California Community Colleges

Request for Applications

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity (Regional Centers of Excellence)

WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
The Equitable Student Learning, Experience, and Impact Office (ESLEI)

Topic	Date
Funding Years	**January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2028** *Funding for years 4 and 5 of this 5-year grant are contingent upon satisfactory performance during years 1-3.*
Release Date	August 1, 2023
Application Deadline	Applications must be received on **September 11, 2023**, at 5:00 PM in NOVA.
Funding Source	Economic and Workforce Development Eight multi-year competitive grants of $4,000,000 each with a 25 percent in-kind or cash match requirement.
Bidders' Conference	August 14, 2023, at 9:30 AM PDT Register here!
Questions Deadline	Written questions concerning the specifications of this Request for Applications must be submitted via email to EWD@cccco.edu by 5:00PM on August 25, 2023.
Notification of Intent to Award	October 4, 2023
Appeal Deadline	October 14, 2023
Grant Begins	January 1, 2024

Amended on September 12, 2023

Table of Contents

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

SUMMARY OF AMENDED ITEMS

1. Change of Appeal Deadline

   o Due Date updated to October 14, 2023

2. Change in verbiage in Eligibility Section

   o Addition of the following: The preferred Community College applicant will collaborate and partner with at least one external organization to fulfill all the requirements of this RFA. The preferred non community college applicant will collaborate and partner with at least one community college in the development of their proposal.

3. Change in NOVA Reporting Dates

   o Added note in table for January 31, 2029, reporting date.

   o Updated the final report date to February 28, 2029
4. Removal of reference to federal guidelines

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Background of Workforce and Job Recovery with Equity

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office), in support of the state's overall workforce efforts, is focused on a broad-based approach to post-pandemic workforce recovery. This approach targets regional investments to serve greater numbers of diverse populations of Californians and to deliver flexible workforce training and education for career pathways that result in high-skill/high-wage employment. Specifically, the Chancellor's Office is interested in making investments that expand and enhance proven workforce training models and support systems that focus on equity, access and inclusion, and deeper participation by individuals and employers.

The Equitable Student Learning, Experience, and Impact Office (ESLEI) seeks transformational change across the system to improve overall student success and career mobility outcomes. In Fall 2022, ESLEI developed the following three Vision Destination Goals that were endorsed by the Board of Governors to support the Vision for Success goals.

Vision Destination: Career Mobility
Goals: Empowered Leaners
- Adaptable Learning Constructs and Modality
- Inclusive Learning Environments
- Supported Learning Leadership
- Career Mobility
- Regional Infrastructure to Realize CO Vision & Career Mobility Goals
- Universal Access to Employment Experiences & Transitions
- Supported Network Leadership
- Unconditional Belonging
- Enabling Conditions that Improve Social Determinants
- DEIA Affirming Campus Climates
- Shifting Access and Navigation Burdens from Students to Institutions

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

In the last three years, the Chancellor's Office has begun to take notable steps toward more progressive regional approaches to workforce and economic development, with career mobility and student-centered pathways rapidly evolving as primary strategies to move the community college workforce system forward.

Purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA)

Toward this end, the Workforce and Economic Development Division (WEDD) of the Chancellor's Office is seeking applications for eight multi-year Regional Center of Excellence (formerly Centers of Excellence) grants from eligible organizations.

A primary function of each Regional Center of Excellence will be to support inclusive, equity-centered regional economic growth; help communities accomplish their goals related to community college student and adult learner retention, completion, and transition to the workforce; and address employer and employee needs, including facilitation of career mobility opportunities for employees. This work requires an extensive use of Labor Market Information (LMI), data analytics, and data storytelling, which allows the colleges and workforce education providers in the regions to be more responsive to the needs of students and local employers and industry.

GOALS, EXPECTATIONS, ROLES, AND FUNCTIONS OF THE REGIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Goals

The goal of this RFA is to establish Regional Centers of Excellence that have the capacity to play a pivotal role in helping communities understand and contextualize labor market data so they can actively address their current and future workforce and workforce training needs. Additionally, Regional Centers of Excellence will be expected to seize opportunities to improve their local economies and related educational offerings that will lead to greater high-skill, high-wage, and equitable employment.

Furthermore, an aim of this RFA is for Regional Centers of Excellence to be equipped to support the realization of the Chancellor's Office Vision 2030 and Career Mobility goals by providing support to the region related to Chancellor's Office communications, and implementation of its new initiatives and policy regulations.

Using this phased approach, the Chancellor's Office will invest in expanding the Regional Centers of Excellence's LMI capacity and in aligning funding to support the provision of technical assistance within each region in Phase 1. Phase 2 will include higher levels of regional network coordination and continuous improvement.

Phase 1 (2024-2026)

- Establish baseline data for regional career mobility outcomes and equity gaps and conduct a review of related effective practices and strategies. Facilitate meetings with regional partners and stakeholders to agree on a plan of action to improve career mobility outcomes, reduce equity gaps, and advance equitable outcomes for students.
- Develop and implement a plan to expand and strengthen regional partnerships and employer engagement. Expand work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities leading to high-wage, high-skill jobs.
- Support community college baccalaureate, competency-based, and other degree and certificate programs needed to address unmet workforce needs, and advance Vision 2030 goals.
- Develop technical assistance capacity to build campus expertise in identifying, collecting, and analyzing student outcomes data and, in doing so, elevate transformative leadership across the region through intensive coaching and professional development.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

- Contextualizes LMI/Next Generation student-centered data by integrating data from the colleges across the region and disaggregating it for stronger equity considerations, priority actions, and strategies.
- Enhance the strategic use of LMI/Next Generation Student-Centered Data within the region to support colleges and local industry, and better prepare students for careers through information on wages, career mobility potential, and labor market opportunities.

Phase 2 (2027-2028)

- Evaluate, refine, and expand phase one work to optimize regional partnerships to build network coordination that supports the region in expanding its partnership development and facilitation capacity. This focus on network coordination can better align proof of concept and pilot projects at the regional level for implementation.
- Evaluate and refine phase one work to expand work-based learning (WBL) and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Assess efforts in Phase 1 to improve career mobility outcomes, reduce equity gaps, and advance equitable outcomes for students. Make strategic adjustments to ensure measurable results in these critical areas.

Expectations

- Under the direction of the Chancellor's office, the Regional Centers of Excellence will collaborate with the Statewide Career Mobility Accelerator Center for support, technical assistance, and professional development around LMI expertise, data contextualization, partnership development, regional goal setting, capacity building, and advancing Vision 2030 goals, including the reduction of equity gaps.
- Serve as a strategic partner for colleges in building a regional infrastructure for achieving career mobility goals.
- Deliver effective coaching and technical assistance to the colleges and regional stakeholders.
- Based on current and anticipated workforce needs, support colleges with data on the demand for short-term certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees.
- Report progress on the region's efforts to help achieve the Chancellor's Office Vision 2030 goals below. These metrics will inform a continuous improvement process and plan that each Regional Centers of Excellence will be responsible for developing.
- Expand the data sophistication and services the Regional Centers of Excellence provides, beyond traditional LMI, to better support the region's understanding of student and adult learner career mobility and assist colleges in identifying training needs and design workforce pathways for diverse student and adult learner populations. For example, disaggregating data and undertaking comparative analyses to determine what yields strong student retention, increased completion, and job placement success.
- Undertake regional landscape analyses to understand regional needs and opportunities, including a baseline-setting process to identify and close equity gaps.
- Provide support for regional stakeholder leadership growth through technical assistance and training that can help college and local industry leaders understand and use data in support of equity.
- Provide a 25 percent match as outlined in the Match Requirement section below.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

- Contribute to and learn from the work of the Statewide Career Mobility Accelerator Center as it develops a full picture of how the Regional Centers of Excellence are operating, coordinate the provision of technical assistance across the state on the regional and college level, highlight common statewide challenges, and identify national trends and best practices relevant to the work of the Chancellor's Office and the regions.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE REGIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

1. Revise what and how student-centered LMI and career data analysis are gathered, organized, applied and disseminated to better understand career mobility and industry needs.
2. Build capacity to support the numerous colleges in the region to identify, collect, and analyze student success metrics and outcomes for continuous improvement and informed decision-making.
3. Effectively and wholistically connect and align strategies related to the various workforce initiative convenings, trainings, and/or economic development meetings to optimize student-centered outcomes across the region.
4. Work towards helping the region's colleges and key stakeholders use evidence-based approaches.
5. Support the focus on expanding work-based learning experiences for all pathways and support the achievement of apprenticeship goals by connecting career mobility to teaching and learning.
6. Promote a regional commitment to continuous improvement.

Parallel RFA

A separate RFA is being issued in parallel to this RFA to competitively select the Statewide Career Mobility Accelerator Center (Career Mobility Accelerator Center) for a multi-year grant cycle. The Career Mobility Accelerator Center RFA will include a set of expectations different from those of similar and previously issued RFAs. Through a phased approach, the functions will expand to and roll out as follows:

Phase 1 (January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026)

- Oversee and help develop the work of the Regional Centers of Excellence to ensure center goals and objectives are met.
- Serve as a subject-matter expert to coalesce the work of the Regional Centers of Excellence into a statewide strategy for workforce and economic development through community colleges.
- Support the Regional Centers of Excellence with contextualizing LMI/Next Generation student-centered data by integrating data from the colleges across the regions and disaggregating it for stronger equity considerations, and the prioritizing of actions and strategies.
- Enhance the capacity of Regional Centers of Excellence by supporting approaches for deploying staff to colleges for technical assistance and professional development that ensures high-quality offerings.

Phase 2 (January 1, 2027– December 31, 2028)

- Expand state- and Chancellor's Office-level data functions to inform system performance and continuous improvement by being a liaison with the Chancellor's Office's Office of Innovation, Data, Evidence and Analytics (Research and Data Division) to align data and metrics more efficiently. The intended results of this include aligned and coordinated efforts for state-level analyses, support for dashboards that permit drilling down to regional data, and the drawing of connections across the regions to facilitate stronger state-wide investments.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

- Provide coaching to Regional Centers of Excellence staff helping staff build network coordination that supports the regions in expanding their partnership development and facilitation capacity. This focus on network coordination is expected to better align proof of concept proposals and pilot projects at the regional level for implementation. The work would draw on successful regional examples, Regional Centers of Excellence staff expertise, and peer-to-peer sharing across the regions.

The Strategic Vision Connecting the Two RFAs

"We see our system shifting to walking alongside students not only while they are with us but serving them throughout their career journey. We will empower learners to have agency over their career choice. Upskilling, credit for life experiences, and the goal of long-term career success anchor this strategy" [Chancellor's Office].

This dynamic strategic direction toward student-centered career mobility has the full support of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, Chancellor's Office leadership, and many college partners and state agencies.

DELIVERABLES

Close Regional Equity Gaps

Process Deliverables:

- Define and measure current regional career mobility outcomes as they relate to closing equity gaps to serve as baseline data.
- Complete an equity gap analysis in the region related to the top 50 priority living wage jobs that includes a review of the following:
    - ❖ Community college students of color, gender, ethnicity, and age.
    - ❖ Student-centered data that is disaggregated by each college's current enrollment and the number of students who, in the most recent academic year, completed 12 units related to the top 50 priority jobs.
    - ❖ Regional community college enrollment and retention in credentials and programs leading to the top 50 priority jobs.
- Complete a review of best practices and strategies on addressing regional workforce equity gaps and removing barriers, including those that result in improvement in student retention, increased completion, and job placement success.
- Publish a report that addresses the above three bullets and includes evidence-based strategies the region will pursue, including an implementation timeline and the metrics the region will use to measure progress.
- Provide information to better prepare students for careers on wages, career mobility potential, and labor market opportunities.
- Help communities accomplish their goals related to community college student retention, completion, and transition to the workforce.

Outcome Deliverables:

- Evidence that equity gaps have narrowed by at least two percent annually as related to career mobility outcomes.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of implemented evidence-based strategies at closing regional equity gaps.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

- Identify and provide professional development for colleges on evidence-based best practices for closing regional equity gaps from the evaluation of the program effectiveness evaluations.

Improve Equitable Outcomes for Students

Process Deliverables:

- In the first six months of the grant, conduct at least eight professional development trainings and provide intensive coaching that builds college capacity and expertise on data collection, analysis, and implementation, including contextualized Labor Market Information/Next Generation student-centered data.
- In the following three months, co-create an equity gap integration plan with colleges in the region, helping colleges put into practice the skills gained from trainings.
- Produce a biannual status report on the implementation of the equity gap integration plan.

Outcome Deliverables:

- Immediately following the trainings, evaluate their usefulness to participants and effectiveness at building college capacity and expertise on data collection, analysis, and implementation, particularly as it relates to improving equitable outcomes for students.
- Six months following the training, conduct a follow-up evaluation on the usefulness and effectiveness of the trainings, and assess the need for additional trainings.
- Evidence that implementation of the equity gap integration plan has measurably improved equitable outcomes for students.

Improve Career Mobility in the Region by Expanding and Strengthening Regional Partnerships and Employer Engagement

Process Deliverables:

- Identify methods for measuring industry-specific employer engagement and regional partnership effectiveness, and assessing employee and employer needs, including career mobility opportunities for employees.
- Develop a plan to expand and strengthen regional partnerships and employer engagement and increase career mobility opportunities for employees.
- Deliver effective coaching and technical assistance to colleges and regional stakeholders.

Outcome Deliverables:

- Evidence that meetings with regional partners and stakeholders have resulted in minimizing or eliminating workforce silos, improving data collection and decision-making, and moving the regional agenda and priorities forward.
- Evidence that career mobility opportunities in the region have measurably improved.
- Evidence that the coaching and technical assistance has been useful in helping colleges and stakeholders meet regional goals.

Expand Work-based Learning and Apprenticeship Opportunities Leading to High-Wage, High Skill Jobs

Process Deliverables:

- Develop a plan to help colleges and key workforce stakeholder communities understand and contextualize labor market data so they can proactively address workforce and workforce training needs, including expansion of work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities leading to high-wage, high-skill jobs.
- Offer a series of training events/convenings regionally to create greater understanding on the use of data to improve student outcomes and expand work-based learning across the disciplines integration into curriculum.

Outcome Deliverables

- Evidence of a five percent annual increase in the number of work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities leading to high-wage, high-skill jobs. Measured by an increase in the number of colleges integrating work-based learning in their instructional programs.

Support Community College Baccalaureate, Competency-based, and other Degree and Certificate Programs Needed to Address Unmet Workforce Needs

Process Deliverables:

- Where colleges in the region are applying for the baccalaureate degree program or to launch a competency-based associate's degree, provide them with documentation of the unmet workforce needs in the field of their proposed bachelor's degree, including:
  - ❖ Statewide and regional workforce data relevant to the baccalaureate degree program
  - ❖ Data showing employers are having difficulty filling positions that require a baccalaureate degree.
  - ❖ Data showing employers prefer candidates with the proposed baccalaureate degree.
  - ❖ Data showing employers are willing to pay baccalaureate degree holders a higher wage than those with a related associate degree.
- For colleges that have an existing baccalaureate degree program and wish to eliminate their related associate degree, identify changes in the labor market that make this degree no longer viable, including:
  - ❖ Statewide and regional workforce labor market data.
- Support colleges with data on the demand for short-term certificates, or competency-based and other associate degrees.
  - ❖ Data showing there is a workforce need for the program.
  - ❖ Data showing job availability for high wage jobs.
- Support the program evaluation of bachelor's degree programs during normal accreditation cycles.

Outcome Deliverables:

- Evidence of increased number of new community college baccalaureate programs added in the region.
- Evidence of increased number of work force aligned short-term certificates, and competency-based and other associate degrees.

Advance the Vision 2030 Goals

Process Deliverables:

- Assess and report on the region's efforts to help achieve the Chancellor's Office Vision for Success goals.

Outcome Deliverables:

- Quantify the extent and impact that the region's efforts have contributed to the achievement of the Chancellor's Office Vision for Success goals.

Chancellor's Office Vision 2030 Goals:

(Below are the initial goals set. These are evolving and should be final during the first year of this grant award.)

Three Goals and Six Outcomes

1. **Equity in Success:**
   A. Increase **completion** of a degree or certificate at a community college with equity
   B. Baccalaureate attainment: Increase in **baccalaureate** attainment with equity.
      - Increase Transfer Preparation
      - Increase CC Baccalaureate
   C. Workforce: Earning a living wage metric
      - Reduce regional achievement gaps through faster improvements among colleges in regions with the lowest educational attainment of adults, with the ultimate goal of fully closing regional achievement gaps.

2. **Equity in Access:**
   A. Increase with equity, participation/enrollments for dual enrollment, justice involved individuals, veterans, working adults, low-income adults.
      - Increase the percentage of exiting Career Technical Education (CTE) students who report being employed in their field of study from the most recent statewide average of 69 percent to an improved rate of 76 percent—the average among the quintile of colleges showing the strongest performance on this measure.

3. **Equity in Support:**
   A. Increase the number of Pell grant recipients and CCPG recipients.
      - Reduce equity gaps across all the above measures through faster improvements among traditionally underrepresented student groups, with the goal of cutting achievement gaps by 40 percent within five years and fully closing those achievement gaps within ten years.
   B. Reduce units to Associate's Degree for Transfer completion
      - Decrease the average number of units accumulated by CCC students earning associate degrees.

GENERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Available Funding

A total of eight grants in the amount of **$4,000,000** each will be awarded. Funds will be distributed annually in the amount of $800,000 with 80 percent advanced allocation and 20 percent reimbursement. A match of 25 percent is required.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

Award Project Period

The performance period is 60 months, expected to run January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2028.

Phase 1 activities and scope of work proposed is for 36 months (Year 1-3). Phase 1 as a performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.

Phase 2 activities and scope of work proposed is for 24 months (Year 4-5). Phase 2 as a performance period includes expansion of services as outlined in this RFA in Goals, Expectations, Roles, and Functions of Regional Centers of Excellence. Continuation into Phase 2 is contingent upon measured performance and achievement of outcomes in Phase 1.

Applicants must plan to fully expend grant funds during each phase while ensuring full transparency and accountability for all expenditures. Awards made under this announcement are subject to the availability of state and/or Federal funds.

Notification of Awards

Intent to Award notification will be made only via an official Intent to Award Memo and posted on the webpage here: https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Workforce-and-Economic-Development/WEDD-Memos. Selection of an applicant to be awarded does not constitute approval of the grant application as submitted. Before the actual grant is awarded, the Chancellor's Office may request adjustments or modifications to the proposal and/or budget to be reflected in the grant NOVA work plan and agreement as necessary. The Chancellor's Office reserves the right not to fund any application related to this RFA for any reason. Chancellor's Office Board of Governors' approval is required before any grant may be awarded. The Board of Governor's approval date will be identified in the Intent to Award notification. No applicant may make a public statement regarding the award of grant funds until after the Board of Governors' approval. Grant awards are not final until grant agreements are signed by the grantee district and the Chancellor's Office Deputy Chancellor.

You may sign up to receive WEDD MEMOs here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScX6t_1fSGEtr4jvw7OgNuTCQz43CD9vu7CvUdQPMysEfCsDg/viewform

ELIGIBILITY

The Chancellor's Office will provide direct and equitable access to funds through a competitive funding/award process. Direct and equitable access includes: 1) the right to submit applications directly to the Chancellor's Office; and 2) a process for reviewing and selecting successful awardees that provides each eligible organization a fair chance to receive an award.

Eligibility under this RFA includes California organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing regional Labor Market Information, technical assistance, network coordination, and other student-centered services as referenced above. These organizations may include but are not limited to:

- California community colleges as defined by the California Education Code;
- Public or private non-profit agencies;
- Community-based or faith-based organizations focused on workforce education and training and/or economic development missions;
- Non-profit institutions not described above with the ability to provide leadership and elevate their delivery of regional student-centered LMI and career mobility analyses, technical assistance, network coordination, needs assessment services for Bachelor's Degree Programs, and continuous improvement planning;

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

- Partnership between an employer and an entity described above that has demonstrated effectiveness in the services required for funding; and
- Economic development agencies or development corporations that are local or regional.
- A nonprofit organization that meets the requirements of this RFA must provide verifiable evidence of its recognition by the California Secretary of State as a nonprofit, or other verifiable documentation, such as Internal Revenue Service certification (as applicable), either as an attachment to its response or prior to being awarded a grant.

Employers must provide documentation of ability to do business in the State of California, such as documentation from the Secretary of State.

The preferred Community College applicant will collaborate and partner with at least one external organization to fulfill all the requirements of this RFA. The preferred non community college applicant will collaborate and partner with at least one community college in the development of their proposal.

Consortium Applicants

The Chancellor's Office strongly encourages applicants to form consortia of two or more eligible applicants that will work together to carry out the functions that will impact students across a region. They will work together to leverage their collective expertise and experience to expand and improve their collective ability to carry out the functions outlined in this RFA. Consortium applicants must identify in the application a lead institution in the consortium that will serve as the official grantee and have overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the grant.

Demonstrated Effectiveness

An applicant must demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance and outcomes data on its record of serving regional college and industry LMI needs and supporting the region's capability to meet Vision 2030 Metrics.

Award Management History

Applicants must provide information on past and current grant management performance and organizational capacity related to current or past WEDD/Strong Workforce/Perkins grants or other grants and contracts.

AWARD CONDITIONS

Applicants awarded funding under this RFA shall comply with the following pre-conditions and requirements across the Statement of Work.

Phase One (Grant Year: 1-3)

Agency Rules and Guidance – adhere to the following guidance:

- All Chancellor's Office (agency) and federal rules governing the delivery of services.
- All state and federal guidance developed by the Chancellor's Office including guidance memos, implementation guidelines, and agency letters and/or other federal, state, agency requirements.
- Adhere to Chancellor's Office and ESLEI guidance for branding and naming conventions.

Data collection and management. Eligible applicants must implement data management and documentation procedures and submit timely data to the system's statewide management information system. This statement of work includes timely data collection and data security protocols if data includes identifiable student or college data.

Staffing Plan. Provide a staffing plan that demonstrates the required expertise to provide services as outlined in this RFA's Deliverables. The staffing plan should:

- Ensure the center is staffed by well-trained labor market information specialists, strategic analysts, and effective facilitators and regional coaches, who have access to high quality Professional Development, including through LMI consultant training, specialized conferences, or other means.
- Ensure the institutional hiring process will have staff in place within the first 90 days following grant execution to manage the expanded scope of work and Phase 1 start-up activities.
- Ensure staff have a commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) principles and practices.
- Ensure there is one point of contact designated to be accountable to the Chancellor's Office.

Phase Two (Grant Year: 4-5)

Continuous Improvement Planning and Services. Successful applicants must develop a statewide continuous improvement framework to further support the setting and accomplishment of student-centered and industry goals across the region.

MATCH REQUIREMENT

There is a 25 percent match requirement for these funds.

There are two kinds of cost sharing permitted for this application: cash and in-kind.

Cash

Cash matching includes cash spent for project-related costs. The allowable cash match must include costs that are "necessary, reasonable, and allowable under this program."

In-kind

In-kind matching includes, but is not limited to, the valuation of non-cash contributions provided by a college, organization, employer or other related third party. An in-kind match may be in the form of services, supplies, real property, and equipment. The value of the service may be used for the matching requirements. The services must be necessary, reasonable, and allowable under the program.

Valuation of In-Kind Cost Sharing Match

For in-kind cost sharing—such as supplies, equipment, or space—the value must not exceed the fair market value at the time of the contribution.

For volunteer services, the rates must be consistent with the rates normally paid for similar work in the organization. If an employee from another organization conducts services free of charge, the services should be valued at that employee's regular rate of pay, in addition to their fringe benefits and allowable indirect costs.

How This Applies to Your Application

Grantees will have to provide the correct amount of match funds, use the funds only on allowable expenses, and maintain records in case of an audit or site visit.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

Determining the Cost Sharing Amount (example)

Steps	Formula	Amount
Step 1 Start with proposed funding amount		$800,000
Step 2 Compute the 25% match requirement	$800,000 x 25%	$200,000
Step 3 Add the match amount to the total.	Step 1 + Step 2	$1,000,000
Total budget for the project		$1,000,000

APPLICATION DUE DATE

The complete application, including any required forms and supporting documentations, must be submitted via the Chancellor's Office NOVA system **on or before September 11, 2023, by 5:00 PM PDT**, at which time the application system will close. No other forms of submission will be accepted. Incomplete and late applications will not be accepted.

Application Format and Instructions

The following instructions describe the content and format of the application. Only applications submitted via the NOVA system will be accepted. To receive the highest possible score and to prevent disqualification, the application instructions in NOVA must be followed, all questions answered, and all requested information supplied. Applications will be screened to ensure they have met the minimum requirements and eligible applicants will be notified that their applications have been advanced.

Applications submitted must meet the following requirements:

1. The application was submitted by an eligible organization as outlined in the "Application Criteria" section below.
2. The application was received by the submission deadline.
3. The application was submitted in the required format with all required information.
4. The application included appropriate signatures.
5. The application included all sections, including a budget and budget justification.
6. The application doesn't exceed the page/character limit as specified in the submission process.

Application Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on criteria and sufficiency of addressing the RFA Statement of Work, guidance and requirements, list of deliverables, and application narrative and budget.

The selection criteria will include a comprehensive panel review process with the five application sections aligned to the following points.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

The application will have a possible total score of 100 points.

Sections	Maximum Points
Abstract	0
Approach	25
Strategic Alignment	20
Staffing Plan/Organizational Chart	10
Work Plan	35
Budget and Budget Narrative	10
Total Points	100

The sections of the application include:

1) **Abstract (Not scored)**

    a) Provide a summary outlining the overall approach the applicant is proposing for the award period of performance (Phase 1: Years 1-3); and (Phase 2: Years 4-5).
    - Must include how the expanded role of the Regional Centers of Excellence provides student/adult learner and industry related LMI technical assistance;
    - Must be an eligible entity;
    - Must address all required outcomes.
    - Character limitations: 2500 characters

2) **Approach (25 points)**

    a) To be considered for an award under this RFA, applicants must provide in this section the following information:

    - A description of the needs of the region and communities served including LMI research data and methodology that will be used when determining the needs of community and college students, future students, incumbent workers, and other adult learners, including the name, source, and year of the data set or publication, as applicable.

    - A description of the additional labor market factors and calculation methods that will be used to ensure that demand calculations will be expanded to include career mobility. The data approach should include student retention and job placement in alignment with programs of study that are in demand, with student access to credentials, and threshold living wages.

    - The Needs Statement should include a description of how select regional data and identified needs will be shared with colleges, either directly or through other entities such as the workforce system, non-profit organizations, or funded partners to help inform career counseling/ advising and course and pathway selection for students.

    - Applicants must provide information on past and current grant management performance and organizational capacity related to current or past grants/contracts.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

b) Must include how the applicant re-envisions the current Regional Centers of Excellence of Excellence to align with the Chancellor's Office vision for a more progressive regional approach to workforce and economic development, with career mobility and student-centered adult learner pathways rapidly evolving as primary strategies to move the community college workforce system forward.

c) All applicants are required to describe the needs or challenges in the region, including community and college demographics, and the labor market and the economic context in each center's region/location where the proposed services will operate and serve colleges. This Needs Statement must be based on accurate and timely data and labor market intelligence gained from partnerships with the colleges, business, industry, and economics development entities.

When presenting regional needs, the regional geographic scope of the LMI data must match the geographic scope of the proposed set of services. Applicants do not have to produce original analyses or studies of LMI and student career mobility data. However, they must provide an interpretation of LMI and student and community demographics to provide context for their Needs/Problem Statement to meet this requirement.

For additional information on local LMI data, applicants may consult regional and county level labor market information tool. For more information on the WEDD tool that facilitates the economic demographics within California by county or region, refer to EWD regional sector website at WEDD https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Workforce-and-Economic-Development/ewd-regional-sector-investments.

- Character limitations: *2500 characters for each section (5000 total)*.

3) **Strategic Alignment (20 points)**

a) Applicants must demonstrate that they performed outreach to, and gathered information on, relevant colleges and entities in the region to ensure strategic alignment to overall RFA goals and regional improvement efforts. For example, data should be collected on not just skills and industry need, but also on student employment outcomes, living wages, and connection of programs of study to regional demand, and challenges that need to be addressed, etc.

In addition, the outreach will help ensure that the Regional Centers of Excellence's services complement and do not duplicate existing data collection/LMI or other services already occurring in the region.

Finally, applicants are strongly encouraged to become aware of, and collaborate with, initiatives in the region funded by private sector and/or philanthropic entities that may align with the proposed Work Plan/Research Plan, as appropriate. Also, applicants are encouraged to include deep and sustained partnerships with organizations whose mission is the career mobility of the student and is prepared for in-demand regional business needs.

Applicants must describe how they will be *strategically aligning* their services with at least five types of key stakeholders in each of the regions represented: (i) all community colleges in the region; (ii) employers and industry; (iii) regional or local economic development agencies, (iv) the public workforce system; and (v) philanthropic organizations, business-related and other non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and labor organizations.

- Character limitations: total of three questions - *2500 characters* for each question.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

4) **Lead Organization/Collaborative Partners Details (10 points)**

a) List the contact information, roles and responsibilities for the lead organization and any expected partners. This section should include the minimum staffing plan.

5) **Staffing Plan and Organization Chart (Supporting Documents) (10 points)**

a) Use the template provided to list the contact information, roles, and responsibilities for the lead organization and any expected partners. Also, upload an Organizational Chart for your project team.

6) **Workplan/Research Plan (35 points)**

a) Applicants must demonstrate that the strategies and activities proposed in the Workplan are organized with Years 1-5: Workplans should include:

(1) A description of how the Workplan and associated services will align with the ESLEI career mobility strategic directions, Governor's Roadmap to Equitable Recovery[1], and local college and/or state, Strong Workforce Regional Plans, Perkins comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA)[2] and State Plan for CTE.

(2) A description of what primary services the Workplan will specifically include as it relates to student-centered career mobility and LMI data.

(3) A short description of how the Workplan will include active engagement with at least five types of key stakeholders in each of the regions represented: (i) all community colleges in the region; (ii) employers and industry; (iii) regional or local economic development agencies, (iv) the public workforce system; and (v) philanthropic organizations, business-related and other non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and labor organizations.

(4) A description of how the Workplan will leverage or conduct a Workforce Regional Needs Assessment; applicants must identify and leverage recent regional needs assessments conducted by colleges as required by Perkins and Strong Workforce program, and from other economic development or workforce system partners. This needs assessment provides regional stakeholders with a complete picture of the future talent pipeline and career mobility strategies. Leveraging existing assessments ensures that the LMI research agenda forms the basis of technical assistance.

(5) The Workplan must include a detailed section for how the Regional Centers of Excellence will approach the provision of Technical Assistance for colleges and key stakeholders to better understand the opportunities within the dynamics of the regional economy. Applicants must identify in the Technical Assistance Plan the areas of opportunity to build insightful LMI and the application of data to inform decisions, for colleges, Institutional Research staff, faculty, college executive leadership teams, and other stakeholders. The provision of technical assistance could include, but would not exclude other activities co-developed by regional stakeholders and students;

- Co-sponsored Regional LMI Career Mobility Institutes for faculty, staff, IR, employers.
- Individualized technical assistance for specific college capacity-building.

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[1] Report can be found on website: https://postsecondarycouncil.ca.gov/initiatives/recovery-with-equity/
[2] Reference document: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/Files/Workforce-and-Economic-Development/Perkins-V/202223perkinsclnaframework2822a11y.pdf

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

- In partnership with the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative Division of the Chancellor's Office (IEPI), co-design a learning series focused on the most important regional labor market needs.
- Combine the release of LMI research or reports with virtual briefings to help stakeholders understand what the data means.
- Develop new equity-driven LMI methodologies to track students into their first jobs and analyze underemployment trends and impact on lifetime earnings.
- Partner with regional economic development agencies to integrate career mobility with regional economic growth strategies.

(6) Workplan must include how they will use data for Continuous Improvement; applicants must describe how data or other Labor Market information can be optimized and used by regional stakeholders to help them better understand program performance, improve programs, eliminate ineffective programs, and improve outcomes for students, businesses, and especially underrepresented groups.

- Character limitations: Total of six questions; *2500 characters* for each question.

7) **Budget (10 points)**

a) Applicants with partnerships must budget for the amount requested by the lead organization/institution and must include any subaward amounts. In preparing the budget, the applicant must provide a concise narrative explanation to support the budget requested. One single integrated budget narrative should be submitted in NOVA.

b) Budget Narrative: In the Budget section, each applicant must include a budget by object code and provide detailed descriptions. NOVA allows for expenditure object code 1000-7000:

- 1000 – Instructional Salaries
- 2000 – Non-Instructional Salaries
- 3000 – Employee Benefits
- 4000 – Supplies and Materials
- 5000 – Other Operating Expenses and Services
- 6000 – Capital Outlay
- 7000 – Other Outgo Indirect Costs

Indirect costs should not exceed 4 percent and should be calculated as follows:

Grant Amount ÷ 1.04 = Grant Operating Budget × 4 percent = Indirect Costs

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Submitting the Application In NOVA

To submit the application, please login using your existing NOVA account at https://nova.cccco.edu/.

- If you are new to NOVA and would like to have an account created for you, use the Access Request Wizard (https://nova.cccco.edu/request-access) to provide your contact information and details for the access you need.
- If you already have a NOVA account and require a modification to your access permissions, please submit a NOVA Support Request through the support portal.
- For additional support and technical assistance, please visit: https://nova.cccco.edu/help to submit a NOVA Support Request ticket.

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

After logging into NOVA: Go to the sidebar menu; select "Programs" then "EWD COE" then "Regional Centers of Excellence" and "Applications."

Click "Create Application" button to begin. You will be directed to choose your purpose to create the application.

Rejection of Application

The Chancellor's Office reserves the right to reject any and all applications received. A grant application shall be rejected if:

- It is received at the Chancellor's Office via electronic submittal in NOVA later than 5:00 pm on **September 11, 2023**, or is incorrectly submitted.
- The proposed budget amount exceeds $4,000,000.
- Any of the required components of the application are incomplete or not submitted.

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

The application review process will include two review panels composed of three workforce and economic development content experts and agency staff. A preliminary training session will be held prior to selection for all panelists to ensure inter-rater reliability. Each panel of three will review approximately half of the total number of applications and will provide a score for the applications. A scoring rubric with clear scoring criteria is provided to all review panelists.

Applications will be evaluated on the extent to which the application addresses the state's strategic priorities and approach to significantly expand the focus of the Regional Centers of Excellence according to the proposal requirements.

Award decisions will be made by the Chancellor's Office WEDD Division.

CALENDAR OF KEY DATES

Information	Details
RFA Released:	August 1, 2023
Bidders' Conference:	August 14, 2023
RFA Questions Submission Deadline:	August 25, 2023
Deadline for Submitting Applications	September 11, 2023
Announcement of Award:	October 4, 2023
Application non-award Appeal Deadline:	October 14, 2023
Grant begins:	January 1, 2024

TRAINING WEBINAR

The Chancellor's Office staff will host an informational Bidders' Conference Webinar to provide an overview of the application submission process and offer potential applicants an opportunity to ask additional clarifying questions. Only one webinar will be provided for the funding year. The webinar will be recorded for posting on the Chancellor's Office website. Failure to attend the webinar will not preclude the submission of an application.

Registration Information:

- **Bidder's Conference:**
  - Date and Time: Aug 14, 2023, 9:30-10:30 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

- o Registration: Use this link to register for the Bidder's conference.
- **NOVA Training Webinar:**
  - o Date and Time: Aug 17, 2023, 1:00-2:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
  - o Registration: Use this link to register for the NOVA application training webinar.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

RFA Clarification

If any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other error in this RFA is discovered, immediately notify WEDD and request a written clarification. Written questions concerning this RFA must be submitted by email to EWD@cccco.edu. Any addendum to the RFA will be posted on the WEDD Grant Opportunities website at: https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Workforce-and-Economic-Development/WEDD-RFA/EWD-RFA-2023-24

Applicants are responsible for checking the WEDD RFA website for any updates to the RFA or FAQ. Applicants will not be notified via any other manner.

Written questions concerning the specifications and instructions in this RFA must be submitted by email to EWD@cccco.edu.

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document will be posted on the WEDD RFA website at: https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Workforce-and-Economic-Development/WEDD-RFA/EWD-RFA-2023-24.

APPEALS

To ensure transparency of the review process, each applicant will receive a score on the application submitted. Additionally, the final slate of funded awardees will be made public.

Should an applicant wish to appeal an award decision resulting from this solicitation, the applicant shall submit a written request containing specific grounds, reasons, and evidence for the appeal. The request shall be emailed to the Vice Chancellor of WEDD. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Chancellor's Office will review it within 10 days of receipt of the request and will provide a written response, including findings of fact and reasons for the award decision.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION

General

Funding for all applicants will be provided in the form of a grant. Approximately eight awards will be made for each designated region across the state. The Chancellor's Office intends to award single and/or consortia applicants as specified in the Eligibility section and reserves the right to adjust the distribution of funding.

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the Chancellor's Office awarding officials shall make a grant to the eligible applicant whose proposal is judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The grant shall run from full execution of this Agreement to [December 31, 2028]. The date specified by the Chancellor's Office awarding official as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than January 1, 2024, of the state fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by the Chancellor's Office under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations,

Collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity

terms and conditions of the award, applicable cost principles, Chancellor's Office assistance regulations.

Reporting

The grantee is required to submit regular reporting, including an end-of-project final report in the NOVA system by February 29, 2029. The required report should demonstrate how the grantee provided program deliverables in pursuant to the grant agreement.

To progress from Phase 1 to Phase 2, grantees will be required to report on outcomes in addressing regional equity gaps and how the Regional Centers of Excellence are helping to advance the Vision for Success goals. Grantees will be required to set and measure progress on regional goals, using LaunchBoard data that illustrate the center's impact on student outcomes.

Grantees must make information on all credentials (including badges, certificates, certifications, licenses, and degrees of all levels and types) and competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities) achieved as a result of funding under this program publicly accessible through the use of linked open data formats that support full transparency and interoperability, such as through the use of credential transparency description language specifications. Such information must include the industry sector for or by which the credential was developed, the entities involved in the development of the credential, the competencies or skills assessed in awarding the credential, the form of assessment used to verify an individual's eligibility to be awarded the credential, and the body engaged in overseeing the awarding of such credentials.

Phase 1: Jan. 2024 – Dec. 2026 (36 months) NOVA Reporting Dates	
July 31, 2024	Expenditure and Progress Report due covering the period of January 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024.
January 31, 2025	Expenditure and Progress Report due covering the period of July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.
July 31, 2025	Expenditure and Progress Report due covering the period of January 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025.
January 31, 2026	Expenditure and Progress Report due covering the period of July 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.
July 31, 2026	Expenditure and Progress Report due covering the period of January 1, 2026, through June 30, 2026.
January 31, 2027	End of Term Report covering Phase 1 (Years 1-3).

Phase 2: Jan. 2026 – Dec. 2028 (24 months) NOVA Reporting Dates	
July 31, 2027	Expenditure and Progress Report due covering the period of January 1, 2027, through June 30, 2027.
January 31, 2028	Expenditure and Progress Report due covering the period of July 1, 2027, through December 31, 2027.
July 31, 2028	Expenditure and Progress Report due covering the period of January 1, 2028, through June 30, 2028.
January 31, 2029	Progress Report due covering the period of July 1, 2028, through December 31, 2028. **Note:** The performance period of July 1, 2028, through December 31, 2028, will focus on grant close out activities.
February 28, 2029	End of Term Report covering Phase 2 (Years 4-5).

CONTACTS

Further information may be obtained from the Chancellor's Office contacts indicated below. Information regarding this RFA obtained from sources other than these contacts may not be accurate. Email inquiries preferred.

Technical Assistance

Name: Jennifer Xiong-Moua

Title: Community College Program Manager

Phone: 916-327-8721

Email: EWD@cccco.edu