K12 SWP FY25-26 RFA
Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions were compiled as part of the K–12 Strong Workforce Program Request for Applications (RFA) process. For additional Guidance, please refer to the Bidder's Conference in the K12 SWP RFA.

General Questions

1) **The third bullet on page 40 references a "SWP-funded CTE coordinator." Is this the K-14 TAP, the SWP Regional Chair, the K12PC, or a completely different position?**

   The K12 PC is considered the "SWP-funded CTE coordinator.

2) **Do students have to be of a certain age? Are there guidelines on whether they need to be paid hourly or via stipend? Do apprenticeships have to be directly aligned to the academies we offer? Or do apprenticeships have to be aligned to certain industries? With the end of the fiscal year looming, I wanted to see if we should expect our funds this fiscal year or next?**

   Questions regarding student eligibility, compensation models, and apprenticeship alignment should be reviewed in consultation with the Regional Consortium. The Regional Consortium is responsible for managing contracts and issuing payments. Timing of fund disbursement may vary by region. For specific guidance on allowable work-based learning models and alignment requirements, applicants should refer to the current RFA and consult with their Regional Consortium.

3) **Can Individual Schools Apply?**

   Yes. Individual schools may apply for the K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP), but applications must be submitted through the school's Local Education Agency (LEA). The LEA serves as the fiscal agent.

4) **Can the problem statement build off past funded K12 SWP problem statements. In other words, can we expand the work already started through K12 SWP funding?**

   Yes, an applicant's proposed project can be an expansion of an existing CTE program

funded through K12 SWP.

Allowable Expenditures

5) **Are CTE credentialing programs an allowable expense? For example, if we already have a teacher who meets the minimum qualifications for a CTE credential, but does not possess a CTE credential, could we include the cost of their CTE Credentialing Program in our budget?**

Yes, typically, expenses related to credentialing for CTE teachers are considered allowable, especially if obtaining the credential is necessary for meeting program requirements or enhancing instructional quality. If the teacher already meets the minimum qualifications but lacks the credential, including the cost of their CTE Credentialing Program in the budget is generally permitted.

6) **Is Professional Development for CTE Teachers an allowable expense?**

Yes, professional development for CTE teachers is usually an allowable expense. Supporting ongoing training helps improve instructional quality and aligns with program objectives. Ensure the District documents the relevance of the PD activities to the CTE program.

7) **Are paid apprenticeships for students an allowable expense? We would like to expand our offerings beyond our district and have partnered with community members such as the Bareng Corporation, Young's Trucking and Oacys Technology for future apprenticeship opportunities. If allowable we have additional questions- Do students have to be of a certain age? Are there guidelines on whether they need to be paid hourly or via stipend? Do apprenticeships have to be directly aligned to the academies we offer? Or, do apprenticeships have to be aligned to certain industries?**

Use of funds for paid internships may be considered a gift of public funds and is not an allowable expense within the K12 Strong Workforce Program.

8) **We would like clarification to determine if this project is allowable: We have already purchased a food trailer for our Culinary program. It is housed at the middle school that is furthest away from our high school in order to provide our middle school CTE students with a hands-on lab experience. The goal of the food trailer is for our 7-12 culinary students to gain WBL by preparing and providing food at district and community events. In our round 7 application, we wrote about a farmers market-style pop up. The food trailer would directly contribute to that event. Our question is- can we**

include contractor expenses such as topographic survey, architect and inspection fees, plumbing and electrical work to get the food trailer up and running?

Expenses such as topographic surveys, architectural and inspection fees, plumbing, and electrical work may be allowable if the costs are directly tied to the operation of the food trailer as a Career Technical Education (CTE) instructional lab. The applicant must provide documentation demonstrating that these costs are necessary for program delivery and do not constitute general facilities expenses. Confirmation from the Regional Consortium is recommended to ensure alignment with regional criteria and current RFA guidelines.

The K12 Strong Workforce Program permits equipment purchases and site improvements when those expenditures are essential to delivering CTE instruction. Examples include culinary equipment, trailers, and infrastructure upgrades that support hands-on learning experiences. These items must be included in the original application and clearly aligned with the pathway's goals.

Additional expenditures such as electrical, plumbing, or ADA upgrades may be allowable if the improvements are specifically required to make CTE equipment functional and accessible for students. Costs associated with general campus improvements or broader utility upgrades are not allowable.

Topographic surveys and architectural fees are often flagged as facilities-related expenses and may be disallowed. If the costs are strictly tied to the installation and operation of the food trailer for instructional purposes, the applicant may justify the expenses as allowable through proper documentation.

Contractor expenses such as plumbing and electrical work may be allowable if the work is directly required for the food trailer's operation within the culinary pathway (e.g., power hookup, wastewater disposal). These costs are not allowable if it is a part of broader campus infrastructure upgrades.

Match Funds

9) **Can Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP) funds be used as a match for K12 SWP grants, including for consortium awards, dual enrollment efforts, or if the funds were not used in a prior year?**

Yes. Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP) funds may be used as match for K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP) grants, including for consortium awards and dual enrollment efforts, if the following conditions are met:

- The funds directly support and benefit the K12 SWP project described in the application.
- The funds are not being used as match for another K12 SWP application or any other grant simultaneously.
- The funds are not in-kind contributions.
- For consortium awards, only the portion of GSPP funds allocated to the applicant's district may be counted toward the match.
- Unused GSPP funds from a prior year may be used, provided all other criteria are met.

GSPP is not listed among the unacceptable match sources in the K12 SWP RFA.

10) **I am working with a charter school heavily impacted by the fires in Los Angeles. They lost most of their CTE equipment and materials. Is it allowable to use the cost of replacing the items as match on the K12 SWP Round 8 RFA? Even if Insurance is (eventually) going to cover the replacement costs? Do the monies actually have to be encumbered for the replacement items before they can be counted as matching funds? Are there any other considerations that may be extended to fire impacted schools?**

Replacement of Career Technical Education (CTE) equipment and materials that are expected to be reimbursed by insurance is not allowable as match funding under the K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP). The Request for Applications (RFA) specifies that reimbursed expenses and in-kind contributions are not eligible match sources. Match funds must represent actual financial contributions that directly support the proposed project and are not duplicated by other funding sources.

Match funding must be documented and aligned with the budget and work plan. Full encumbrance of match funds is not required at the time of application; however, there must be clear commitment and traceable documentation indicating that the funds will be used to support the project.

Although the RFA does not include specific provisions for disaster-impacted schools, applicants may receive positive consideration if the proposed project serves unduplicated pupils, operates in high-unemployment areas, or includes significant investments in CTE infrastructure. If student access or equity has been disproportionately affected by a disaster, this impact should be clearly addressed in the Problem Statement and Positive Considerations sections of the application.

11) **If I am a county office of education, but don't have an operating ROP, do I still fit within the 1:1 match?**

A County Office of Education (COE) with an active CDS code as an ROP can still meet the 1:1

match requirement for Career Technical Education (CTE) grants like the K–12 Strong Workforce Program (K–12 SWP).

12) Can CCAP grant be used as a match?

If the CCAP grant is being used for the same pathway/program as the applicant is applying for, then yes. All financial match must benefit the program described in the application.

13) what is considered in-kind match?

In-kind match refers to non-monetary contributions such as staff time, facilities, and use of equipment. However, in-kind match is not allowed under the legislation for the K12 Strong Workforce Program.

14) Can K16 workforce development grants, ECMC, CCAP, or community schools grant funds be used as qualified matches?

The eligibility of external grant funds as match for K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP) projects depends on alignment with the proposed pathway and current RFA guidelines:

- K16 Workforce Development Grants: May be eligible if the funds directly support the same pathway or program. Eligibility must be verified against the current RFA.
- ECMC Foundation Funds: Not explicitly listed among excluded sources. May be eligible if aligned with the goals of the proposed K12 SWP project.
- College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) Funds: May be used as match if the funds support the same pathway or program described in the K12 SWP application.
- Community Schools Grant Funds: Not explicitly confirmed in the RFA. Eligibility depends on alignment with the proposed project and regional priorities. Consultation with the Regional Consortium is recommended.

15) Can a County Office of Education (COE) with an active CDS code as an ROP still meet the 1:1 match requirement for Career Technical Education (CTE) grants like the K–12 Strong Workforce Program (K–12 SWP).

Yes, a County Office of Education (COE) that operates a Regional Occupational Program (ROP) and has an active CDS code qualifies to meet the 1:1 match requirement for the K–12 Strong Workforce Program (K–12 SWP).

16) Can Middle College/Early College Grant funds be used for match?

The K12 SWP Request for Applications (RFA) does not explicitly confirm whether Middle

College or Early College Grant funds may be used as match. However, if the funds directly support the same pathway or program described in the K12 SWP application, the funds may be considered eligible. Applicants should verify alignment with current RFA guidelines and consult with the Regional Consortium to ensure compliance.

Pathways

17) **As this is our first year participating in the SWP, it's unclear to me when we should be receiving our appropriation. With the end of the fiscal year looming, I wanted to see if we should expect our funds this fiscal year or next?**

Questions regarding the timing of K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP) fund disbursement should be directed to the Regional Consortium. The Regional Consortium is responsible for managing contracts and issuing payments. Timing may vary depending on regional processes and fiscal timelines.

Scoring

18) **Please explain how this is supposed to be measured by the Selection Committee?**

Local and Regional Economies: Has the K-12 Selection Committee, in consultation with the consortium, determined this program most effectively meets the needs of the local and regional economies?

Leverage Other Funding: Does the program successfully leverage one or both of the following:
- Existing structures, requirements, and resources of the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (Public Law 115-224), the California Partnership Academies pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 54690) of Chapter 9 of Part 29 of Division 4 of Title 2, or the Agricultural Career Technical Education Incentive Program pursuant to Article 7.5 (commencing with Section 52460) of Chapter 9 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2.
- Contributions from industry, labor, and philanthropic sources.

When scoring the "Local and Regional Economies: Has the K-12 Selection Committee, in consultation with the consortium, determined this program most effectively meets the needs of the local and regional economies?" positive consideration, the selection committee should consider the following:

The consultation requirement implies the Selection Committee should measure a proposal's effectiveness not just on a local level, but by validating it against the regional consortium's priorities, labor market analysis, and cross-sector input. This ensures funded applications are collaborative, regionally relevant, and non-duplicative, consistent with

Education Code. The consortium K–14 TAP serves as a member/consultant to the Selection Committee. K-14 TAPs help bridge communication between the consortium and the committee, ensuring alignment with regional goals and plans.

Key Factors:

- Use of SWP 4-year Regional Plans and Labor Market Information
  - The consortium develops and maintains a regional plan (Ed Code §88823), which includes:
    - Labor market analysis
    - Prioritized sectors
    - Workforce gaps
    - Strategic goals
    - K–14 pathways
    - Demand for skilled workers
    - Wage rates
    - Regional employment trends
- Applicants should reference elements of the plan in their Problem Statement and Project Objectives sections. The committee should assess whether the application addresses documented needs.
- Cross-Sector Input
  - The consortium includes:
    - Community colleges
    - Local education agencies (LEAs)
    - Workforce development boards
    - Industry sector leaders
    - Civic representatives and labor partners
- Collectively, these groups provide complementary perspectives that help ensure proposals are aligned with workforce demands, educational opportunities, and regional priorities. Applicants should demonstrate that the proposal was shaped by collaboration across education, industry, workforce, and community sectors.

Proposals that effectively integrate these factors should be awarded positive consideration.

When scoring the "Leverage Other Funding: Does the program successfully leverage one or both of the following: • Existing structures, requirements, and resources of the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (Public Law 115-224), the California Partnership Academies pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 54690) of Chapter 9 of Part 29 of Division 4 of Title 2, or the Agricultural Career Technical Education Incentive Program pursuant to Article 7.5 (commencing with Section 52460) of Chapter 9 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2. • Contributions from industry, labor, and philanthropic sources" positive consideration, the selection committee should consider the following:

The Selection Committee should measure "Leverage Other Funding" by reviewing whether the application provides documented, specific, and integrated use of Perkins V, State Academies/Ag Incentive Programs, or industry/philanthropic contributions that add value, prevent duplication, and expand program reach.

- Leveraged Funds
    - The applicant should show evidence in the application detailing the integration of the referenced resources in the proposal.
    - Examples:
        - Perkins V: Using Perkins V funds for equipment while K12 SWP funds cover curriculum development.
        - California Partnership Academies: Aligning academy structures with SWP-supported pathways.
        - Ag Incentive Program: Expanding an agriculture pathway with SWP, while sustaining staffing with Ag Incentive funds.
- Industry, Labor, or Philanthropic Contributions
    - The committee should look for real commitments, not just intentions.
    - Evidence can include:
        - Employer donations of equipment or materials.
        - Industry partners hosting internships or apprenticeships.
        - Philanthropic grants or local foundations covering program sustainability.

The Selection Committee should award positive consideration if these contributions are evident, measurable, and tied to student impact.

19) **On page 14 of the RFA, positive consideration is listed for "programs that the K-12 Selection Committee, in consultation with the consortium, determines most effectively meet the needs of the local and regional economies." Where would the applicant find this information? Have Selection Committees met with their Regional Consortia to determine the programs that most effectively meet the needs? How can the applicant respond to the positive consideration if no such meeting has occurred, or if the information has not been made public?**

Each K–12 Selection Committee has created criteria for award decisions. The links to each regional set of criteria are posted on page 10 of the RFA. In addition, page 6 of the RFA contains all eight Regional Plans, which outline the needs of the local and regional economies.

NOVA

20) Is there a manual or website that details how the Project Lead assigns roles in NOVA?

If the user is already assigned as the Project Lead on the plan in NOVA, that individual will have the ability to add additional contacts as needed. If no contacts have been added to the plan, a user with the appropriate permission must be assigned to initiate the process. A video tutorial demonstrating how to add contacts to a plan is available [here](#).

21) What if an LEA is using a contracted grant writer? Would that person be the lead?

The Lead LEA is the entity responsible for submitting the K–12 SWP application. A contracted grant writer may be used to support the process; however, the Lead LEA must be the one to complete the application and submit it in NOVA.

22) On pages 16 and 28, the RFA states that K12 Partner Agencies must receive K12 SWP awarded funds or services. If the K12 Partner Agency only receives services, can the applicant list the K12 Partner Agency with a $0 budget? In past rounds, NOVA required budgets of at least $1.

If a K12 Partner Agency is only receiving services and not funds, a budget is not required for that agency in NOVA. When entering a partner agency into the NOVA system, the applicant must indicate whether the agency is receiving funds or services. If "funds" is selected, a budget card will be generated, and funding must be allocated. If "services" is selected, the system will not prompt for a budget entry, and the agency may be listed with a $0 budget.

Allowable Expenditures Table

The table shown below is a synopsis of rules to determine allowability cost.

Allowable and Non-Allowable Activities and Costs

Allowable	Allowable with Prior Approval	Unallowable
		Advertising and Public Relations
		Alcoholic Beverages

		Alumni Activities
		Audit Costs
		Bad Debts
		Commencement and Convocation Costs
	Communication Costs (telephone, telegrams, postage, messenger)	
Compensation for Personnel Services (salary, wages, fringe benefits)		
		Contingencies
		Contributions or Donations Given or Paid Out (cash, property, services)
		Entertainment Costs
Equipment (low value assets with a value greater than $250 - $4,999)		Equipment
		Fines and Penalties
		Fundraising and Investment Costs
		Gifts of Public Funds are never allowed (memorabilia, honoraria, gifts, souvenirs, etc.)
		Goods & Services for Personal Use
		Improvements

Indirect or Administrative Expenditures (rate approved by the Chancellor's Office)		
		Lobbying
		Losses on Other Sponsored Agreements or Contracts
Materials & Supply Costs (only those actually used for performance of sponsored agreement)		
Meetings and Conferences		
	Memberships	
Professional and Consultant Services		
		Proposal Costs
Publication and Printing Costs (printing and publication costs related only to funded project activities)		
Maintenance & Repair Costs (keeping in efficient operating condition)		Maintenance & Repair Costs (construction, remodeling, increasing value)
		Student Expenses, Activities or Direct Services
		Selling and Marketing
Travel	Out-of-State Travel	Out-of-Country Travel

- **Entertainment Costs:** Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are unallowable.

- **Equipment:** For the purposes of the K-12 SWP, equipment includes low value assets of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the institution for financial statement purpose. Equipment with a value higher $5,000 must obtain prior approval before purchase from the Regional Consortia. Any equipment requested within the K12 SWP grant will be closely scrutinized to determine purchases meet the intent of the funding and show long-term sustainability.

  - **General Purpose Equipment:** General purpose equipment furnishings, modular offices, telephone, networks, information technology equipment systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, motor vehicles, etc. are unallowable unless the awarding agency approves them in advance.

- **Fines and Penalties:** Costs resulting from violations of, or failure of the institution to comply with, Federal, State, and local or foreign laws and regulations are unallowable, except when incurred as a result of compliance with specific provisions of the sponsored agreement, or instructions in writing from the authorized official of the sponsoring agency authorizing in advance such payments.

- **Gifts of Public Funds:** If it looks like a gift, it is. You are not allowed to purchase pencils, pens, mouse pads, t-shirts, etc. and give them out (under the marketing banner). This would still be considered a gift of public funds. Awards and honorarium would also be considered a gift of public funds and not allowed.

- **Improvements:** Improvements for land, buildings, or equipment that materially increases their value or useful life are unallowable as a direct cost.

- **Meetings and Conferences:** Costs of meetings and conferences, the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of technical information or leadership, CTE competitions, CTSO opportunities (and the like) for students, are allowable. This includes costs of meals, transportation, rental of facilities, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences. Be aware not to cross over into entertainment costs. Must obtain prior approval from the Regional Consortium.

  - **NOTE:** Food is only allowed at meetings/conferences that require a working

breakfast, lunch, or dinner and disseminate technical information to participants. The meeting must have an agenda that shows a working meal; must have a sign-in sheet for participants; and cannot go over the fiscal agent's per diem guidelines for food purchases.

- **Memberships:** Only institutional memberships are allowed (not individual memberships). If the K12 SWP applicant requests any (institutional) membership costs, the application must justify why the statement of work cannot be accomplished without paying for such membership(s). Grantee must demonstrate how they will sustain the membership beyond the term of the grant. Business, technical, and professional organization or periodical memberships are allowed. Civic or community, or country club or social or dining club memberships are not allowed.

- Maintenance and Repairs: Activities such as construction and remodeling, which increase the value of an asset or appreciably extend its useful life, are not allowed unless authorized by the funding source. Maintenance of equipment that neither adds to the permanent value of the property nor appreciably prolongs its intended life, but keeps it in an efficient operating condition, is allowable.

- Selling and Marketing: Cost of selling and marketing any products or services of the institution are unallowable.

- Travel: Only travel necessary for the project is allowed. Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business for the grant. Such costs will be based on the fiscal agent's per diem rates. These costs shall be considered reasonable and allowable only to the extent such costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by the institution in its regular operations as the result of the institution's written travel policy.

  - **OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL:** Out-of-state travel will be closely scrutinized and must be disclosed in the Budget summary. After the application is fully executed, any further out-of-state travel requires prior approval of the Regional Consortia by submitting the necessary (as determined by the Regional Consortia) documentation for approval. The Regional Consortium reserve the right to limit out-of-state travel.

  - **OUT-OF-COUNTRY TRAVEL:** Out-of-country travel will not be allowable via this funding source.

Cost must be necessary, reasonable, allocable, and not supplanting, and any

additional cost restrictions listed in the RFA would supersede allowable costs within this summary.