



A Partnership for a Better Future

## **California (CA) Jobs First (formerly known as Community Economic Resilience Fund Program CERF)**

### **Request for Qualifications: Grant Writing Consultant**

**Purpose.** The Kern Community College District (KCCD) on behalf of the Kern Coalition solicits qualifications from qualified consultants or contractors to provide grant writing services specializing in economic and workforce development research. These services aim to support initiatives aligned with the CA Job First Planning Phase II. In January 2024, the Kern Coalition submitted the Regional Plan as part of Phase I. The study, completed by UC Merced Community and Labor Center, as well as the addendum and supporting documents can be accessed [here](#). Requests for Qualifications will require support to the Kern Coalition on a contractual basis.

**Background.** Community Economic Resilience Fund (CA JOB FIRST), authorized in Senate Bill 162, is an equity-centric, nontraditional approach to a post-pandemic economic recovery that leads to quality jobs and family-sustaining careers.

For more information on the Kern Coalition's background and activities carried out thus far, please visit: [Kern Coalition \(kccd.edu\)](http://kerncoalition.kccd.edu)

### **ELIGIBILITY.**

Applicants must show a proven track record in writing successful, complex proposals from diverse funding sources, possess expertise in economic and workforce development, knowledge of Kern County, and demonstrate an understanding of equity in relation to underserved, low-income populations and disinvested communities (SB 535). The applicants must also meet the additional requirements:

- We encourage RFQs from entities with prior experience and a proven track record of successfully obtaining grant funding from Federal and State programs and private foundations.

### **SCOPE OF WORK.**

The following are typical services and/or items that the successful consultant will be required to provide to the Kern Coalition if awarded the contract and should be addressed in each application.

- Funding needs analysis: Work with the Kern Coalition to assess the reliability of current funding priority areas and identify new priority areas for funding
- Grant funding research: Conduct research to identify grant resources including, but not limited to federal, state, foundation and private sources.

The consultant's responsibilities will include:



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1. Understanding and assisting in the development of the Kern Coalition's development plan.
2. Grant prospect research and exploration aligning with economic and workforce development
3. Consistent and clear communication with the Kern Coalition about grant prospects, proposals, reporting requirements and deadlines.
4. In person engagement and meetings with the Kern Coalition at least 2 times a month
5. Provide grant writing support to the Kern Coalition and subregions as needed.
6. Collection and analysis of demographic and other important program related data to enhance and advance future needs statements and proposals.
7. Development and maintenance of grant templates and materials.
8. Professional and confidential management of grant records, organizational documents and data
9. Discuss services offered in addition to grant writing and proposal development, if applicable. This may include project management post grant award, training on grant writing, consensus building and facilitation.

Fees outline should indicate whether fees will be hourly or per grant written and submitted. Consultant must provide a detailed price breakdown of all services. Fees for all services may not exceed \$114,000.00 throughout the performance period.

#### **APPLICATION DETAILS.**

- A. Application Submission Information
  - a. Closing Date: Qualifications must be submitted by July 22 at 5 P.M.
  - b. Inquiries: Inquiries concerning this RFQ should be directed to the [KernCERF@kccd.edu](mailto:KernCERF@kccd.edu) email.
  - c. Cost of Application Preparation. All costs incurred in preparing an application responding to this RFQ will be the Vendor's sole responsibility and will not be reimbursed by KCCD. Unless otherwise stated, all materials submitted by Vendor in response to this RFQ shall become the property of Kern Coalition.
- B. Application Submission Instructions to Vendors: Your application should be submitted via the [Google Form](#).

It is the responsibility of the Vendor to ensure that KCCD receives the applications by the date and time specified above. Only an on-time application will be considered. Confirmation of receipt is the sole responsibility of the Vendor. Each Vendor must submit its application using the enclosed format in Section III below. If any application submitted deviates from the requested application format, it may be cause for disqualification. This does not preclude the Vendor from offering value-added alternatives and additional relevant information in addition to the information requested in the RFQ. The other options, however, must be fully explained in written form and separately stated as alternatives in both the application content and fee application.



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**Expected Timeline.**

Date(s)	Event
July 2, 2024	RFQ Released to the public
July 12, 2024	The due date for Vendor Questions -Please email to <a href="mailto:KernCERF@kccd.edu">KernCERF@kccd.edu</a>
July 22, 2024	<b>DUE DATE FOR RFQs FROM VENDORS</b>
July 23, 2024	Selection Committee Review
July 26, 2024	Notification of Award
July 29, 2024	Contract Review and Execution

As we work through the contracting process, we anticipate services to begin no later than July 29, 2024 and all work to be completed by September 30, 2024.

**Right to Reject:** KCCD reserves the right to reject any documents received in response to this RFQ. The Contract for the accepted application will be based on the factors described in this RFQ. KCCD reserves the right to waive any informalities or irregularities in any application.

**Confidentiality:** The Vendor agrees to keep the information related to negotiations in strict confidence. Other than the reports submitted to KCCD, the Vendor agrees not to publish, reproduce, or otherwise divulge such information in whole or in part, any manner or form or authorize or permit others to do so, taking such reasonable measures as are necessary to restrict access to the information. At the same time, in the Vendor’s possession, those employees on the Vendor’s staff must have the information on a "need-to-know" basis. The Vendor agrees to notify, in writing immediately, KCCD authorized representative in the event the Vendor determines or has reason to suspect a breach of this requirement.

**Notification of Award:** KCCD anticipates but does not guarantee that the Contract will be awarded after the Notice of Award.

The award will be made to the most responsible Vendor whose service, experience, and approach to the project are most compatible with the KCCD needs. KCCD in consultation with the Kern Coalition will be the judge in making this determination.



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**Small, Women, and/or Minority-Owned Business:** Efforts will be made by KCCD to utilize small businesses, women, and minority-owned businesses, considering that the primary responsibility is the most favorable return to KCCD.

A Vendor qualifies as a small business firm if it meets the “small business” definition established by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.201).

### **Application Requirements.**

The application must include the following and not exceed 10 pages:

- A. Cover Letter: A one-page cover letter with the name and contact information of the proposed Vendor.
- B. Please list your experience by providing 3 to 5 brief project descriptions, including the scope of services and outcomes, and share any lessons learned from those projects.
- C. Evidence of System for Award Management (SAMs)
- D. Describe the background, experience, and qualifications of the person(s) who will act as the consultant and the capabilities of any staff who will assist with this project (include their role, education, relevant experience, and related qualifications). This includes identifying the lead consultancy agency and any sub-awardees to carry out portions of the scope of work. If sub-awardees have not been identified, provide clarification and a plan for identifying partners.
- E. Provide at least three (3) references, including the contact’s name, affiliation, address, direct telephone number, and email address.
- F. Describe in detail the fee structure for research services.
- G. Conflict of Interest: Provide a statement of any potential conflicts the Vendor and/or key staff may have regarding providing these services. The information should include actual conflicts and any working relationships that disinterested parties may perceive as conflict. If no potential conflicts of interest are identified, state them in your applicationl.

The vendor shall have read and be aware of the provisions of Section 1090 et seq. and Section 87100 et seq. of the Government Code relating to the conflict of interest of public officers and employees. No officer or employee of the Kern Coalition or member of its governing body shall have any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in the resulting Contract or the proceeds thereof.

- H. Vendor Information Sheet:
- I. W-9
- J. Additional Terms and Conditions.
- K. Insurance Requirements.

**Vendor Requirements.** All responsive RFQs shall be reviewed and evaluated by the CA JOB FIRST Coalition Review and Selection Committee to determine which applicationl best meets the Kern Coalition’s needs for this project by demonstrating the competency and professional qualifications necessary.



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## **Performance of The Required Services.**

Accounting for the contracting process, it is anticipated that the research will begin July 29, 2024.

## **Application Submittal Process**

A. The application submission shall indicate that the Vendor has investigated and satisfied itself as to the conditions to be encountered, the character, quality, and scope of work to be performed, and the requirements of KCCD.

B. All RFQs received by KCCD will be considered a "Public Record" as defined in Section 6252 of the California Government Code and shall be open to public inspection, except to the extent the Vendor designates trade secrets or other proprietary material to be confidential. Any documentation that the Vendor believes to be a trade secret must be provided to KCCD in a separate envelope and clearly marked as a trade secret. KCCD will endeavor to restrict the distribution of material and analysis of the RFQs. Vendors are cautioned that materials designated as trade secrets may nevertheless be subject to disclosure, and KCCD shall in no way be liable or responsible for any such disclosure. Vendors are advised that KCCD does not wish to receive material designated as trade secrets and requests that Vendors only supply trade secrets if necessary. The Vendor's qualification package, and any other supporting materials submitted to KCCD in response to the request, will not be returned and will become the property of KCCD.

Your application should be submitted via the [Google Form](#).

## **Selection Process and Criteria**

This is a NEGOTIATED procurement; an award will not necessarily be made to the Vendor submitting the lowest-priced application. Instead, an award will be made to the Vendor submitting the best responsive application satisfying KCCD requirements, as determined by KCCD, including consideration of price and other indicated factors.

Advance Payment options are not available. A reimbursement model will be used for awarded contractors.

## **Nonresponsive Applications**

Applications may be judged nonresponsive and removed from further consideration if any of the following occur:

- The application is not received timely by the terms of this RFQ.
- The application does not follow the specified format.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation of each application will be scored on the factors identified in Section B. below. In compliance with 2 CFR Part 200.319 – Competition, no geographic preferences will be given in



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the evaluation of this application since the section states: “The Non-Federal entity must conduct procurements in a manner that prohibits the use of statutorily or administratively imposed state or local geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or applications, except in those cases where applicable Federal statutes expressly mandate or encourage geographic preference.” The selection process is designed to ensure that the Vendor’s services are engaged based on demonstrated competence and qualifications for the type of services to be performed and at fair and reasonable prices for KCCD.

- A. The Kern Coalition will review all applications received by the specified deadline for content, fees, related experience, and professional qualifications of the Vendor.
- B. The evaluation and selection of the successful Vendor shall be based upon the factors listed below with corresponding point evaluation. The total points available are 100.

**Scoring Matrix.**

**Evaluation of each application will be scored on the following factors:**

Criteria	Score
1. Understanding the RFQ requirements and completing all required documentation as listed in the Application Requirements section of this RFQ. In addition to the above, include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Lead(s) who will be the primary liaison with the Kern Coalition and proposed meeting schedule. Key personnel background, certifications, and experience in providing the requested services.</li> </ul>	Points = 35
2. Experience and relevance of similar work products and services provided to other entities and success in performing this service.	Points = 25
3. Fees/Pricing Structure (i.e., monthly retainers, flat fee, cost per application methodology).	Points = 10
4. Demonstrated research experience of underserved, low-income populations, and disinvested communities	Points = 30
<b>5. Total</b>	<b>Points =100</b>



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KCCD may, at its discretion, request presentations by or meetings with any or all Vendors to clarify the Vendors' applications. However, KCCD reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the applications submitted. Therefore, applications should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms, from both technical and price standpoints, which the Vendor can propose.

KCCD contemplates awarding the Contract to the responsible Vendor with the highest total points awarded by the Kern Coalition application evaluation team.

Upon final selection, the Contract will be processed by KCCD for the award of the Contract.

**Conditions to Award.**

A. KCCD reserves the right to delay the selection process, withdraw and reissue the RFP, or cancel this procurement.

B. This solicitation does not commit KCCD to pay any costs in preparing or presenting a submittal.

**Timeline.** The start time to fulfill the application's requirements shall be after the Contract is signed.

**Prohibited Activity.** Vendors or their agents shall only make personal contact with members of KCCD or the Kern Coalition personnel after selecting and awarding a Contract for this work.