HIGH ROAD
CONSTRUCTION CAREERS
2026

ROUND TWO
GRANT SOLICITATION
OCTOBER 28, 2026

CALIFORNIA
Workforce Development Board

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Section One. Overview

The California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is pleased to announce the availability of $19 million in grant funding for Round Two of the High Road to Construction Careers 2026 (HRCC 2026) Grant Program.

HRCC 2026 supports regional construction workforce development efforts that align with California's infrastructure investments and workforce priorities. Round Two funding was designed to maintain continuity of services for existing grantees.

The HRCC 2026 grant program's objectives are to:

- Meet demand: Train workers to meet the hiring needs of public infrastructure and construction projects.
- Promote access: Support entry into joint-apprenticeship programs for individuals who have traditionally faced barriers to employment in the construction trades, including women, veterans, and justice-involved individuals.
- Boost the economy: Increase employment, boost incomes, and drive economic activity in communities that need it most.

HRCC Background

The CWDB has invested $70,270,492 to support 13 preapprenticeship partnerships statewide, previously funded through the California Clean Energy Jobs Act (Prop 39), Accountability Act (SB 1), and California Climate Investments (CCI). HRCC partnerships link local Building and Construction Trades Councils with workforce boards, schools, and community-based organizations (CBOs) to create pathways into stateapproved apprenticeships across multiple construction trades, including Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) training and provide participants with supportive services.

Under Senate Bill (SB 150, 2023–2024, Ch. 61, Stat. 2023), Caltrans and CWDB jointly support the HRCC Grant Program. Unemployment Insurance Code §§ 14010 and 14013 authorize CWDB to fund workforce programs aligned with state economic, equity, and climate goals, forming the basis for HRCC within the High Road Training Partnership (HRTP) framework.

HRCC 2026 Funding Structure

This is the second of the two solicitations for the HRCC 2026 grant program. HRCC Round One awards were announced in May 2026. All current HRCC grantees are eligible to apply for Round Two. Nineteen (19) million dollars is available to eligible applicants through this solicitation.

Individual applicants may request up to $4 million in Round Two funding to support their project.

Section Two. Program Priorities

In addition to the program objectives outlined in Section One, the CWDB will also consider the following program priorities when determining HRCC Round Two awards:

- Alignment with demand in construction, including responses that are informed by partnership(s) with Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee(s) (JATCs) and public information about the current demand for employment in construction.
- Grantee past performance, including participants' achievement of training, apprenticeship, and employment outcomes amongst HRCC's Target Population(s), as well as the frequency with which previously awarded funding was spent as planned and ongoing partnerships were maintained.

Refer below for more information about how HRCC's Program Priorities will be evaluated during CWDB's scoring and review process.

Alignment with Demand in Construction

The CWDB seeks to fund projects that align workforce training with current employment demand in the construction sector. Regional awards for this funding cycle will be informed by several factors, including public data about construction projects in HRCC regions statewide.[1]
Applicants are encouraged to describe, in their HRCC application narrative responses, their plans to coordinate with Caltrans and local JATCs to prioritize the placement of MC3 program graduates into regional Caltrans projects.

Coordination with Caltrans

Applicants are encouraged to consider how their projects will align with current and planned Caltrans infrastructure projects. More than 32,000 projects are currently listed on the Infrastructure Project Map. Projects appearing on this map have been initiated and have committed transportation funding.[2]
Additionally, Caltrans leads the Building Bridges initiative, which connects HRCC grantees to Caltrans services for participant activities including job fairs, job site tours, internships, etc. Applicants are encouraged to describe their plans to participate in opportunities to collaborate with Caltrans in the relevant application narrative responses.

Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee Partnership(s)

Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees are made up of an equal number of members from labor and management.[3] Although JATCs are not a Required Partner for Round Two funding, applications that include partnerships with one or more local JATCs may receive priority consideration for the upper range of their eligible Round Two funding. Documented partnerships in the Partner Roles and Responsibilities, responses to the corresponding Narrative question, quantifiable data, and partner/participant commitments may strengthen scores. For more information about application exhibits, refer to Section Four. How To Apply.

Grantee Past Performance

The CWDB will analyze the administrative data of each HRCC Resilient Workforce Fund (RWF) grantee to assess each region's past administrative performance. Factors considered in evaluating past performance for existing grantees will include:

- Achievement of participant outcomes related to MC3 construction training, apprenticeship, and training-related employment for HRCC's Target Populations, including:
  - Women
  - Veterans
  - Justice-Involved individuals
- Fiscal stewardship, including the frequency with which previously awarded funding was spent as planned during the HRCC RWF grant term.
- Partnership engagement and relationships with employers, unions, and community organizations.

Grantees who have had participants from HRCC's Target Population(s) complete training, and/or enter apprenticeship, and/or training-related employment will be eligible to receive priority consideration. Additionally, grantees who have previously spent awarded funds as planned and maintained their pre-existing partnerships will receive additional consideration.
The CWDB will collect and maintain administrative performance data for awarded HRCC 2026 grantees, which may be considered in future CWDB funding decisions.

Section Three. Program Guidelines

The HRCC 2026 program will support projects that advance high road workforce pathways in the building and construction trades by strengthening apprenticeship access, expanding equitable participation, and aligning workforce training with California's infrastructure priorities.

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1 Labor demand for construction projects was informed by data provided by the EDD Labor Market and Information Department (LMID).
2 Building California. *California Projects Under Development*. 2026.
3 Division of Industrial Relations, *Apprenticeship Program Information*.

Eligibility

Funding is available only to existing HRCC grantees. Organizations serving as the Fiscal Agent for HRCC Round One must apply and serve as the Fiscal Agent on behalf of the region for HRCC Round Two. For more details, refer to the Administrative Requirements, subsection Role of Lead Applicant.

Required Partners

HRCC partnerships create pathways to apprenticeships between local BTCs, local workforce boards, schools, and CBOs through MC3 training and the provision of supportive services. Building on this model, applicants must develop and strengthen regional networks through strategic partnerships that address employment gaps and enhance HRCC program service delivery.

HRCC networks must include:

- Local Building Trades Council(s) (BTCs) in the region
- At least one Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) Provider
- At least one Community-Based Organization(s) (CBOs)

Optional additional partners may include:

- Community Colleges
- County Corrections entities, including Probation or Parole Offices
- County Social Services
- Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees (JATC)
- Local Public Works Agencies
- School Districts
- Local Workforce Development Board(s) (LWDBs)

Building Trades Councils

All Building Trades Councils (BTCs) whose jurisdictions cover the proposed regional service area are eligible to participate in an HRCC network. BTCs are composed of the construction unions affiliated with North America's Building Trades Union (NABTU). BTCs coordinate the activities and interests of the affiliated local unions with the purposes of:

- Securing work opportunities for the members of the affiliated local unions.
- Providing mutual assistance to each affiliated union to secure sustainable wages, hours, and working conditions for its members through the collective bargaining process.
- Promoting workforce development with industry partners.
- Promoting apprenticeships as a pathway to careers.
- Promoting the interests of the affiliates through participation in political and legislative activities. BTCs are crucial to partnership when it comes to coordinating the JATCs, local trades, and contractors to access apprenticeship training; coordinating training providers; and working with NABTU to grant approval for the use of the MC3.
- Assessing and calibrating the supply of new apprentices with regional demand and connecting MC3 with demand for first-period apprentices.

Multi-Craft Core Curriculum

The HRCC program utilizes the MC3 as the core pre-apprenticeship training framework to prepare participants for entry into state-approved apprenticeship programs in the building and construction trades. Under California law, MC3 is the mandated curriculum for state and federally funded construction pre-apprenticeship programs. Developed by NABTU's National Training Directors, MC3 is a standardized comprehensive pre-apprenticeship curriculum that identifies and addresses common prerequisites for diverse trades and delivers an industry-recognized credential. This curriculum benefits job seekers by broadening their employment opportunities and increasing their chances of placement into an apprenticeship. Participants can explore different trades and select their best fit, and construction contractors get a pool of qualified, diverse candidates who have received a minimum of 120 hours of rigorous instruction.

The MC3 curriculum includes:

- Basic Math for Construction
- Blueprint Reading
- Construction Health and Safety
- Construction Industry Orientation
- Diversity in the Construction Industry
- Financial Literacy
- Green Construction
- Heritage of the American Worker
- Tools and Materials

Community-Based Organization

Community-based organizations (CBOs) play a critical role in the HRCC program by helping recruit participants and providing supportive services that enable individuals to successfully enter pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeships in the building and construction trades. CBOs are non-profit groups with considerable experience and capacity to work with and support disadvantaged populations. They have insight and expertise working with specific population groups, which play a crucial role in recruitment and retention. CBOs are crucial for outreach and expanding into new areas and communities, engaging and retaining participants, and providing targeted support services to individuals (particularly those who are in high need).

Program Goals & Deliverables

Program goals and deliverables are intended to build upon prior HRCC investments and support a coordinated, regional approach to construction workforce development.
Funded projects are expected to achieve the following:

- Develop a skilled and qualified construction workforce capable of supporting high-quality infrastructure and construction projects.
- Expand access to state-approved pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship pathways in the building and construction trades.
- Increase participation and representation of underrepresented and disadvantaged workers, including women, veterans, minorities, and justice-involved individuals, in construction career pathways.
- Advance collaborative models among labor, employers, education and training providers, CBOs, LWDBs, and government partners to address current and future workforce needs.
- Promote alignment with workforce and infrastructure initiatives, including Community Workforce Agreements (CWAs), local hire policies, and state infrastructure investments.

Additionally, HRCC 2026 grantees must prioritize placement of MC3-certified graduates into infrastructure projects identified by Caltrans where feasible. When placement opportunities on regional Caltrans-identified projects are unavailable, graduates should be placed in other registered apprenticeship programs. In instances where apprenticeship opportunities are not immediately available, participants may be referred to other appropriate employment, training, or supportive services through the region's local workforce development board partner(s).

Community Workforce Agreements

Applicants are strongly encouraged, but not required, to include one or more Community Workforce Agreements (CWAs) as part of their application. CWAs support coordinated labor-management partnerships and help connect training programs to employment opportunities, including alignment with local hire priorities where applicable.
Applicants including a CWA in their application are encouraged to include the following elements:

- Identification of the project and/or partnership covered by the agreement
- Names of participating organizations and authorized representatives
- A description of the roles and responsibilities of each party related to workforce development and project implementation

- Commitments to equitable workforce participation, including access for individuals from underrepresented or priority populations
- A description of how the project supports pathways from pre-apprenticeship to state-approved apprenticeship programs
- The geographic area(s) where project services and workforce activities will occur.
- Signatures (electronic or original) from authorized representatives of the participating organizations

A CWA may be uploaded in the *Upload Documents* section of the application. For instructions on document submission, refer to the Upload Documents section of this RFA.

Target Populations

Applicants must prioritize serving women and individuals facing barriers to employment. Applicants will be prompted to specify the populations facing employment barriers (target populations) they will seek to serve in the application. Below is a list of eligible target populations.

English Language Learners: An English Language Learner (ELL) is defined as a person who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and (a) their native language is a language other than English or
(b) lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

Homeless and Housing Insecure: A homeless and/or housing insecure individual lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; is living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements; is an unaccompanied or migratory youth; and/or is fleeing domestic violence or life-threatening conditions in the individual's current housing situation.

Justice-involved Individuals: A justice-involved individual is defined as an adult or juvenile (a) who is or has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process; and for whom services may be beneficial; or (b) who requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction.

People with Disabilities: People with Disabilities (PWD) is an individual who identifies as a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Youth: For the purposes of this RFA, a youth is an individual who meets the criteria for WIOA-eligible out-of-school youth ages 18-24.

Immigrants/Refugees: An immigrant is defined as a citizen and national of the United States (U.S.); a lawfully admitted permanent resident; a refugee; an asylee; a parolee; an eligible migrant or seasonal farmworker; or another immigrant authorized by the Attorney General to work in the U.S.

Low-income Workers: Including but not limited to individuals who reside in low-income communities and low-income households.

Other Under-resourced Communities: Including but not limited to residents of disadvantaged communities, underserved populations as defined under Executive Order 13985, Native American communities, Communities of Color, and unemployed individuals.

Veterans: A veteran is a person who served in active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

Applicants seeking to serve participants who do not align with this list must provide a clear definition of any target population(s) not defined in this RFA.

Section Four. How to Apply

Only existing HRCC grantees are eligible to apply for HRCC 2026. Any applications received from organizations that are not a current HRCC grantee will be disqualified, and the application will not be scored.

Applicants should follow the steps in this section to ensure all the required application elements are completed and submitted by the application deadline.

Application Instructions

All applications for HRCC funding must be submitted electronically through the Cal-E-Grants website by **Thursday, December 3, at 5:00 pm PST**. Only applications submitted through Cal-E-Grants will be considered for funding. Paper applications will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified.

Applicants can apply for HRCC 2026 by selecting *High Road to Construction Careers 2026 Grant Program* in Cal-E-Grants under the Funding Opportunities link (located in the upper left corner of the website) and then selecting *Apply* (located in the upper right corner).

Cal-E-Grants

In partnership with the Employment Training Panel (ETP), the CWDB posts available grant opportunities on the Cal-E-Grants website.

Cal-E-Grants supports the state's administration of grant programs, including application submission, application ranking and assessment, and contract generation.

New Users must create an account to complete and submit an application package.

To receive funding consideration, all required Narrative questions, exhibits, and documentation must be completed and submitted in Cal-E-Grants by the application deadline.

Creating a Cal-E-Grants Account

Applicants must create a Cal-E-Grants account to access the HRCC 2026 application. If a Cal-E-Grants account already exists for the organization, request the organization's primary account holder to add the applying user via the system's Manage Users function. For information on adding new users, visit Manage Users.

To register for an account:

1. Select 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.

Logging in to Cal-E-Grants

Applicants must log in to the webpage using the administrator credentials created by their organization. It is strongly recommended that the individual with the organization's administrator credentials be the only person who adds new users and manages existing users. The administrator can add multiple users, inactivate users, and delete the contents of input fields in the application. When added, new users will be able to complete and submit the HRCC 2026 application and, if awarded, have access to complete and submit Quarterly Progress Reports, Invoices, Modification Requests, and other relevant documents.

Application Elements

To be considered for funding, applicants must complete each of the following application elements. The Cal-E-Grants system will not allow an application to be submitted if any required fields are incomplete. Applications submitted with missing, incomplete, or inaccurate information may be disqualified.

Cover Page

Enter general information about the partnership and proposed project. The Cover Page contains a pop-up acknowledgment of terms before an applicant can proceed to the subsequent exhibits. Once the acknowledgment is accepted, the remaining application exhibits will be made available for review and completion.

Narrative

Applicants are required to respond to each narrative question. There is a 3,000-character limit per response, including spaces and punctuation.

Project Summary

Applicants must include a project summary in the Narrative section of the application. This response may be used in the CWDB's award announcement, press release, and/or other public-facing communications.

Narrative Questions

Respond to each of the narrative questions about the proposed project. Details of the proposed project's goals and deliverables should be clearly outlined and consistent throughout the application, including the Project Narrative, Participant Plan, and Partner Roles and Responsibilities exhibits.

Participant Plan

Projects must identify their target population(s) and the number of participants the project plans to enroll, train, and place in post-secondary education, Department of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) approved apprenticeship, and/or employment. Applicants must also provide detailed information about their project's participant placement and/or career objectives, participant lifecycle, training cadence, and types of supportive services offered.

For more information, refer to the Target Populations sub-section.

Partner Roles & Responsibilities

List all partnering organizations and their roles and responsibilities as part of the HRCC 2026 Round Two project.

Include match/leveraged funds being provided by partners. Leveraged funds listed on this tab must also be included in the leveraged funds section reported on other application tabs.

Upload Documents

The Upload Documents section of the application allows applicants to submit additional required and supporting documentation. Please use the description field to clearly identify each uploaded document (for example, "Community Workforce Agreement"). There is a 500-character limit per text box.

Applicants must upload a completed Payee Data Record (STD 204) and, if applicable, a Payee Data Record Supplement (STD 205).

Applicants who wish to submit a Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) may upload their CWA in this section.

Budget Exhibits

Applicants are not required to complete budget exhibits when applying for HRCC 2026 Round Two. However, awarded applicants will be required to complete budget exhibits prior to entering into a grant agreement with the CWDB. Detailed instructions and guidance for how to complete these exhibits during the modification phase can be found in Appendix C.

Section Five. Program Timeline

This section provides an overview of the HRCC 2026 program timeline and key program milestones.

Application & Award Timeline

Event	Details
RFA Release	October 28, 2026
Applications Deadline	December 3, at 5:00 p.m. PST
Award Announcement	Winter 2027
Contract Processing	4 - 6 weeks
Program End Date (estimated)	May 31, 2029
Grant Term Length*	36 months

*The 36 month grant term includes activities funded by both Round One and Round Two of the HRCC 2026 grant program.

The CWDB reserves the right to modify any dates in this RFA without an addendum. All dates provided in the table above are estimates and are subject to change. Significant dates, including cutoff dates and review periods, are available on the HRCC 2026 Round Two webpage.

The application deadline is **Thursday, December 3, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. PST**. Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications at least 48 hours in advance to ensure there are no errors. Technical issues that prevent submission by the deadline will not be grounds for an extension.

To ensure timely assistance with application issues, applicants are encouraged to submit requests for assistance to Solicitations@cwdb.ca.gov at least two (2) business days before the application deadline. The CWDB cannot guarantee individualized assistance with application issues if notified less than two days prior to the application deadline.

Section Six. Selections and Award Process

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated based on their alignment with HRCC goals and priorities. The methodology for applying these priorities in the CWDB's selection process is described below, including the rubric table that will be used during the CWDB's application scoring process.

Application Narrative Scoring Rubric

Applicants should answer each Narrative question thoroughly and ensure that responses are consistent with the other required exhibits, including the Partner Roles and Responsibilities and the Participant Plan. Responses that are supported by quantifiable data and partner/participant commitments may strengthen scores.

Narrative Question Scoring	Points Possible
Q1: Project Summary (Not Scored)	0
Q2: Lessons Learned	3
Q3: Aligning Infrastructure Projects + Workforce	9
Q4: Graduate Career Strategies*	9
Q5: Caltrans Alignment*	3
Q6: JATC Coordination*	6
Q7: Supportive Services*	3
Q8: DAS Pathways*	6
Q9: Project Sustainability	6
Q10: Target Population Strategies*	6
TOTAL POSSIBLE	51

** Responses in the Partner Roles & Responsibilities and Participant Plan exhibits may also factor in this score.*

In addition to the scores of the application narrative responses, the CWDB will weigh each applicant's past performance, labor market demand in the construction sector in the applicant's region, and the applicant's requested award amount to determine final allocation amounts.
The CWDB reserves the right to consider additional factors beyond those described in this RFA when determining grant awards, including, but not limited to, projected participant enrollment and placement totals.

Communication of Award Decisions

All applicants will receive an emailed communication of their award decision to the primary point of contact identified in their application following the conclusion of the application scoring process. Awarded grantees must respond via email to Solicitations@cwdb.ca.gov within three (3) business days to confirm acceptance of a grant award. Awarded applicants who do not confirm their award within this timeline may be subject to forfeiture of the award. The CWDB will also post a list of awarded projects to its website following the conclusion of the award process.

Acceptance of Award

Upon confirming award acceptance, applicants must complete all exhibit modifications identified by the CWDB within the specified timeline. Failure to complete requested exhibit modifications in accordance with the timeline and specifications conveyed to the awarded applicant may result in revocation of a grant award.
Awarded applicants also agree to comply with all guidelines and stipulations outlined in this RFA, all terms in the grant agreement, and all administrative and reporting requirements communicated by the CWDB at any point in the grant term.
The CWDB reserves the right to revise the terms and conditions of HRCC 2026 awards throughout the grant agreement execution process and grant term.

Application Exhibit Modifications

Following the award notice and prior to the execution of the grant agreement, the CWDB's Program Implementation and Regional Support (PIRS) Branch will work directly with the point of contact listed in the application to initiate the modification process. During this stage, awarded applicants will be required to update their application exhibits. This process is time-sensitive and requires prompt responses to all emails and the return of all paperwork to authorize funding and begin project activities by the program start date.

To reduce administrative burdens, the CWDB will amend grant agreements from HRCC Round One. The amendments will include the amount awarded for HRCC 2026 Round Two and extend the agreement.

The application exhibit update modification process will include the following steps:

1. An analyst from the PIRS Branch will contact the application point of contact with the revisions needed or additional information requests.
    a. If assistance is needed during this process, contact the PIRS Branch through their inbox, HRCC@cwdb.ca.gov.
2. The CWDB Grant Agreements unit will work with ETP to transfer information from the grantee's Round One application and grant management records to combine the new application material in the Cal-E-Grants system.
    a. During this period, grantees will not be able to submit invoices or other information for their Round One grant record. The assigned PIRS analyst will communicate specific timelines related to this process.
    b. All exhibit data will be combined into one HRCC 2026 grant record.
3. Upon completion of Step 2, the PIRS analyst will reopen the application for edits in the Cal-E-Grants system.
    a. Prior Approval authorization (via Use of Funding or Purchase Justification forms) may be needed depending on the nature of the scope of work. If required, the CWDB will notify and provide the appropriate forms for completion. These will be added to the application via the Upload Documents section.
    b. Revisions must be completed in the Cal-E-Grants system. Revisions should only be made to the identified Applicable exhibits (tabs).
4. In addition to application revisions, the grantee will need to complete the following exhibits that were not included in the application submittal:
    a. Budget Summary
    b. Budget Narrative
    c. Supplemental Budget (if applicable)
    d. Work Plan
5. After revisions are submitted, the CWDB will review them and determine if all revisions are met. Once approved, the CWDB will provide an update on the process and start the Grant Agreement process.

After Award Announcements are made, the CWDB will release a Grant Administration Guide to all grantees, providing further guidance on using the Cal-E-Grants system for monitoring and reporting purposes.

Grant Agreement Process and Timeline

Upon acceptance of the final approved grant application, the completed grant agreement amendment package will be sent to the awarded organization for signature. Organizations must review, sign, and return the grant agreement amendment by the deadline set by CWDB following the award announcement. The CWDB Director or designee will be the final signature.

Upon receipt of the required signature(s), the amended Grant Agreement will be executed. However, the Grant Agreement is not effective, and new program activities cannot begin until a fully executed Grant Agreement Amendment is returned to the grantee.

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. If a contact changes during the application modifications or after grant agreement execution, the change should be communicated to HRCC@cwdb.ca.gov. If the change occurs during the grant agreement processing period, the change should be communicated to Contracts@cwdb.ca.gov. Failure to provide valid and current contact information and/or failure to respond to CWDB requests for information may result in revocation of a grant award.

Rejection of Funding Request

All award decisions are considered final. However, applicants not selected for the award may request a summary of feedback from the CWDB scoring panel. Requests for feedback must be sent to Solicitations@cwdb.ca.gov within 30 calendar days of CWDB's award decision message. Applicants submitting such a request will receive an email summary of the scorer's comments within ten (10) business days of the 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:

- 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 that 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, but are not limited to:
    - No business license.
    - Submission of 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.
    - An application is submitted without an authorized signature.
    - The applicant falsified any information in the application package or has shown poor performance on a previous contract with the CWDB.
    - Upon license verification with the Contractor's State Licensing Board, the CWDB learns 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.

Administrative Performance

For applications submitted by organizations that have received past CWDB grant funding, the CWDB may review its administrative records to determine whether a prospective grantee achieved an adequate level of administrative performance under their previous CWDB grant(s). Factors that will be considered when evaluating past administrative performance include, but are not limited to, success in achieving proposed project goals, fiscal agent performance, participant data collection and reporting, and the occurrence of any cash holds or de-obligations. Findings indicating that an organization was unable to adequately administer past CWDB grant funding may disqualify such an organization from consideration for HRCC 2026 funding.

The CWDB will collect and maintain administrative performance data for awarded HRCC 2026 grantees, which may be considered in future CWDB funding decisions.

Funding Source Information

SB 150 directs Caltrans to partner with CWDB on HRCC. Through an Interagency Agreement, Caltrans provides funding and strategic guidance, while CWDB administers HRCC to align workforce efforts with state and federal transportation infrastructure investments. Projects should prioritize preparing workers for jobs on Caltranssupported projects, particularly those in HRCC regions.

A map of all HRCC regions and their corresponding counties can be found on the HRCC webpage.

Section Seven. Administrative Requirements

Funding requests must be clearly justified and outlined in the application's Project Narrative, Budget Summary, and Supplemental Budget, including a detailed breakdown of all costs by line item and thorough descriptions provided under the Budget Narrative. Applicants must request an award amount no greater than $4 million. The CWDB reserves the right to request additional information as needed.

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 reserves the option to extend grant periods within the term limits imposed on the funding appropriation, provided there is 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.

Administrative and Indirect Cost Limits

Administrative Costs should be detailed in the Budget Narrative section of the application, under the "Other" line item. Details should include which budget line items have associated Administrative Costs. This way, Administrative Costs are considered direct costs as defined.

Indirect Costs should be detailed in the Budget Narrative section of the application, under the Indirect Costs line item. Details should include cost-breakdown calculations and sufficient justification. For more information on Indirect Costs, refer to CWDB State-Funded Program: Indirect Costs (CWDB25-01).

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA) are established by the federal government. If the applicant is claiming an indirect cost rate exceeding 20%, the applicant must submit a NICRA from a cognizant agency to the CWDB for review and approval, which outlines the above information. Each agreement must 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.
- Special remarks (e.g., the composition of the indirect cost pool).

NICRAs with redacted information will not be accepted. Organizations with a NICRA accepted by CWDB will have administrative costs capped at 10% of the grant award.

De Minimis Rate

Organizations without a NICRA, or unable to provide one, may use a *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 20% of the modified total direct costs (MTDC). The rate caps administrative costs at 10% and combined administrative and indirect costs cannot exceed 20% of the total grant award amount.

When Should Costs Generally Considered Indirect Be Counted as Direct Costs?

Costs for program implementation are direct costs, but direct costs should include costs normally classified as indirect when they are *directly allocated to the project* including costs from the following activities:

- Managing, coordinating, directing, and/or evaluating the overall program/project.
- Preparing program plans, budget schedules, and related amendments.
- Monitoring programs, projects, subrecipients, 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 program requirements.
- Evaluating program results against stated objectives.
- Performing administration services such as program-specific payroll, accounting, auditing, or legal activities.

What Types of Non-Labor Costs Should Be Treated as Indirect Costs?

Examples of non-labor costs that should be treated as indirect costs when directly allocated to the project funded by this grant include:

- Costs for goods and services required for administration of the program, including goods and services such 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 Resources

Leveraged resources (match requirement) may include both non-cash (in-kind) and cash contributions, if they are made outside the domain of the donor and provide benefits and/or scale the proposed project, as well as the donor's impact aims.

Leveraged resources are to be used by the grantee(s) and/or subrecipient contractor(s) to support the proposed project's activities (such as training or supportive services) and may include a cash dollar amount up to the equivalent value of the total requested funding, in-kind services with an equivalent dollar value, or a combination of the two. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the use of match funding is allowable by its source.

The CWDB has the sole authority to determine whether proposed leveraged resources are acceptable. Leveraged resources may 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.

Projects are encouraged to propose leveraged resources from similar workforce programs, including but not limited to California Jobs First, in a manner that strategically aligns with the intent of the HRCC 2026 program.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds may be used as leverage, but not as a cash source or to make a Cash Match. All leveraged funds will be subject to the reporting requirements contained in Workforce Services Directive 19-05 and Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200: "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards."

Supplanting

Grant funds provided under HRCC 2026 shall not be used to replace or duplicate funding from other sources or initiatives. Grant funding may not result in a decrease in state or local funding that would have been available to conduct the activity had these funds not been received. These grant funds may not free up state or local dollars for other purposes but should create or augment programs to an extent that would not be possible without the funding. Projects must be able to demonstrate that the funds are added to the amount of state and local funds that would, in the absence of the grant funds, be made available for uses specified in the grant application. Grantees must ensure that HRCC 2026 funds are used to enhance, rather than replace, existing funding or resources for target programming.

Travel Reimbursements

The travel and per diem rates shall be set in accordance with the California Department of Human Resources for comparable classes. Travel outside the State of California will not be reimbursed unless prior written authorization is obtained from the CWDB.

Contractor Procurement

The Fiscal Agent must determine the relationship with partners within the scope of the grant on a case-by-case basis prior to entering into a contractual agreement. When determining whether a Contractor or Subrecipient relationship exists, the substance of the relationship is more important than the form of the agreement (i.e., grant, contract, subgrant, or subcontract). All characteristics related to the type of provider and agreement should be analyzed, and no single factor should be taken in isolation. Not all characteristics will be present in every relationship. Contractors are subject to procurement regulations as defined in CWDB's State-Funded Program: Subrecipient and Contractor Management (CWDB24-01). All state grant procurements must be "necessary and reasonable" in operating the state program and directly contribute to its success and outcomes.

Fair and Reasonable Purchasing

All purchases of goods over $10,000 or subcontracts must be procured through a fair and reasonable contracting method requiring the Fiscal Agent to obtain at least three written, competitive quotes to justify that the purchase price is fair and reasonable. The Fiscal Agent shall keep quotes for purchases on file and provide them to CWDB upon request.

Noncompetitive Procurement (Sole source)

If a purchase is a sole-source purchase (only one vendor can provide an item or service, so a competitive bid cannot be obtained), justification must be provided to the CWDB 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 goods 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.

Role of Lead Applicant

The Lead Applicant will represent the HRCC region and make disbursements on behalf of the awarded region. As such, they must possess legal authority to administer state funds, as they will be responsible for organizing, coordinating, and reporting on project activities, deliverables, and program metrics on behalf of their HRCC region. They are the lead reporting entity for their project and are expected to administer fiscal responsibilities for this grant program. Lead Applicants may also provide services to participants.

Community of Practice

Awarded grantees will be required to participate in CWDB-facilitated Community of Practice events. The Community of Practice is a forum for grantees, staff, partners, and other key system stakeholders to share information. It provides an 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.

Record Retention

Fiscal Agents are required to maintain the project and fiscal records in a manner that will allow state and local reviewers to evaluate the project's effectiveness and proper use of funds. The record retention system must include both original and summary data sources (e.g., computer-generated). Fiscal Agents will retain all records pertinent to this contract for three (3) calendar years from the date of final payment of this contract. Specific documentation and records used for this purpose are within the Fiscal Agent's discretion to determine and produce if requested. The CWDB will rely on federal standards regarding Record Retention and Access.

Advance Payment

This grant operates on a reimbursement structure. Due to funding constraints for the 2026-2027 FY, the CWDB is unable to offer grantees an Advance Payment option.

The CWDB will not, under any circumstances, pay for services provided before the start date or the state's final approval of the Grant Agreement, whichever is later. Final approval occurs when all parties have signed the Grant Agreement, with the latest signature date being the date of final approval.

Invoicing

Grantees will submit monthly invoices in accordance with funding requirements for approval in the Cal-E-Grants system by CWDB. Invoices are due by the 20th of the month following the invoice period. Invoices must be submitted even when the month's balance is $0. Payments shall be issued within 45 calendar days from the date the invoice is approved and processed by the EDD Fiscal Program Division 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. Refer to Manage Users for instructions on how to add a new user to the primary user's Cal-E-Grants account. Training will be provided for all selected grantees.

Under no circumstances will CWDB pay for services provided after the grant agreement end date. Final invoices for all reimbursable grant activities must be submitted no later than the 30th day of the month following the grant term's end date.

Monitoring and Audits

After grant approval, Fiscal Agents may be monitored and/or audited by the state in accordance with existing policies, procedures, and requirements governing the funding source and grant program. The purpose is to identify areas of strength and non-compliance. If selected, the Fiscal Agent/Awardee is expected to:

- Be responsive to all compliance monitors' Fiscal and Program Management requests.
- Provide reasonable and timely access to records and staff.
- Facilitate access to subcontractors and communicate with compliance monitors promptly and accurately.
- Conduct regular oversight and monitoring of all Fiscal Agents and their contractors.[4]
- Ensure that all awarded funds are compliant with State regulations.

If performance is insufficient or the project is not making progress toward deliverables, the state may place the agency on a cash hold and de-obligate funds.

Section Eight. Data Collection and Reporting

This section provides applicants with an overview of the HRCC 2026 program's data collection, reporting, and evaluation expectations and 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 the

4 This requirement ensures that all expenditures meet the cost category and limitation requirements of CWDB, that all Fiscal Agents are compliant with applicable laws and regulations, and provide technical assistance as needed.

labor market once they transition into the broader system. This will be measured by tracking these individuals using existing performance monitoring systems and metrics that govern 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.

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 will be shared publicly only as an aggregate of the HRCC 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 HRCC 2026 program as authorized by SB 150. The HRCC 2026 program 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.

Collaboration with the HRCC Program Evaluation Team

Awarded grantees must comply with all administrative and reporting requirements. They must submit demographic information on the participants they serve, the services they provide to participants, and the outcomes participants achieve ("Data Metrics") to the CWDB using the Cal E-grants ("CEG") participant data system. Grantees are required to collect information for all fields listed in CWDB's Participant Data Fields Guide as a condition of funding.

A complete list of data variables awarded grantees are required to collect is included in Appendix B, along with the source of data. Full definitions of variables and response options are provided in the *Cal-E-Grants Participant Data Fields Guide* on our Grantee Guidance webpage. Response options described in CEG allow participants to opt out of providing information for most variables, but grantees must still attempt to collect it via participant self-attestation or documentation supplied by the participant. Any information that establishes eligibility in a program is required and must be provided.

Measuring Impact: How to Approach Participant Data Collection provides additional guidance on CWDB's data security and confidentiality practices, the purpose of collecting participant data, and suggested best practices for collecting individual information.

Grantees that do not comply with data collection and reporting requirements may be subject to de-obligation of any outstanding grant funds. All reporting requirements outlined in this RFA are subject to change to comply with all state and federal laws.

Grantees may be required to participate in a third-party evaluation of work achieved at the end of the grant term.

Measuring Partnerships

The CWDB seeks to comprehensively assess the impact of its High Road grants. Doing so requires considering benefits to (1) trainees; (2) employers; (3) consumers; and (4) the environment.

The CWDB has established metrics for its High Road programs for which grantees must demonstrate progress through their reported participant data. Participant-level data reported in Cal-E-Grants is used to evaluate project success in meeting equity goals. Additionally, narrative Progress Reports contain questions about partnerships, outreach, participant support, and related topics that are also used to evaluate project success in the areas described above.

High Road grantees may define additional metrics and must document and report on progress throughout the grant term.

Grantee Onboarding and Administration Guide

Following the execution of the grant agreement, the CWDB PIRS team will host individual or group onboarding sessions and provide grantees with a grant administration guide.

Periodic Review and Information Requests

The CWDB may conduct periodic reviews or request information from Fiscal Agents as needed throughout the grant term. Periodic review and information requests may include, but are not limited to, surveys, interviews, and site visits. If a Fiscal Agent is not performing in accordance with program requirements, the Fiscal Agent will be subject to remedies for non-performance, including cash hold and de-obligation.

Progress Reporting and Close-out

The Fiscal Agent must complete and submit semi-annual progress reports (due on the 20th of the following month after the reporting period) and a close-out report (due 30 days after the end of the grant term). The CWDB reviews the progress reports to ensure projects' progress throughout the grant term.

Fiscal Agents must complete and submit semi-annual progress reports and close-out reports through Cal-E-Grants. An email notification will be sent to the Fiscal Agent when the report is active and available to complete.

The Fiscal Agent is responsible for providing complete and comprehensive responses that demonstrate activities, progress, successes, and challenges in project implementation. Failure to provide correct or responsive answers may impact the performance and evaluation of the Fiscal Agent and the project.

Close-out Period

The grant close-out period refers to the 60-day period before the end date of the grant agreement or when its funding is fully utilized. The close-out period is a crucial component of the grant agreement cycle. It is used by the grantee to liquidate remaining obligations and prepare and transmit final fiscal and program documents. Additionally, the grantee should review and update or close out participant data to ensure that all participant information is accurately entered and captured. The final invoice and close-out report are due on the 30th of the month following the end of the grant term. Grant funds cannot be spent after the grant term ends, nor can prepayment be made for activities that occur outside of the grant term. Any unspent grant funds will revert to the State of California.

CWDB Support

CWDB staff are available to respond to questions about the HRCC 2026 grant. Questions about this solicitation and/or Cal-E-Grants issues can be sent to Solicitations@cwdb.ca.gov.

Awarded grantees may submit questions regarding the grant agreement process to Contracts@cwdb.ca.gov. Questions regarding application modifications and/or grant administration can be sent to the grantee's designated contact on the CWDB's PIRS Team.

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

Appendices

The appendices in this section contain examples, explanations, and concepts of standard contracting language and templates that will be included in the contract of awarded grantees.

Appendix A. Allowable Expenditure Guidance

Allowable Activities

Allowable costs must meet four primary criteria:

1. Substantiation that the cost was necessary and reasonable for proper and effective administration of all allocations.
2. The cost must be justifiable.
3. The cost must be allocable to the funding sources' activities.
4. The cost must not be a general expense required to carry out the Grantee's overall responsibilities (not supplanting).

However, even if the costs meet the prior four criteria, they must be approved within the Grantee's application work plan and budget; otherwise, they are not allowable. The state has discretion to impose special conditions beyond the funding source, which would also determine the allowability of costs.

While the proposed cost is allowable under the funding source, is it also reasonable?

"Reasonable" is defined as agreeable to sound judgment, not exceeding the limit prescribed by reason (not excessive), moderate in price, and a rational decision. Systems that guide this definition include those that are:

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

What are the guidelines for allocable?

"Allocable" is defined as capable of being allocated or assigned. A cost is considered allocable to a particular funding source/program to the extent it actually benefits the program's objectives. Grantees may only charge in proportion to the value received by the funding source/program.

Example: **The Project Director works 80% on the funded program (only 80% of the salary and benefits can be charged in the grant application). Beyond this definition, allocable also means that the cost must be related to the activities identified in the approved work plan.**

When do I need to submit a Purchase Justification Form?

It is not necessary to include a Purchase Justification Form with the grant application. During the review process, if CWDB staff finds that a single item or a group of items serving the same purpose exceeds $2,500, the Contractor will be asked to submit a Purchase Justification Form for review and approval. This applies to any future contract amendments where purchases fall under this description.

Allowability of General Costs

Grantees must follow the intent of the RFA to ensure the cost is necessary, reasonable, allocable, justifiable, and not supplanting. Any additional cost restrictions identified in the RFA would supersede allowable costs within this document.

Appendix B. Required Cal E-Grants Participant Data Fields

The information below describes the complete set of variables that projects will be required to collect and report on to the CWDB. Parenthetical notes clarify the source of information for each variable.

The superscripts after the field names indicate the source of information for the field.

- (*) Indicates fields for which information is received directly from participants.
- (+) Indicates fields generated automatically by the Cal E-Grants System.
- (A) Indicates fields where the information is sourced from the administrative data maintained by the grantee.

Grantee Information

- Grant Title+
- Grant Name+
- Lead Agency Applicant Name+

Participant Information

- Participant ID+
- First Name*
- Last Name*
- Date of Birth*
- Does Participant have a Social Security Number?*
- Social Security Number*
- Gender*
- Transgender / Gender Nonconforming*
- Sexual Orientation*
- Address Line 1*
- Address Line 2*
- City, State, Zip Code*
- Race/Ethnicity*
- Individual with a Disability*
- Veteran Status*
- Employment Status*
- Individual Income*
- Household Income*
- Household Size*
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) Eligible*
- Long-Term Unemployed*
- Dislocated Worker*
- School Status*
- Highest Education Level Completed*
- Immigrant
- Public Benefits Status* Foster Care Individual*
- Homeless Individual / Runaway Youth*
- Formerly Incarcerated/Justice-Involved*
- English Language Learner* Basic Skills Deficient/Low Literacy*
- Single Parent*
- Displaced Homemaker*
- Migrant / Seasonal Farmworker Status*
- Desired Occupation*
- Enrollment DateA Has Participant exited the program?A
- Exit DateA
- Which services were provided?A

Supportive Services

- Service Provider NameA
- Supportive Service NameA
- Service Start DateA
- Supportive Service StatusA Supportive Service TypeA

Career Services

- Service Provider NameA
- Career Service NameA
- Service Start DateA
- Career Service Type/ Type of Internship/ Work ExperienceA
- Career Service StatusA
- Service Completion or Withdraw DateA
- Reason for Withdrawing from ServiceA

Training Services

- Training Provider NameA
- Training Course NameA
- Training Start DateA
- Training TypeA
- Occupation of TrainingA
- Occupation
- Training Course StatusA
- Training Completion / Withdraw DateA
- Reason for Withdrawing from TrainingA

Milestones

- Skill Gain: Training MilestoneA
- Skill Gain: Skills ProgressionA, Stabilized Housing*, Improved Health*, Improved Personal Finances*

Credentials

- Has Participant received a Credential?A
- Credential NameA
- Credential TypeA
- Date Attained Recognized CredentialA

Post-Exit Outcomes

- Post-Exit Employed*
- Post-Exit Holding Multiple Jobs*
- Post-Exit Employment Related to Training*
- Career Advancement for Incumbent Worker*
- Post-Exit Wages or Salary (quarterly)*
- Occupation Description*
- Occupation (O*Net code) *
- Employer-Provided Benefits*
- Post-Exit Public Benefits Status*
- Post-Exit DAS Registered Apprenticeship*
- Post-Exit Postsecondary Education*

Appendix C. Application Budget Instructions

Applicants recommended for the HRCC 2026 Round Two funding are required to complete and submit application exhibits relating to their project's budget and work plan.

The exhibits listed below will be made available to grantees in Cal-E-Grants after award announcements are made. All exhibits must be completed in Cal-E-Grants, in addition to any requested edits to the Project Narrative, Participant Plan, and Partner Roles and Responsibilities.

Work Plan

Provide details about proposed outcomes, activities, outputs, estimated completion quarters, and planned expenditures throughout the grant term. This information must align with the goals outlined in the Project Narrative responses.

For each outcome, identify the activity necessary to achieve the outcome and the specific, measurable outputs expected as a result of those activities. Select the applicable quarter(s) in which each activity will occur and, when applicable, the quarter(s) associated with each output.
For each identified activity, enter the planned expenditure and planned leverage or match amounts by quarter. Total expenditures should generally align with the project budget totals.

Note: Grant administrative costs are associated with the administrative and general functions of the Awardee/ Subrecipient to operate and oversee the grant. These are expenses that support the organization and program as a whole. These typically include staff salaries for administrative roles, accounting and audit, legal fees, and other allocations of program administrative support and expenses. Administrative costs cannot exceed 20% of grant funding.

Budget Narrative

Provide details related to proposed line-item allocations, including but not limited to cost-breakdown calculations, subrecipient information, and purchase justification.

Supplemental Budget

Complete if grant funds are used for Equipment Purchases, Leased Equipment, Contractual Services, and/or Subrecipient.

Budget Summary

List all line-item allocations of the proposed budget. Costs are divided into two categories: Grant Funds and Leveraged Funds (match).