



California Community Colleges

K12 SWP Problem Statement and Project Objectives EXAMPLES

The following are examples of how an applicant might capture their Problem Statement and Project Objectives within the given character count limits. These are not offered as exemplars but as examples of the level of detail to be considered.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT EXAMPLE

Provide a brief Problem Statement that is concise, clear, and evidence-based, describing the problem or need that your K12 SWP project will address.

Item 1: Explain the regional challenge or problem this grant project is trying to address. Illustrate the problem using the region's Strong Workforce Program Regional Plan, and the region's Centers of Excellence Labor Market Information (LMI). Utilize and include information about the wage rate and demand for skilled workers in the industries/sectors the grant project includes. (2500 character maximum)

This project aims to address a critical regional challenge: growing demand for skilled workers in the public safety sector, particularly in fire science and emergency medical services (EMS). The region is facing a significant shortage of qualified professionals to fill key roles, a gap exacerbated by declining enrollment numbers at local community colleges. This shortage makes it increasingly difficult to meet the workforce needs of the public safety sector.

North Far North Regional Consortium's (NFNRC) Strong Workforce Program Regional Plan has identified public safety as a priority sector, with a specific focus on fire science and EMS due to the increasing demand for qualified professionals in these fields. Over recent years, the region has seen a surge in job openings in fire technology, emergency medical services, and related public safety careers. The sector's expected growth is 8% through 2026, with approximately 4300 annual job openings. Despite this demand, NFN is facing a significant skills gap, with employers struggling to fill positions due to lack of qualified candidates.

Although public safety professionals play essential roles in maintaining safety and well-being of the community, the industry faces difficulties in attracting and retaining talent, primarily due to lower wage rates compared to other sectors requiring similar levels of expertise. According to the Centers of Excellence LMI, wages for public safety professionals, including firefighters and EMTs, remain below average for other industries, making it difficult to compete for workers in an increasingly tight labor market. Demand for skilled workers in public safety is expected to rise due to population growth, aging workforce, and increasing emergency response needs, which further intensifies the challenge.

Additionally, there is regional need for nearly 300 firefighters, who earn average wages of \$46 per hour. Firefighting is a middle-skill job with a higher-than-average posting intensity, demonstrating the effort employers are putting into hiring. Other related employment opportunities in public safety include fire inspectors, fire investigators, and EMTs.



Item 2: Identify the applicant LEA's challenges the proposed project will address and how they align with the Strong Workforce Program Regional Plan and Centers Labor Market Information provided by the Centers of Excellence. (2500 character maximum)

Maple Unified School District (MUSD) conducted a survey of students regarding the career education options available within our schools; results revealed a significant and growing interest in public safety pathways. The data from the survey clearly indicates that many students are eager to pursue careers in public safety yet currently face limited opportunities to explore and develop the necessary skills for this field. This is a pressing need that MUSD is committed to addressing to better equip our students for future employment in this vital sector.

Public safety, encompassing areas such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, firefighting, and corrections, is a critical component of our community. However, regional employers have reported difficulty in filling positions due to a shortage of qualified candidates. This skills gap in the public safety sector is compounded by the fact that many students lack exposure to the necessary training, certifications, and career exploration opportunities that would make them competitive candidates for these roles.

In response to this need, this project aims to build a comprehensive public safety pathway that will directly address both the educational and workforce demands in this field. The goal is to create a structured program that offers students a clear trajectory from high school to post-secondary education or a career in the public safety sector.

Item 3: Identify the need or opportunity to create alignment with your Community College partner(s) that the proposed project will address. (2500 character maximum)

Although multiple colleges surrounding the Maple Unified School District have fire science and EMT programs, up until now, MUSD has not built a pathway leading to their successful programs. Additionally, in the last few years, enrollment numbers at the region's community colleges have drastically declined, creating a need to boost pipeline opportunities from high school to college.

Throughout the Spring of 2024, Maple USD administrators met with Deep River Community College District and Shasta College staff and Fire Department leaders about the need to fill hundreds of jobs in the region. A pathway that bridges Maple USD CTE coursework to DRCCD and SC's program is a dynamite solution to filling the need.

Deep River Community College District offers Fire Technology, Fire Prevention, Firefighter Suppression Specialist, and Wildland Fire Technology programs, along with a multitude of other programs in Public Safety. Shasta College offers Fire Investigation, Fire Service Command, Fire Technology, and Firefighter I and II.

The group discussed creating the Fire Science Career Pathway which would consist of two courses, Introduction to Public Safety Careers and Emergency Medical Response (EMR). This pathway would serve students interested in a variety of public safety careers and the EMR course meets a requirement for Deep River CCD's Fire Science Program.



The collaboration between Maple Unified School District, Deep River Community College District, and Shasta College represents a critical step to addressing the growing workforce needs in the public safety sector, particularly within fire science and emergency medical services. By creating a Fire Science Career Pathway that links Maple USD's Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses to the specialized programs offered by the local community colleges, we are ensuring that students have a direct and seamless transition from high school to college and career. This pathway not only provides students with the necessary skills and certifications to pursue careers in fire science and emergency medical response but also helps to address the regional shortage of qualified public safety professionals.

Item 4: *Provide data identifying equity gaps on how targeted student subgroups (e.g., race, gender, socioeconomic, unduplicated) access, participate in, and complete high school CTE coursework. Specifically, include evidence from demographic, enrollment, and completion data to substantiate the targeted student population to be served.* (2500 character maximum)

In August 2024, the Maple USD began an in-depth investigation of discrepancies in CTE Pathway completion and graduation rates among student subgroups. Data indicate that our Hispanic or Latino students have the lowest CTE completion rate (68%), were more likely to be identified in dropout rates (9%), and less likely to show as prepared on the College and Career Indicator dashboard than any other race or ethnic subgroup. When asked on a HS college and career readiness survey if they believe their high school education is preparing them for a gainful career or post-secondary education, only 25% of Hispanic or Latino students responded "yes." We need to implement strategies and programs that increase student engagement, college and career readiness, and prepare our students for high-demand and high-wage careers in our region. In response, Maple USD is developing the Fire Science Career Pathway.

Discussions with Forest Service, CalFire, local fire departments, CBOs, and Maple USD leaders identified the importance of providing all students with work-based learning experiences and increasing the number of bilingual workers and the ethnic and gender diversity of the public service workforce. These stakeholders, along with Deep River CCD administrators, will serve on an advisory committee and work closely to support the development of this pathway. Maple USD will also implement several initiatives to ensure our Hispanic or Latino students enroll in and are equipped to successfully complete the Fire Science Career Pathway, including small group tutoring available at Maple USD and the Deep River CC, a firefighter mentoring program, and a bilingual outreach coordinator.



B. PROJECT OBJECTIVES EXAMPLE

Provide clear, concrete Project Objectives this project aims to achieve that address the issues identified in the Problem Statement. Include how the LEA(s) plan to use K12 SWP funds to meet the objectives. Avoid statements of lofty goals.

Item 1: *Identify measurable outcomes for this project that align career pathways/programs to community college programs AND lead to high-wage, high-demand career opportunities.* (2500 character maximum)

Maple USD (MUSD) and Deep River CCD (DRCCD) will recruit Fire Technology Employers and convene a Fire Science Advisory Committee to review LMI data to inform this new pathway.

MUSD will recruit and employ a teacher (.25 FTE in 2025-26; .5 FTE in 2026-27) to teach the Introduction to Public Safety Careers course, which will be taught in one high school in the fall of 2026, and at both high schools by the fall of 2027. Grant funds will pay for the development and offering of the course in 2026 and 2027 with MUSD absorbing costs in subsequent years.

DRCCD will offer the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) course in one MUSD high school as a dual enrollment course, then moving to dual enrollment at both high schools, and will continue to do so after the grant if enrollments remain at 25 or more students.

DRCCD students will provide academic tutoring and technology support at MUSD high schools and on the DRCCD campus using grant and Federal Work Study funds.

MUSD will ensure a minimum of 25 MUSD students (90% of those enrolled) successfully complete the EMR course in year one and 50 students successfully complete the course in year two. A minimum of 70% of these will be Hispanic or Latino students. We expect 20 students from year one will enroll in DRCCD the following year, with 15 continuing in Fire Science and 40 to enroll in DRCCD with 30 continuing in Fire Science.

Item 2: *Describe the efforts the proposed project will include that will close equity gaps by improving access to and completion of high-skill/high-wage CTE opportunities for disproportionately impacted students. Include student services that are designed to intentionally improve outreach and increase targeted academic supports, such as tutoring, mentoring by professionals and work-based learning.* (2500 character maximum)

MUSD will recruit and employ a bilingual outreach coordinator (.5 FTE) to lead efforts to inform students, parents, teachers, and the community about education and career opportunities in fire science and the introduction of Maple's Fire Science Career Pathway.

The project will fund Curriculum and Instruction staff at MUSD to develop the course outline for the Introduction to Public Safety Careers course, develop all instructional materials, and work with



employers to develop site visits and other work-based learning experiences, including bringing MUSD DRCCD Fire Science students together to strengthen connections between the programs. This team will also analyze student data on a regular basis to ensure the program and supports are meeting students' needs.

This team will also work with administrators to identify academic and social support services to ensure the success of our Hispanic or Latino students.

Item 3: *Explain how project objectives respond to the needs described in the Problem Statement.*
(2500 character maximum)

The introduction of the Introduction to Public Safety Careers and Emergency Medical Response courses aligns perfectly with the needs of both students and employers, fulfilling a demand for skilled workers while also boosting enrollment and engagement in local community college programs. By fostering this partnership, Maple USD is not only responding to the current labor market challenges but is also investing in the future of its students and the community, ensuring that the next generation of public safety professionals is well-equipped to meet the demands of an evolving and vital sector. This pathway represents a meaningful, strategic solution to connecting high school education with college programs and the regional workforce, creating long-term opportunities for both students and employers.

This grant project aims to address these issues by creating a Fire Science Career Pathway that connects high school students directly to community college programs in fire science and EMS, which will serve to strengthen the pipeline of qualified workers entering the field. The pathway will include two foundational courses - Introduction to Public Safety Careers and Emergency Medical Response (EMR) - that meet entry-level requirements for local fire science programs. By targeting high school students, this project will foster a new generation of public safety professionals, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills and certifications to meet the increasing demand for qualified workers in fire science and EMS.

Ultimately, this project will help solve the regional problem by providing a sustainable, high-quality talent pipeline to fill critical jobs in the public safety sector, helping to meet both local employer needs and regional labor market demands, while also providing students with meaningful career opportunities in high-demand industries.

Item 4: *Describe how the objectives are informed by and aligned with the region's Strong Workforce Program Regional Plan, and the region's Labor Market Information provided by the region's Centers of Excellence.* (2500 character maximum)

This project aims to address these workforce challenges by establishing a sustainable, high-quality talent pipeline to fill these critical roles. By aligning educational opportunities with regional labor market demands, the project will help meet needs of local employers while providing students with



meaningful career opportunities in high-demand industries. Ultimately, it seeks to reduce the skills gap, support local workforce needs, and ensure that the region has the qualified professionals necessary to maintain effective public safety services.

By establishing this pathway, MUSD will not only help students gain the skills necessary for successful careers in public safety but also respond to the needs of local colleges and regional employers. Furthermore, this initiative will contribute to building a robust pipeline of students who are well-prepared to enter public safety careers directly after graduation or continue their education at local community colleges. With a growing demand for public safety professionals in the region, creating this pathway will serve to address both the immediate workforce needs and long-term sustainability of the sector. It will also support regional economic development by providing a skilled and capable workforce that can meet the challenges of public safety in an evolving community.