate and Graduate level social work simulation casebook, and Introductory courses in Statistics and Probability.
- Open Education Advisory Committee – NEBHE hosts a bi-monthly meeting of open education practitioners in the Northeast to hear about what their communities and institutions are experiencing and learning about where NEBHE can provide support to the open community. Representatives are from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New York, Vermont, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.
- Through the National Consortium of Open Educational Resources (NCOER), the four regional education compacts continue to collaborate to scale and sustain the use of open educational resources and practices across the nation. You can learn more about our collaborative work here www.ncoer.org