Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment (HIRE)

May 15, 2023

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Section One. Program Overview

Introduction

The California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) is pleased to announce the Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment (HIRE) initiative. HIRE is a new funding opportunity for community-based organizations (CBOs) and other nonprofit organizations to provide employment services to justice-involved individuals. Approximately $50,000,000 will be available to qualified grantees. The initiative's objectives are to:

- Increase employment opportunities and job mobility for formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals.
- Provide training, reskilling and upskilling, and supportive services to justice-involved individuals to improve employment opportunities and job mobility.

Under HIRE, CWDB seeks to fund organizations that advance the goals of its Strategic Plan and build workforce system infrastructure and capacity through:

- **Collaboration** among partners to develop service delivery strategies and align resources to connect the supervised population to employment.
- **Innovation** that creates new or adapts existing approaches or accelerates application of promising practices in workforce development and skill attainment.
- **System change** that utilizes these funds to incentivize the adoption of proven strategies and innovations that are sustained beyond the grant period.

Corrections-Workforce Partnership

The HIRE initiative is the latest program under the Corrections-Workforce Partnership, a state-level collaboration effort between CWDB, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), and the California Prison Industry Authority (CalPIA). Since 2018, the CWDB has formally partnered with CDCR and CalPIA to improve labor market outcomes of the state's justice-involved and formerly incarcerated populations. For additional information on the partnership, visit the CWDB's Corrections-Workforce Partnership webpage.

Funding Background

In June 2022, the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 178, which made available $50,000,000 to the CWDB to administer a statewide reentry grant program. Per AB 178, program grantees must meet the following criteria:

- Specialize in serving the reentry population in California.
- Demonstrate relationships with employers that hire individuals with a criminal record.
- Show a track record of developing training programs with feedback from the reentry population.

This funding will build on the CWDB's past and current investments in workforce programming for the reentry population. Since 2018, the CWDB has awarded over $56 million through the Prison to Employment Initiative (P2E) to support the integration of workforce, reentry, and supportive services to formerly incarcerated and other justice-involved individuals[1]. The HIRE

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[1] Prison to Employment Initiative - Interim Report

initiative seeks to apply the lessons learned from the implementation of the P2E Initiative. HIRE program applicants are encouraged to leverage the resources and expertise of past and current P2E partner organizations.

Program Background

In the months preceding the release of this RFA, the CWDB engaged with stakeholders serving formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals throughout the state. These stakeholder engagement sessions were designed to collect input from CBOs, nonprofits, and local workforce development boards, all of which provided critical feedback that informed the design and structure of the HIRE initiative.

Key program components based on stakeholder feedback that have been integrated into this initiative include:

- A program model and funding structure designed to enhance and/or create partnerships that provide equitable access and support for CBOs to manage state funds.
- A program framework that supports projects that deliver direct participant assistance to program participants including stipends and needs-related payments.
- A unique data collection approach intended to track outcomes beyond traditional workforce development reporting metrics, such as obtaining a driver's license or moving into housing.

Prior CWDB grantees have found that individuals with significant barriers to employment are more likely to benefit from career services and job training when they have access to resources that support their basic needs[2]. Additionally, research has demonstrated that successful labor market outcomes are uniquely challenging to achieve for the reentry population. Individuals transitioning from incarceration often face heightened barriers to employment, including limited access to stable housing and transportation, as well as gaps in education, job, and financial literacy skills[3].

To address these barriers, the California legislature has declared that HIRE's needs-related payments to participants serve a public purpose, as they contribute to California's economy and reduce recidivism. Approximately 30% of HIRE funding is available for this purpose. More information about needs-related payments can be found on page 11 of this document.

Eligible Applicants

Funds under this Request For Applications (RFA) will be awarded to CBOs and other nonprofit organizations specializing in serving California's reentry population. Organizations applying must demonstrate both:

- relationships with employers that hire individuals with a criminal record
- a history of developing training programs with feedback from the reentry population

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[2] AB 1111: Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative - Interim Report
[3] Anderson, A. Y., Nava, N. J., & Cortez, P. (2018). The Conduits and Barriers to Reentry for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals in San Bernardino, Journal of Prison Education and Reentry, 5(1), 2–17. http://doi.org/10.25771/sdf0-1631.

Applicants must align with the objectives of this initiative and determine whether they will be applying independently or as part of a network. Organizations seeking to fulfill fiscal agent responsibilities for this grant should have experience providing services consistent with the objectives of this initiative and to the population specified.

Nonprofit organizations must:
- Be registered with the federal government pursuant to either Internal Revenue Code Sections 501(c)3, (c)4, (c)6 or (c)10.
- Be registered in the State of California with the Department of Justice and appear on their Registry of Charitable Trusts.
- If a nonprofit entity is excluded from registering with the Department of Justice, relevant proof must be provided with the application.

All applying organizations must:
- Have been duly organized, in existence, and in good standing for at least six months prior to the date the Grant Solicitation is issued by CWDB.
- Be registered with the California Secretary of State's Office, with an "Active" status.
- Have a tax-exempt status with both the Internal Revenue Service and the California Franchise Tax Board.
- Have a "Registry Status" of "Current" or "Exempt" with the California Attorney General's Registry of Charitable Trusts (RCT)11.
- Have any other state or local licenses or certifications necessary to provide the services requested (e.g., facility licensing by the Department of Health Care Services, etc.), if applicable.
- Have a physical address in California.

Examples of eligible CBOs include but are not limited to, those that are:
- Culturally-based
- Employment social enterprises
- Faith-based
- Food banks
- Labor-based (including labor-management partnerships and labor-community partnerships)
- Reentry centers and resource hubs
- Services-based
- Transitional housing providers
- Worker centers

HIRE Project Types
The CWDB has identified four different project types for the HIRE initiative:
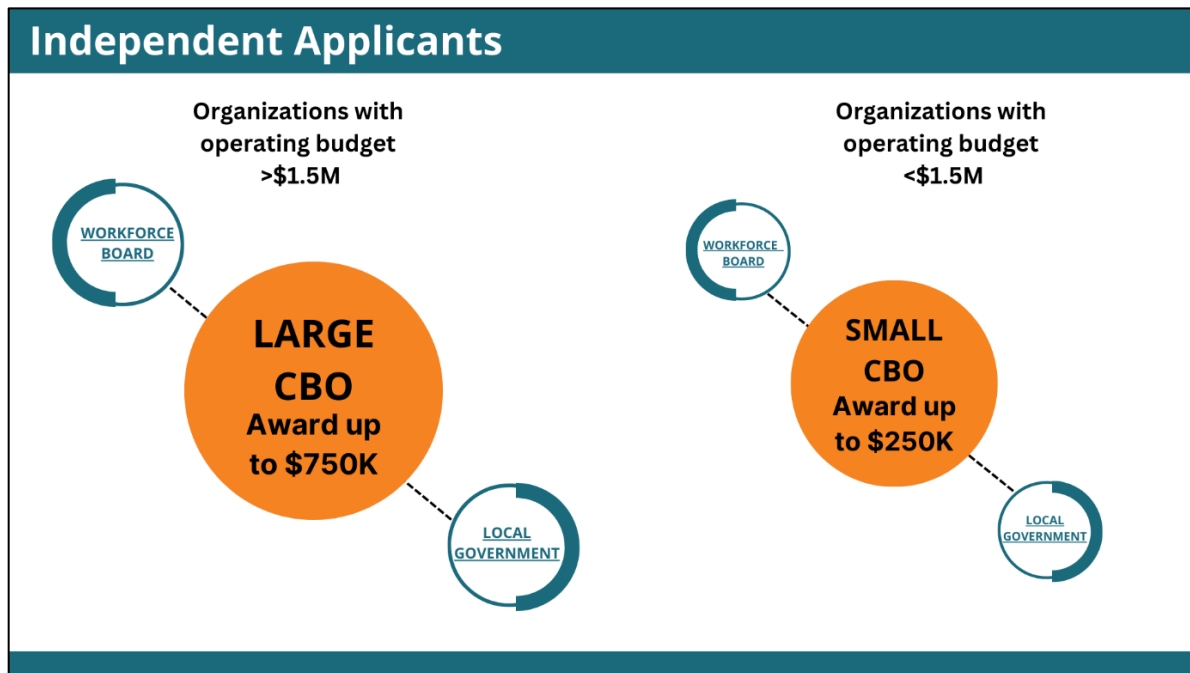1. Independent projects
2. HIRE Network Hubs
3. HIRE Networks Spokes
4. Technical Assistance (TA)

Prospective applicants must identify a single project type prior to applying. Organizations may only apply for one project type, excluding Technical Assistance.[4]

Independent Projects

Independent projects consist of a single organization, which acts as the lead fiscal agent and is responsible for submitting a complete application package outlining how the organization will recruit, train, provide supportive services to participants, as well as establish and/or reinforce existing relationships with the local and state corrections system(s) to support participants' successful transition from the justice system to the labor force. For the purposes of this application, small community-based organizations are defined as organizations with an annual budget less than or equal to $1.5M. Large community-based organizations are defined as organizations with annual budgets exceeding $1.5M.

Using the Independent applicant project type, a small CBO may request up to $250,000 in grant funds to complete proposed grant activities. Large CBOs may request up to $750,000 in grant funds to complete proposed grant activities. Applicants will be asked to verify their annual operating budget[5] and provide narrative support in their application demonstrating their organizational capacity aligns with their funding request.[6] Applicants can find additional information about completing HIRE applications by project type in the HIRE Application Guide.

Independent Applicants

Organizations with operating budget >$1.5M

WORKFORCE BOARD

LARGE CBO Award up to $750K

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Organizations with operating budget <$1.5M

WORKFORCE BOARD

SMALL CBO Award up to $250K

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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[4] Applicants applying for the Technical Assistance grant may also apply under one of the additional three project types.

[5] See Upload Documents Section of Application Guide for more instructions.

[6] Please see Appendix B for guidance on determining the operating budget of your organization.

HIRE Networks: Hub and Spoke Model

A HIRE network is a group of organizations applying collectively via one application. HIRE networks will consist of a single large CBO as the lead applicant, or Hub, and one or more large or small CBO(s) as partner applicants, or Spokes. Allowable HIRE network sizes are determined by the Hub's annual operating budget and organizational capacity.

See below for a breakdown of HIRE network sizes:

Hub with Operating Budget of $1.5M-$4M During Fiscal Year 2022*

ORGANIZATION #1 PARTNER/SPOKE

WORKFORCE BOARD

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

HUB SIZE #1 OPERATING BUDGET $1.5M-$4M IN FY 2022

ORGANIZATION #2 PARTNER/SPOKE

ORGANIZATION #3 PARTNER/SPOKE

UP TO AN ADDITIONAL 10% OF THE SPOKES' TOTAL REQUEST AVAILABLE TO HUB

*up to 3 spokes permitted
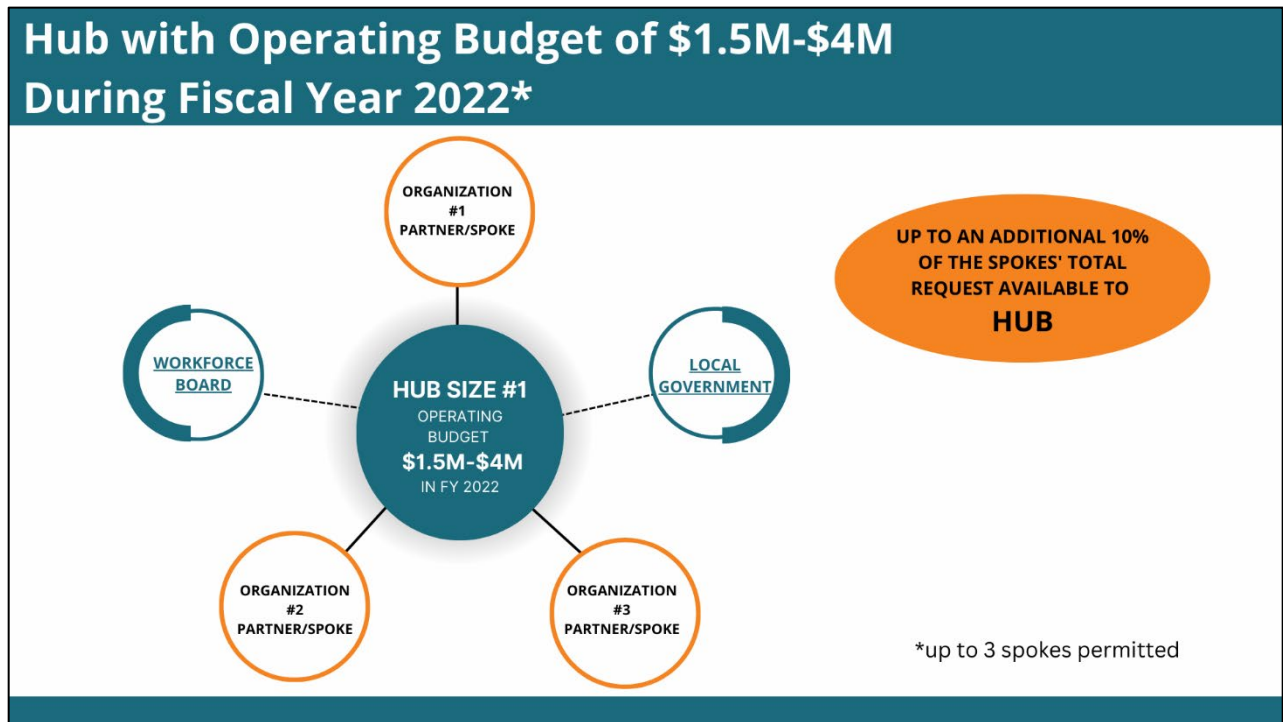
A Hub whose operating budget was between $1,500,000 an $4,000,000 in FY 2022 is eligible to apply with up to three other Spokes, in addition to the required government and workforce partners further detailed in the Required Partners section of this document.

Hub with Operating Budget of >$4M-$10M During Fiscal Year 2022*

ORGANIZATION #1 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #2 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #3 PARTNER/SPOKE
WORKFORCE BOARD
HUB SIZE #2 OPERATING BUDGET >$4M-$10M IN FY 2022
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ORGANIZATION #4 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #5 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #6 PARTNER/SPOKE
UP TO AN ADDITIONAL 10% OF THE SPOKES' TOTAL REQUEST AVAILABLE TO HUB
*up to 6 spokes permitted
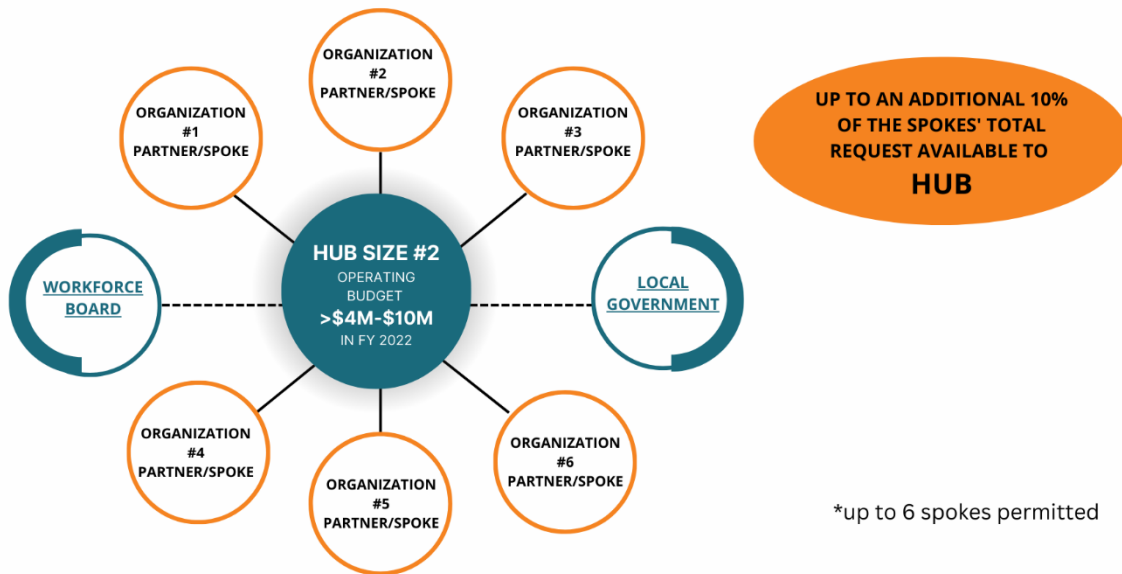
A Hub whose operating budget was between $4,000,000 and $10,000,000 in FY 2022 is eligible to apply with up to six other Spokes, in addition to required government and workforce partners as detailed in the Required Partners section of this document.

Hub with Operating Budget of >$10M During Fiscal Year 2022*

ORGANIZATION #1 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #2 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #3 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #4 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #5 PARTNER/SPOKE
WORKFORCE BOARD
HUB SIZE #3 OPERATING BUDGET >$10M IN FY 2022
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ORGANIZATION #6 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #7 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #8 PARTNER/SPOKE
ORGANIZATION #9 PARTNER/SPOKE
UP TO AN ADDITIONAL 10% OF THE SPOKES' TOTAL REQUEST AVAILABLE TO HUB
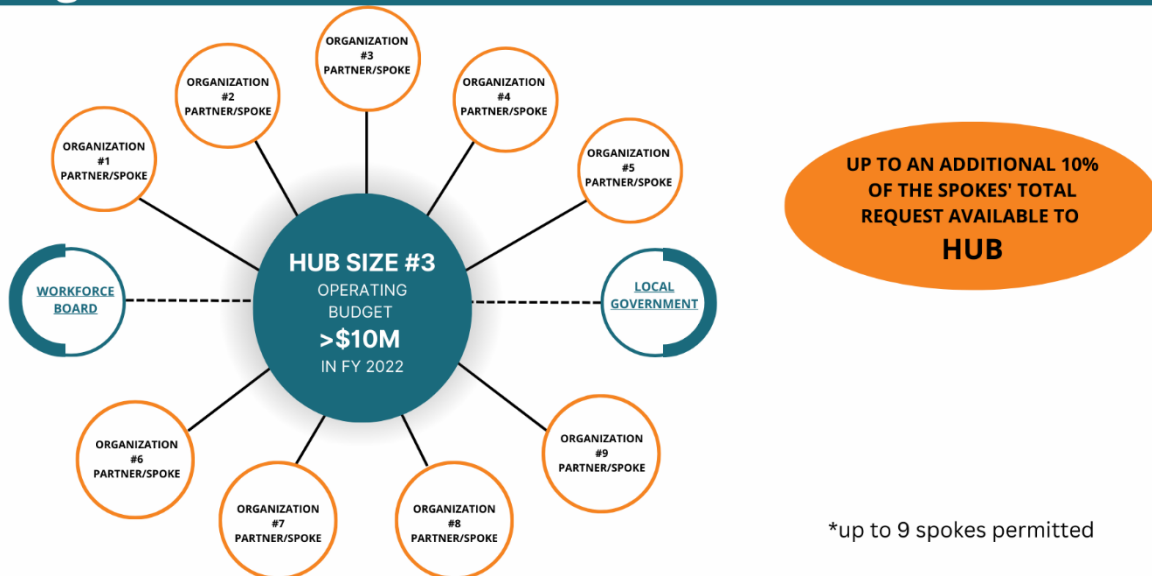*up to 9 spokes permitted

A Hub applicant whose operating budget was greater than $10,000,000 in FY 2022 is eligible to apply with up to nine other Spokes, in addition to required government and workforce partners as detailed in the Required Partners section of this document.

To successfully apply as a HIRE Network Hub and Spoke project type, the Hub, as the lead applicant, must start an application AND create a project name on behalf of the network. After the Hub confirms the application is in "in progress" status on Salesforce, the Spoke(s) will create their own application and link to the Hub's "in progress" application.

Organizations with Multiple Locations

Larger CBOs with multiple locations in the state of California may submit one application per location, provided the organization's locations have separate Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) numbers and Federal Tax IDs. Individual locations must substantiate the size of each location's annual budget in determining whether they are a large or small CBO per the definitions provided in this RFA. These entities may apply either independently, as part of a single network, or as part of multiple networks.

Linking Spoke Applications to the Hub

After the Hub application is successfully created and "in progress", Spoke(s) will be able to select the project name created by the Hub when starting a separate application, thereby linking all Spokes to their Hubs to successfully apply as a Network. Applicants can find additional information about completing HIRE applications by project type in the [HIRE Application Guide](#).

HIRE Networks: Hubs

HIRE Hubs will serve as the primary point of contact for the CWDB and are responsible for organizing, coordinating, and reporting on project activities, deliverables, and program metrics on behalf of their proposed Network. HIRE Hubs will serve as the fiscal agent, convener, and lead reporting entity for their entire network, and are expected to administer fiscal responsibilities for all other projects in their application that will serve this initiative. Similar to Independent projects and network Spokes, Hubs may also provide services to participants.

Hubs may request up to $750,000 for their own HIRE program activities and up to an **additional** 10% of the collective amount of awarded funding to their network's Spokes. This bonus funding is available to Hubs only and must be applied towards managing and providing support to the project(s) within their HIRE Network.

The CWDB expects Hub applicants to have experience managing state and/or federally funded grants, and the capacity to organize and coordinate project teams comprised of representatives from the partner organizations listed in the **Required Partners** section of this RFA.

Organizations applying to serve as a Hub **must have an annual operating budget greater than $1.5 million** in the previous fiscal year and demonstrate organizational capacity to serve the reentry population.

HIRE Networks: Spokes

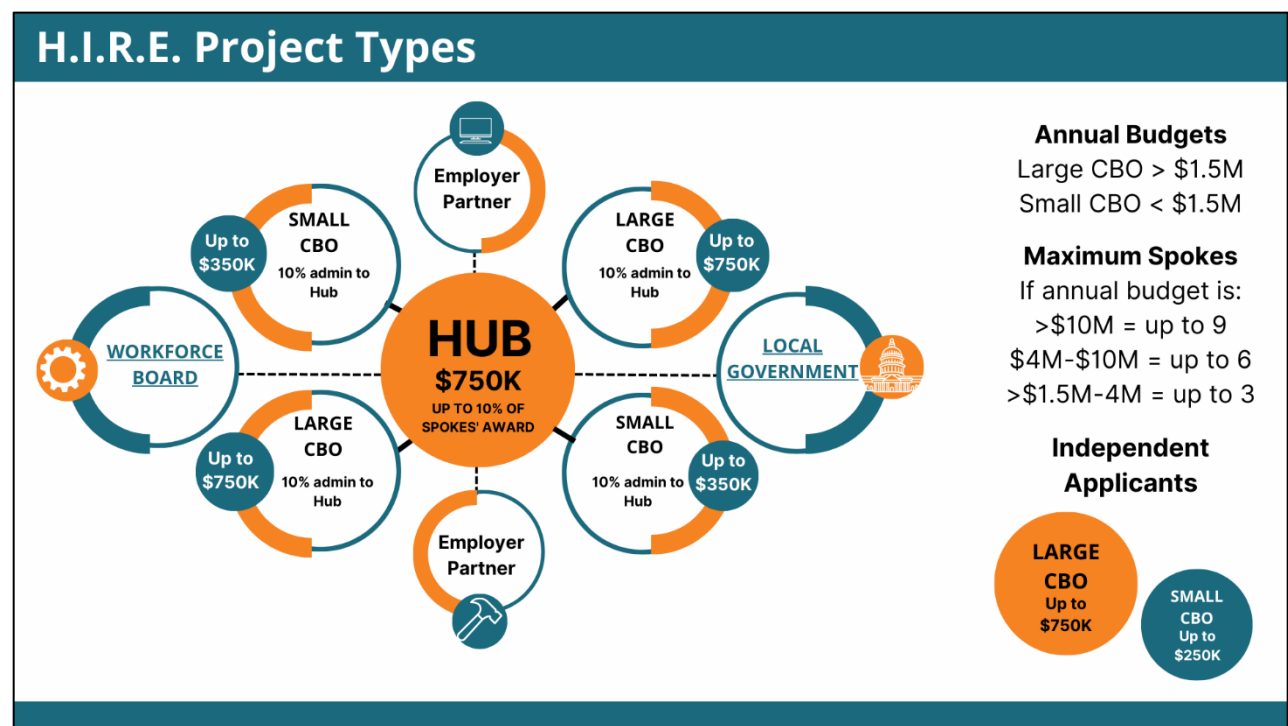HIRE Spokes are community and/or nonprofit organizations that are applying as part of a Network with a Hub via a single application. Spokes will work collaboratively with their Hubs to fulfill CWDB reporting requirements, complete financial transactions, and develop a Community of Practice within their Network. This includes but is not limited to, the issuance of needs-related payments and accounting reports.

Large CBOs (with an annual budget greater than $1.5 million) applying as a Spoke may request up **to $750,000** to complete proposed grant activities.

Small CBOs (with an annual budget less than or equal to $1.5 million) applying as a Spoke may request **up to $350,000** to complete proposed grant activities.

HIRE Network Model (About Hub & Spoke Partnerships)

Collaboration among service providers is a critical component of successful implementation of the HIRE grant initiative. Organizations applying as a HIRE Network will be expected to work together collectively throughout the grant term to serve the reentry community. HIRE Networks may operate throughout the state and serve one or more counties, cities, and/or other jurisdictions. Networks should share successful program models, outreach and retention strategies and coordinate performance criteria, reporting, and evaluation activities. Networks may be industry focused or contain partners that offer a variety of different services that serve the reentry community. Local boards, CBOs, and other agencies are expected to operate in a collaborative relationship to recruit and support participants, assess their needs, and provide supportive, direct, and needs related payments to participants.

Up to an additional 10% of total project costs are available for organizations willing to serve as Hubs for other community-based and/or nonprofit organizations (Spokes) in the HIRE Network model.

Technical Assistance Grant

Up to $500,000 is available to fund a Technical Assistance (TA) team to aid in continued development and implementation of awarded projects. TA applicants will complete a separate application which will be reviewed and awarded on the same timeline as HIRE program

applications. The TA grantee will also provide a forum for cross-project communication and peer-to-peer learning, supporting project-specific outcomes and broad HIRE goals.

CWDB program managers will provide day-to-day oversight of each grant, high-level strategic direction, and grant-related technical assistance. The awarded TA grantee will report to and work in coordination with the CWDB program team. The TA team will play key roles under four categories:

- Expertise and Capacity Building
- Regional Coordination
- Knowledge Sharing and Networking via Communities of Practice
- Development of Materials and Media

Refer to the *Technical Assistance Grant: Scoring Detail* section of this RFA for more information about deliverables and activities required under the TA grant. TA grant applications can be accessed via the Cal E-Grants system. Interested applicants should select the *Technical Assistance (HIRE)* application category to apply. More information about completing the online Technical Assistance application can be found in the HIRE Application Guide.

Because the TA provider role does not directly serve participants, the program requirements outlined in the following sections do not apply to the TA grantee:

- Required Partners
- Eligible Activities
- Eligible Participants

Community of Practice

The Community of Practice is a forum for grantees, staff, partners, and other key system stakeholders to share information, and provides the opportunity to solve problems and prioritize challenges addressed through dialogue and proactive thinking. Grantees and their program partners are expected to access peer and expert technical assistance, share successful program models and coordinate performance criteria and evaluation activities through the learning community.

The CWDB intends to convene at least one in-person meeting during the grant period; however in-person meetings will be contingent upon state and/or local public health guidance. Additionally, a series of virtual learning community meetings will be held throughout the grant term. Applicants' budget may include travel for appropriate staff to attend any in-person meetings.

In addition to the statewide Community of Practice described above, Network Hubs must cultivate a Community of Practice within their network by hosting in-person and/or virtual gatherings with their network partners. Best practices and lessons learned from these network-level Communities of Practice must be documented and shared with the CWDB.

Required Partners

To receive consideration for HIRE funding, all applicants, excluding TA applicants, must include partnership agreements between one or more local government entity/entities and one or more

local workforce development board. Partnership agreements must outline the partner role as part of the proposed project in each jurisdiction where services are to be delivered.

Local Governments

Eligible local government entities include but are not limited to local probation offices, public school districts, housing services agencies, municipal court, planning and economic development offices, public works departments, and other county, city, or municipal offices. Applicants are encouraged to partner with local government entities that provide services to the justice-involved and formerly incarcerated population. The nature of each project's local government partnership(s) may vary. The CWDB encourages applicants to pursue new and innovative partnerships that braid existing resources, place a minimal administrative burden on individual program participants, and increase opportunities for formerly incarcerated and justice-involved job seekers in their communities.

Local Workforce Development Boards

Local Workforce Development Boards (local boards) include [California's 45 local boards](). Local board partners must ensure a connection exists between awarded CBOs and the America's Job Center of California (AJCC) system. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their HIRE project will utilize the existing expertise and capacity of local boards that are currently implementing the P2E initiative.

Organizations applying as a Spoke within a Network are not required to submit partnership agreements, provided their Hub is submitting signed partnership agreements with local government and local workforce development board partners in the same geographic area as the Spoke's proposed service delivery area.

Eligible Activities

HIRE funds will be awarded as a single contract for direct services, supportive services, and needs-related payments to participants. Applicants are encouraged to structure their service strategy to integrate Direct and Supportive Services as well as Needs-Related Payments.

Direct Services and Supportive Services

Direct Services under the HIRE initiative include:
- Pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, training, customized training, incumbent worker training and on-the-job-training with the reentry population.
- Wages and stipends for trainees, program participation stipends and needs-related payments to support individuals' reentry and subsequent job search.
- Job readiness and bridge activities that serve as leading to enrollment and completion of training programs for the reentry population, such as obtaining housing and/or a driver's license.

Supportive Services play a critical role in ensuring participant success as they help to reduce barriers to employment. Supportive services are defined in the Unemployment Insurance Code, Section 14040© as services that are necessary to enable an individual to successfully participate in, or receive, workforce, education, and other related services authorized under Penal Code, Section 1234.4(c), Unemployment Insurance Code, Section 14035, as well as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and its corresponding regulations.

Supportive services can include, but are not limited to, assistance with: transportation, childcare, technology, food, housing and other obstacles necessary for program participants to successfully enter and complete training, education, and employment. Note that providing the types of services allowed under WIOA does not make individuals receiving Initiative funds a "reportable" individual for purposes of WIOA performance reporting unless WIOA funds are braided as part of a particular individual's service package.

Needs-Related Payments

Up to 30% of HIRE funds are intended for Needs-Related Payments. Needs-Related Payments refer to direct assistance to participants to address basic needs such as housing, food, technological needs, and transportation. They are not stipends provided to participants as a cost coverage for participation in workforce programs. HIRE promotes the use of needs-related payments to support individuals' reentry and subsequent job search, including job readiness activities that lead to enrollment and completion of training programs**.**

CWDB encourages the utilization of HIRE funds towards needs-related payments using a methodology adapted to the needs of each project's target population. Research has demonstrated there are economic benefits associated with providing direct cash assistance to participants seeking assistance.[7] Awarded projects may also choose to issue needs-related payments to participants for achieving milestones that advance participants' preparation to enter employment. These payments have been declared to serve a public purpose, as they contribute to California's economy and reducing recidivism[8]. Although CWDB supports the utilization of needs-related payments, they are not a requirement for any project type.

Applicants are encouraged to integrate Needs-Related payments into their project design, but the provision of Needs-Related payments is not a requirement.

Eligible Participants

Grant funds will support activities for California's reentry population.

For the purposes of this grant, the reentry population includes individuals who were:
- Previously incarcerated in a local juvenile or adult correctional facility
- Previously incarcerated in a state juvenile or adult correctional facility
- Justice-involved individuals.

Justice involved individuals are defined as individuals who are on parole, probation, mandatory supervision, or post-release community supervision and are supervised by, or are under the jurisdiction of, a county or the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.[9]

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[7] Sankar-Bergmann, A., & Haroon, H. (2020). The Case for Direct Cash Transfers: How Organizations Can Support Communities in Navigating the Covid-19 Financial Crisis. Prosperity Now. https://prosperitynow.org/sites/default/files/resources/The-Case-for-Direct-Cash-Transfers.pdf.
[8] Assembly Bill 178
[9] Section 14040 of the Unemployment Insurance Code

Grant Awards

Grant award amounts will be determined through an evaluation process conducted by the CWDB. Applications will be evaluated based on several factors, including but not limited to:

- Applicant's ability to comprehensively respond to the narrative questions and other required application components.
- Proposed number of participants served.
- Evidence of the applicant's capacity to complete the proposed grant activities.

Priority consideration will be given to applications that:

- Demonstrate a proven success rate of placing program graduates into unionized and career-track employment.
- Propose matching funds, including, but not limited to, moneys committed by local workforce development boards, local governments, and private foundation funds.
- Are submitted by an organization that currently participates in or administers a paid workforce training program for individuals with high barriers to employment within the reentry population.
- Include the provision of stipends or assistance program participation stipends and needs-related payments for reentry program participants.
- Specifies an array of wraparound services available to participants, including, but not limited to, case management, health and wellness services, legal services, and workforce and education services.

Performance

Applicants must include program performance goals, targets, deliverables, and evaluation metrics that fit the justice-involved population as defined in the Eligible Participants section of this RFA. The CWDB may review and revise these performance criteria with each grantee.

Tracking Participant Milestones and Outcomes

The CWDB is interested in documenting and celebrating milestones in addition to outcomes for participants. Awarded grantees should document success throughout the grant term by choosing to report information regarding participants' completion of milestones. Milestones may include Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs) as defined under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)[10]. Success may also include evidence of other achievements such as obtaining a driver's license, entering a substance abuse treatment program, and paying off debts.

HIRE funds allow for the support of participant success upon the completion of certain milestone achievements that align with project objectives. Grantees are encouraged to document progress on various milestones that may be achieved throughout an individual's participation in the program. See Appendix A for further examples of milestone achievements that align with HIRE's objectives.

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[10] WIOA Performance Indicators and Measures

Program Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

Awarded grantees must provide all necessary information to the CWDB to facilitate grant performance evaluation. Each grant will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Ability to provide the services proposed in the grant to the number of individuals specified in the grant as evidenced by, among other factors, whether the grantee completed the work proposed.
- Ability of individuals to successfully complete relevant programming funded under the grant as demonstrated by relevant measures directly related to the purpose of the program.
- Ability of individuals to succeed in both the broader workforce and education system and labor market once they transition into the broader system. This shall be measured by tracking these individuals utilizing existing performance monitoring systems and metrics governing relevant programs and outcomes once they transition into the broader system.
- Ability to provide comprehensive updates on project activities, successes, and challenges, submit accurate reporting, invoices, and contract modification requests throughout the grant term.

Awarded grantees will be responsible for ensuring all program data is captured and that data is, to the extent feasible, complete, and accurate. The CWDB will provide a Data Guide to grantees prior to the issuance of grant funds.

Data Management

All information reported to CWDB is expected to be complete, accurate, and proprietary. Reported data will be used by the CWDB for evaluation purposes and only shared publicly as an aggregate of the HIRE program as a whole. The CWDB will not publicly share personally identifiable information of any participant, client, or organization without prior consent or authorization.

Collection of Personal Information

The CWDB administers the HIRE initiative as authorized by AB 178. The HIRE initiative entails the collection of Personal Information as defined in the EDD Privacy Policy.

Use of Personal Information

The CWDB collects Personal Information for the following purposes:
- Program evaluation
- Participant eligibility

Providing participant data, program outcomes, and any additional information requested by the CWDB is mandatory. Grantees that decline to provide this information, may be subject to revocation of grant funds.

Sustainability

In addition to the CWDB's HIRE Grant, applicants are encouraged to include narrative detail on intended strategies for pursuing additional funds to sustain partnerships for serving the reentry population beyond the life of this RFA's funding period.

Program Goals & Deliverables

Project applications should:

- Describe how the proposed service strategy will reach and serve participants.
- Clearly define how individuals served will be prepared to enter and/or advance in workforce and education programs.
- Outline the skills and competencies the project seeks to achieve with participants for them to enter the labor market, retain employment, and earn wages leading to self-sufficiency, economic mobility, and security.

Details of proposed project goals and deliverables should be clearly outlined and consistent throughout the application including the narrative, outcomes and deliverables, work plan, partner roles and responsibilities, and the participant plan.

Section Two. Grant Timeline

Application & Award Timeline

Event	Details
RFA Release	May 15, 2023
Applications Due	July 10, 2023
Award Announcement	September 2023*
Contract Processing	4-6 months*
Estimated Program Start Date	Early 2024*
Grant Term	12 months

*estimated

The CWDB may adjust dates after the application submission deadline on Cal-E-Grants without an addendum to this RFA. Significant dates, including cutoff dates and review periods, will be posted on the HIRE webpage.

Grantees must complete reimbursable grant activities by March 31, 2025. The remainder of the contract term will be used for grant evaluation and closeout.

Weekly Q&A

To adhere to the legality and transparency requirements of the solicitation process, individual CWDB staff cannot respond directly to inquiries or engage with potential applicants during the solicitation period. The Q&A document serves as a supplement to this RFA and is intended to clarify policy about the grant and application process.

Questions regarding this RFA can be sent via email to Solicitations@cwdb.ca.gov. Please use "HIRE Question" in the subject line.

Cumulative questions and answers will be posted on the HIRE webpage on a weekly basis beginning Friday, May 26, 2023. Questions must be received each Tuesday by 2:00 PM (PST) to be

included in that Friday's weekly posting. The last Q&A posting will be Friday, July 7, and questions must be received by Monday, July 3, at 3:00 PM to receive an answer. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be included or answered in the Q&A.

Contracting Process and Timeline

CWDB partners with EDD to process and execute grant contracts following the award process. The contract process will begin with CWDB program staff contacting awarded organizations to make edits to application exhibits. Grantees are expected to respond and make requested edits promptly. Once requested edits are made, CWDB will submit relevant documentation to EDD for contract processing. This process includes several steps in which EDD collects, reviews, and approves submitted contract documentation. At the conclusion of this process, the completed contract package will be sent to the awarded organization for signature. Upon receipt of the required signature(s), the contract will be executed and program activities can begin. Program activities cannot begin until a contract is fully executed, despite the grant term start date. Awarded grantees should expect the contracting process to take 4-6 months.

Any changes to an organization's contact information as identified in their application at any point during the grant cycle, including primary and fiscal point(s) of contact, must be communicated to the CWDB immediately. Failure to provide valid and current contact information and/or failure to respond to CWDB requests for information during the award process may result in revocation of a grant award.

Section Three. Application Submission Instructions

All applications for HIRE funding must be submitted electronically through the Cal-E-Grants website. Only applications submitted through the Cal E-Grants application website will be considered. Paper applications will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified. Applicants can find the HIRE application on Cal-E-Grants under the *Funding Opportunities* link (located in the upper left corner of the website) or under the CWDB link (located in the middle of the website).

To begin the application, locate and select the **Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment (HIRE)** link and select *Start Application*.

Cal E-Grants Account

Applicants must create a Cal-E-Grants account to access the HIRE application.

To sign up for an account:
1. Click on the *Log In* button on Cal-E-Grants.
2. Select *Sign Up.*
3. Enter the required information in the *New User Registration Form.*
4. Follow the steps to complete registration.
5. For more information on new registration, refer to the New User Registration.

If a Cal-E-Grants account already exists for your organization, request your organization's primary account holder add the applying user via the system's *Manage Users* function. For information on adding new users, visit Manage Users.

Once logged in, select the *Apply* button in the right-hand corner of the page.

Application Guide

A comprehensive guide with detailed instructions for completing each section of the HIRE application can be found on CWDB's website at the link below. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Application Guide before submitting an application.

[HIRE Application Guide](#)

Application Elements

Applicants must complete and include each of the following application elements:

1. **Cover Page**: Input basic information about the organization and proposed project.
2. **Narrative**: Respond to the narrative questions about the proposed project. There is a 3,000-character limit per text box.
3. **Outcomes and Deliverables**: Identify specific project outcomes and deliverables, define alignment with HIRE's objectives, and provide metric targets for the project.
4. **Work Plan:** Provide details about proposed activities and estimated milestone completion dates quarterly throughout the grant term. This information must align with the scope of work, goals, and deliverables outlined in the project narrative.
5. **Participant Plan:** Identify the number of participants the project plans to enroll, train, and place in post-secondary education, state-approved apprenticeship, and/or employment.
6. **Partner Roles & Responsibilities:** List all partnering organizations and their roles and responsibilities as part of the HIRE project and any leveraged/match funds provided by partner organizations. Local government AND one (1) local workforce development board are required partners and must be included.
7. **Expenditure Plan**: Enter quarterly spending projections for the expenditure of proposed grant funding.
8. **Budget Narrative:** Provide details related to proposed line-item allocations.
9. **Supplemental Budget:** Complete if grant funds are used for Equipment Purchases, Leased Equipment, Contractual Services, and/or Subrecipient.
10. **Budget Summary:** List all line-item allocations of the proposed budget. Costs are divided into two categories: Grant Funds and Leveraged Funds (Match)*.*
11. **Upload Documents:** Each application must include partnership agreements between a local government entity and one or more local workforce development boards for each jurisdiction where services are to be delivered, current proof of non-profit status, along with verification of annual budget, and form STD 204. All supporting documents must be submitted via the *Upload Documents* section. For more information on partnership agreements and annual budget requirements, see the [HIRE Application Guide](#).

Section Four. Scoring Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated based on their alignment with the HIRE initiative's objectives. Successful applications that meet the evaluation criteria described below will be eligible for funding consideration.

Technical Review

All applications received will be subject to an initial round of review for adherence to and alignment with HIRE program requirements. Prior to the CWDB's application scoring process, all applications will be reviewed for:

- Tax-exempt status
- Appropriate partnership agreements that detail each party's role in relation to the proposed project(s)
- Verification of annual operating budget

Applications that are missing required documentation are subject to automatic disqualification.

HIRE Grants: Scoring Detail

The tables below provide an overview, by project type, of the scoring categories and total available points available by section, that will be used during the CWDB's application scoring process.

Network Hub

SECTIONS TO BE SCORED	MAXIMUM POINTS
1. Network Hub Role & Budget Overview	25
2. Project Framework	20
3. Target Population	10
4. Service Strategy*	20
5. Partnerships	20
6. Other Requirements	5
Total Points	100

Independent/Network Spoke

SECTIONS TO BE SCORED	MAXIMUM POINTS
1. Project Framework	30
2. Target Population	10
3. Service Strategy*	25
4. Partnerships	25
5. Other Requirements	10
Total Points	100

Technical Assistance

SECTIONS TO BE SCORED	MAXIMUM POINTS
1. Expertise & Capacity Building	40
2. Local & Regional Collaboration	40
3. Knowledge Sharing & Networking	10
4. Materials & Media	10
Total Points	100

*Bonus points available in these sections can increase an applicant score above the total points

listed.

Rejection of Funding Request

The CWDB reserves the right to waive any immaterial deviation in an application; however, the waiver of an immaterial deviation in an application shall in no way modify the document or excuse the successful applicant from full compliance with the application requirements after the contract is awarded.

An application may be rejected for any of the following reasons:
- The application is incomplete or fails to meet the solicitation specifications and/or basic application requirements.
- The application contains false or misleading statements or references which do not support an attribute or condition claimed by the applicant. The application shall be rejected if, in the CWDB's opinion, such information was intended to erroneously mislead the state in its evaluation of the application.
- The applicant has received a substantive negative contract evaluation from the State of California.
- The applicant has had a contract with the State of California canceled due to failure to comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1990.
- It is determined that the applicant is not responsible. Examples of why an applicant may not be found responsible include:
    - No business license.
    - Submitted an application when the license is subject to suspension on the date of the application opening and/or award of the contract or during the proposed term of the Agreement.
    - Submitted an application without an authorized signature.
    - Falsified any information in the application package or has had poor performance on a previous contract with the CWDB.
- Upon license verification with the Contractor's State Licensing Board, it is found that an applicant's license is subject to suspension on the date of the application opening and/or award of the contract or during the proposed term of the Agreement.

Appeal

If the applicant disputes an action of the CWDB, the applicant may appeal to the CWDB's Executive Director or designee. Such appeals shall be filed within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the notification of such dispute. A written appeal shall:
- state the basis for the appeal.
- state the action being requested of the Executive Director.
- include any documentation relating to the dispute.

The CWDB's Executive Director or designee will review the correspondence and related documentation and render a decision on the appeal, except in those cases where the applicant withdraws or abandons the appeal. The procedural time requirement may be waived with the mutual consent of the applicant and the Executive Director.

Disposition of Application

All materials submitted in response to this RFA will become the property of the CWDB, and as such, are subject to the Public Records Act (Gov. Code, § 6250, et seq.). The CWDB will disregard any language purporting to render all or portions of any application confidential.

After applications are evaluated, and the notices of intent to award have been posted, all applications shall be available for public inspection.

The contents of all applications, draft RFAs, correspondence, agenda, memoranda, working papers, or any other medium which discloses any aspect of an applicant's application shall be held in the strictest confidence until the award is made. The CWDB shall hold the content of all working papers and discussions relating to an application confidential indefinitely unless the public's interest is best served by the disclosure because of relevance to a decision, Agreement, or evaluation of an application. An applicant's disclosure of this subject is a basis for rejecting an application and ruling the applicant ineligible to participate further in the process.

The application process does not act as procurement, nor does it waive local, state, and federal procurement rules and requirements. All contractual services must be competitively procured in accordance with state and federal procurement regulations, and policies and types of procurement must be outlined in the Supplemental Budget. Links to applicable resources are included within the Supplemental Budget.

Contracted funds must be categorized as either a Contractual Service or Subrecipient. Upon review, the state may determine that a Subrecipient is a contractor. If a Subrecipient is deemed a contractor, all procurement requirements apply. The *Procurement Requirements* section of this document contains additional information.

Section Five. Funding Requirements

Funding requests must be clearly justified and outlined within the application's Narrative, Budget Summary, and Budget Narrative – including a breakdown of all costs within a line item and thorough descriptions provided under the Budget Narrative. The CWDB reserves the right to request additional information as needed. Funding requests must align with the funding ranges identified in the Project Types section of this document.

No obligation or commitment of funds will be allowed prior to the start of the grant term or beyond the grant term end date. Any grant funds not expended during the grant period will be returned to the state.

The CWDB and EDD reserve the option to extend grant periods within the term limits placed on the funding appropriation and with proven justification. The CWDB also reserves the right to adjust the total number, duration, and amount of each grant award, including allocating additional funds above the requested amounts.

Direct, Indirect, and Administrative Costs

Definitions and guidance related to Direct, Administrative, and Indirect costs are provided below:

Direct (Program) Costs
Expenses directly related to implementing the proposed grant activities.

Administrative Costs
Expenses directly associated with grant implementation, management, and reporting.

Indirect Costs
Expenses associated with the costs of doing business that are not readily identified within a particular grant, contract, project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs. Indirect costs are frequently referred to as overhead expenses. Generally, direct administration costs differ from indirect costs in that the latter are considered organization-wide costs that are required to run operations but do not have a direct role in grant implementation.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)
Indirect cost rate established with the Federal Government. Each agreement will include:
- The approved rate(s) and information directly related to the use of the rates, e.g., type of rate, effective period, and distribution base;
- The treatment of fringe benefits as either direct and/or indirect costs;
- General terms and conditions; and
- Special remarks, e.g., composition of the indirect cost pool.

If claiming an indirect cost rate above 20%, the applicant is required to submit a NICRA from a cognizant agency outlining all the information above to the CWDB for review and approval. NICRAs with redacted information will not be accepted.

Organizations with a NICRA accepted by CWDB will have direct administrative costs capped at 10% of the grant award.

De Minimis Rate
A de minimis indirect cost rate of 20% of the grant award can be used by organizations who do not have a NICRA or who cannot provide one.

Administrative Cost Cap
If using the De Minimis rate, direct administrative costs are capped at 10% and combined direct and indirect cannot exceed 20% of the grant award amount.

When Should Costs that are Normally Indirect Be Counted as Direct Costs?
Costs for program implementation are direct costs, however, direct costs should include costs normally classified as indirect when they are directly allocated to the project, such as when:
- Overall program management, program coordination, project director, and project evaluator.
- Preparing program plans, budgets schedules, and related amendments.
- Monitoring of programs, projects, sub-recipients and related systems and processes.
- Developing systems and procedures, including management information systems, for assuring compliance with program requirements.
- Preparing reports and other documents related to the program requirements.
- Evaluating program results against stated objectives.

- Performing administration services such as program specific payroll, accounting, auditing or legal activities.

Examples of non-labor costs include:
- Costs for goods and services required for administration of the program, including such goods and services as the rental or purchase of equipment, utilities, office supplies, postage, and rental and maintenance of office space.
- Travel costs incurred for official business in carrying out program management and administrative activities.

Leveraged/Match Funds

Leveraged/Match funds are not required for the HIRE grant. However, the CWDB encourages applicants to leverage cash or in-kind support for project activities.

Cash Match is a contribution of funds made available specifically for project activities and must be consistent with allowable activities of the funding source.

In-Kind Match is a contribution of non-cash resources explicitly used for project activities and includes, but is not limited to, donated personnel or staff, services, and the use of equipment or space.

The terms *Match* and *Leveraged* funds are used interchangeably for the purposes of the HIRE grant.

Leveraged/Match resources can be from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, businesses, industry associations, labor organizations, CBOs, education and training providers, and/or federal, state, and local government programs. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the source of leveraged funds allows those funds to be leveraged for the purpose of this grant. **WIOA dollars cannot be used as match.**

Procurement Requirements

Grantees (Fiscal Agents) must obtain three competitive quotes for purchases and purchase orders over $2,500. Quotes must justify that the cost of the equipment is reasonable. Fiscal Agents do not need to submit quotes to the CWDB but are required to obtain and keep them on file in the event they are monitored or audited.

Example: Buying ten laptops at $500 each would result in a purchase order of $5,000 and would require three competitive quotes.

If an expense is listed in the Grantee's (Fiscal Agent) budget but the CWDB cannot determine how the cost is related to the scope of work, deliverables, and outcomes, and/or activities, the Grantee (Fiscal Agent) is required to complete the CWDB *Use of Funding Approval* form. The Grantee (Fiscal Agent) will have to provide justification for that cost and explain how the cost is related to the scope of work, deliverables, and outcomes, and/or activities.

Sole Source Procurement

If a purchase is a sole source purchase (only one vendor capable of providing an item or service, so a competitive bid cannot be obtained), justification must be provided detailing why the purchase cannot be competitively procured and why the provider was selected.

All sole-source purchases (regardless of price) require a Proprietary Letter. A Proprietary Letter explains an entity's rights to its specialized good or services. Fiscal Agents do not need to submit this letter to the CWDB but are required to obtain and keep the Proprietary Letter on file in the event they are monitored.

Monitoring and Audits

After grant approval, grantees may be monitored and/or audited by the state under existing policies, procedures, and requirements governing the use of state funds. The grantee is expected to be responsive to all requests including but not limited to, compliance monitor's requests, providing reasonable and timely access to records and staff, facilitating access to subcontractors, and communicating with compliance monitors in a timely and accurate manner. If performance is insufficient or the project is not performing and making progress towards deliverables, the state will consider placing the agency on cash hold and possibly de-obligating funds. The grantee must conduct regular oversight and monitoring of all contractors and their subrecipients. The CWDB monitors the administrative performance of all its grantees. Poor grant administration practices may result in a denial of future funding.

Section Six. Reporting Requirements

The Fiscal Agent/Subrecipient (applicants selected for funding) must complete progress reports including participating in pre-scheduled quarterly check-in calls and submitting comprehensive semi-annual progress reports and closeout reports. The CWDB will assess the information gathered during the quarterly check-in call and the semi-annual report to ensure the project is progressing throughout the grant term.

Quarterly Progress Report & Closeout

As part of their duties, grantees must:
- Track and enter relevant data monthly.
- Participate in quarterly pre-scheduled Zoom meetings.
- Complete semi-annual progress reports and submit them through Cal-E-Grants.

An email notification will be sent to the Fiscal Agent when the report is active and available to complete. More information about these requirements will be provided to awarded grantees following contract execution.

The closeout report must be completed and submitted through Cal-E-Grants. The report will focus on activities through the grant term.

Grantees are responsible for providing complete and comprehensive responses demonstrating activities, progress, success, and challenges in project implementation. Failure to provide correct or responsive answers may impact the performance and evaluation of the grantee and the project.

Periodic Review and Information Requests

The CWDB may conduct periodic reviews or request information from awarded projects as needed throughout the grant term. If a grantee is not performing in accordance with program requirements, the recipient will be subject to remedies for non-performance and corrective action plans up to deobligation of funds and cancelling of the grant agreement.

Grant Oversight

CWDB staff will provide day-to-day grant oversight, administrative assistance, and project management, including contract, fiscal, reporting, and grant technical assistance.

CWDB Support

CWDB staff is available to respond to questions about HIRE. During the application process, please submit any questions about this RFA and/or Cal-E-Grants to Solicitations@cwdb.ca.gov. If awarded, HIRE program grantees will be directed to a Program Implementation mailbox.

Payment Provision & Invoicing

This grant operates on a reimbursement structure. Small CBOs (organizations with an operating budget of less than $1.5 million in the prior fiscal year) may submit an invoice to receive up to 20% of their approved budget upon contract execution with CWDB to support the implementation of grant activities. Monthly invoices are required to account for all advanced funds. The remaining awarded grant funds will be provided through a monthly reimbursement process. Under no circumstances will selected applicants receive provision of payment prior to contract execution.

CWDB will compensate all grantees for services satisfactorily rendered upon receipt and approval of invoices, in accordance with the approved Budget Summary. The total invoiced amount shall not exceed the award amount. Grantees shall maintain thorough accounting ledgers to support all charges and year-to-date expenditures of grant funds.

Under no circumstances will the CWDB pay for services provided before the start date or the final Standard Agreement approval of the state, whichever is later. Final approval occurs when all parties have signed the Standard Agreement, with the latest signature date being the date of final approval.

Grantees will submit monthly invoices in accordance with funding requirements for approval by CWDB through Cal E-Grants. Invoices are due by the 20th of the following month. Payments shall be issued within 45 calendar days from the date the invoice is received, in accordance with the California Prompt Payment Act.

If a new user needs to complete and submit an invoice on Cal-E-Grants, the primary user for the organization should add a new user rather than create a new Cal-E-Grants account. Visit Manage Users for instructions on how to add a new user to the primary user's Cal-E-Grants account.

Training will be provided to all selected grantees. Final invoices for all reimbursable grant activities must be submitted no later than March 31, 2025.

Section Seven. Appendices

Appendix A. Examples of Participant Milestones

Here is a list of participant milestones that HIRE awardees may be asked to track. Final details will be provided when awardees begin their HIRE programs.

- Reunited with family
- Reunited with children
- Obtained short-term housing
- Obtained long-term housing
- Obtained own vehicle
- Began paying off debt
- Paid off debt
- Began saving money
- Enrolled in/Receiving health coverage
- Received medical treatment for physical issues
- Resolved physical health issues
- Received mental health treatment
- Resolved mental health issues
- Received treatment for substance use
- Completed treatment program for substance use
- Attend ongoing substance use treatment program
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved self-confidence
- Enrolled in government social support services (e.g. TANF)
- Received driver's license
- Registered to vote
- Completed probation
- Completed parole

Appendix B. Guidance on Estimating Annual Operating Budgets

Applicants can estimate their organization's annual operating budget by using this simple calculation:

OPERATING BUDGET =
Total expenditures – grants to governments, organizations, and individuals - benefits paid to members

Annual budgets may also be verified by following the outlined next steps:

Obtaining and Using Form 990

1. Create a free account on guidestar.org.
2. Enter in the name of the organization you wish to obtain a Form 990 for.
3. In the summary section, download the most recent Form 990.
4. Calculate an estimation of an organization's annual operating budget using the following formula:

    Part IX Line 25MINUS
    Part IX Line 1 MINUS
    Part IX Line 2 MINUS
    Part IX Line 3 MINUS
    Part IX Line 4 EQUALS an estimate of the organization's annual operating budget