BREAKING BARRIERS

Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative

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CALIFORNIA Workforce Development Board

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Section I: Overview

Initiative Overview

- The **Foundation for California Community Colleges (FoundationCCC)**, in partnership with the **California Workforce Development Board**, is pleased to announce the availability of up to **$22,760,000** in funding through the AB 628 Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative.

- The initiative aims to ensure that individuals from target populations receive the necessary supplemental, supportive, remedial, and wraparound services they need to successfully enter, participate in, and complete workforce and education programs and enter, be retained, and advance in the labor market.

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AB 628 Key Changes to Breaking Barriers

- Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) may apply for funding as the single lead fiscal agent.

- Emphasis on outreach and engagement of small CBOs.
  - *Defined as: organizations that have annual budgets of less than $1.5 million*

- Revised initiative intent to focus on innovative approaches to, and proven practices for, addressing racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in the labor market.

- Broadened eligibility for applicants, target populations, and eligible activities.

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Grant Evaluation Criteria

- The CWDB is required to submit an interim and final report to the California legislature.

- Evaluation criteria is detailed in Section I of the RFA and is in direct alignment with AB 628 criteria.

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Significant Dates

Event	Date
RFA Release	July 11, 2022
Office Hours (Four 90 minute sessions)	August 2022
Live Technical Help Session	TBD
Last Date to Submit Questions	August 25, 2022 by 1:00pm PT
Applications Due (in Cal E-Grants portal)	**September 2, 2022 by 5:00pm PT**
Award Announcements	October 31, 2022
Grant Contracts and Training Period	November 2022 – December 2022
Grant Term	January 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024

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Section II: Eligibility

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Eligible Applicants

- Lead applicants must have experience providing services consistent with the objectives of this initiative and to the populations specified and be one of the following:

    1. **Community-Based Organization (must provide proof of 501c3 status)** (including, but not limited to)

        i. Faith-based

        ii. Business-based

        iii. Labor-based, including labor-management partnerships and labor-community partnerships

        iv. Cultural-based

        v. Services-based organizations,

        vi. Employment social enterprises

        vii. Worker centers

    2. **Local Workforce Development Board**

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Collaborative Partnerships

- Services under the AB 628 Breaking Barriers Initiative shall be delivered at the local and regional level through collaborative partnerships.

- Partnerships shall include **at minimum, one community-based organization and one local workforce development board**. Letters of Support from required partners must be submitted with the grant application.

- Additional partners may be engaged to support the goals of this initiative.

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Target Populations

- Applicants may propose projects that address more than one of these populations. However, grantees must be able to document benefits specific to each proposed targeted population. Populations eligible to be served by the grant include, but are not limited to, all of the following:
    - (a) Youths who are at risk of disconnection or disconnected from the education system or employment.
    - (b) Women seeking training or education to move into nontraditional fields of employment.
    - (c) Displaced workers and long-term unemployed.
    - (d) Low-wage workers.
    - (e) Persons for whom English is not their primary language.
    - (f) Economically disadvantaged persons.
    - (g) CalWORKs participants.
    - (h) Persons who are incarcerated and soon to be released or formerly incarcerated.
    - (i) Armed services veterans.
    - (j) Native Americans.
    - (k) Migrants or seasonal farmworkers.
    - (l) Persons with developmental or other disabilities.

Target Populations (continued)

- (m) Any other population with barriers to employment identified in [subdivision (j) of section 14005 of the Unemployment Insurance Code](#).

- (n) Immigrants.

- (o) Persons who reside in cities that are disproportionately impacted by violence or are enrolled in violence prevention or mitigation programs.

- (p) Persons who are victims of domestic violence or community violence.

- (q) Persons over 50 years of age who need retraining for in-demand skills.

- (r) Population groups with disproportionate numbers of people living in ZIP Codes of concentrated poverty.

- (s) Population groups that are disproportionately impacted by occupational segregation and who are underrepresented in jobs as defined by the Department of Fair Employment and Housing in their enforcement of the California Equal Pay Act.

- (t) Populations that have been disproportionately impacted by unemployment, job interruption, and displacement during the pandemic.

- (u) Persons diagnosed with autism.

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Eligible Activities

- Eligible activities for initiative and grant funds shall include, but are not limited to, all of the following:
  - (a) English language improvement training.
  - (b) Culturally and linguistically relevant academic enrichment, basic skills training, tutoring, and adult education.
  - (c) High school diploma and GED acquisition and other remedial education and workforce readiness skills training.
  - (d) Industry certifications.
  - (e) Skills and vocational training that aligns with regional labor market needs identified as part of the California Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regional planning process.
  - (f) Work experience and On-the-job training.
  - (g) Stipends and income and language supports for trainees.

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Eligible Activities (continued)

- (h) Earn and learn training, Apprenticeships, and Pre Apprenticeship programming offered in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of [Section 14230 of the unemployment insurance code](#), regardless of whether the pre apprenticeship program funding source includes California Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds.

- (i) Mentoring.

- (j) Entrepreneurial training and support for small business development.

- (k) Know-your-rights training.

- (l) Supportive services.

- (m) Mental health services, trauma-informed care, and wraparound support services.

- (n) Employer education.

- (o) Activities undertaken pursuant to [subdivision (d) of Section 14033 of the unemployment insurance code](#).

Section III: Grantee Requirements

Contracting

- Estimated contract term is January 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

- Required to execute a contract with FoundationCCC.

- Grant activities may not start prior to contract execution date.

Reporting

- Required to track and enter specific data on Cal E-Grants Platform on a monthly cadence.

- Quarterly narrative reports.

- Individual must be appointed to be responsible for data submission.

- Further details, instructions, and training will be provided on reporting requirements, processes, and Cal E-Grants platform.

Payment Provision and Invoicing

- Grantees may submit an invoice to receive up to 20% of their approved budget upon contract execution.

- Monthly invoices will be required to account for the spend down of advanced funds.

- Remaining grant funds will be disbursed via monthly reimbursement process after monthly invoices are submitted and approved.

- Grantees will be compensated for services rendered and upon receipt and approval of invoices as aligned with the approved Budget Summary.

- Training will be provided.

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Technical Assistance

- Grantees are required to be active participants in the Breaking Barriers Community of Practice and participate in all technical assistance related activities.

- TA Support
  - Online Community of Practice
  - Interviews and Focus Groups
  - Training and Informational Webinars
  - Quarterly Virtual Peer Learning Circles
  - Three In-person Convenings
  - Virtual Grantee Onboarding Week
  - Other supportive activities

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In-Person Convenings

- One convening will take place in the **Northern California** region.

- Two additional convenings will take place in the **Southern California** region.

- Applicants must account for travel costs in their budget proposal.

- A *maximum* of **three** implementation staff from each partner organization must attend.

Virtual Onboarding Week

- Series of virtual technical training sessions to onboard new grantees taking place over the span of one week.
  - Reporting, Invoicing, and more
- Mid-November/Early December (dates TBD).

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Evaluation

- Identify areas of need, unanswered questions, and challenges.

- Third-party evaluation team will work to gather research and identify effective practices.

- Grantees are required to provide all necessary information to the evaluation team to facilitate grant performance evaluation.

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Section IV: Funding and Application Requirements

Funding

- Funding for the AB 628 Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative was appropriated in the SB-129 Budget Act of 2021.

- All awards are subject to availability.

- All efforts funded under this initiative are intended to supplement and be aligned with the broader workforce and education system in the State of California.

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Grant Award Amounts

- Applicants defined as **small CBOs** may request **up to $300,000** in grant funds to complete proposed grant activities.

- Applicants with annual budgets exceeding $1.5M may request **up to $750,000** in grant funds to complete proposed grant activities.

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Match Requirement

- A 20% cash or in-kind match is required.
  - *Ex: If total grant amount requested is $200,000, applicants must include a $40,000 match must be demonstrated.*

- **Cash match**: a contribution of funds made available to the applicant to be used specifically for project activities and must be consistent with the allowable activities of the fund source.

- **In-kind match**: a contribution of non-cash resources used specifically for project activities.

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Indirect Costs

- Up to 10% may be applied to the total project budget amount requested to cover administrative costs.
  - *Ex: If total grant amount requested is $200,000, applicants may incorporate up to $20,000 in the budget line item for indirect costs.*
- Applicants with a negotiated indirect cost rate (NICRA) can exceed 10% with proof from the cognizant agency.

Application Scoring Rubric

Section	Points
Project Framework	20
Target Populations	10
Services Provided	20
Partnerships/Project Team	30
Grantee Requirements	5
Sustainability	5
Budget	10
TOTAL	100

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Bonus Points Available

Description	Points
Small CBO applicants that clearly demonstrate capacity to serve their target population(s).	5
At least 25 percent of lead applicant's staff reflects the target populations they serve.	2
At least 51% of lead applicant's board of directors identify as immigrants/people of color.	1
51% of lead applicant's executive leadership identify as immigrants/people of color.	1
At least 51% of the population being served identify as immigrants/people of color.	1
Applications that integrate individuals from target populations into career pathway programs aligned with regional labor market needs.	5
TOTAL	**15**

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Application Elements

Cover Page: includes organization information, project cost, and contacts

Narrative Questions: series of open-ended questions

Work Plan: outlines objectives and activities for each quarter (activities that span multiple quarters can be repeated).

Participant Plan: Identify target populations, numbers of participants to be served, and placement outcomes

Partner Roles and Responsibilities: List required and additional partner organizations, outline roles and responsibilities, and provide match amounts.

Application Elements (continued)

Budget Summary: Detailed budget including match, indirect costs, and contracted amounts (all grant funds must be allocated to a line item).

Supplemental Budget: Must be completed for funds allocated to equipment purchases, leased equipment, contractual services, and sub-recipient services.

Budget Narrative: Provide written descriptions to justify cost allocations being funded directly by grant (does not include match).

Expend Plan: Provide totals for planned expenditures and match by each quarter of the grant term.

Uploads: Upload documents as outlined in the RFA and in this tab of the application.

Section V: Application Period and Review Process

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Application Deadline and Submission

- The deadline for applications is **September 2, 2022 at 5:00 PM PT**.

- All applications must be submitted electronically through the Cal E-Grants website. Only applications submitted through the Cal E-Grants application portal will be considered.

- The application can be accessed through the Cal E-Grants website under the **Funding Opportunities** tab at the top of the Cal E-Grants page linked above, then selecting this grant's link under **CWDB Grant Opportunities.**

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Application Period Support

- FoundationCCC will offer technical support in the formats outlined below to prospective applicants. Prospective applicants are invited, but not required, to participate in one or all of the provided support activities. Session registration details will be posted on the CWDB website with the release of this RFA.

- Formats:
  - Application Presentation
  - Office Hours
  - Technical Help Session
  - Written Q&A

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Office Hours

- 90-minute Zoom sessions x 4 led by solicitation team
  - First session will prioritize questions from Small Community-Based Organizations
  - Sessions will not be recorded
  - All Q&A surfaced will be posted on CWDB website
  - Registration on CWDB website

- Format:
  - Level setting
    - High level Breaking Barriers overview
    - Review of FAQs
    - Majority of time reserved for live Q&A to address RFA questions

Date	Time
Monday, August 1st (Small CBOs focus)	1:00pm- 2:30pm
Wednesday, August 3rd	10:00am – 11:30am
Tuesday, August 9th	10:00am – 11:30am
Thursday, August 11th	1:00pm – 2:30pm

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Technical Help Session

- Zoom session with IT/development staff (not recorded).

- Format:
  - Q&A and 1:1 support if needed via breakout rooms.
  - Focus will be on issues related to submitting applications in Cal E-force platform.
    - RFA/program related questions will be answered during Office Hours.
  - Date will be posted on initiative website.

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Written Q&A

- Option to send RFA questions to a central email inbox.
  - Email address: breakingbarriers@foundationccc.org
  - Deadline to submit questions: Thursday, August 25, 2022 by 1:00pm PT.
- Individual email responses will not be provided.
- All Q&A will be posted on the Breaking Barriers web page weekly.

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Recommendation for Funding

- The final scores will be ranked highest to lowest and will serve as the primary basis for making recommendations for funding in conjunction with other factors such as:
  - Geographic distribution of funds
  - Reasonableness of funding request
  - Representation of organizations by size
  - Populations served, etc.

- The CWDB and FoundationCCC reserve the right to make additional awards to applications not initially funded through this RFA, should additional funding become available. The CWDB and FoundationCCC reserve the right to adjust the total number, duration, and amount of each grant award.

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Request for Additional Information

- FoundationCCC may request additional information during the review process (prior to award announcements). Requests for additional information occur in situations where mandatory criteria have been met, but further clarification or elaboration is needed before making an official award.

- Applicants that submit complete and thorough applications where additional information and clarification is not needed will be given priority in the award process.

Rejection of Application

- FoundationCCC reserves the right to reject an application for any reason.

- An application shall be rejected for any of the followings reasons:
  - Received after 5 PM Pacific Time on September 2, 2022; Incomplete or fails to meet the RFA specifications;
  - Contains false or misleading statements or references which do not support an attribute or condition contended by the Applicant;

Debriefing

- Written debriefing of the application review results will not be provided to unsuccessful applicants. Oral debriefings may be provided at the FoundationCCC's discretion.

Appeal

- Applicants may file an appeal within three (3) business days after the Notice of Intent to Award in dispute of an action by FoundationCCC. The appeal must be in writing and comply with the following:
  - State the basis for the appeal
  - State the action being requested
  - Include any documentation relating to the dispute
- Appeals must be submitted to the FoundationCCC at breakingbarriers@foundationccc.org.

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Stay Connected

- Breaking Barriers Initiative information and application period support materials can be found at: https://cwdb.ca.gov/initiatives/breakingbarriers/

- Solicitation and application can be found on Cal E-Grants: https://caetp.force.com/calegrants/s/

- Contact the Breaking Barriers solicitation team at: breakingbarriers@foundationccc.org