California Community Colleges

K-12 Strong Workforce Bidder's Conference Q&A

Eligible Applicants:

Q: Can an LEA submit their own application and participate in 3 applications as part of a consortium? Or is the limit of 3 a hard limit?
A: LEAs are limited to submitting no more than three K12 SWP applications as a Lead Agency or as a K–12 Partner Agency per funding cycle.

Q: Can LEA's be in a consortium across regions?
A: LEAs may be in a consortium across regions and may apply in each region within which they have a site but are limited to submitting no more than three applications total as either a Lead or a K–12 Partner Agency.

Q: Can an ROP be a lead LEA for organizations/districts that do not officially belong to the ROP?
A: Partner LEAs do not have to be part of your ROP.

Q: Are applicants required to partner with the area/regional community college that their students feed into? Or can they partner with community colleges outside of their service area?
A: LEA's must partner with a community college within their service area. To obtain permission to partner with a college outside of the service area, the in-service area college must sign a "first right of refusal form" and a copy of the form, signed by the CIO, must be retained by both the LEA and the Community College that is outside of the LEA's service are. The LEA still applies for funds from the Regional Consortium in which the LEA or LEA site is principally located, not the Regional Consortium of the partnering community college or community college district.

Q: If a charter school is part of a school district, can they submit an application? Or does it have to be an independent charter school?
A: Charter schools, both independent and under the authority of a school district, are eligible LEA Applicants. However, that charter cannot participate in more than three applications as a Lead Agency or as a K–12 Partner Agency per funding cycle.

Q: When you refer to partnering between a LEA and community college, are you requiring an articulation agreement sometime during the grant period?
A: No articulation agreements are not a required outcome for a partnership. The expected outcomes should be described in the work plan that is part of the application.

Q: Is an LEA able to submit one application for multiple pathways at their site correct?
A: Yes, a single application can include multiple pathways.

Q: Are we able to have adult schools be participants? Or is the emphasis on partnering with the community college? What about Special Education students?
A: Adult Education Programs are not eligible to apply as a Lead Agency nor to be listed as a K–12 Partner Agency. However, an Adult Education Program may be included under a district LEA Lead or K–12 Partner Agency applicant, if the program serves students under

the age of 18, as approved by the local board. Adult Education Programs may also be included in the application as a Collaborative Partner, working with K–12 LEAs, community colleges, and other stakeholders to support pathways to higher education and employment for all students (page 9 of RFA).

Application Specifics:

Q: Should we include data in our Problem Statement?
A: Yes, your Problem Statement should be evidence-based and cite data that supports the stated needs.

Q: Are districts limited to writing the grant to fund only the specific industry sectors prioritized in our region?
A: The intent of the K12 SWP is to fund programs and pathways at the K–12 level that are responsive to the regional priorities and are aligned with regional workforce needs.

Q: Are letters of commitment from a partner community college required? If not, how do applicants demonstrate they have approval for proposed partner activities from the community college if letters of support are not required?
A: Letters of commitment are not required however, applicants must include contact information for all identified partners and all partners will be included in application communications. The LEA–community college collaboration is a mutually beneficial partnership and all parties should be made aware of and agree to proposed activities.

Q: Are the local community colleges limited to partnering with 3 entities?
A: No, since community colleges cannot be Lead applicants they may partner with multiple (more than 3) LEAs.

CTEIG Evaluation:

Q: CTEIG is only requiring a copy and paste from the 2019-20 High Quality CTE Program Evaluation, will that be acceptable for the Strong Workforce K12 RFA?
A: The 2019-20 High Quality CTE Program Evaluation will be acceptable if it was submitted previously. If you are a brand new applicant, you must fill out the 2020-21 High Quality CTE Program Evaluation.

Q: Can the High Quality CTE Program Evaluation be uploaded to NOVA or does everything need to be retyped into the platform?
A: The 2019-20 High Quality CTE Program Evaluation should be completed off line and uploaded in "Supporting Documents" tab of the NOVA system.

Q: The RFA states, "2018-19 High quality CTE Program Evaluation" is that supposed to be 2019-20?
A: The RFA has since been updated to align with CTEIG's requirements. The 2019-20 High Quality CTE Program Evaluation is acceptable for those reapplying while new applicants must upload the 2020-21 High Quality CTE Program Evaluation.

ADA:

Q: How is elementary school ADA entered if they are partner agencies in the grant since (they were not included in the pull down last year) and they do not have HQT evaluation forms.
A: ADA is captured starting at 7th grade through 12th grade.

Scoring & Evaluation:

Q: Does the region decide which application is funded, and is there a correlation between the scoring points and the percentage of funds requested to the funds awarded?
A: Each Regional Consortium has a K12 Selection Committee that is responsible for reviewing and scoring applications within its region. The K12 Selection Committee can take a variety of factors into consideration in making their funding decisions and are not required to fund the highest scoring applications if these applications are determined not to align with the regional plans or do not meet regional economic needs.

Q: If an area is required but not scored, how do we account for that in the overall scoring? For example, if a section is left out, like documentation or pathway info, do points need to be taken away? If so, how many?
A: Sections of the application identified as "required" but not scored must be completed and/or included to be considered for award. While these sections are not scored they must be completed to be considered for funding. See page 21 of the K12 SWP RFA for a complete list of sections.

Q: Is there a reason that the grant review committee would choose to not fund one of the highest scoring applications, yet choose to fund several other lower scoring applications? Who is providing oversight to prevent "politics"?
A: The purpose of the Selection Committee is to award funds to those plans/programs that are most responsive to the region's economic priorities, labor market needs, and consortium goals. At the start of the review process each regional Selection Committee elects a chair and/or co-chairs depending upon the size of the region and the number of applications anticipated. The primary role of chairs is to facilitate the scoring and deliberation process. The K12 Selection Committee can take a variety of factors into consideration in making their funding decisions and are not required to fund the highest scoring applications if these applications are determined to be duplicative in nature, not aligned with the regional plans, or do not meet regional economic needs.

Unemployment Rate:

Q: What is the CA unemployment rate that we'll be comparing to?
A: Per the California Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2019–20 an Area of Substantial Unemployment is defined as at or above 6.451%.

Q: Will local unemployment rate be evaluated at the sub-county/city level this time to account for differences?
A: Unemployment rate is evaluated at the County level.

Q: Is unemployment rate data from one specific month or an average of 12 months?
A: The State unemployment rate is based on a 12 month average. The 6.451% that is referenced in the RFA was last captured in February from the California Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2019-20.

Allowable Expenditures:

Q: Can SWP K12 funds be used to pay for student internships?
A: Funds may not be used to compensate students in an internship environment. Funds may be used to provide student supports such as costs associated with supporting students to find, apply, and interview for internships.

Q: Can SWP K12 funds be used to pay for tutoring services and cohort coaches to support students in their classes?
A: Yes, K12 SWP funds can be used to pay the salaries of certified and classified staff directly supporting your CTE program/pathway.

Q: Can SWP K12 funds be used to pay for scrubs for students who need them to participate in an internship?
A: Materials (Scrubs) may be purchased and kept on site for the interns to use. The intern is not allowed to keep the materials (scrubs) once the internship has concluded.

Q: Can SWP K12 funds be used to pay students that go to school but also do on the job training?
A: No, K12 SWP funds cannot be used to pay students since this would be considered a gift of public funds, which is prohibited by law.

Q: Are subcontractors with non-LEAs (or ROPs, COEs) to deliver student services an allowable use of funds?
A: Grantees may utilize funds to contract for services. LEA's must adhere to district contracting and procurement guidelines. Grantees should consider how these services would be provided post the grant funding to ensure sustainability of the program.

Q: Can a district retain a Chamber of Commerce to help create student internships?
A: Grantees may retain the services of an intermediary to assist in the creation of student internships. LEA's must adhere to district contracting and procurement guidelines. They should consider how these services will be provided post the grant funding to ensure sustainability of the program.

Q: Can SWP K12 funds be used to pay for consultants that are helping us build the pathways?
A: Grantees may procure the services of subject matter experts to assist in the development of career pathways. They must adhere to district contracting and procurement guidelines.

CTE Credentials:

Q: Are the Strong Workforce K12 grant funds only to be used for CTE credentialed teachers and to be coded as a CTE course in CALPADS?
A: Yes, these are CTE specific funds and must be used and coded that way.

Q: Can coaches or consultants be paid through CTEIG dollars even if they do not have a CTE credential, as long as the program is taught by a CTE credentialed teacher?
A: Coaches and consultants can be paid for with CTEIG dollars, but they will have to specifically explain how they support CTE.

Q: Can you use K12 SWP money to pay for Contract Education through a community college for a college instructor to come to the HS campus to teach a specific class that the school wants to start a pathway in but is not able to hire a CTE credentialed teacher?
A: We would encourage CC's and LEA's to consider dual enrollment as an alternative option. Community colleges may obtain apportionment funding for courses taught as part of an AB288 agreement. This type of partnership builds seamless transitions from HS to Community College within a designated pathway and allows for CTE courses to be taught during the day within the bell schedule at a partner high school.

Q: Can Strong Workforce K12 grant funds be used for career pathway expenses, for courses/programs that are not technically CTE (7000/8000 course code)?
A: Yes, provided the courses are a part of the documented pathway and are not the only courses being offered in the pathway.

Q: Many of our adult school teachers have been working as full-time high school CTE teachers. However, their budgeted goal code is linked to the ROP center (4630) rather than goal codes 3800 or 6000. Does their actual job (HS CTE teacher) trump their goal code?
A: Yes, the job role should trump the goal code.

Matching:

Q: Will CTEIG be an allowable monetary match?
A: No per the legislation CTEIG is not an allowable match source (see page 13 of the RFA for acceptable financial match sources).

Q: What is the difference between in-kind and financial matching? What are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable matching fund sources?
A: In-kind refers to non- cash or monetary resources, for example the donation of equipment, services and/or supplies. These sources are not considered monetary and cannot be included as match.

Q: Would match funds from the community college count as financial match?
A: Yes, this type of blending is encouraged to leverage funding for a successful pathway improvement.

Q: Can you explain the rationale behind requiring a 2-1 match for LEAs?
A: This is a legislative requirement per Education Code, Sections 88828 (c)(1)(A)(B).

Q: If an application does not meet the requirements of the match, will that application still be scored?
A: No, an application that does not meet the proportional dollar match is ineligible and will not be scored or considered for award.

Q: Do matching funds need to be goal coded 3800?
A: They can be goal coded as 3800 or 6000; this is what is required for CTEIG.

Q: Does the match all have to come from the current application year or can it come from the total years covered by the grant?
A: Match should be expended at the same rate that grant dollars are expended. The match should be captured quarterly and reported in the NOVA reporting system.

Q: Salaries can be used correct? If so, then non CTE credentialed teachers such as English credential can be used to match if they are guiding part of the instruction for college and career exploration?
A: Salaries used as match must be proportional to what is applicable to the grant-funded program. For example: if an English teacher has 5 classes during the day and only 2 of those classes are taught as part of the CTE pathway then the proportion of their salary that is the 2 classes is what can be used as match for the grant. Time and effort needs to be documented to demonstrate that this is being used as match.

Q: How can a teacher's salary be counted as a match (funds from local funds)? I thought salary and persons' time is considered in-kind?
A: Salaries used as match must be proportional to what is applicable to the grant-funded program. For example: if an English teacher has 5 classes during the day and only 2 of those classes are taught as part of the CTE pathway then the proportion of their salary that is the 2 classes is what can be used as match for the grant. Time and effort needs to be documented to demonstrate that this is being used as match.

Q: Why do community colleges in the SWP grant have NO match required but K12 districts do?
A: That is how the legislation was written, per Education Code, Sections 88828 (c)(1)(A)(B).

Q: Are LCFF considered in-kind or actual monetary?
A: LCFF funds are considered cash match as long as they are used for the direct benefit of the program being funded by SWP K12 funds.

Q: Re: LCFF -- So for instance: the work an administrator (principal or CTE administrator) does to support/administer the SWF grant would count as a match.
A: Only the allocable portion that directly benefits the program would count as match.

Q: Can bond funds be used as a match?
A: Bond funds may be used as match but they must be specific to CTE.

Q: If a donation from a partner is equipment, can the value of that equipment be cash match?
A: No, the value of equipment is not considered financial but in-kind therefore is not an allowable match.

Miscellaneous:

Q: Is the VRC website accessible for K12? How can we get access to the VRC website if we are not a Community College employee?
A: The VRC is accessible by the Pathway Coordinators and the K-14 TAPs. Please work with those individuals to obtain information that you need.

Q: Can Strong Workforce K12 grant funds be used for K-7 career prep courses like Computer Science?
A: No, K12 SWP funds can only serve students in grade 7 through 12.

Q: Can an online educational platform that focuses on college and career readiness with high school's to support their career pathways be eligible to apply to this program or do they have to partner with a community college and have them apply?
A: Only Local Education Agencies (LEAs) specifically school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and regional occupation centers or programs are eligible for K12 SWP funds.

Q: How do you gather consent from other districts if applying as a consortium? Do you need some type of MOU in place with each district before the grant is submitted?
A: Please consult with your Regional Consortium and K-14 Tap for guidance on what will be acceptable in your region.

Q: If you apply as a consortium, do each of your partners have to have access to the plan in NOVA and do they have to approve it?
A: If applying as a consortium, the Lead LEA applicant must submit a work plan that identifies each partner as well as their role and responsibilities therefore it is critical that each partner is award of and approves the consortium's plan.

Q: Do Charter Schools need to apply with the local community college as a partner?
A: Yes, all eligible LEAs must partner with at least one community college/community college district.