Workforce Accelerator 14 Grant Program

Cumulative questions and answers will be posted weekly beginning Friday, July 24, 2026.

Questions must be received each Tuesday by 2:00 p.m. PST to be included in that Friday's weekly posting. The last Q&A posting will be on Friday, August 21, 2026, and questions must be received by Wednesday, August 19, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. PST to receive an answer. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be included or answered in the Q&A.

Email questions regarding this RFA to Solicitations@cwdb.ca.gov. Please use "WAF 14 Question" in the subject line. The Q&A does not include duplicate questions. The CWDB encourages prospective applicants to utilize the search feature (CTRL+F) in this document to find answers to frequently asked or previously asked questions.

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Weekly Q&A as of Friday, August 21, 2026 - FINAL

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Q: Are local governments, state governments, and tribal governments eligible to serve as Lead Applicants for this program?

A: Yes, local, state, and tribal government entities are eligible to serve as Lead Applicants for Accelerator 14, provided they have the capacity to fulfill the responsibilities outlined on page 3 of the RFA.

Q: Can a California State University foundation serve as the Lead Applicant instead of the university itself?

A: Yes. University foundations are an allowable Lead Applicant for Accelerator 14.

Q: May a for-profit LLC participate as a project lead through a fiscal sponsor or eligible partner?

A: Accelerator 14 does not have a formal "project lead" designation that is distinct from the Lead Applicant role described on page 3 of the RFA. An LLC is eligible to serve as a partner organization but may <u>not</u> serve as a Lead Applicant.

Q: Can a local organization provide a defined training component while a larger workforce or educational institution serves as the Lead Applicant?

A: Yes, the described partnership structure is allowable.

Q: We're in partnership with a Council of Government (COG) that includes both schools and employers, community colleges, and educators. Would it be wise to allow our COG to serve as the Lead Applicant for our project since they are composed of multiple entities that meet the requirements for Lead Applicants outlined on page 3 of the RFA? Or would it be preferred that we designate an alternative Lead Applicant for our project, comprised only of a solo entity or organization that can fulfill the requirements as outlined?

A: Provided the Council of Governments is a non-profit entity, it would be eligible to serve as a lead applicant. In this example, the applicant should specify the role of each organization represented by the council in the proposed project and substantiate their role through partnership commitment letters.

Q: Would partnerships with regional organizations, such as Councils of Governments, strengthen statewide scalability?

A: Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate, in the Scope of Work response and Partner Roles & Responsibilities exhibit, how partnerships will support the project's scalability.

REQUIRED PARTNERS

Q: For organizations focused on K-12 education, what would the Employer Attestation look like?

A: The Employer Attestation requirements are the same for any type of Lead Applicant.

Q: Can a company located in Canada participate as a partner?

A: Yes, organizations outside of the United States may participate in Accelerator 14 as a program partner only. Organizations that will serve as Lead Applicants must have a documented presence in California. Partner organizations do not have this same requirement.

Q: Can a nonprofit serve as the technology, artificial intelligence navigation, outreach, and participant engagement lead while a community college serves as the education lead?

A: Applicants should ensure their proposal is designed to align with the partnership structure described in the RFA's eligibility requirements as described in pages 3 – 5.

Q: Under the Industry Partnerships scoring category, will Partnership Commitment letters from firms engaged with the project's industry (for example: venture capital funds whose portfolio companies operate in the target sector) receive 10 points per letter, or is that category limited to employers with direct hiring demand?

A: Employer partners should understand the workforce needs unique to their industry, offer industry analyses about the jobs and skills they need, and provide specific information about technology, equipment, and operational conditions critical for effective job training. Partnerships with employers should seek to identify opportunities for hiring, upskilling, promotion, retraining, and problem-solving for future demand.

PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENT LETTER REQUIREMENTS

Q: Do partnership commitment letters need to disclose the estimated leverage amount they will be committing to? This has been a requirement in the past.

A: Partnership commitment letters do not need to reference a leverage amount. The Partner Roles and Responsibilities exhibit of the application is where applicants should document any leverage from partner organizations.

Q: Should my application mention the task of each partner in the Scope of Work or only in the commitment letter?

A: The Partner Roles and Responsibilities (Partner R&R) exhibit is intended to capture tasks to be performed by project partners. Partner roles described in the Scope of Work and partnership letters should align with the Partner R&R exhibit.

Q: We are applying for the Planning & Development grant. Do our partnership letters need to reflect the anticipated work to be done throughout the grant term? Or will signed documentation regarding the existence of the partnership and intention to collaborate to fulfill the needs of the project meet the minimum requirements for funding?

A: Partnership commitments for the Planning and Development project type must reflect the partner organization's commitment to both collaborate in the planning and development of the project and align with their partner's planned activities as described in the Partner Roles & Responsibilities exhibit.

EMPLOYER ATTESTATION

Q: Could CWDB change the Employer Attestation requirement from hiring participants to simply interviewing them, or make the hiring commitment optional?

A: Applicants unable to obtain employer commitments to hire participants are encouraged to apply as a Planning and Development project rather than the Innovation Impact Project Type. Planning projects require only employer participation in planning throughout the grant term and do not include hiring commitments.

Q: Would internships or pre-apprenticeships qualify as employment for this grant?

A: No, Employer Attestations must include a commitment to hire participants. Internships and pre-apprenticeships do not satisfy this requirement.

Q: For employer attestation letters, can employer partners place conditions on commitments to hire participants?

A: Yes, the required employer commitment letter(s) for the Innovation Impact project type may include conditions such as completion of proposed training.

Q: How much emphasis is placed on employer hiring commitments versus letters of support?

A: An Employer Attestation, which must entail a hiring commitment from at least one employer, is required for the Innovation Impact project type. Innovation Impact projects will receive scoring credit for additional Employer Attestations OR Partnership Commitment letters from one or more employer partners. Planning and Development applicants must submit at least one Partnership Commitment Letter from an employer partner and will receive points for additional employer Partnership Commitment Letters. Please reference pages 5, 6, and 8 of the RFA.

TARGET POPULATIONS

Q: Can Veterans serve as a stand-alone Target Population, even if participants are not enrolled in postsecondary education?

A: Yes, Veterans are an eligible target population and there is no requirement that they be enrolled in other programming.

Q: Our project will be serving Veterans with disabilities. People with disabilities are also identified as another Target Population for this funding. Will we receive priority consideration since our project will serve people who meet the definition for both populations?

A: Serving an identified Target Population is a requirement of the program. Projects that serve people who meet the definitions for multiple target populations will not receive additional points during application scoring. However, grant funds can serve a participant pool that is comprised of multiple target populations.

Q: If the project's target population is Veterans, do all participants have to be Veterans?

A: No; however, participants receiving services funded by Accelerator 14 grant funds must be WIOA eligible.

Q: In a Planning and Development application, if we pilot our training using a population different from the target population (for example, piloting with professors even though our target population is students), can we still use grant funds to cover the pilot participants' costs?

A: Accelerator 14 participants must meet Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) eligibility requirements, and grantees must provide data on training outcomes (e.g., credentials earned, job placements, etc.). Because the individuals in the example are described as currently employed teachers and professors, they are unlikely to meet WIOA eligibility requirements and would therefore be ineligible to receive participant services under this grant. These individuals, as described, would be contributors to the planning and development of the program rather than participants in a training program. Staff time for planning and development activities is an allowable cost for this grant.

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

Q: The Partner R&R exhibit requires applicants to provide text in the field, "K-12 School District". Does this mean that a school district is required for this grant? Would collaborating with a high school count as a "Required Partner"?

A: In this example, collaboration with a high school would meet the Required Partner requirement for the "K-12 School District" category.

Q: The Work Plan exhibit states that fiscal agents must complete grant activities by December 31, 2028. Can you please explain what that means and how that works if the grant term end date is 3/31/2029?

A: This is a system error. Activities should be reported in the Work Plan exhibit through the end of the grant term, **March 31, 2029**.

Q: Regarding the Supplemental Budget and procurement language on page 16, how should a Lead Applicant classify a for-profit LLC's proposed paid scope under the Subrecipient and Contractor Distinctions (WSD18-06): as a Subrecipient, a Contractual Service, or potentially either, depending on specific conditions? If a Subrecipient classification may be appropriate, please identify the relevant conditions or responsibilities the proposed partner must hold.

A: Generally, subrecipients are responsible for meeting all programmatic compliance requirements. Contractors are subject to procurement regulations and are required to present specific deliverables for completion of a contract (which, if not completed, can result in non-payment or legal action). Subrecipients, on the other hand, can complete their obligation with an outcome or expenditure closeout report. Please refer to [WSD 18-06] for more information about the distinctions between subrecipients and contractors.

Q: What is the expectation regarding citations for claims made in the narrative sections? Footnote citations are taking up a lot of the word count; would an occasional in-text citation be sufficient?

A: The CWDB does not require citations in the narrative section. Applicants may include supporting documentation, such as a list of citations and/or footnotes, as a supplemental document submitted via the "**Upload Documents**" section of the application.

Please note: Only narrative content submitted via the Scope of Work will be scored.

SELECTIONS AND AWARD PROCESS

Q: The RFA says 2 awards will be made. Is that one for each Project Type? Or is it possible you'll award two projects of the same type (I.e. both Planning or both Innovation Impact)?

A: There is no predetermined number of awards for each project category.

Q: How many awards are expected in each category?

A: At least two total awards are expected. There is $3 million available with a maximum award of $1.5 million. There is no predetermined number of awards for each project category.

Q: Is there a preference for proposals that request the maximum award amount?

A: No. Applicants should request only the amount needed for the proposed project.

Q: Is the CWDB looking to fund projects that combine both quantum and fusion?

A: Proposals focused on both sectors are allowable but will not receive preference.

Q: Is there a prioritization in scoring if the Lead Applicant is a non-profit organization?

A: No, the type of organization serving as a project's lead applicant is not a factor that will be considered in grant scoring.

Q: Is there a ratio of planned awards for Planning & Development grants vs Innovation impact?

A: No, the CWDB has not predetermined the number of grants by Project Type.

Q: Will the need for services in the region be a factor that is considered in scoring? Our county's local plan has objectives that align with this grant.

A: The CWDB encourages applicants to identify and describe labor market demand for the project's target occupation(s) in the application's Scope of Work.

GRANT TERM

Q: Can the project end before the posted end of the grant term? That is, is it permissible for a project to be scheduled to end before March 31, 2029? Can the project's design be shorter, as in 15-24 months?

A: Yes, applicants are not precluded from proposing projects that end their activities prior to the end of the grant's term. The CWDB encourages applicants to use the full grant term. However, if a project can complete all required deliverables and project goals before the conclusion of the grant term, that is allowable.

LEVERAGED FUNDING REQUIREMENT

Q: Can we use WIOA Title I Adult or Dislocated Worker funds as leverage?

A: WIOA resources may be used as a source of leverage, but not as a cash match. For more information, please review page 19 of the RFA.

*(**Note:** A previous version of this response indicated WIOA formula funds were not an allowable source of leverage. That error has been corrected in the above response.*

Q: Can a discounted software license provided by a partner be used as a source of leverage? For example, the software is valued at $20k, and our partner would be

willing to offer us a $10k discount. Are we able to use the discount of $10k toward the Leveraged Requirement?

A: Yes, as described, the $10k discounted software price may be used as a source of leverage. Sources of leverage funding should be detailed in the application.

Q: Can matching funds from one institution be used for the overall matching funds, or must those funds be allocated specifically to that institution's subaward?

A: The match/leverage requirement applies to the total award request. Matching funds may be contributed by the lead applicant and/or any partner organizations and do not need to align with subgrant allocations.

Q: Could you please clarify if this match must be strictly monetary, or if it can include in-kind contributions such as volunteer hours and partner services?

A: Yes, in-kind or leveraged resources can be used to satisfy the grant's match/leverage requirement.

Q: If we propose using our own staff's work time for this grant, would that count towards meeting the matched leverage requirement?

A: Yes, applicants may propose leveraging existing staff as a leveraged resource.

Q: Can an applicant use the difference between its federally negotiated indirect cost rate (NICRA) and the Accelerator program's 15% indirect cost rate cap (unrecovered indirect costs) to count toward the grant's 1:1 leverage requirement?

A: Applicants who have a NICRA should use the cost rate in their NICRA in their application rather than the 15% indirect cost rate cap referenced in the RFA. Because the indirect cost rate cap does not apply to organizations with a NICRA, those organizations cannot both 1) use their NICRA and 2) cite the difference between their NICRA and the 15% rate cap as unrecovered indirect costs as a source of leverage, because citing both would double-count those costs.

Q: Can a training pilot or prototype activity be supported with leveraged (non-CWDB) funds and counted towards the 1:1 leverage requirement while using any awarded grant funds to support the design, documentation, and evaluation of the model?

A: Yes, provided the funding source of the leveraged resources allows for participant services, their use would be allowable to support an Accelerator 14 training pilot. Using leveraged resources to support training activities would constitute “serving participants” under this grant.

Q: What documentation requirements are there for reporting match/leverage funds?

A: In the application, match/leverage sources should be documented in the **Partner Roles & Responsibilities** exhibit. If awarded, grantees may be asked to provide additional documentation for their match/leverage sources. The CWDB program team will be available to assist awarded grantees with guidance regarding match/leverage documentation post-award.

See also: U.S. Department of Labor’s Core Monitoring Guide (page 146)

OTHER

Q: Will there be additional funding to sustain successful Accelerator 14 projects beyond the grant term, or should we expect this source of funding to end after March 31, 2029?

A: The program’s grant term is from January 1, 2027-March 31, 2029. Funded grantees will be required to submit a sustainability plan that outlines how the project will secure non-CWDB resources to sustain program activities after the grant term.

Q: How strictly must training map to the named trades (Cryogenic Technician, Precision Machinist, Electromechanical Technician) versus adjacent software/controls/systems-integration roles?

A: The occupations listed in the RFA are given as examples and are not an exhaustive list of allowable occupations. Roles in software/controls/systems-integration are allowable.

Applicants should explain how their proposed occupations support the quantum or fusion supply chains in the Scope of Work narrative response.

Q: Can a project focus on precision manufacturing instead of only quantum or fusion industries?

A: Yes, provided applicants can clearly demonstrate how the proposed training pathway supports the quantum or fusion sectors and includes appropriate employer partners connected to those industries.

Q: Would a project focus on software and systems integration instead of hands-on technical trades be considered well aligned?

A: Yes. The funding opportunity is not limited to hands-on technical training. Software and systems integration proposals are also eligible if they support the target industries.

Q: Are overhead (Facilities & Administrative costs) requests allowed for California State Universities? At what rate?

A: Yes. The grant has a 15% indirect cost cap. Applicants with a negotiated indirect cost rate may use that rate, subject to the guidance in Section 6 of the RFA and applicable WIOA/federal requirements.

Q: For institutions with a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, is reimbursement limited to 15% Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC), or may the full negotiated rate be charged?

A: Applying organizations with a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (NICRA) may use the full negotiated rate in their application. The CWDB reserves the right to request budget amendments from awarded applicants with a NICRA that greatly exceeds 15%.

Q: If we choose to apply for both pathways, Planning and Development and Innovation Impact, would we need to submit two different applications? Or could they be submitted as one?

A: Eligible organizations applying as the Lead Applicant for Accelerator 14 may submit one application only. Applicants are encouraged to review the RFA and identify the project type that best aligns with their planned project.

Q: Can a proposed project's partners participate in more than one application submission?

A: Yes, organizations may serve as a partner in more than one application. Eligible organizations applying as the Lead Applicant for Accelerator 14 may submit only one application.

Q: Can a partner serve an unpaid role in my project?

A: Yes, partner organizations are not required to be subrecipients of awarded grant funds.

Q: Is it possible to see a copy of the application questions and the contents of the application tabs, before setting up the application in the Cal-E-Grants portal?

A: No, applicants must register in Cal-E-Grants to view the application.

Q: If we're still unsure how funds will be distributed amongst partners, how can we best write flexibility into the project while achieving the required deliverables?

A: Applicants should provide their best estimate of their planned partner subawards in their application. Awarded grantees will have opportunities to make modifications to budget exhibits prior to subgrant agreement execution and during the grant term.

Q: Is it important to identify how the project will sustain this program beyond the grant term?

A: Yes, all awarded applicants must submit a sustainability plan by the conclusion of the grant term.

Q: Could you please provide the Prior Written Approval Form and any related instructions or guidance for its completion? Additionally, please advise whether the form should be submitted as part of the initial application package or after award determination.

A: The form will be provided by the CWDB Program branch to awarded applicants.

Q: Can an Innovation Impact project include both direct participant services and statewide workforce infrastructure?

A: Yes, please reference page 4 of the RFA for more information.

Q: Can multiple community colleges participate in one consortium?

A: Yes

Q: Under the Planning and Development project type, can awarded grant funds be used to pay staff who deliver a limited, prototype training activity for the purpose of testing the instructional model? Or would paying staff to train individuals during the grant term count as direct services to participants, requiring the project to apply under the Innovation Impact project type?

A: Using Accelerator 14 grant funds to pay staff to train individuals constitutes direct services to participants. The Innovation Impact project type would be the correct project type for this type of application.

Q: Can an LLC be named as an unpaid program partner that contributes a documented discount on its platform license and uses unpaid staff time as leverage while receiving no grant funds? We're seeking confirmation that this non-compensation structure is acceptable.

A: As described, this partner and leverage structure would not constitute grounds for an application's disqualification. However, the CWDB reserves the right to request modifications to applications selected for award, including modifications to contractor/subrecipient designations. Applicants are encouraged to reference WSD 18-06 for detailed guidance on subrecipient and contractor distinctions.

Q: The application allows us to input hyperlinks and formatted text into certain field boxes. Will formatted text be kept in the document when it is seen before the review team? Or are applications converted to plain text after they are submitted?

A: Applications are converted to plain text once text is entered into the field boxes and saved in the Cal-E-Grants system. Any additional text formatting will increase the character count(s) in each field. Applicants are encouraged to enter their responses to each narrative prompt as plain text to avoid exceeding the character count for each field.

Q: Does a nonprofit education organization qualify under the Education Partnerships category, or is it limited to K-12 districts, community colleges, and universities?

A: The CWDB does not have a restriction on the inclusion of an education nonprofit organization in a proposed partnership; however, applications must include a partner representing at least one, preferably each, of the following institutions: K-12 school district, community college or community college district, California State University system, University of California system, or a California-based national laboratory or research facility.