

CATALYST PRE-DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS APPLICATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS/APPLICATIONS
NOVEMBER 2024







i. ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

Thank you for your interest in submitting an application for the *We Prosper Together* Catalyst RFP! Prior to working on your application, we encourage you to complete the following eligibility checklist to determine whether the proposed project is eligible for consideration. Responding "yes" to all of the questions below indicates that the proposed project is eligible.

Question	Yes	No
Does the project serve one or more of the following counties? The following counties collectively form the Capital Region. Colusa El Dorado Nevada Placer Sacramento Sutter Yolo Yuba		
Is the application to advance one of the following types of pre-development projects? Note: A more detailed list of eligible projects and activities can be found on pages 6-7 of the RFP. • "Exploratory" Projects: These are in the early-stage of development. Exploratory projects focus on studying whether an idea is feasible and creating plans for future work. These projects are not yet fully developed but are exploring possibilities. • "Last-Mile" Projects: These projects have completed initial planning or feasibility studies and require a few more actions to be ready for implementation.		
Does the proposed project advance quality jobs in any of the following priority tradable industry sectors? Note: Definitions for each of these sectors can be found on pages 7-8 of the RFP. Biotechnology Precision Manufacturing Working Lands Business Services OR Does the proposed project advance quality jobs in any of the following opportunity sectors? Note: Definitions of quality jobs and each of these sectors can be found on pages 8-9 of the RFP. Construction Healthcare Tourism Creative Economy		
Does the proposed project directly benefit disinvested communities in the Capital Region? Note the Economic Equity Priorities found on page 10 of the RFP.		

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I. INTRODUCTION

CALIFORNIA JOBS FIRST (CJF)

CALIFORNIA JOBS FIRST (CJF) was established under Senate Bill 162 (SB 162) in September 2021 to boost long-term economic growth and sustainability across California. This program is essential to strengthening the state's economic resilience as we transition to a carbon-neutral future. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CJF supports recovery efforts by helping communities diversify their economies and grow sustainable industries that provide high-quality, accessible jobs for all Californians. CJF seeks to create broadly accessible economic opportunities and address historical inequities by investing in local industries, supporting communities in the transition to a carbon-neutral future, and helping build good-paying, accessible jobs for everyone across the state.

The CJF program follows a four-phase grant process designed to encourage inclusive planning and equitable outcomes for underserved communities throughout the state. The phases include the Pre-Planning Phase, the Planning Phase, the Catalyst Phase, and the Implementation Phase. This phased approach ensures intentional planning, community engagement, and effective execution, with a commitment to creating opportunities for populations that have historically been underserved. CJF aims to build strong, inclusive local economies and address long-standing inequities by making economic opportunities widely accessible.

VALLEY VISION

VALLEY VISION serves as the main organizer and fiscal agent for the eight-county California Jobs First initiative in our region, named <u>We Prosper Together</u>. Valley Vision has guided this effort from its earliest stages. Valley Vision's role is to make sure that the economic goals of CJF are reached in a way that benefits everyone, especially communities that have been systematically overlooked in the past.

As a regional leadership organization, Valley Vision is dedicated to advancing economic, environmental, and social equity in Northern California. Focused on uplifting communities through innovative solutions, Valley Vision leads efforts that enhance quality of life, environmental health, and economic resilience. Known as a trusted partner, Valley Vision brings together diverse groups—including local governments, businesses, and community-based organizations—to collaborate on key priorities like workforce development, clean air and climate, and healthy communities. Together, these efforts are building a stronger and more inclusive future for our region.

WE PROSPER TOGETHER COLLABORATIVE

WE PROSPER TOGETHER COLLABORATIVE is a partnership of eight-counties: Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba. This Collaborative is focused on creating equitable opportunities and uplifting communities across Northern California that have historically been underserved. With a strong belief that economic success should benefit everyone, the Collaborative brings together resources, partnerships, and strategies to support inclusive growth. We Prosper Together works to dismantle systemic barriers and open pathways to quality jobs, educational advancement, and community empowerment for populations that have often been left out of economic progress.

The Collaborative's mission is to ensure that all communities, especially those that have been disproportionately affected by economic challenges, play a vital role in the region's future growth. By centering equity in decision-making processes, *We Prosper Together* is building a resilient and inclusive economy that works for everyone.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL is the main decision-making body of the Collaborative. Its role includes considering recommendations from the larger Collaborative, meaningfully engaging with communities across the region, upholding the core values of *We Prosper Together*, and providing guidance on regional strategic planning.

COMMUNITY AND LABOR AMBASSADORS

COMMUNITY AND LABOR AMBASSADORS play a vital role in connecting the broader initiative to the specific needs of disinvested communities. In each county, community ambassadors bring people together to advise the Leadership Council on key priorities and decisions. You can find a list of our region's Community and Labor Ambassadors here.

WE PROSPER TOGETHER REGIONAL PLAN

WE PROSPER TOGETHER'S REGIONAL PLAN, Strategies for a Thriving and Inclusive Economy, is designed to guide the Capital Region toward a strong and equitable economy. Shaped by thorough research and broad community engagement, the plan's strategies focus on creating high-quality jobs, connecting disinvested communities to new opportunities, and ensuring equitable outcomes across the region. All applicants are encouraged to read the full Regional Plan and Executive Summary.

II. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY AND BACKGROUND

THE CATALYST PHASE

THE CATALYST PHASE is a key part of the California Jobs First initiative, which seeks to build long-term economic resilience, workforce inclusivity, and regional competitiveness across California. The Catalyst phase is designed to speed up the implementation of strategies identified in the *We Prosper Together* Planning phase. Through targeted investments, it aims to boost job creation, support high-quality employment, and drive sustainable industry growth. By directing resources toward advancing high-opportunity industry sectors, the Catalyst phase helps the region create and expand quality jobs in environmentally sustainable, future-focused industries. Building on the Planning phase, the Catalyst phase turns these strategies into actionable projects, strengthening capacity in the region's most promising sectors and advancing long-term economic goals.

PURPOSE OF FUNDING

PURPOSE OF FUNDING The goals of funding Catalyst Pre-Development Phase projects are to:

- Invest in industries that will advance environmentally sustainable, future focused, high quality job opportunities.
- Fund projects that ensure workers and disinvested communities are the primary beneficiaries.
- Advance projects toward implementation readiness, positioning them to compete effectively for future federal, state, or private funding.

QUALITY AND PROMISING JOBS

QUALITY JOBS are occupations that offer a living wage and employer-sponsored benefits. Promising jobs, on the other hand, may not yet pay a living wage or include benefits, but they provide pathways to quality jobs within the next 10 years. Together, these types of jobs create opportunities for workers to earn a livable wage.

WAGE THRESHOLD FOR QUALITY JOBS IN THE CAPITAL REGION, BY SUBREGION

County	Hourly Wage	Annual Earnings
Placer and El Dorado	\$34.30	\$69,972
Nevada	\$33.50	\$68,340
Sacramento and Yolo	\$30.70	\$62,628

Colusa	\$29.50	\$60,180
Yuba and Sutter	\$29.20	\$59,568

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES funded through this RFP must advance economic development that contributes to building a carbon-neutral, climate-resilient economy. This includes building capacity for quality job creation in the four priority industry areas outlined below. Eligible projects must also meet the California Jobs First initiative definitions of "Exploratory" or "Last Mile."

- **"Exploratory" Projects:** These are in the early-stage of development. Exploratory projects focus on studying whether an idea is feasible and creating plans for future work. These projects are not yet fully developed but are exploring possibilities.
- "Last-Mile" Projects: These projects have completed initial planning or feasibility studies and require a few more actions to be ready for implementation.

Catalyst funding supports specific pre-development activities to help projects get closer to being implementation ready. See below for examples of what Catalyst funding can cover:

- **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 and Legal 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 partnerships or public-private arrangements
 - Planning costs to establish financial tools, such as a regional tax financing district
 - Creating agreements that benefit the community (Community Benefits Agreements)
- 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.
 - Financial planning associated with a capital project (e.g., preliminary budget and construction financing)

- **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 innovative workforce pathways in priority industry sectors leading to high-quality jobs for disinvested communities. Pilots must also demonstrate the potential for expansion across the region or into multiple regions.

In addition to meeting the definition of "exploratory" or "last mile" indicated above, projects are expected to advance pathways to quality jobs in one of the following priority tradable or opportunity industry sectors identified by the We Prosper Together initiative. Priority scoring will be granted to projects that foster growth in a priority tradable industry sector.

HIGH OPPORTUNITY INDUSTRY SECTORS:

PRIORITY TRADABLE INDUSTRY SECTORS:

Applications are expected to advance quality jobs in one or more of the following sectors. While all occupations meeting quality job threshold are encouraged, middle-skill occupations are highlighted within each category.

- Biotechnology -This sector is concentrated on food and life science innovations, including biotechnology, biopharma, agriculture, and food technology. With core drivers of research and innovation in the region, this sector offers promise for the expansion of future high-quality job opportunities.
 - Examples of middle skill occupations consist of technicians, including lab, drafting engineering, and mapping technicians; information and records organization specialists; mathematical science occupations, management and supervisory positions, installation, maintenance, and repair workers, and administrative roles.
- Precision Manufacturing This sector includes manufacturing high-value-added products
 containing instrumentation and microelectronics manufacturing, including medical device
 manufacturing, next-generation transportation, machinery manufacturing, robotics, aerospace,
 and defense. The region has the capacity to produce intricate, highly accurate components to
 meet stringent specifications and tolerances. In light of major new investments, this sector
 presents emerging opportunities in microelectronics and semiconductors, battery production,
 cleantech, instrumentation, and advanced agricultural equipment. Focusing on this sector could
 preserve and grow activities that generate middle-skill, middle-income jobs.
 - Examples of middle skill occupations consist of assemblers and fabricators, metal and plastic workers, production workers, installation, maintenance, and repair workers, operators, drafting and mapping engineer technicians, administrative roles, and managers and supervisors.
- Working Lands This sector includes food, agriculture, and wood economy product
 manufacturing. Manufacturing and downstream activities connected to the region's exceptional
 natural resources and working lands show promise. This sector highlights the region's emerging

opportunity in the production of renewable energy products through the utilization of biomass and carbon management.

Examples of middle-skill occupations consist of agricultural workers, dispatching and distribution positions, material recording and scheduling, material moving workers, production occupations, wholesale and manufacturing sales representatives, engineers, technicians, installation, maintenance and repair including vehicle and mobile equipment, management occupations, administrative roles, forest, conservation and logging workers, firefighting and prevention workers, wood, metal and plastic workers, rail transportation workers.

• Business Services - A key driver of the region's economy, this sector includes technical services, business administration, legal services, management consulting services, advertising, and marketing, among others. Accelerated by the presence of state government, connections to the Bay Area, and national and global headquarters, business services are a major driver for the region. This sector is the largest to pass the selection screens of tradability, feasibility, opportunity, and sustainability across the region. Additionally, this sector has the capacity to support a dispersed workforce due to the prevalence of remote work, providing opportunities to diversify areas of the region with limited source economies.

Examples of middle-skill occupations consist of business operations specialists, computer occupations, information record specialists, sales representatives, supervisors and managers, legal support workers, financial specialists, advertising, sales and public relations, and administrative roles.

OPPORTUNITY INDUSTRY SECTORS:

While growing tradable sectors and increasing the number of jobs in those sectors is key to growing a prosperous, resilient, and sustainable economy, it can take time for investment targeted towards sector growth to create these new jobs. Therefore, it is equally important to invest in strategies to connect communities to currently available quality jobs, many of which are in local-serving sectors. Project applications will also be eligible for funding if they advance quality jobs in any of the following:

- Construction The regional construction industry grew steadily between 2012 and 2022, with job growth in the sector accounting for more than 20% of all jobs created in the region during that period. Demand for skilled construction workers continues to rise, pushed higher by the need to backfill positions held by retiring workers. Federal and state investments in infrastructure and climate adaptation create additional opportunities for industry growth. These investments can be leveraged for maximum effect if deliberate actions are taken to diversify contractor pools and expand access to pathways into these careers.
- Healthcare The healthcare sector is a very large employer in the region, with many major
 medical systems. Healthcare concentrates a reasonably high proportion of opportunity jobs.
 Several sub-sectors like hospitals and outpatient care centers feature even greater shares of
 occupational roles with higher wages, including well-established professional and credentialing
 ladders that create a clear pathway for workers to navigate toward economic mobility.

- Tourism This local-serving sector has historically been an important contributor to our regional economy, particularly in the Tahoe subregion. Businesses in this industry run the gamut from small and micro businesses to casinos, outdoor expedition providers, boutique hotels, convention venues, major resorts, and tribal casinos. Wineries and agritourism operations attract people to agricultural areas and provide much-needed revenue for rural communities. Outdoor recreation provides a major draw for visitors from throughout California and beyond.
- Creative Economy Outreach and engagement across the different subregions revealed the
 desire for the arts and the creative economy to be better represented across the industry
 clusters, given that they play a crucial role in almost every industry (e.g., through design,
 marketing, etc.). Our region recognizes the need to include the creative economy within the
 broader job market by integrating it into various sectors, promoting job opportunities, and
 fostering a culture that appreciates and utilizes creative skills.

ECONOMIC EQUITY PRIORITIES

For We Prosper Together, economic equity is considered the just and fair inclusion of disinvested communities into the economic fabric of the Capital Region to ensure they advance economically and reach their full potential. Projects should prioritize economic equity by creating pathways for empowerment and social mobility for our unique disinvested populations. In addition to meeting the definition of "exploratory" or "last mile" indicated prior, and advancing one of the priority or opportunity industry sectors identified by the We Prosper Together initiative, proposed project plans should intentionally incorporate inclusionary strategies to ensure direct benefit to our disinvested communities. The Capital Region's economic equity priorities are introduced below, with the full details available here:

- Community-Centered Inclusionary Practices Focus on community-centered, inclusionary practices that prioritize the unique and holistic needs, strengths, and perspectives of disinvested populations.
- **Economic Inclusionary Approaches** Advance economic mobility for residents of disinvested communities through participation as workers and business owners.
- **Data Informed and Transparent Alignment and Coordination** Include transparent programmatic procedures and community-involved decision-making.

California Jobs First defines 'disinvested communities' as any of the following:

- 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.
- California Native American Tribes as defined by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Tribal Consultation Policy.

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.

- 1. Construction Projects Any project that is ready to begin construction or involves building new facilities is not eligible for Catalyst funding. This type of project may qualify for Implementation Phase funding instead, which will open after January 1, 2025.
- 2. "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 also not eligible for Catalyst funding. These projects can apply for Implementation funding.

III. ELIGIBILITY & REPORTING

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

The following is a list of entities eligible to apply for funding:

- Nonprofit organizations
- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
- Academic institutions
- Local governments
- Community foundations
- Labor organizations

Note: While private businesses cannot lead an application, they are encouraged to participate as partners.

Applicants may submit multiple project proposals. Each proposal must be submitted separately. Entities are allowed to act as fiscal agents for multiple organizations.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantees must submit regular progress reports including the following:

- Quarterly Progress Reports: Summarize the project's progress according to the work plan
 including key milestones achieved, measurable objectives and performance indicators,
 challenges encountered, adherence to the budget, and fiscal reporting. Reports should include
 photos of the project's advancements whenever available along with impact stories and/or
 testimonials.
- Final Project Report: A comprehensive final report summarizing the current and anticipated impact of the project on economic conditions, disinvested communities, and climate impacts. Include the full timeline of activities highlighting project successes, measurable outcomes, challenges encountered, final budget summation. This report should also include anticipated next steps and/or actionable recommendations for transitioning to the next stage of development. Project proposals involving the development of a pilot program should indicate next steps in program expansion.

IV. PROJECT TIMELINE AND TOTAL AWARD AMOUNTS

FUNDS AWARDED

FUNDS AWARDED will support activities from the date of award through September 30, 2026. While there is no specified minimum or maximum award, awards are recommended to be up to \$1,000,000. A total of \$9 million in funding is available, with the expectation that not all funds will be allocated in this first round of funding. A second funding opportunity is planned for the Spring or Summer of 2025.

APPLICATION AND FUNDING TIMELINE

RFP Release	November 26, 2024
Proposers' Webinar	December 4, 2024, 9 am to 10:30 am or

	December 10, 2024, 9 am to 10:30 am
Applications Due	February 2, 2025, by 11:59 pm
Approximate Award Notifications	February 28, 2025
Approximate Start Date	March 1, 2025
End Date	Projects must be completed by September 30, 2026

PROPOSER'S WEBINAR

PROPOSER'S WEBINAR: Potential applicants are encouraged to attend one of two optional proposers' webinars regarding this funding opportunity. These will be held via Zoom on December 4, 2024, from 9 AM to 10:30 AM and December 10, 2024, from 9 AM to 10:30 AM. To register please follow this Link. The Webinars will review the application and field questions. Attendance at one of the webinars is not required, however, it is strongly recommended. Please review the application materials before attending.

V. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applications are due no later than 11:59 PM Pacific Time on February 2, 2025, and must be submitted through the <u>Submittable platform</u>. Incomplete applications will not be eligible, and proposals received after 11:59 PM Pacific Time on February 2, 2025, will not be reviewed.

Please submit questions regarding this RFP to info@weprospertogether.org by 5 PM on December 9, 2024, in advance of the December 10th Proposer's Webinar. Questions and answers will be posted on the We Prosper Together website.

APPLICATION DETAILS AND RATING:

To ensure a complete and reviewable application, applicants must submit the following information, excluding budget information and references. Applications will be rated according to the following criteria:

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Organization name

- Organization Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
- Organization address
- Primary contact information (name, position, email, and phone number)
- Project name
- Counties within the We Prosper Together region the proposed project will serve
- Total funding requested

ORGANIZATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (12 points)

- Describe the lead applicant organization, including mission, history, 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.
- State names and roles of key personnel and partners involved in the project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (20 points)

- Provide a concise overview of the project, including its primary purpose and intended outcomes.
- Describe how the project contributes to the growth and development of quality jobs.
- Describe how the project contributes to mitigating climate impacts.
- Describe how disinvested community members will be engaged in the project planning and design.
- Describe how the project outcomes will benefit disinvested communities.

SECTOR ALIGNMENT (8 points maximum)

Project must align with one of the priority tradable or opportunity sectors. Projects aligned with priority tradable industry sectors will be awarded eight points; projects aligned with opportunity sectors will be awarded four points

- Describe how your project aligns with one of the priority tradable industry sectors.
- Describe how your project aligns with one of the opportunity industry sectors.

WORK PLAN (12 points)

- Provide a timeline with specific dates for project milestones, key activities, and deliverables including assigned roles for key staff and project partners.
- Detail existing community engagement and/or plans to conduct outreach and inclusion activities with historically marginalized and disinvested populations within the project area.

- Provide measurable objectives and performance indicators to evaluate the project's pre-development activities. The following are provided as examples and are not an exhaustive list.
 - Completion of Key Pre-Development Milestones: Examples include securing necessary permits or approvals, completing site assessments, feasibility studies, or environmental reviews.
 - Stakeholder Engagement and Buy-In: Examples include conducting community engagement sessions with measurable participation rates, establishing formal agreements or partnerships with key stakeholders.
 - Detailed Project Planning: Examples include finalizing architectural or engineering designs, preparing a comprehensive project timeline and risk assessment.
 - Project Advancement and Development: Examples include submitting grant applications or other funding proposals, receiving funding commitments from external sources.
 - Data Collection and Analysis: Examples include gathering and analyzing baseline data to inform project planning, completing demographic, market, or environmental analyses.

PROPOSED BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE (8 points)

- Provide a detailed budget that itemizes costs by category (e.g., personnel, materials, travel, subcontractors)
- Provide a budget narrative that provides justification for each line item, explaining how
 costs were calculated and how they are necessary for project completion.
- Fiscal contact name and contact information

REFERENCES

Include the following details for two funding organizations:

- Name, email, and phone number of the primary contact.
 - A brief summary (one paragraph) of the project associated with each reference.

References should be able to speak to:

- Your capacity to deliver the type of work outlined in your proposal
- Your ability to meet reporting requirements and adhere to the approved budget.

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
- List of Board of Directors or governing body
- 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

APPENDICES

(OPTIONAL)

- Letters of Support
- Additional supporting documents, such as resumes of key staff, case studies, or past project summaries, if relevant to the application.

VI. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS

Applications that do not include all required documents or fail to follow submission instructions will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

VII. QUESTIONS AND INQUIRIES

For questions related to this funding opportunity, please email info@weprospertogether.org with the subject line: "We Prosper Together Catalyst RFP Inquiry."