K12 Strong Workforce Program FAQs

1. Eligible Applicants and Eligibility Requirements

a. How many applications can an LEA submit?

Local Education Agencies (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 (see F1. Partnerships of the K12 SWP 2020 RFA for more details).

b. If multiple LEAs want to come together as a consortium to apply, do they submit a single application? If one member of the consortia also wants to go it alone, do they submit a second application?

Yes. The consortium would submit a single application, listing one LEA as the Lead Agency and all of the other LEAs as Partner Agencies. An LEA can be a partner on one application (as a consortium) and submit a second application on their own as the Lead Agency. However, an LEA can only be named as the Lead Agency and or Partner Agency on no more than three (3) K12 SWP applications per funding cycle.

c. Are charter schools eligible? If so, can a charter school organization with sites around the state submit an application for each region where they have a school site?

Yes, as an LEA, charter schools are eligible to apply for K12 SWP funds.

As an LEA a charter school can be named as the Lead Agency and/or Partner Agency on no more than three (3) K12 SWP application per funding cycle. The physical location of a charter school site will determine what geographic region the charter school organization can apply. The charter school site must be geographically located within the region for which it applies. Also, a statewide charter may not use funding received from an application submitted in one region to fund a charter located in another region without written consent of both regions.

d. Is a partnership with a California Community College suggested or required? If so, what is the role of the community college?

To receive K12 SWP funds an LEA must partner with at least one community college. It is allowable and encouraged for LEAs to partner with multiple community colleges or community college districts.

The LEA–community college collaboration is an opportunity to bridge CTE programs as coherent K–14 pathways, designed to be a mutually beneficial partnership. The LEA can leverage the SWP efforts and resources of the partnering community college, while the community college can anticipate prepared, incoming students for their pathways and better predict student enrollment levels. Moreover, students and employers benefit when students are able to more fully develop knowledge, skills, and abilities through participation in a longer sequence of aligned instruction.

2. K12 SWP Award Process and Amounts Awarded

a. How are award decisions made? Who makes final award decisions?

Each application is read and scored by a minimum of three K12 SWP Selection Committee members using the K12 SWP scoring rubric. Applications are scored on a 100-point scale and a minimum average score of 75 points must be obtained during the review process to be considered eligible for funding. Per Education Code §88829, award decisions are made by each region's K12 SWP Selection Committee (see K12 SWP Selection Committee for more details).

b. What additional factors are considered in awarding funds?

The K12 Selection Committee can take a variety of factors into consideration in making their funding decisions including how well plans align with the regional plans and meet regional economic needs.

Per Education Code §88830, to help ensure that K12 SWP funds are supporting underserved student populations while meeting the intentions of the initiative, the K12 Selection Committee will give positive considerations via points to applications that serve underserved student populations (see E. Positive Considerations of the K12 SWP 2020 RFA for more details).

c. If a region is unable to fund the full grant application amount, would the grant application be awarded a partial amount, or would the grant application not be funded?

If the application budget exceeds the maximum amount allowed as specified in the RFA, the application may be rejected by the regional Selection Committee. LEAs can also expect that award amounts may be adjusted according to how well the application meets the priorities for funding and the outcomes for students. Funding decisions are made by the Selection Committee for each Region.

3. K12 SWP Selection Committee

a. What was the process for choosing the K12 SWP Selection Committee? Are new committees formed each year?

In 2018, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and the California Department of Education (CDE) solicited online applications for individuals interested in serving a two-cycle term as a K12 Selection Committee member. From these applications, each Regional Consortium Review Team selected qualified candidates for the two year term. In regions where there has been attrition, the Selection Committee vacancies are replaced using the same application and selection process as established in 2018.

b. Who serves on the K12 Selection Committee? What training do they receive?

The K12 SWP relies on the input and expertise of multiple stakeholders, from teachers to business leaders, each with a deep understanding of the needs as well as the opportunities of their particular region. Regional K12 Selection Committee teams are comprised of of K–12 CTE teachers and administrators, charter school staff, career guidance counselors, representatives from regional industries, community college faculty and administrators, as well as staff from county offices of education (COEs) and regional occupational centers and programs (ROCPs). Over the past two years, K12 Selection Committee size varied from six members to 29 members, depending on the region, with a majority of members representing K–12.

Selection Committee members participate in a rigorous and collaborative training process using standard materials across the regions to ensure equitable and consistent scoring and aligned to the intent of the K12 SWP.

The K12 Selection Committee is an autonomous group and participation is voluntary but requires a significant time commitment. Selection Committee members receive CCCCO and CDE-sponsored training on the intent of the K12 SWP, calibrating of scores, scoring applications using the scoring rubric, and using NOVA (the online application and reporting platform for K12 SWP). Per K12 SWP legislation, funding decisions are made by the Selection Committee for each Region.

c. Who governs regional Selection Committees?

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. Chairs receive ongoing support through the

scoring and deliberation process through weekly meetings with the CCCCO and Regional Chairs.

d. If you serve as a K12 Selection Committee member is your LEA ineligible to apply? How do you ensure impartiality?

Your LEA may still submit an application, but the K12 Selection Committee member must recuse him or herself when deliberating on their LEA's application.

K12 Selection Committee members sign a letter of confidentiality and are held to an ethical standard as called out in legislation to avoid conflict of interest. The region relies on each individual's professionalism and has also put some process safeguards in place. For example, each application is read by a minimum of three members and a member cannot review or score their own application or an application in which they can directly benefit. If the there is a wide variance between the top and bottom scores additional members are assigned to read and score the application. It will be the responsibility of the K12 Selection Committee to ensure that all applications are reviewed without bias and that all LEAs are provided access to K12 SWP funding.

4. Application Process and the NOVA Platform

a. Why has the K12 SWP application changed with each funding cycle?

An essential component of the K12 SWP is engaging in continuous improvement. To that end, after each funding cycle the CCCCO collects data and feedback via surveys, interviews, and focus groups from multiple stakeholders. Each year, the feedback received has resulted in significant changes and improvements to the K12 SWP application, outreach, materials, and training.

b. Can an LEA apply for both CTEIG and K12 SWP funds?

Yes. CTEIG and K12 SWP are complimentary initiatives designed to lead more secondary students to successfully transition to postsecondary education to earn an industry-valued degree, certificate, or training for employment. Both CTEIG and K12 SWP target K-12, a key emphasis of K12 SWP is to increase intersegmental collaboration between the K–12 and community college systems to develop high-quality K–14 CTE pathways for students. A partnership with a community college is required for all LEA applicants for K12 SWP funding. Such a partnership is encouraged for high-quality CTE pathways and programs with CTEIG funds.

c. Why are K12 SWP applicants required to complete and upload a High-Quality CTE Program Evaluation

Each LEA that is a Lead or K–12 Partner Agency is required to upload a completed High Quality CTE Program Evaluation that reflects the current practice of existing programs. LEAs that have applied for CTEIG funds will upload the same High-Quality CTE Program Evaluation used in their most recent CTEIG application. The Program Evaluation is not scored for the K12 SWP application, but rather a self-assessment tool to help inform planning. By completing the Program Evaluation, an LEA can identify strengths and areas of improvement in its CTE programs and develop plans using the K12 SWP Work Plan accordingly.

5. Applicant and Grantee Support

a. What support is available to applicants and grantees?

Interested K12SWP applicants have access to a number of informational and training sessions including a Bidder's Conference Webinar and regional information sessions (see L. Calendar of Key Dates for K12 SWP Grant Cycle for more information).

In addition to these sessions, K12 SWP applicants and awardees have access to a tiered system of support. These include K14 Technical Assistance Providers (K14TAPs) and K12 Pathways Coordinators (K12PCs) who also support the work of CTEIG. The 72 K12 PCs (1 for each of the 72 California community college districts) will be supported by 8 K14 TAPs (1 for each region). The role of these professionals is to support outreach, share critical labor market information, and provide regional leadership in the development, administration, and organization of Pathway development and improvement efforts. Collectively, their role is to support, link, and align program development efforts funded by CTEIG, CC Strong Workforce, and K12 SWP.