



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

**Kern Coalition Request for Resume and Letter of Interest: Sector Investment Coordinators (SICs)**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Purpose:** Working on behalf of the Kern Coalition - the Kern County region participant of the State of California's California Jobs First Regional Initiative- The Kern Community College District ("KCCD", "Kern CCD", "District") is soliciting proposals from qualified consultants or vendors experienced in providing robust technical assistance to advance strategic regional economic objectives for the priority sectors outlined in the Kern California Jobs First Regional Plan Part 2 for the duration of the Catalyst phase of the California Jobs First's Regional Investment Initiative through September 30, 2026. KCCD is acting as both a fiduciary agent and as a Kern Coalition Co-Convener member partner.

**Coalition Description:** The Kern Coalition consists of five (5) local organizations including Kern Community College District, Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Kern, A Better Bakersfield and Boundless Kern (B3K) Prosperity, Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK), and Kern Inyo Mono Central Labor Council (KIM CLC). The Coalition serves as co-conveners of the Kern Jobs First Collaborative (KJFC) through Kern CCD, which serves as the Kern region's fiscal agent for the Community Economic Resilience Fund, now known as California Jobs First.

**Mission:** The Kern Coalition's mission is to unify and bolster local efforts that advocate for the equitable attainment of good, quality jobs that promote a resilient economy and positive health, social, and environmental outcomes in disinvested communities through diverse representation and securing direct investments for economic development strategies.

**Vision:** To eliminate generational poverty and promote equitable economic mobility for all in Kern County by ensuring investments dismantle systemic barriers.

**Background: Phase I** The California Jobs First Regional Initiative was developed as a result of The California Community Economic Resilience Fund (renamed Regional Investment Initiative), authorized in Senate Bill 162, and amended in Assembly Bill 2342, is an equity-centric,

nontraditional approach to a post-pandemic economic recovery that leads to quality jobs and family-sustaining careers. California Jobs First has been designed in a three-phase grant structure with the intention of creating inclusive economic development plans and meaningful processes to engage diverse communities to support the growth of a community-led, climate forward economy. The outcome is to create an innovative economic development strategy to grow Kern's economy and develop sustainable industries that create high-quality, broadly accessible jobs. Phase I planning efforts will inform regional investment opportunities during the Catalyst Phase and Phase II of the program.

In Summer 2022, the Kern Coalition joined forces to lead an effort in bringing tens of millions of state dollars, and hopefully, even more in private investment into Kern communities to create a diverse economy with high-quality jobs that are accessible to all. Throughout the Planning Phase, the Kern Coalition hosted more than 50 meetings across all of Kern County's communities in North, East, South, West and Central Kern – including cities like McFarland, Delano, Wasco, Lake Isabella, Ridgecrest, California City, Mojave, Arvin, Lamont, Taft and Bakersfield. Other informational meetings and sessions were held and recorded virtually at 12 noon to provide an additional opportunity for engagement.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Catalyst Phase**

The Kern Coalition is now embarking on the Phase II Catalyst Phase of the California Jobs First program. The Catalyst Phase award provides \$14 million in Catalyst funding to each region, which includes funding to hire Sector Investment Coordinators (SICs) with expertise in the priority sectors aligned with the [Kern California Jobs First Regional Plan Part 2](#) including Agriculture, Clean Energy, and Manufacturing to assist the KJFC with pre-development activities (see "[SCOPE OF WORK](#)"), technical assistance, and capacity building while cataloging assessing and evaluating potential projects for Catalyst funding consideration.

Catalyst projects will be assessed, scored and designated as "exploratory", "last mile", or "non-viable," and aligned with funding opportunities. Of the \$14 million, \$9 million of the Catalyst funds will be earmarked for the Kern Coalition to invest in developing exploratory and last-mile projects that can access local, state, federal, philanthropic, and private equity funding opportunities. All projects will ultimately have to be approved by the Kern Coalition Governance Council with adherence to the criteria guidelines.

The purpose of the Catalyst Phase for California Jobs First is to identify and invest in projects within the tradeable and locally-serving industries identified in the planning phase of the grant. These projects should also fulfill the California Jobs First initiative's goals of advancing equity and prioritizing disinvested communities while supporting the state's climate resilience goals. The Kern Coalition reserves the right to add projects for consideration that meet criteria for Catalyst, that help to advance the Vision and Mission of this program and that meet the grant's fiduciary responsibilities but are not necessarily approved by the Kern Coalition Governance Council.

According to information presently being provided by statewide agencies administering California Jobs First funds, Catalyst projects may be expected to meet the following criteria listed below:

1. Equity
  - a. Funding from Catalyst projects should provide direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to disinvested communities and include an applicant or co-applicant located in or serving a disinvested community.
  - b. Projects should align with Executive Order N-16-22 (Embedding Racial Equity)
  - c. Projects should include an equity impact assessment and displacement analysis, as well as an avoidance strategy, if necessary
  - d. Projects should include a community engagement strategy with a mechanism for feedback from residents.
2. Climate
  - a. Catalyst projects should align major state climate goals and policies, such as:
    - i. CARB Scoping Plan
    - ii. EO N-82-20 (Land and Water Protection)
    - iii. EO N-19-19 (Climate Agenda)
    - iv. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)
3. Job Quality and Access
  - a. Catalyst projects should promote the creation of family-sustaining jobs with healthcare and retirement benefits, upward mobility, access to training, consistent scheduling, safe working conditions, and opportunities for collective worker input.
  - b. Projects should ensure equitable access to quality jobs for communities throughout the region.
  - c. Projects should receive approval from the Kern Coalition and the Kern Region Governance Council and align with criteria for the identified stage of readiness, listed above.

The Kern Coalition is still developing a formal scoring matrix for evaluating Catalyst projects, and the criteria above are subject to change. Target outcomes for Catalyst projects include but are not limited to the following:

1. **Economic Competitiveness** that addresses inequities and strengthens the region overall to improve economic competitiveness and deliver prosperity across the Kern region
  - a. Expanding access to capital
  - b. Expanding capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship
  - c. Retaining or expanding existing businesses or promoting new business development
  - d. Building the region's skilled workforce
2. **Economic Resilience** improves the region's ability to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shocks. This includes foreseeing, adapting to, and leveraging changing conditions to a region's economic advantage. Activities to help achieve economic resilience include, but are not limited to:

- a. Building capacity of organizations serving disinvested communities to compete for and administer federal and state grants
- b. Building wealth in disinvested communities
- c. Diversifying the regional economy.

## SCOPE OF WORK:

Under the supervision of the Regional Director and direction from the Kern Coalition, the Sector Investment Coordinators will execute the following activities on behalf of the Kern Jobs First Collaborative:

- **Work within the Jobs First Collaborative** on industries prioritized in the Planning Phase: [Regional Plan Part 1](#); [Regional Plan Part 2](#)
- **Support the Jobs First Collaborative in cataloging projects** that will support the proliferation of the prioritized industries and enhance high-quality job creation; label these projects as “exploratory” (agreed-upon ideas that are at the very initial phases) and “last-mile” (agreed-upon projects that need the final piece of the puzzle to begin development), or identify projects as non-viable;
- **Work with GO-Biz staff and regional partners** to find and apply for state, federal, and private grants; and align Jobs First Collaborative identified projects with federal funding;
- **Coordinate** with workforce and economic development partners at both the city and county levels and others, High Road Training Partnerships, community-based organizations, and others capable of contributing to the success of the project to build an ecosystem around identified industries or sectors;
- **Provide or procure Technical Assistance** for Catalyst or Implementation grant applications and administration to all stakeholders who it may benefit;
- **Provide pre-development capacity-building technical assistance** by referring and assisting others in using data, research, and the Kern Regional Plans Part 1 and 2 for guidance in applying for public and private funding that advances projects and strategies that align with the Regional Plan;
- **Coordinate and provide economic development and industry expert pre-development technical assistance** on environmental, climate mitigation and adaptation, environmental infrastructure, economic competitiveness, equity, resilience, and sustainability;
- **Support outreach, engagement, and capacity-building activities** to ensure individuals and groups from disinvested communities have the ability to apply for Catalyst project funding and participate in ongoing activities related to the subregional high roads transition collaboratives;
- **Develop a regional roadmap** to address quality jobs demand-supply gaps, by increasing access by disinvested community members;
- **Develop regional and sector roadmaps** to plan for the creation of high-quality jobs in new environmentally friendly industry sectors;

- **Work with Kern HRTC Co-Conveners and stakeholders** to address unmet project pre-development needs by maintaining a catalog of potential projects that are being considered or have been submitted for the Catalyst Funding consideration and submit the list to the Kern Coalition (conveners) for monthly review;
- **Evaluate** projects for alignment with Catalyst criteria to inform the Kern Jobs First Coalition on project viability;
- **Provide guidance and lead** the development of proposals that meet the criteria set by the California Jobs First initiative, ensuring alignment with project goals and funding requirements;
- **Represent the Kern Jobs First Collaborative to Prepare and present findings** in report format to key relevant stakeholders including the Regional Director, the Kern Coalition Conveners, the Governance Council, governmental officials, planning departments, and other local agencies;
- **Work closely** with the Kern Jobs First Collaborative to draft and submit funding applications for regional projects.

**The Sector Investment Coordinators must be available to meet in person across all five subregions of Kern County as necessary to coordinate and support project development activities.**

The target outcomes for Catalyst projects include but are not limited to:

1. Economic Competitiveness that addresses inequities and strengthens the region overall to improve economic competitiveness and deliver prosperity across our region with a focus on the following industries:
  - a. Expanding access to capital
  - b. Expanding capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship
  - c. Retaining or expanding existing businesses or promoting new business development
  - d. Building the region's skilled workforce
2. Economic Resilience improves the region's ability to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shocks. This includes foreseeing, adapting, and leveraging changing conditions for a region's economic advantage. Activities to help achieve economic resilience include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Building capacity of organizations serving disinvested communities to compete for and administer federal and state grants
  - b. Building wealth in disinvested communities
  - c. Diversifying regional economy

The Sector Investment Coordinators shall work closely with the Kern Jobs First Collaborative to prescribe the respective project scopes to advance equitable growth within each approved priority sector from the Planning Phase.

A committee composed of the Kern Coalition and Governance Council will select 3 Sector Investment Coordinators for the approved Tradable Industries (1 per each tradable industry).

The approved tradable industries for Kern County are:

**1. Tradable Industries:**

- a. Agriculture (Agricultural Technology, Value-Add Processing, etc)
- b. Clean Energy
- c. Manufacturing

## **SECTOR INVESTMENT COORDINATOR DELIVERABLES:**

1. The SIC must be available to meet in person across all five subregions of Kern County as necessary to coordinate and support project development activities.
2. Conduct comprehensive research and interviews with key stakeholders across sectors, ensuring a robust understanding of the workforce gaps, challenges, and opportunities in each region. **This is relevant when projects are in the pipeline or have been identified as viable.**
3. Provide guidance and lead the development of proposals that meet the criteria set by the California Jobs First (CJF) initiative, ensuring alignment with project goals and funding requirements.
4. Prepare and present findings in a report format (frequency will be discussed at a later time) to key stakeholders, including the Regional Director, Kern Coalition Conveners, and the Governance Council.
5. The SIC will be required to present findings, strategies, and project updates to relevant stakeholder bodies, such as city councils, planning departments, and other local agencies.
6. Work alongside contracted permitting experts to ensure all projects meet code requirements and adhere to the regulatory standards necessary for successful project execution.
7. As needed, plan and host community engagement events or town halls to gather input from residents on economic development initiatives and to communicate progress on projects to the broader public.
8. As appropriate and in partnership with the grant firm, identify relevant federal, state, and private grant opportunities. Work closely with the Jobs First Collaborative to draft and submit applications for project funding.
9. Develop regional roadmaps that address quality jobs demand-supply gaps, by increasing access by disinvested community members.
10. Develop regional and sector roadmaps to plan for the creation of high-quality jobs in new environmentally friendly industry sectors.

## **TERM OF ENGAGEMENT AND BUDGET**

The term of the initial consultant contract runs through June 30, 2025 with an option to extend the contract through September 2026 subject to the approval of the Kern CCD Board of

Trustees.

The maximum budget allotment of \$114,500.00 is available per SIC annually through the term of engagement.

### **PROJECT TIMELINE**

The high-level tentative project timeline includes ongoing technical assistance and activities outlined in the Scope of Work through the grant period, September 30, 2026.

### **SUBMISSION DETAILS**

Please submit Resumes and Letters of Interest to [KernCERF@kccd.edu](mailto:KernCERF@kccd.edu)