
REGIONAL INVESTMENT INITIATIVE CATALYST APPLICATION

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) - Round 2

May 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	3
A.	CALIFORNIA JOBS FIRST (CJF)	3
II.	FUNDING OPPORTUNITY AND BACKGROUND	4
A.	PURPOSE OF FUNDING	4
B.	ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES	4
C.	PREDEVELOPMENT PROJECT PHASES	6
D.	INELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES	8
E.	ELIGIBLE ENTITIES	8
F.	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	8
III.	PROJECT TIMELINE AND TOTAL AWARD AMOUNTS	9
A.	FUNDS AWARDED	9
B.	APPLICATION AND FUNDING TIMELINE	9
C.	PROPOSER'S WEBINAR	9
IV.	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS	10
A.	APPLICATION DETAILS AND RATING	10
B.	SCORING CRITERIA	12
1.	JOB CREATING PROJECTS	12
2.	COMMUNITY ENHANCING PROJECTS	16
C.	PROCUREMENT	19
1.	CONFLICT OF INTEREST	19
D.	PROTEST AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION	20
1.	DEBRIEFING PROCESS FOR UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS	22
E.	SELECTION PROCESS	21
F.	TERMS AND CONDITIONS	21
G.	GRANT WRITING MENTORS	22
H.	APPLICANT/ORGANIZATION DOCUMENTATION FOR CONTRACTING	23
V.	INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS	23
VI.	QUESTIONS AND INQUIRIES	23
VII.	ATTACHMENTS AND APPENDICES	24
A.	GLOSSARY (ATTACHMENT A)	24
B.	CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT (ATTACHMENT B)	26
C.	APPENDIX C	27
D.	APPENDIX D	30

I. INTRODUCTION

CALIFORNIA JOBS FIRST (CJF)

CALIFORNIA JOBS FIRST (CJF) is a state initiative focused on creating [good-paying jobs](#) and awarding millions in grants to jumpstart the Governor's Regional Investment Initiative to accelerate economic and workforce projects throughout the state.

REGIONAL INVESTMENT INITIATIVE (RII) is a new approach to economic development that seeks to center disadvantaged communities as part of California's transition to a clean energy, carbon neutral economy, creating [good-paying jobs](#) and prosperous communities for all. The RII is broken down into two phases. Implementation and Catalyst. This NOFO addresses funding as it relates to Catalyst. Implementation funding has been released directly from the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development and can be found [here](#).

An FAQ for this NOFO can be found [here](#).

II. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY AND BACKGROUND

PURPOSE OF FUNDING

The goals of funding Catalyst Pre-Development activities are to:

- Invest in industries that will advance good paying job opportunities in high opportunity industries, and/or significantly improve job quality in specific industries.
- Advance projects that ensure disinvested communities are significant beneficiaries.
- Advance projects that can assist the state in meeting its climate goals and generally improve environmental sustainability.
- Advance projects toward implementation readiness, positioning them to compete effectively for future federal, state, or private funding.
- Advance projects physically located in or have significant participation from Orange County residents.
- Advance projects that meet the strategies in [Jobs First Regional Plan Part 2](#)

A total of \$9 million has been allocated for Catalyst Pre-Development Activities. Of that, 3.4 million was released in round 1, with \$4.6 million available through this round 2 NOFO. The remaining funding will be released throughout 2025.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Catalyst funding supports specific [pre-development activities](#) to help projects get closer to being implementation ready. Below are examples of what Catalyst funding can cover, with a comprehensive, but not exclusive, list. [All activities](#) must be fully expensed by September 30, 2026:

- **Planning and Feasibility:** Planning activities to explore a project's viability. Examples of potential activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Feasibility studies
 - Market analysis

- Environmental impact assessments, surveys, and remediation
- Site plans, project designs, and necessary permits
- **Financial, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks:** Expenses related to setting up financial or legal frameworks for the project. Examples of potential activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Legal costs for setting up public-private arrangements, joint powers authorities, or a revolving loan fund
 - Planning costs for and all the way up to establishing financial tools, such as a regional tax financing district
 - Creating agreements that benefit the community (Community Benefits Agreements)
 - Financial planning associated with a capital project (e.g., preliminary budget and construction financing)
- **Infrastructure Construction:** Construction would be a component of predevelopment and not the final outcome of a ready-to-go project. Example of potential activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Water systems or pollution control services to make a building or facility habitable and functional.
- **Capacity Building:** Investments to strengthen the project team's ability to plan and execute the project effectively. Examples of potential activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Staffing and training costs for project leadership
 - Development of sustainable infrastructure plans for essentials like water or waste systems
 - Professional development for key team members or partners.
- **Pilot Projects:** Pilot projects are eligible for Catalyst funding if they serve as a scalable test for broader implementation.
 - Development of new pilot or demonstration projects and programs that create economic opportunity in priority industry sectors leading to good

paying jobs for disinvested communities. Pilots must also demonstrate the potential for expansion across the region.

Predevelopment Project Phases:

Catalyst Predevelopment Phase Projects will fall into one of three stages: Concept, Accelerate, or Last Mile. There is not a requirement to fund a minimum number of projects in each stage but is used as tool to compare projects that are in the same stage.

1. Concept: Recommend not to request over \$50,000 Grant

Concept projects are in the early stages of development. They may be an idea or an in-progress plan and may need dedicated funding to explore and refine potential projects or conduct feasibility assessments.

Key Considerations:

- Projects should demonstrate a clear understanding of the problem or opportunity they aim to address.
- Applicants should explain how the grant will be used to gather data, conduct initial research, or test the feasibility of their concept.

2. Accelerator: Recommend not to request over \$250,000

Accelerator projects have moved beyond the initial idea phase and are beginning to take shape through early planning and analysis. These projects require more detailed planning and preparatory work to advance toward implementation. Accelerator projects should have a clear outline of the next steps required to move to the implementation stage, including studies, detailed planning, and solutions to potential challenges.

Key Consideration:

- Projects should show a clear trajectory from planning to full implementation, identifying any risks and potential solutions.

3. Last Mile: Recommend not to request over \$750,000

Last Mile projects are considered feasible and viable, having undergone initial steps. They require funding to clear final hurdles such as, but not limited to, research and development, site selection, permitting, or additional studies, before moving to full-scale execution. Last Mile projects should have:

Completed feasibility study if applicable.

Necessary plans or studies completed such as, but not limited to: needs assessment, environmental assessment, site plan, preliminary engineering report, management plan, community outreach and engagement plan, or other plan or study necessary for the success of the project.

Key Considerations:

- Projects should demonstrate that they are ready for execution and have completed or cleared most of the predevelopment hurdles.
- Each project should stand on its own. If there are multiple projects that can be feasibly separated and implemented on their own, these should be submitted as separate applications.
- Applicants should show that they have already identified or secured additional funding sources, such as matching funds, to ensure long-term sustainability.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

This funding opportunity is focused on early-stage planning and development. This section outlines the types of projects that are **not** eligible for this funding round. Projects that are not eligible will be eliminated before the scoring process begins.

- I. **“Ready-to-Go” Projects** – Projects that are fully prepared to start immediately (i.e., those that have completed all planning, permits, and pre-development work) are not eligible for Catalyst funding. These projects can apply for Implementation funding which is now open and administered by the state. Please visit jobsfirst.ca.gov. If you are unsure whether your project is eligible, please contact jobsfirst@ocbc.org.
- II. Projects may not fund new fossil fuel extraction or activities or expand fossil fuel production.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

All entities are eligible for funding, with the exception of applying as an individual. The individual can be involved in an application, but the applicant must be a legally recognized entity.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantees must submit regular progress reports to the Regional Convener and Fiscal Agent including the following:

- I. **Quarterly Progress Reports:** Summarize the project’s progress according to the work plan including key milestones and objectives achieved, challenges encountered, adherence to the budget, and fiscal reporting.
- II. **Final Project Report:** A comprehensive final report summarizing what was accomplished with the funds given in relation to the work plan. This report should also include anticipated next steps and/or actionable recommendations for transitioning to the next stage of development.

Templates for these documents and further guidance on this requirement will be provided during the contracting phase.

III. PROJECT TIMELINE AND TOTAL AWARD AMOUNTS

FUNDS AWARDED

FUNDS AWARDED will support activities from the date of award through September 30, 2026. Applicants may submit multiple project proposals. Each proposal must be submitted separately. Entities are allowed to act as fiscal agents for multiple organizations.

APPLICATION AND FUNDING TIMELINE

Milestone	Date / Time
NOFO Release	May 19, 2025
Proposers' Webinar (Job Creating Project Applicants)	May 27, 2025, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm
Proposers' Webinar (Community Enhancing Project Applicants)	May 29, 2025, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm
Applications Due	June 20, 2025, by 5:00 pm
Approximate Award Notifications	July 25, 2025
Activities End Date	Activities must be completed by September 30, 2026

PROPOSER'S WEBINAR

The Regional Investment Initiative Informational Webinar provides background on California Jobs First and the Regional Investment Initiative, highlighting the outreach and collaboration that informed this process. This session focuses on key milestones leading up to the Catalyst Pre-Development NOFO but does not cover the NOFO itself. The recording can be accessed [here](#).

Two optional Proposer's Webinars will be held for projects classified as Job Creating and Community Enhancing, which will review the application and field questions. Definitions for both are provided later in this NOFO.

Registration for the Job Creating Webinar can be found [here](#). Registration for the Community Enhancing Webinar can be found [here](#). Both will be held via Zoom. The webinars will review the application and field questions. Attendance is not required. Please review the application materials before attending.

IV. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applications are due no later than **5:00 PM Pacific Time on Friday, June 20, 2025**, and must be submitted through the designated grant web portal. Applicants must create an account in the portal to begin their application. Please carefully follow all instructions provided in the portal. The link to the portal can be found [here](#).

Applicants must include a one-page project summary addressing Project Impact, Who Benefits, Work Plan, and Total Funding Request. Incomplete applications will not be eligible, and proposals received after 5:00 PM Pacific Time on Friday, June 20, 2025, will not be reviewed. We strongly encourage applicants to submit their applications well before the deadline to account for any potential technical difficulties.

Please submit questions regarding this NOFO to jobsfirst@ocbc.org. Questions and answers will be posted on <https://ocbc.org/cjf/> at the end of each week while the application window is open.

APPLICATION DETAILS AND RATING:

Unlike most grants, these funds will help projects that are not implementation ready but are in the pre-development or pre-implementation phase. We are able to fund activities like market analysis, project designs, permitting, establishing public-private partnerships, staff capacity building, gaining access to financial services or legal review, just to name a few.

For the \$4.6 million in funding, there are two classifications of funding.

Job Creating Projects:

\$3.6 million will be spent on activities that advance projects with the primary goal of business development and growth that then create good paying jobs in the region. Projects supporting the industries of tourism and outdoor recreation, medtech, high-tech hardware, semiconductors & microelectronics, advanced manufacturing, precision manufacturing, healthcare, childcare, education, aerospace and defense, hydrogen, and construction. Project must show that there is a significant benefit to Orange County's disinvested communities. See [glossary](#) for definition of good paying jobs and disinvested communities. Workforce development projects must be in connection with a future economic development project or some commitment to partner from an employer(s). Stronger projects also demonstrate a positive impact on the climate.

Community Enhancing Projects:

\$ 1,000,000 will be spent on activities for projects that address any topic(s) in the [Regional Plan Part 2](#) and/or industries not mentioned in the Job Creating Projects section. Although not exhaustive, these would be topics such as housing, healthcare

access, green technologies, childcare access and climate adaptation. For projects that are not primarily climate focused, stronger projects demonstrate a positive impact on the climate.

Although some items may be more applicable to one classification over the other, some components that would strengthen a proposal are:

- Project Labor Agreement, Community Workforce Agreement, or a Community Benefit Agreement
- Fund alternative models of ownership for land, businesses, or other assets, such as worker-owned cooperatives, community land trusts, community investment, funds, or others
- Directly leverage regional assets, investments, and processes with have additional funding attached

If you are unclear which classification you should apply under, please email jobsfirst@ocbc.org. Your application will not be reclassified after the application deadline, so make sure to complete the correct application.

Scoring Criteria:

Applications for Job Creating Projects will be rated according to the following criteria:

PROJECT IMPACT (30 points)

- Provide a concise overview of the project, including its main goals, activities, how these activities will be executed, and expected results that advances priority industries of tourism and outdoor recreation, medtech, high-tech hardware, semiconductors & microelectronics, advanced manufacturing, precision manufacturing, healthcare, childcare, education, aerospace and defense, hydrogen, and construction.
- Describe how the project contributes to the growth and development of good paying jobs and/or business creation and development. Please quantify how many people will be served by this project and describe how their lives could be improved because of the project.
- Describe how the project addresses topic(s) in the [Regional Plan Part 2](#). Please reference the page and section in your response.
- Stronger proposals will describe how the project contributes to improving the climate or mitigating climate impacts. For examples, please see sections in the [Regional Plan Part 2](#) that reference green technology, the environment, and/or climate. Please reference the page and section in your response.

Economic Equity (30 points)

- Describe how the project's outcomes will benefit disinvested community census tracts, and/or its residents, and/or individuals who experience employment barriers. See glossary in NOFO for definition of disinvested community. Census tracts for disinvested communities in Orange County can be found on the map at the Jobs First website (<https://ocbc.org/cjf/>). The census tracts are in blue and/or green on Map 2 of 4, 3 of 4, or 4 of 4. (24 points). It would be ideal if you could match to the disinvested community areas. If your project is a physical development, consider its location. If it's a service-based project, think about whether it benefits residents in those areas.

In addition to projects located in or serving residents of disinvested census tracts, applicants may also propose projects that serve individuals who experience employment barriers, regardless of their place of residence. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals who are justice-involved, foster youth, single parents,

individuals with disabilities, and others as defined in the glossary.

While these individuals may not reside in a mapped disinvested community, they may still meet eligibility criteria based on income level or other socioeconomic factors. We will consider households earning at or below approximately \$95,280 annual income for a family of four, or a comparable number based on household size, as economically disinvested. Projects that target and support these populations are eligible and encouraged, as they advance the initiative's broader goals of equity, inclusion, and community-centered economic development.

- If the beneficiaries are Native American, they do not need to be on the map.
- Describe how residents of disinvested communities have expressed a need for this project, or how they will be engaged in the project planning and design (6 points).

WORK PLAN (20 points)

- Provide a list and timeline of the specific pre-development activities the funds you are requesting will help advance your project, why they are necessary, and assigned roles for key staff, project partners, and potential consultants.
- Address the Key Considerations depending on which phase this project is in.
- Reference any supplemental funding that has been received or committed, and/or possible sources of supplemental funding, if applicable.
- Provide measurable objectives and performance indicators to evaluate the project's pre-development activities.
- Examples of pre-development activities are explained in the NOFO, but can also be found [here](#).
- Timeline Guidance: Applicants should structure their work plan with a projected start date of September 1, 2025, and ensure that all proposed activities are completed by September 30, 2026.

ORGANIZATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (10 points)

- Describe the lead applicant organization, including relevant experience, and capacity to manage the project.
- Describe the organization's capacity to execute similar projects, outlining specific past projects and outcomes.
- Describe the organization's process and methods to ensure effective reporting and compliance with this project.

PROPOSED BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE (10 points)

- Provide a detailed budget that itemizes costs by category (e.g., personnel, materials, travel, subcontractors). See template [here](#).
- Provide a budget narrative that provides justification for each line item, explaining how costs were calculated and how they are necessary for pre-development activity completion. See template [here](#).
- Fiscal agent contact name and contact information, if applicable.

REFERENCES

- Provide one letter of reference from someone who is not employed by or is directly associated with your organization and does not stand to benefit financially from the project. The intent of the reference is to verify your organization's qualifications.
- Their name, email, and phone number
- A summary of your capacity to deliver the type of work outlined in your proposal and your ability to meet reporting requirements and adhere to the approved budget.

Project Sector Diversification:

Projects will also be selected to ensure that a diverse set of sectors receive funding.

Applications for Community Enhancing Projects will be rated according to the following criteria:

PROJECT IMPACT (30 points)

- Provide a concise overview of the project, including its main goals, activities, how these activities will be executed, and expected results.
- Describe how the project addresses topic(s) in the Regional Plan Part 2. Please reference the page(s) and section (s) from the Regional Plan Part 2 in your response. Please quantify how many people will be served by this project and describe how their lives could be improved because of the project.
- Describe how the project contributes to improving the climate or mitigating climate impacts. For examples, please see sections in the Regional Plan Part II that reference green technology, the environment, and/or climate.

Equity (30 points)

- Describe how the project's outcomes will benefit disinvested community census tracts, and/or its residents, and/or individuals who experience employment barriers . See glossary in NOFO for definition of disinvested community. Census tracts for disinvested communities in Orange County can be found on the map at the Jobs First website (<https://ocbc.org/cif/>). The census tracts are in blue and/or green on Map 2 of 4, 3 of 4, or 4 of 4. (24 points). It would be ideal if you could match to the disinvested community areas. If your project is a physical development, consider its location. If it's a service-based project, think about whether it benefits residents in those areas.

In addition to projects located in or serving residents of disinvested census tracts,

applicants may also propose projects that serve individuals who experience employment barriers, regardless of their place of residence. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals who are justice-involved, foster youth, single parents, individuals with disabilities, and others as defined in the glossary.

While these individuals may not reside in a mapped disinvested community, they may still meet eligibility criteria based on income level or other socioeconomic factors. We will consider households earning at or below approximately \$95,280 annual income for a family of four, or a comparable number based on household size, as economically disinvested. Projects that target and support these populations are eligible and encouraged, as they advance the initiative's broader goals of equity, inclusion, and community-centered economic development.

- If the beneficiaries are Native American, they do not need to be on the map.
- Describe how residents of disinvested communities have expressed a need for this project, or how they will be engaged in the project planning and design (6 points).

WORK PLAN (20 points)

- Provide a list and timeline of the specific pre-development activities the funds you are requesting will help advance your project, why they are necessary, and assigned roles for key staff, project partners, and potential consultants.
- Address the Key Considerations depending on which phase this project is in.
- Reference any supplemental funding that has been received or committed, and/or possible sources of supplemental funding, if applicable.
- Timeline Guidance: Applicants should structure their work plan with a projected start date of September 1, 2025, and ensure that all proposed activities are completed by September 30, 2026.

ORGANIZATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (10 points)

- Describe the lead applicant organization, including relevant experience, and capacity to manage the project
- Describe the organization's capacity to execute similar projects, outlining specific past projects and outcomes
- Describe the organization's process and methods to ensure effective reporting and compliance with this project.

PROPOSED BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE (10 points)

- Provide a detailed budget that itemizes costs by category (e.g., personnel, materials, travel, subcontractors). See template [here](#).
- Provide a budget narrative that provides justification for each line item, explaining how costs were calculated and how they are necessary for pre-development activity completion. See template [here](#).
- Fiscal agent name, email and phone number, if applicable

REFERENCES

Provide one letter of reference from someone who is not employed by or is directly associated with your organization and does not stand to benefit financially from the project. The intent of the reference is to verify your organization's qualifications.

- Their name, email, and phone number
- A summary of your capacity to deliver the type of work outlined in your proposal and your ability to meet reporting requirements and adhere to the approved budget.

Procurement:

Please refer to the procurement policy in Appendix D when recommending consultants or subcontractors that are necessary for your proposal. All procurement activities carried out using funds awarded under this NOFO must comply with the procurement standards in Appendix D. Procurement Justification Form will need to be completed during the contracting phase. Upon being awarded pre-development funds, consultants for the execution of pre-development activities need to be approved by the Regional Convener and Fiscal Agent.

Conflict of Interest:

If your organization is a voting member of the Orange County Jobs First Collaborative, you must complete the Conflict of Interest Statement in Attachment B and include it in your submission.

To preserve the integrity of the procurement process, applicants and all project partners are required to avoid conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest arises when an individual's personal or financial interests interfere, or appear to interfere, with their ability to perform duties impartially. Applicants must:

- Disclose any potential or actual conflicts of interest in writing to the Regional Convener and Fiscal Agent prior to engagement in any procurement process.
- Ensure that all personnel involved in the procurement process sign conflict of interest statements and are fully aware of the expectations for impartiality.
- Avoid situations where personal or financial relationships with suppliers or contractors could unduly influence the procurement process.

Failure to adhere to procurement and conflict of interest policies may result in:

- Suspension or termination of the award.
- Ineligibility for future funding opportunities.
- Repayment of improperly allocated funds.
- Legal action, if warranted.

It is essential that all recipients of funding under this NOFO maintain the highest standards of integrity throughout the procurement process.

Protests and Dispute Resolution:

Applicants who believe that the award decision was made in error or that the procurement process was conducted unfairly may file a protest. A protest is a formal written objection to the award decision, and it must be submitted within 10 business days from the date of notification of non-selection.

The protest must include the following:

- A detailed statement of the grounds for the protest.
- Supporting documentation to substantiate the claim.
- A clear description of the specific relief or corrective action sought.

Upon receipt of a protest, the Regional Convener and Fiscal Agent will review the claim to determine whether the protest has merit. The agency will notify the protesting applicant of the outcome of the review within 15 business days. If the protest is upheld, the agency may take corrective actions, which may include re-evaluating the procurement process or re-awarding the contract.

Debriefing Process for Unsuccessful Applicants:

Applicants who are not selected for an award can request a written debrief by email.

The debriefing is not an opportunity for applicants to challenge the outcome.

Applicants who wish to request a debriefing must submit a request in writing within 10 business days from the notification of non-selection to jobsfirst@ocbc.org. Please note that the debriefing will not include specific details about competing proposals.

Selection Process

Job Creating Projects:

The Regional Convener staff in consultation with Sector Investment Coordinators and other consultants will provide a recommendation of projects to the Orange County Jobs First Regional Collaborative to be awarded based on the scoring criteria listed above. Upon deliberation between the Regional Convener and the Collaborative, the regional convener will decide if any modifications to the original selections will be made and direct the fiscal agent to begin the contracting process.

Community Enhancing Projects:

The Orange County Jobs First Collaborative will review and score all projects based on the criteria listed above, and then vote to award activities until all funds are exhausted.

Terms and Conditions

The regional convener, in collaboration with the fiscal agent, reserves the right to amend, modify, or update this notice, including deadlines, requirements, or conditions, as necessary to support the effective implementation and administration of this funding opportunity.

Applicants must adhere to the terms and conditions outlined by the State, including intellectual property rights, compliance with state laws, and other contractual obligations such as proof of financial solvency.

The Fiscal Agent and Regional Convener reserve the right to reject any and all proposals received or to negotiate separately with any applicant, in any manner necessary, to serve the best interest of the Orange County Jobs First Collaborative.

All awards will be based upon fund availability. The Fiscal Agent and Regional Convener reserve the right to terminate or modify any part of this procurement process at any time and for any reason; to award one contract or multiple contracts; to negotiate changes; to make no awards; and to issue new and/or revised policies and clarifications at any time.

The Fiscal Agent and Regional Convener reserve the right to negotiate modifications to response packages.

Funds must be fully expensed by September 30, 2026.

Funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis, with a reimbursement period of 60-90 days. If awarded, and the reimbursement period creates an undue burden, please notify the fiscal agent.

Funds must supplement existing funding, never supplant funds for activities that were previously allocated.

We reserve the right to negotiate increases or decreases to budgets once all applications have been reviewed.

Grant Writing Mentors:

Applicants who don't have experience writing grant proposals are invited to contact jobsfirst@ocbc.org to request a mentor at no cost to the applicant. This mentor will provide advice on preparing a complete and compelling proposal and will review and offer suggestions to your draft. Applicants and mentors will mutually agree on the time spent together, with support available for up to 5 hours per applicant. The mentor will not write the grant proposal for you or provide consultation on the design of your project. Additionally, no cost reimbursements will be provided for proposal preparation or submission. Please note that mentors are not permitted to provide guidance on the scoring criteria or offer opinions on the relative strength of project types as perceived by reviewers.

APPLICANT/ORGANIZATION DOCUMENTATION FOR CONTRACTING

The following documentation does not need to be submitted with the proposal package, but will be necessary to finalize a contract:

- Evidence of eligibility to conduct business in California such as Business Registration and tax ID number
- Most recent audited financial statements or financial statements covering the previous twelve months
- Insurance Certificates (demonstrating coverage for general liability, workers' compensation, etc.)
- Other information or documentation as required or requested by the state of California

V. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS

Applications that do not include all required documents or fail to follow submission instructions are considered incomplete and will be ineligible for funding. Staff will not review submissions for completeness until after the application deadline has passed.

VI. QUESTIONS AND INQUIRIES

For questions related to this funding opportunity, please email jobsfirst@ocbc.org with the subject line: "Catalyst NOFO Inquiry."

VII. ATTACHMENTS AND APPENDICES

GLOSSARY (ATTACHMENT A)

GOOD PAYING JOBS:

GOOD PAYING JOBS are occupations that offer baseline annual earnings of \$48,353, receive employer-sponsored health care, have full time (35 hours/week) and full-year appointment (50 weeks or more).

DISINVESTED COMMUNITIES:

- Census tracts identified as ‘disadvantaged’ by the California Environmental Protection Agency.
- Census tracts with median household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with the median household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development’s list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093 of the California Health and Safety Code.
- ‘High poverty area’ and ‘High unemployment area’ as designated by the California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development California Competes Tax Credit Program. (Note that there are none in Orange County).
- California Native American Tribes as defined by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Tribal Consultation Policy.
- Individuals with employment barriers. See Chapter 2 of the California Unemployment Insurance.

Chapter 2 of the California Unemployment Insurance Code:

“Individual with employment barriers” means an individual with any characteristic that substantially limits an individual’s ability to obtain employment, including indicators of poor work history, lack of work experience, or access to employment in nontraditional occupations, long-term unemployment, lack of educational or

occupational skills attainment, dislocation from high-wage and high-benefit employment, low levels of literacy or English proficiency, disability status, or welfare dependency, including members of all of the following groups:

- (1) Displaced homemakers.
- (2) Low-income individuals.
- (3) Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, as those terms are defined in Section 3221 of Title 29 of the United States Code.
- (4) Individuals with disabilities, including youths who are individuals with disabilities.
- (5) Older individuals.
- (6) Ex-offenders.
- (7) Homeless individuals, as defined in Section 14043e-2(6) of Title 42 of the United States Code, or homeless children and youths, as defined in Section 11434a(2) of Title 42 of the United States Code.
- (8) Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system.
- (9) Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers.
- (10) Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, as defined in Section 3322(i) of Title 29 of the United States Code.
- (11) Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 601 et seq.).
- (12) Single parents, including single, pregnant women.
- (13) Long-term unemployed individuals.
- (14) Transgender and gender nonconforming individuals.
- (15) Any other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment.

JUSTICE INVOLVED:

A justice-involved person is someone who has had contact with the criminal justice system, either through incarceration, probation, or parole. This term can also refer to people who have been charged but not convicted.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT (ATTACHMENT B)

SECTION I: INSTRUCTIONS

All voting members of the Orange County Jobs First Collaborative seeking to apply to this NOFO must submit a Conflict-of-Interest Statement along with the proposal. This requirement also applies to any role within a proposal. Failure to comply with this requirement may cause your proposal to be declared non-compliant.

SECTION II: CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

As a voting member of the Orange County Jobs First Collaborative, I acknowledge that I am prohibited from voting on the allocation of catalyst funding to pre-development activities that directly benefit my current employer, current client, and/or any organization on whose board or executive committee I serve.

This Validation Statement must be completed and signed by at least one General Partner, Owner, Principal, or Officer authorized to legally commit the proposer.

DECLARATION

I, (name), hereby declare that I am (position) of (organization), and that I am duly authorized to execute this Validation Statement on behalf of this entity.

I acknowledge that any false, deceptive, or fraudulent statements on this Validation Statement will result in rejection of my catalyst funding proposal.

Signature of Person Certifying for Proposer (original signature required)

Date

NOTICE

A material false statement, omission, or fraudulent inducement made in connection with this Conflict of Interest Form is sufficient cause for rejection of the contract proposal or revocation of a prior contract award.

APPENDIX C

Operating Costs

The following functions and activities constitute the costs of administration subject to the administrative cost limitation:

1. The costs of administration can be both personnel and non-personnel and both direct and indirect.
2. The costs of administration are the costs associated with performing the following functions:
 - a. Performing the following overall general administrative functions and coordination of those functions:
 - i. Accounting, budgeting, financial and cash management functions.
 - ii. Procurement and purchasing functions.
 - iii. Property management functions.
 - iv. Personnel management functions.
 - v. Project management functions.
 - vi. Payroll functions.
 - vii. Coordinating the resolution of findings arising from audits, reviews, investigations, and incident reports.
 - viii. Audit functions.
 - ix. General legal services functions.
 - x. Developing systems and procedures, including information systems, required for these administrative functions.
 - xi. Fiscal agent responsibilities.
 - b. Performing oversight and monitoring responsibilities related to administrative functions.
 - c. Costs of goods and services required for administrative functions of the program, including goods and services such as rental or purchase of

equipment, utilities, office supplies, postage, and rental and maintenance of office space.

- d. Travel costs incurred for official business in carrying out administrative activities or the overall management of the grant.
 - e. Costs of information systems related to administrative functions (for example, personnel, procurement, purchasing, property management, accounting and payroll systems) including the purchase, systems development and operating costs of such systems.
3. Awards to subrecipients or contractors that are solely for the performance of administrative functions are classified as administrative costs:
 - a. Personnel and related non-personnel costs of staff that perform both administrative functions specified in item 2 of this section and programmatic services, or activities must be allocated as administrative or program costs to the benefitting cost objectives/categories based on documented distributions of actual time worked or other equitable cost allocation methods.
 4. Costs of the following information systems including the purchase, systems development, and operational costs (for example, data entry) are charged to the program category:
 - a. Employment statistics information

Where possible, the awardee must make efforts to streamline services to reduce administrative costs by minimizing duplication and effectively using information technology to improve services.

Allowable Costs and Cost Items

In general, to be an allowable charge, a cost must meet the following criteria:

- Be necessary and reasonable for the performance of the award;
- Be allocable to the award;
- Conform to any limitations or exclusions set forth in the award;
- Be consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to allowable uses of general funds;

- Be accorded consistent treatment;
- Be determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles; and
- Be adequately documented.

Disallowable Costs

The following costs are ineligible uses of grant funds:

- Exceeding 10% of Administrative cost.
- Lobbying or advocacy work, such as direct lobbying for the passage of specific bills or local propositions.
- Expenses not related to the Catalyst RFP Program efforts.
- Commission fees.
- Ongoing operational costs beyond the grant term.
- Using funds for mitigation activities that are already mandated by local or state governing bodies or agencies.
- Expenses for publicity not directly related to project efforts.
- Bonus payments of any kind.
- The purchase of alcohol.
- Payments on existing debt or debt servicing fees.
- Damage judgments arising from the acquisition, construction, or equipping of a facility, whether determined by judicial process, arbitration, negotiation, or otherwise.
- Services, materials, or equipment obtained under any other state program.
- Stewardship of legal defense funds.

APPENDIX D

Procurement Policy

The purpose of this Procurement Policy is to establish clear guidelines and procedures for procuring goods and services in a manner that promotes fairness, transparency, and accountability. This policy ensures compliance with applicable state and federal regulations, enhances competition, and ensures the efficient use of public funds, all while maintaining the integrity of the procurement process.

Scope

This policy applies to all procurement activities conducted by Charitable Ventures and its subcontractors/subawardees under the **California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative program**. All procurement activities must comply with applicable state laws, regulations, and guidelines, including those issued by the **California Department of General Services (DGS)**, the **California Public Contract Code**, and the **State Administrative Manual (SAM)**.

This policy covers the procurement of all goods and services, including but not limited to supplies, equipment, consulting services, and other services.

1. General Procurement Principles

All procurement activities will adhere to the following principles:

- **Transparency:** Ensure fairness and openness in all procurement processes.
- **Accountability:** Establish mechanisms to monitor and track procurement activities to ensure compliance with policy.
- **Competition:** Promote fair competition to obtain the best value for public funds.
- **Integrity:** Ensure that procurement is conducted in an ethical and responsible manner, avoiding conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof.

2. Procurement Methods

A. Sole Source Procurement

Sole source procurement occurs when one vendor has a proven track record of providing the required goods or services. Sole source procurements are allowable under the following conditions:

- **Threshold:** Sole source procurements may be used when the total cost does not exceed \$50,000.00.
- **Justification:** A **detailed written justification** must explain why only one vendor can fulfill the requirements. This may include factors such as proprietary technology, unique qualifications, or lack of competition.
- **Documentation:** The justification must be documented and should include an assessment of fair market value to ensure the price is reasonable.
- **Approval:** Sole source procurements require **prior approval** by the **Regional Convener** and **Fiscal Agent** before executing the contract.

B. Competitive Bid Process

A competitive process should be used whenever possible to ensure fair pricing and vendor selection. Competitive bidding is encouraged for all procurement transactions, particularly those involving larger contracts or significant public funds.

i. Formal Competitive Bidding: Invitation for Bids (IFB)

An **Invitation for Bids (IFB)** is used when the procurement involves clear specifications where price is the primary consideration.

- **Process:** A formal invitation is issued for vendors to submit bids. The contract is awarded to the lowest responsible bidder who meets all requirements.
- **Evaluation:** Bids are evaluated based on price and adherence to technical and legal requirements.
- **Public Opening:** Bids are publicly opened, and bid results are available for public review, ensuring transparency.

ii. Request for Proposals (RFP)

An **RFP** is used when the specifications are more complex or when factors beyond price (such as technical qualifications or experience) are crucial to the decision.

- **Process:** A detailed RFP is issued outlining scope of work, evaluation criteria, and terms and conditions. Proposals are evaluated based on price and non-price factors such as quality, methodology, and vendor experience.
- **Evaluation:** Proposals are reviewed according to a **predefined set of criteria**. This may include factors such as the vendor's experience, technical capabilities, and proposed methodology in addition to cost.

- **Negotiation:** In certain cases, negotiations may take place with the highest-ranked vendor(s) after initial evaluations to refine the terms of the proposal.

C. Noncompetitive Bids (NCB)

Noncompetitive Bids (NCB) are used when procurement through competitive bidding is not feasible. This may occur due to unique requirements or other justified circumstances.

Noncompetitive Bids are different from **Sole Source Procurement** in that they may involve more than one vendor but are not subject to a formal competitive process.

- **Conditions for Use:**
 - **Urgency:** In cases of an emergency, where immediate procurement is required.
 - **Specialized Requirements:** For unique products or services that can only be provided by a limited number of vendors.
- **Justification:** Noncompetitive Bids must be fully justified in writing, detailing why competition is not feasible and any other relevant circumstances (e.g., emergency need, specialized services).
- **Documentation:** A full justification must be documented and submitted, including a cost analysis to ensure that the price is reasonable.
- **Approval:** Noncompetitive procurements must be approved in advance by both the **Regional Convener** and the **Fiscal Agent**.

3. Procurement Justification Form

To ensure compliance with the procurement policy and to provide clear documentation for each procurement decision, individuals seeking to procure goods or services must complete the **Procurement Justification Form**. This form must be submitted with every procurement request to provide the rationale for the chosen procurement method.

The **Procurement Justification Form** is attached as **Attachment 1** of this policy.

4. Vendor Selection and Evaluation

- **Qualification Criteria:** Vendors must meet the qualification standards outlined in the solicitation documents (e.g., RFP, IFB), which may include financial stability, technical expertise, and relevant experience.

- **Evaluation Methodology:** The selection of vendors is based on objective criteria, as outlined in the solicitation documents. This may include price, technical capability, experience, and quality of the proposed solution.
- **Conflict of Interest:** All procurement staff and vendors must comply with conflict-of-interest policies. Procurement decisions must be made solely based on merit and in adherence with the stated criteria.

5. Compliance and Accountability

- **Applicable Laws and Regulations:** All procurements will comply with the **California Public Contract Code, State Administrative Manual (SAM)**, and other applicable state and federal regulations.
- **Procurement Records:** Detailed records of all procurement activities, including solicitation documents, evaluations, and contracts, will be maintained for audit purposes.
- **Audit and Oversight:** Procurement activities will be subject to both internal and external audits to ensure compliance with this policy and legal requirements.

6. Reporting

Charitable Ventures and its subcontractors/subawardees will provide regular reports on procurement activities, including the number of contracts awarded, procurement methods used, and compliance with policy and regulations. Reports will be submitted to the **California Employment Development Department (EDD)** on a quarterly basis.

7. Approval and Revisions

This Procurement Policy is approved by the **Regional Convener** and **Fiscal Agent** and is effective as of **01/01/2025**. The policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with current laws, regulations, and organizational needs. Any revisions to this policy must be approved by the **California Employment Development Department (EDD)**.

This form should be submitted with each procurement request to provide justification for the chosen procurement method and ensure adherence to policy.