ORANGE COUNTY REGIONAL CONSORTIUM | **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE**

Regional Strong Workforce Program
2025-2027 Project Proposal & Budget RFA

RFA and Application Release Date	January 24, 2025
Application Deadline	Applications must be received by **March 21, 2025**, at 5:00 PM via email to: sacoto_michael@rsccd.edu
Eligible Applicants	Orange County Community Colleges and Districts
Funding Source	Orange County Regional Strong Workforce Program Preliminary Amount*: $5,286,595 *Based on 70% of prior year (2024-2026) project allocation for planning purposes. Actual amount will be based on the 2025-2027 award memo released by the CCCCO in Fall 2025.*
Regional Project Ideation Session	February 28, 2025, 1:00 – 3:00 pm Santiago Canyon College | Building E | Room: 203 RSVP HERE!
Regional Information Session	February 21, 2025, 3:00 – 4:00 pm Zoom RSVP HERE!
Regional Project Compression Planning	March 10, 2025, 1:00 – 3:00 pm Santiago Canyon College | Building E | Room: 203 RSVP HERE!
Questions Deadline	Written questions concerning the specifications of this proposal must be submitted via email to sacoto_michael@rsccd.edu by 5:00 PM on March 21, 2025.
Application Approval	April 17, 2025, at the OCRC Governance Council Meeting
Funding Begins	July 1, 2025
Funding Ends	December 31, 2027

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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Background of Strong Workforce Program and Orange County Regional Consortium

To develop more workforce opportunities and lift low-wage workers into living-wage jobs, California took a bold step in 2016 to create one million more middle-skill workers. At the recommendation of the California Community College Board of Governors, the Governor and Legislature approved the Strong Workforce Program (SWP), adding a new annual recurring investment of $290 million to spur career technical education (CTE) in the nation's largest workforce development system of 116 colleges.

Grouped into seven areas targeting student success, career pathways, workforce data and outcomes, curriculum, CTE faculty, regional coordination and funding, this leading-edge state economic development program is driven by "more and better" CTE. The "more" is increasing the number of students enrolled in programs leading to high-demand, high-wage jobs. The "better" is improving program quality, as evidenced by more students completing or transferring programs, getting employed or improving their earnings.

The Strong Workforce Program focuses on data-driven outcomes rather than activities, along with an emphasis on innovation and risk-taking. In this way, colleges can be more responsive to labor market conditions and student outcomes.

A primary function of the Orange County Regional Consortium (OCRC) is to foster collaboration across the region resulting in inclusive, equity-centered regional economic growth by helping community college students attain their goals related to retention, completion, and transition to the workforce; thereby addressing regional employer and employee needs, including facilitation of career mobility opportunities for employees. This includes facilitating the Regional Strong Workforce Program encompassing project proposals, proposal review and recommendation, project approval, and working alongside the fiscal agent to ensure timely dissemination of funds as well as collection of project metrics to determine return on investment and project viability.

Purpose of the Strong Workforce Program

The purpose of Regional Strong Workforce Program (SWP) projects is to improve career education programs at Orange County's community colleges and address workforce needs by fostering regional collaboration among colleges, employers, and other stakeholders. These projects aim to increase the number of skilled workers to meet labor market demand and ensure equitable access to high-quality educational and career opportunities for all students.

Objectives of the Strong Workforce Program

Key Regional SWP objectives include:

1. **Enhancing Workforce Readiness**: Develop and improve programs to align with industry needs, ensuring students acquire the skills required for high-demand, high-wage jobs.

2. **Promoting Collaboration**: Foster partnerships among regional consortia, local colleges, employers, and community organizations to maximize resources and address labor market gaps.

3. **Advancing Equity and Access**: Focus on creating opportunities for underserved populations, including strategies to close equity gaps in education and employment outcomes.

4. **Supporting Career Pathways**: Help students transition seamlessly from education to employment through internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities.

5. **Economic Impact**: Strengthen regional economies by producing a well-prepared workforce to fill critical roles in sectors such as healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing.

GOALS & EXPECTATIONS

All Regional SWP projects should align with the following goals and expectations. Proposals for new projects should include explicit language demonstrating how the proposed project will endeavor to meet these goals and expectations.

Alignment with Strong Workforce Program Regional Plan

SWP legislation specifies that funds are provided to expand the availability of high-quality, industry-valued career technical education and workforce development courses, programs, pathways, credentials, certificates, and degrees (Education Code, Section 88821). The workforce development efforts within each region are established by the Strong Workforce Program Regional Plan ("Regional Plan").

Developed under the guidance of each of the eight California Community College Regional Consortia ("Regional Consortia"), each Regional Plan, by design, is responsive to regional economic priorities. Similarly, applications for Regional SWP funds should be responsive to the regional priorities, labor market needs, and consortium goals as identified in the Orange County – Strong Workforce Program Regional Plan

Regional Collaboration in SWP Projects

According to both legislation as well as the Strong Workforce Program Regional Plan, regional SWP projects are expected to foster collaboration amongst Orange County's community colleges, noncredit institution, K-12 schools, and key partners while also optimizing resources and achieving cost efficiencies through economies of scale.

Strong Workforce Program Taskforce Recommendations

The Strong Workforce Program Task Force was created to develop recommendations for improving and expanding career technical education (CTE) programs within California's community colleges, aiming to better align education with regional labor market needs and create a larger pool of skilled workers for high-demand, high-wage jobs by identifying necessary changes to curriculum, faculty development, regional collaboration, and data tracking mechanisms to achieve this goal.

Below is a list of the 25 SWP Taskforce recommendations to consider as you develop the goals, objectives, and activities of your project.

Student Success

1. Broaden and enhance career exploration and planning, work-based learning opportunities, and other supports for students.

Workforce Data & Outcomes

2. Create common workforce metrics for all state funded CTE programs and expand the definition of student success to better reflect the wide array of CTE outcomes of community college students.

3. Establish a student identifier for high school students and those enrolled in postsecondary education and training programs to enable California to track workforce progress and outcomes for students

across institutions and programs. Increase the ability of governmental entities to share employment, licensing, certification, and wage outcome information.

4. Improve the quality, accessibility, and utility of student outcome and labor market data to support students, educators, colleges, regions, employers, local workforce investment boards, and the state in CTE program development and improvement efforts.

Curriculum

5. Evaluate, strengthen, and revise the curriculum development process to ensure alignment from education to employment.

6. Evaluate, revise and resource the local, regional, and statewide CTE curriculum approval process to ensure timely, responsive, and streamlined curriculum approval.

7. Improve program review, evaluation, and revision processes to ensure program relevancy to both students and business/industry as reflected in labor market data.

8. Facilitate curricular portability across institutions.

9. Develop, identify and disseminate effective CTE practices.

10. Improve CTE student progress and outcomes.

11. Clarify practices and address issues of course repetition for CTE courses when course content evolves to meet changes in skill requirements.

Career Pathways

12. Develop and broadly publicize industry-informed career pathways that prepare students for jobs needed within the regional labor market.

CTE Faculty

13. Increase the pool of qualified CTE instructors by addressing CTE faculty hiring practices.

14. Consider options for meeting minimum qualifications to better integrate industry professionals who possess significant experience into CTE instructional programs.

15. Enhance professional development opportunities for CTE faculty to maintain industry and program relevancy.

16. Explore solutions to attract industry professionals in high-salaried occupations to become CTE faculty in community colleges.

Regional Coordination

17. Strengthen communication, coordination and decision-making between regional CTE efforts and the colleges to meet regional labor market needs.

18. Clarify and modify, as needed, state regulations to allow colleges to regionalize course articulation along career pathways utilizing regional or state curriculum models.

19. Develop regional leadership and operational partnerships among community college, industry, labor, and other workforce and economic development entities to improve the delivery of all CTE efforts.

20. Develop robust connections between community colleges, business and industry representatives, labor and other regional workforce development partners to align college programs with regional and industry needs and provide support for CTE programs.

21. Create a sustained, public outreach campaign to industry, high school students, counselors, parents, faculty, staff, and the community-at-large to promote career development and attainment and the value of career technical education.

Funding

22. Establish a sustained, supplemental funding source to increase community college capacity to create, adapt, and maintain quality CTE courses and programs responsive to regional labor market needs.

23. Create a separate, predictable, targeted and sustained funding stream that leverages multiple state, federal, and local CTE and workforce funds to support an infrastructure for collaboration at the state, regional and local levels; regional funding of program start-up and innovation; and other coordination activities.

24. Review, analyze, and modify, as needed, laws and regulations related to student fees for disposable and consumable materials and CTE facilities.

25. Create incentives and streamline processes to maximize public and private investment in support of CTE programs.

Alignment with Vision 2030: A Roadmap for California Community Colleges

The California Community College's **Vision 2030** outlines a roadmap to strengthen the role of community colleges in addressing educational and economic challenges. As part of this vision, the SWP and Career Technical Education (CTE) are central to achieving the following key purposes and goals:

Vision 2030 Purpose:

- **Prepare Students for High-Demand Careers**: The SWP and CTE programs aim to ensure students acquire the skills needed to succeed in high-demand, high-wage industries.

- **Support Regional Economic Growth**: By aligning educational programs with labor market needs, the initiative helps drive economic vitality and workforce readiness in California.

- **Advance Equity and Access**: The focus is on removing barriers and expanding opportunities for underrepresented populations in career education.

Vision 2030 Goals:

1. **Increase Completion Rates**: Improve the number of students earning certificates, degrees, or transferring to four-year institutions, particularly in career-focused disciplines.

2. **Close Equity Gaps**: Address disparities in student outcomes by ensuring equitable access to CTE programs and employment opportunities.

3. **Foster Collaboration**: Encourage partnerships among colleges, employers, and community organizations to align education with workforce needs.

4. **Strengthen Career Pathways**: Develop seamless transitions from education to employment through internships, apprenticeships, and real-world training.

5. **Enhance Student Success**: Help students achieve sustainable career mobility and meet their professional aspirations.

The SWP and CTE programs are integral to the Vision 2030 framework by driving improvements in workforce readiness, equity, and collaboration across California's regions, ensuring community colleges are well-positioned to meet future challenges in education and the labor market.

For further details, refer to the full report: Vision 2030: A Roadmap for California Community Colleges.

GENERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Strong Workforce Program (SWP) Funding[1]

The Budget Act of 2024 (Senate Bill 108) outlines the funding to be made available for the Strong Workforce in fiscal year 2024-25 as follows:

- $290,400,000 shall be available to support the Strong Workforce Program pursuant to Part 54.5 (commencing with Section 88820) of Division 7 of Title 3 of the Education Code.

- Of this amount, $5,000,000 shall be available on a one-time basis to support statewide education pathways for low-income workers demonstration project, and $60,000,000 shall be available to support the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program.

SWP Funding Allocation Breakdown (based on 2024-25 Allocations)

The preliminary funding amount that will be used to develop 2025-2027 project proposals is $5,286,595, based on 70% of the prior year (2024-2026) Project Allocation (see below). This is a conservative approach to planning and puts OCRC in the position to increase activities and/or approve additional projects when the final award announcement is made, rather than to have to cut or reduce projects if the award comes in lower than planned. A 70% rate for planning is a good margin to avoid cutting projects.

SWP Funding is comprised of base and incentive (17%) funds and is distributed to each district through the Local Share (60% of the total) and to the region through the Regional Share (40% of the total). In 2024/2025 Orange County's total SWP Funding was $19,874,418 distributed as follows:

- $11,924,651 FY 24-25 Local Share Distribution (@60%): Base $9,496,314 + Incentive $2,428,337

- $7,949,767 FY 24-25 Regional Share Distribution (@40%): Base $6,330,876 + Incentive $1,618,891

  - 5% Administration Allocation: $397,488 for OCRC & Fiscal Agent

  - Project Allocation: $7,552,279

Funding Formula (based on 2024-25 Allocations)

Formula factors impacting the fiscal year 2024-25 SWP base allocation calculations include unemployment rate, CTE full-time equivalent students (FTES), job openings as well as regional economic changes. Overall, the fiscal year 2024-25 local and regional share funding is settling back into pre-COVID 19 pandemic levels and no significant shifts occurred in the 2022-23 program year for CTE FTES, unemployment data, or population changes to impact job openings.

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[1] https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Workforce-and-Economic-Development/Strong-Workforce-Program/Frequently-Asked-Questions

Expanded Uses of Strong Workforce Program

As outlined in the Chancellor's Office September 22, 2023 memo, the fiscal year 2023-24 enacted State budget included expanded uses for SWP funding as outlined in Education Code Section 88825. SWP funds apportioned directly to a community college district may be used for all of the following:

   i. Providing funds for student grants to cover fees for third-party certification and licensing*.

      a. *The intent of the Chancellor's Office is not to impact a student's financial aid award. Therefore, our guidance is for colleges to procure vouchers for third-party certification or licensing fees as instructional supplies or materials and maintain records of students who receive these vouchers. Procurement of third-party certification or license fee vouchers should be associated with enrollment in a capstone course for a student completing a certificate and or degree in a Career Education pathway.

   ii. Enhancing student services to support retention, work experience, and job placement.

   iii. Providing students with an integrated educational program that connects academic curricula to applied and experiential learning in the workplace, including, but not limited to, work-based learning programs and models.

Determining an Allowable Expense

When justifying SWP expenditures, a college/district should consider the following:

- Permissible under District Board Policy.

- Permissible under District Administrative Procedures.

- Allowable - Substantiate that the cost was necessary and reasonable for proper and effective administration of the allocation.

- Reasonable - Necessary for the performance of the grant; following sound business practices (procurement processes, follow state and local laws, follow the terms of the grant); use of fair market prices; acting with prudence under the circumstances; and having no significant deviation from established prices.

- Allocable - A cost is considered allocable to a particular funding source/program to the extent it actually benefits the objectives of that program. You can only charge in proportion to the value received by the funding source/program.

- No Supplanting – Funds appropriated to community college districts for local or regional share investment shall supplement, not supplant, existing funding of community college career technical education programs. This shall not be interpreted to mean that a participating community college district is prohibited from eliminating or altering existing programs, but the percentage of that community college district's total full-time equivalent students enrolled in career technical education courses relative to the total full-time equivalent students enrolled in the district shall not be reduced.

- Ensure that community college district Strong Workforce Program expenditure is focused on improving student success with workforce outcomes for all students enrolled in community college career technical education courses, programs, and pathways, and addressing the recommendations of the Strong Workforce Task Force.

- SWP expenditures must be included in the budget of the associated project plan approved in NOVA.

If the college/district can document each of the considerations, the expenditure will generally be approved by the Chancellor's Office.

Orange County Regional SWP Allocation & Available Funding

The Chancellor's Office is required in Education Code Section 88825 to provide the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office its recommendations for the allocation of funds available for each consortium no later than August 30 of each year.

For planning purposes, as has been their practice, the OCRC Governance Council will preliminarily approve projects and their respective budgets up to 70% of the previous year's allocation. Once the final allocations have been released by the CCCCO, the Governance Council will grant final project approval along with whatever budgetary adjustments, up or down, need to be made.

Award Project Period

The performance period is 24 months, running from July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2027. As of now, it will include four CCCCO-reporting periods throughout the duration of the performance period. However, OCRC may request additional reporting at any time.

ELIGIBILITY/ASSURANCES

Orange County Community Colleges and Districts are the only eligible applicants and project leads for OC Regional SWP project funding. All others may participate in the proposed project via collaboration with the community college and/district.

All proposers are required to commit to each of the *Assurances Requirements* to be eligible to lead a SWP regional project. Simply place a check in each box to confirm that you will complete and/or participate in each of the tasks. **This section is required and not scored.**

APPLICATION DUE DATE

The complete application, including any required forms and supporting documentations, must be submitted via email to sacoto_michael@rsccd.edu **on or before March 21, 2025, by 5:00 PM PDT**. 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 email will be accepted. To receive the highest possible score and to prevent disqualification, the application instructions 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 completed application was submitted by an Orange County community college or district.

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 all sections, including a budget and budget justification.

5. 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 goals & expectations, guidance, requirements, list of deliverables, and application narrative and budget.

The selection criteria will include a comprehensive examination by the OCRC Review Committee. A maximum 100 points are possible per application per the point breakdown below:

Sections	Maximum Points
I. Project Assurances	0
II. Collaborative College Partners	0
III. Previous Regional Project Background	0
IV. Project Occupational Sector Focus	15
V. Metrics	25
VI. Project Need	25
VII. Scalability	15
VIII. Sustainability	5
IX. Budget and Sustainability Statement	15
Total Points	**100**

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The quality and intentionality of the applicant's answers and their responsiveness to the prompts is the most important thing to keep in mind when completing the application.

1) **I. Project Assurances (Required/Not Scored)**

   a) Provide project name, project lead and full contact information.

   b) All proposers must accept all "Assurances" to be considered for Regional Strong Workforce Program Regional funding. Placing an "x" in the boxes, verifies your commitment to each assurance.

2) **II. Collaborative College Partners (Required/Not Scored)**

   a) Place an "x" for each partner and provide their contact information.

      i. By adding an "x", the applicant verifies that they have spoken with the collaborative partner and are not just listing contact information.

3) **III. Previous Regional Project Background (Required/Not Scored)**

   a) Item 1. Indicate whether your proposed project has received previous Regional SWP funding as either a standalone project or as a component of another project, by selecting "Yes" or "No."

      ii. If your project has NOT received previous funding, skip to IV. Project Occupational Sector Focus.

      iii. If your project HAS received previous funding, you must answer Items 2-9 in their entirety.

   b) Items 2-9. Address each prompt to provide a description of the background of this proposed project. *Be concise* and use quantitative terminology wherever possible.

4) **IV. Project Occupational Sector Focus (15 Points)**

   a) All 12 Community College occupational sectors are listed in alphabetical order. Select the occupational sector(s) that aligns with your project.

   b) For each selected sector, you must list the specific skills or competencies that will be addressed by the proposed project. Consider regional employment needs in your response.

      i. In this case, "skills and competencies" are equated to knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), which may not necessarily pertain to job-specific skills related to occupations. For example, but is not limited to, addressing instructor skills related to a sector or students' skills to seek and obtain employment.

   c) If your proposed project crosses all 12 sectors, place an "x" for each sector and complete each corresponding "skills and competencies" section.

5) **V. Metrics (25 Points)**

   a) There are two tables: "Vision for Success Goals & SWP Metrics" and "Metrics & Outputs Timeline." Both tables must be completely addressed in order to be considered for the maximum of 30 points available. *Note: the tables are considered together, holistically, for the total points available. They are not each worth a specific number of points.*

   b) **Vision for Success Goals & SWP Metrics:** <u>At least one (1)</u> Vision for Success goal is required for per proposed project. For each Vision for Success goal selected, select the relevant Strong Workforce Program Metrics.

      i. Mark an "x" in the first column to indicate which goal(s) align(s) with the proposed project. Must select at least one (1) metric. Note the corresponding "Goal #(s)" for use in the following table.

      ii. In the "Actual Number" column, write the target number, percentage, or wage by which you plan to improve each metric.

      iii. Use the format shown in parenthesis in the corresponding SWP Metric column: (#) = Whole Number, (%) = Percentage, ($) = Hourly Wage in dollars and cents

   c) **Metrics & Outputs Timeline:** Connect the long-term metrics outlined above with proposed project stages and outputs, which will serve as key progress milestones. The line items in this table will then be used to connect the Goals and Expectations to Section VI. Project Need.

      i. *Describe the Stage of Proposed Project*: Provide a brief description of the project stage for each output of the proposed project. Specific project stages and outputs as well as the number of each are to be defined by applicant.

      ii. *How Will Regional SWP Funds Be Used to Accomplish Project Goals and Metrics?*: Describe the projects' outputs that will contribute to accomplishing the goals selected in the previous table. Be concise and include specific and, where applicable, quantifiable details. (e.g., 3 workshops geared towards underrepresented students to help them understand the high-paying, middle-skill career opportunities in xx sector and subsequently enroll in related CTE programs. Funding will be used for workshop snacks and facilitators. For this workshop, the goal is to have 100 students attend each workshop, with 15 per workshop enrolling in a CTE program, etc.)

- *Maximum of 200 words per output line item (excluding description of project stage). Any words beyond the allotted 200 will be redacted and not part of the proposal's evaluation.*

   iii. *Goal # – Write the corresponding Goal # from the blue-shaded column from the Vision for Success Goals & SWP Metrics table. Each output must have a minimum of one (1) goal assigned to it, but more are permitted.*

6) **VI: Project Need (25 Points)**

   a) Clearly and concisely explain the need for your proposed project and how it will result in changes for each chosen Goals & Expectation. Describe the impact and specific changes that will result from your proposed project being implemented – include quantifiable estimates wherever possible. Keep in mind the five OCRC Governance Council Regional SWP Project Priorities when writing your responses.

   b) Each applicant must have responses for six (6) Goals & Expectations for this section to be considered complete.

     i. <u>Each proposal **must** include responses for</u>: "Alignment with Regional Priorities", "Collaboration and Partnerships", and "Alignment with Vision 2030".

     ii. Then select any additional three (3) Goals & Expectations from the remaining nine options.

   c) *Output #(s)* – Write the corresponding Output #(s) from the green-shaded column from the Metrics & Outputs Timeline table. Each *Project Need & Justification* response must have a minimum of one (1) output assigned to it, but more are permitted.

   d) ***Maximum of 200 words repose per Goal/Expectation. Any words beyond the allotted 200 will be redacted and not part of the proposal's evaluation.***

7) **VII: Scalability (15 points)**

   a) Describe your plans for ensuring the long-term impact and scalability of your proposed project. How do you envision the program expanding to reach more students? Identify key areas for growth and outline strategies for incorporating new opportunities. Additionally, as the program scales, what potential collaborations with new or existing partners and funding sources will you pursue to sustain and enhance its impact?

   b) ***Maximum of 100 words repose. Any words beyond the allotted 100 will be redacted and not part of the proposal's evaluation.***

8) **VIII: Sustainability (5 points)**

   a) How would you determine the economic viability and long-term sustainability of the project activities necessary to achieve the proposed project outcomes. Provide details on the anticipated duration of the project (e.g., how many SWP Allocation Cycles, etc.) and outline your plans for securing sustainable funding. If Regional SWP funding will be needed, explain how it will be utilized and supplemented with other funding sources to ensure the project's continuity beyond the initial funding period. (max 50 words)

   b) ***Maximum of 100 words repose. Any words beyond the allotted 100 will be redacted and not part of the proposal's evaluation.***

9) **IX. Project Budget (15 points)**

   a) Budget the entire project amount for the duration of the performance period – inclusive of all partners.

   b) Budget by object code:

   - 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

   c) Provide a brief summary of the budget items for each object code utilized. Include a description of the specific types of costs and quantities, where applicable (e.g., 3 full-time faculty members, 1 part-time (15 hrs/wk) Project Manager, Snack for 3 workshops, Lunch for 2 half-day planning sessions (approx. 30 people each), etc.)

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

The proposal examination process will be conducted by the Review Committee whose members represent the community colleges in the region and have been appointed by the OCRC Governance Council. A training session will be held prior to the proposal examination for all Review Committee members to ensure inter-rater reliability. Each Review Committee member will review all proposals, excluding those submitted by their own college and/or district, and will provide a score for the proposals. A scoring rubric with clear scoring criteria will be provided to all Review Committee members.

Proposals will be evaluated on the extent to which they address the region's and state's strategic priorities according to the proposal requirements. Based on the total scores for each proposal, the Review Committee will make an award recommendation to the OCRC Governance Council.

Final award decisions will be made by the OCRC Governance Council.

CALENDAR OF KEY DATES

Proposal Released:	January 24, 2025
Regional Project Ideation Session:	February __, 2025
Regional Information Session:	February 21, 2025
Regional Project Compression Planning:	March __, 2025
Deadline for Submitting Applications	March 21, 2025
Preliminary Proposal Approval:	April 17, 2025, OCRC Governance Council Meeting (Final approval occurs after release of the allocation memo from the CCCCO
Funding Begins:	July 1, 2025

PROPOSAL APPLICATION CLARIFICATION

If any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other error in this application is discovered, immediately notify the OCRC Regional Chair of the error and request a written modification or clarification of the document. Additionally, any addendum to the application will be posted on the OCRC website at: https://ocregionalconsortium.org/strong-workforce/oc. Written questions concerning the specifications and

instructions in this application must be submitted by email to sacoto_michael@rsccd.edu no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, February 28, 2025.

Questions received will be addressed on the Frequently Asked Questions section of the application webpage.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION

General

After the Governance Council has reviewed the funding recommendations and approved projects for the 2025-2027 allocation, the Fiscal Agent will develop a list of tentative awards for each participating college, continuing education center or district. Once the Chancellor's Office publishes the 2025-2027 allocations for base funds (usually occurs in August), the project award amounts provided in the funding recommendations will be adjusted, as needed. If the Chancellor's Office publishes the incentive award amounts at or near the same time as the announcement of the base allocations, incentive funds will be included in the adjustments to project award amounts. However, if the announcement of incentive awards is significantly delayed, the Fiscal Agent will send out Participation Agreements for the base amount only and provide amendments once the incentive amount is known. The objective is to send out Participation Agreements within 4 weeks after the Chancellor's Office's announcement of funding amounts and the Governance Council's approval of project allocations.

Reporting

The Chancellor's Office requires that fiscal and progress reports for SWP Regional Funds be submitted in NOVA two times per year: at the mid-year and at the end of the year; and, a Final Report must be submitted in NOVA at the end of the project. These reports include narrative questionnaires that must be completed to certify the report. If a report is not certified then it prevents submission of subsequent reports, which can delay payment and misrepresent progress to the state.

Refer to the report questionnaires for the Mid-Term and Final Reports to see what type of information should be collected over the course of the project to complete the required reports. Data collection methods should be set up at the beginning of a project rather than attempted at the time of reporting to avoid data gaps and inaccuracies.

The Fiscal Agent will provide guidance on reporting requirements and timelines at monthly OCRC Collaborative Meetings and through emails to project directors on a quarterly basis.

CONTACTS

Further information may be obtained from the OCRC Regional Chair, indicated below. Information regarding this application obtained from sources other than these contacts may not be accurate. Email inquiries preferred.

Name: Michael Sacoto
Title: OCRC Regional Chair
Email: sacoto_michael@rsccd.edu

Rubric with BARS Ratings

Under the names of the sections that are scored, there are words in parenthesis that describe the intent of the section for raters' reference. Please consult the descriptions for the responsiveness for each level of the rating criteria.

Section	Max Points	Rating Criteria		
Section I. Project Assurances	Unscored	**Complete**		**Incomplete**
		Yes		No
Section II. Collaborative College	Unscored	**Complete**		**Incomplete**
		Yes		No
Section III. Previous Regional Project Background	Unscored	**Complete**		**Incomplete**
		Yes		No
Section IV. Project Occupational Sector Focus *(Connecting skills & sectors)*	15	**Responsive**	**Response Lacking**	**Non-Responsive**
		Score of 11-15 points: A clear indication of which skills or competencies relevant to each respective sector will be addressed by the proposed project. For each skill or competency, the employment needs for that sector were considered.	*Score of 6-10 points:* Skills and competencies listed not clearly defined or the connection to the employment sector or need is not clearly provided.	*Score of 0-5 points:* No skills or need were provided in the application, or skills not connected to a need.
Section V. Metrics *(Return on Investment [ROI])*	25	**Responsive**	**Response Lacking**	**Non-Responsive**
		Score of 21-25 points: The applicant has identified the ways the Vision for Success Goals/SWP Metrics will be quantified and provides specific numerical estimates. Specific stages or milestones provided to capture metrics at each stage, or return on investment.	*Score of 11-20 points:* The applicant did not fully specify the metrics gathered in the program or metrics are unrealistic. Specific milestones, or no return on investment provided or too ambiguous.	*Score of 0-10 points:* The applicant did not provide detail on Strong Workforce Metrics with Vision for Success Goals nor what specific metrics would be gathered or at what stages.

Section	Max Points	Rating Criteria		
		Responsive	**Response Lacking**	**Non-Responsive**
Section VI. Project Need *(Goal Alignment)*	25	*Score of 21-25 points:* The proposal provides a concise and complete description of how the proposed project will meet at least the three (3) required and three (3) additional Goals and Expectations. For each goal a project need and justification should be provided. *Up to 5 points per response.	*Score of 11-20 points:* The proposal does not adequately describe how the proposed project will meet the three (3) required Goals and Expectations or failed to provide three (3) additional goals. Proposal does not provide a program equivalent and/or justification. *Up to 5 points per response.	*Score of 0-10 points:* The proposal leaves out or does not address any of the three (3) required Goals and Expectations or fails to provide three (3) goals total. No justifications or program examples provided. *Up to 5 points per response.
		Responsive	**Response Lacking**	**Non-Responsive**
Section VII. Scalability Statement *(Scalability)*	15	*Score of 11-15 points:* The long-term impact of the program is clear and the ways in which more or future students would be integrated is explicit. Future collaborators or funding sources are offered.	*Score of 6-10 points:* Long-term impacts are given but without clear ways of expanding into new populations, or new partners or sources of funding are not thought out.	*Score of 0-5 points:* No clear indication of how the program scalability would occur, such as with future participants or funding sources.
		Responsive	**Response Lacking**	**Non-Responsive**
Section VIII. Sustainability Statement *(Sustainability)*	5	*Score of 4-5 points:* A clear plan for sustainability is given including how SWP funds are to be utilized and how other funding sources might be incorporated to supplement programming.	*Score of 1-3 points:* A plan for sustainability plan is offered including how SWP funds are to be utilized but unclear, or methods of sustaining past SWP funds unclear.	*Score of 0 points:* No clear plan for sustaining the program is clear or other funding sources identified.
		Responsive	**Response Lacking**	**Non-Responsive**
Section VIII. Project Budget	15	*Score of 11-15 points:* The applicant includes a detailed summary of proposed expenditures. Applicant's budget is reasonable and aligns with the proposed activities, objectives, and outcomes.	*Score of 6-10 points:* The applicant does not include sufficient detail to evaluate the budget; or the budget does not demonstrate alignment with the proposed activities, objectives, and outcomes; or the budget is unreasonable (too high or low).	*Score of 0-5 points:* The applicant leaves out or does not complete a proper budget or budget incomplete such that an evaluation cannot be completed.

Cut score: 80 (Proposals with Scores of 80 and above are fundable • Proposals with Scores below 80 are non-fundable)