

California Regional Investment Initiative (RII)
Implementation Phase Request for Proposal (RFP)

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Presented by the California Jobs First Council, the Governor's Office of
Business & Economic Development, and the Labor & Workforce Development
Agency.



Table of Contents

About the Program	3
Introduction	3
Background	3
Purpose and Objectives (Implementation Phase)	3
Glossary	4
Program Information.....	5
Program Design	5
Eligible Applicants	6
Eligible Projects	7
Disallowed Activities and Expenditures.....	8
Application Process	8
Funding Availability	8
Application Submission & Review Schedule	8
Period of Performance and Grant Agreement	9
Application Criteria and Evaluation.....	10
Grounds for Rejection.....	10
Administrative and Reporting Requirements	11
Project Reporting	11
Financial Report	12
Monitoring & Review.....	13
Subcontracting & Procurement.....	13
Record Keeping	13
Public Records.....	13
Fiscal Requirement and Reporting.....	14
Infrastructure.....	14
Equipment.....	15
Prevailing Wage	15
Intellectual Property Rights/Creative Commons Attribution License.....	18
Compliance.....	18
Application	18
Notice of Intent.....	19
Pre-Application Questionnaire	19
Full Application	20
Questions.....	21

About the Program

Introduction

The Regional Investment Initiative (RII), the signature program within California Jobs First, represents a comprehensive approach to economic development across California. By strategically investing in economic development, community infrastructure, and supportive services, the initiative aims to empower local communities and foster sustainable economic growth. Bringing together local communities, economic development practitioners, industry partners, and workers, this collaborative effort seeks to unlock the potential of California's diverse regional landscapes, creating opportunities for prosperity, innovation, and shared economic success.

Background

RII was established by Senate Bill 162 (2021), amended in Assembly Bill 2342 (2022), and most recently amended in Senate Bill 108 (2024).

The program is overseen by the California Jobs First Council, which is led by the Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development and the Labor & Workforce Development Agency. The California Jobs First Council also includes the California Natural Resources Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Environmental Protection Agency, California Health and Human Services Agency, California Department of Veterans Affairs, the California Public Utilities Commission and the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Investments. Council members participation will foster increased opportunities to leverage resources across agencies toward the goals of RII.

Since 2021, RII has funded regional economic development strategies and pre-development activities in all 13 regions of the state alongside eight pilot projects, totaling \$286 million. The program focuses on strategies that help create, attract, and provide access to good-paying jobs, with the aim of bolstering economic competitiveness and resilience. More information is available at <https://www.labor.ca.gov/regional-investment-initiative/>.

Purpose and Objectives (Implementation Phase)

The Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development (Co-Chair of the Jobs First Council), in partnership with the Employment Development Department, and on behalf of the Jobs First Council, including the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) (Co-Chair of the Jobs First Council), is

making up to \$125 million available in grant funding within the Implementation Phase of the RII program.

The Implementation Phase represents the pivot point in the program from planning to implementing the strategies that were developed by and for communities across the state.

These grants are intended to allow a range of activities related to economic growth, job training and access, business development, and research and development, all with the primary goal of supporting the creation, attraction, and access to good-paying jobs for Californians.

The core pillars of this funding include:

- Supporting sustainable and equitable economic growth
- Investing in the workforce for the sectors of the future
- Creating an attractive environment for and with job creators
- Strengthening the California innovation economy and our entrepreneurial culture

The grants within this phase will be awarded on a rolling and competitive basis to economic development projects that are informed by the work of the regional Jobs First Collaboratives.

Glossary

The following definitions apply to terms used throughout this RFP.

- Disinvested Communities refers to any of the following:
 - A definition utilized within the applicable regional Jobs First Strategy where the project is anticipated to serve (this may include alternative language to “disinvested” as defined by the applicable Jobs First Regional Collaborative) including but not limited to:
 - Census identified as ‘disadvantaged’ by the California Environmental Protection Agency using CalEnviroScreen 4.05 or by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.6
 - Census tracts with median household incomes at or below 80 percent of the regional median income (as defined by the Interagency Leadership Team), 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 and justification for disinvestment definition for specific project area or community.⁷
 - California Native American Tribes as defined by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Tribal Consultation Policy.
 - Individuals with disabilities, young people who are neither working nor in school ("opportunity youth"), students whose parents did not attend college ("first-generation students"), and English language learners
- Good-paying jobs refers to jobs that meet standards as defined in the applicable regional Jobs First Strategies for the region(s) with which the project is anticipated to serve.

Program Information

The Implementation Phase is designed as a two-phase competition to (1) select regional coalitions and their project clusters that advance sector growth in one or more regions and (2) invest in highly competitive individual projects from within the cluster.

Interested applicants should form regional/cross-regional coalitions, in coordination with private sector and other partners, that share a common vision for how Implementation funds could begin to scale growth of the identified sector in the region(s). Together the regional coalition will identify project clusters to propose for funding.

Project clusters are defined as between three and eight aligned and interconnected projects (construction and/or non-construction) organized under a singular vision to grow one tradable sector (as identified in the "Accelerate" or "Bet" categories within the State Economic Blueprint) in a regional economy(ies). Projects included in the cluster should be ready for implementation and should have completed all necessary studies, assessments and pre-development steps. Interested applicants should form regional/cross-regional coalitions, in coordination with private sector and other partners, that share a common vision for how Implementation funds could begin to scale growth of the identified sector in the region(s).

Program Design

Phase 1: Regional Coalition and Project Cluster Selection

In Phase 1, a lead entity representing a regional coalition must submit a Notice of Intent outlining the targeted sector and associated regions. Any lead entity is eligible to submit a maximum of one Notice of Intent in each review cycle.

Lead entities will then be able to complete a Pre-Application Questionnaire. The questionnaire is intended to provide details about each of the projects identified by the regional coalition that help to evaluate the potential impact of investments in each project cluster. The lead entity will be required to include a letter from the associated regional Convenor(s) (if the project(s) are anticipated to support multiple regions a letter is required from the Convenor(s) in each associated region) as part of the Pre-Application, confirming that the target sector aligns with their Jobs First Regional Plans. From this evaluation, specific regional coalitions will be selected as finalists.

Phase 2: Project Selection

In Phase 2, each entity representing a project within the regional coalition finalists will be invited to submit an application. Projects will be evaluated independently and within the proposed cluster of projects. Interviews will be required, for qualifying projects, to provide applicants with an opportunity to “pitch” the most competitive projects. Once interviews are completed, project cluster awards will be announced, and applicants will be notified of their project’s success in this competition.

Eligible Applicants

This RFP requires local partnerships and collaboration. Only applications that provide evidence of impact into disinvested communities, either through a specific project or partner organization that is located in or directly serves a disinvested community will be accepted. Award recipients will also work closely with staff from GO-Biz and the California Workforce Development Board, on behalf of the Jobs First Council.

Proposals will be accepted from the following entity types:

- Non-profits (501c(3), c(4), and c(6)), and other community-based organizations.
- Institutions of higher education or consortium of institutions of higher education.
- California Native American Tribes or a consortium of California Native American Tribes.

- Local governments, Special Districts, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), etc.

For-profit entities are not eligible to apply. The applicant must be based in California.

Eligible Projects

All proposed projects within the cluster must be identified as ready-to-go and able to be completed within the 24-month period of performance (POP). Projects must have completed feasibility and environmental studies and have received permits, if relevant.

Factors that will be considered during both scoring phases will include and are not limited to:

- Geographic equity
- Benefits to disinvested communities
- Capacity of the lead organization to complete the project

Project clusters must include two or more of the following project categories:

Ecosystem Support

- Projects that address cross-cutting gaps in a sector ecosystem (e.g., support for backbone organizations, capital and technical assistance to support new and expanding businesses, targeted investment into market-relevant research and development or supply chain advancements)

Infrastructure

- Projects that invest in targeted infrastructure or real estate development to support sector specific activities

Workforce Development

- Projects that support workforce training and/or supportive services that advance critical skills for prevalent occupations for the sector.

Additional Anchors

- Projects that invest in an “Anchor” activity (as defined in the state Economic Blueprint) that has been identified by employers and/or workers as a critical barrier to the creation of and access to good-paying jobs in the tradable sector identified by the regional coalition.

Activities funded by this grant program must comply with applicable, local, state, and federal laws and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act and local permitting requirements. GO-Biz, on behalf of the Jobs First Council, may assist the applicant with verifying applicable compliance with state and local policies; however, the applicant is solely responsible for project compliance. Applicants must be prepared to submit any permits, surveys, or reports that support the status of their environmental compliance.

Disallowed Activities and Expenditures

Investments in new fossil fuel extraction infrastructure or activity, or enhancements to expand fossil fuel production will not be eligible for Regional Investment Initiative Implementation funding.

All costs incurred must meet the tests of reasonableness, allowability and allocability in accordance with the grant agreement terms. GO-Biz and EDD may require grantees to provide an audit of funds by the state or a third-party to verify compliance with the grant agreement. Recipients are responsible for ensuring proper management and financial accountability of state funds to preclude future cost disallowances.

Application Process

Funding Availability

Up to \$125 million in General State Funds are available through this RFP, with two review and award periods.

The minimum award amount is \$500,000 for individual projects within the project cluster.

There is no maximum award amount for individual projects within the project clusters.

There is no matching funds requirement.

During the review of the Full Applications, award amounts for the top scoring individual projects may be adjusted depending on the availability of funding.

Application Submission & Review Schedule

GO-Biz and LWDA, on behalf of the Jobs First Council, will review applications and make award decisions twice during the RFP application period, reviewing only applications received prior to 5:00 PM PT on each due date. Project

applications not selected for a grant award in the first review period will be required to reapply during the next review period. Should duplicate applications be submitted for a project, the most recent application will be evaluated.

The two review periods are as follows:

1. Round 1
 - Notice of Intent Due: March 26, 2025
 - Pre-Application Due: April 23, 2025
 - Full Application Due: May 28, 2025
- Round 2
 - Notice of Intent Due: March 20, 2026
 - Pre-Application Due: April 17, 2026
 - Full Application Due: May 22, 2026

All applications shall be submitted via email to regionalinvestment@gobiz.ca.gov by 5:00 PM PST on or before the due dates listed above. An email will be returned to you to verify the receipt of your application with GO-Biz timestamp. Applicants are encouraged to submit 48 hours early to ensure no errors in submission as late applicants will not be accepted under any circumstances, without exception. All applications must be submitted by the deadlines listed above. There are no exceptions or extensions of this deadline. Any technology challenges or inability of an applicant to submit an application by the deadline for any reason shall not be grounds for an extension of the deadline. For help applying, please send an email to regionalinvestment@gobiz.ca.gov and copy our grant team at Rllgrants@gobiz.ca.gov with the subject line: RII Implementation Phase Application Help.

Period of Performance and Grant Agreement

Grants awarded within this RFP are anticipated to have a Period of Performance (POP) of 24 months, with an anticipated start date of September 2025. This POP includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities. No obligation of funds will be allowed before an executed grant agreement is provided. Any funds not expended during the grant agreement period shall be returned to the State.

Note – A 24-month POP is not guaranteed, and GO-Biz reserves the right to reduce the POP if necessary for encumbrance or expenditure requirements. Similarly, GO-Biz reserves the right to extend the POP beyond the anticipated 24-months considering unanticipated delays in project implementation.

During the POP, the awardees will be required to abide by all the obligations as stipulated within this application and the signed Grant Agreement. This includes submittal of reports to GO-Biz including identifying progress made toward stated goals. The exact reporting requirements will be finalized by an agreement between the awardee and GO-Biz.

Application Criteria and Evaluation

GO-Biz and LWDA, on behalf of EDD and the Jobs First Council, will confirm eligibility of each project cluster and determine the pre-applications that will be eligible to submit a full application. GO-Biz, LWDA and other agency staff from within the California Jobs First Council will comprise a review committee that will review and evaluate each qualifying proposal for final consideration. The review committee will make a recommendation to the California Jobs First Council Co-Chairs. The recommendation will be based on consensus reached after each application is thoroughly reviewed, evaluated, and discussed by the review committee. The California Jobs First Council Co-Chairs will take the recommendations and input of the review committee into consideration along with the Council's mission and program priorities to make the final designations and funding decisions.

Grounds for Rejection

GO-Biz and LWDA's determination as to eligibility for grant funding, or the amount of grant funding awarded, is final and not subject to appeal or protest. GO-Biz, on behalf of EDD and the Jobs First Council, reserves the right to waive any immaterial deviation in a proposal; however, the waiver of an immaterial deviation in a proposal shall in no way modify the document or excuse the applicant from full compliance with the proposal requirements after the applicant is awarded the agreement.

A proposal shall be rejected if:

- The proposal package is received after the exact time and date set for receipt of proposals.
- The proposal does not meet the requirements and is not prepared and submitted as outlined in the application format section.

- Plagiarism, including but not limited to taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own, and failure to cite someone else's work or ideas, is prohibited and is grounds for disqualification. Using Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools to complete any portion of an application, without citation, may be considered plagiarism and may also be grounds for disqualification.
- The proposal contains false or misleading statements or references which do not support an attribute or conditions contended by the applicant; and if, in the opinion of GO-Biz, LWDA or EDD, such information was intended to mislead the review committee in its evaluation of the proposal.
- The proposal is confidential, conditional, and incomplete or if it contains any irregularities. The determination of rejection for grant funding is final and not subject to appeal or protest.

Administrative and Reporting Requirements

The following information should be considered by the entities proposed to lead on individual projects.

Project Reporting

Awardees will be required to submit quarterly reports assessing the progress of their projects against the commitments identified in the grant agreements.

In phase two, all full project applications must include indicators and metrics for evaluating project success that are specific, measurable, and appropriate. Final reporting indicators and metrics will be determined in grant agreements.

Some sample metrics for each project type include:

Ecosystem Support

- Anticipated number of new licensed technologies or patented innovation.
- Anticipated number of new start-ups, spinouts, or exits.
- Number of small/midsize businesses in disinvested communities connected to universities, research centers or national labs.
- Expected number of small/midsize businesses with access to funding or other assistance to overcome barriers to entry into new industries.
- Anticipated number of good-paying jobs.

Infrastructure

- Size and makeup of population expected to benefit from investment.
- Anticipated new businesses or expansion of businesses in disinvested communities.
- Anticipated number of good-paying jobs.

Workforce Development

- Total number of participants served (total, career services, job training).
- Total number of and % of participants who receive training by Skill Type – Basic, Cross-functional, Knowledge-based.
- % of total training participants who completed training.
- Total number of participants trained and placed.
- Number of training participants with a Credential Attainment; % of participants with a credential attainment within 1 year of program exit.
- % of training project graduates with measurable skill gains (training/sector specific).
- % of training project graduates employed.
- % of training graduates employed with health insurance benefits.
- Median training graduates' quarterly earnings over time and compared to regional living wage targets (prior to training and after training).

Additional Enablers

- Number of network partners serving or representing members of disinvested communities.
- Number of new initiatives or partnerships that contribute to social safety net programs
- Anticipated number of high-quality jobs.

Financial Report

The Financial Report Template will be included in the grant agreements, contain the invoice template and not be limited to the following information:

- Consultant names (including affiliated organizations if it's a partnership with a participating Technical Assistance Expansion Program (TAEP) center, chamber, accelerator, incubator, institution, government entity, etc.)
- Description of non-labor expenditures (cost for research, cost for marketing, reimbursement period)

Monitoring & Review

During the performance period, awardees will be monitored and/or audited by the state in accordance with existing policies, procedures, and requirements governing the use of the State General Funds. Awardees are expected to be responsive to all reviewers' requests, provide reasonable and timely access to records and staff, facilitate access to subcontractors, and communicate with reviewers in a timely and accurate manner.

Subcontracting & Procurement

Subcontractor procurement processes must adhere to state and local requirements. Procurement requirements: Projects must obtain three competitive quotes for purchases to justify that the cost of the equipment is reasonable. Awardees are required to obtain and keep them on file in the event they are monitored.

Sole source procurement: If the purchase is a sole source purchase (only one vendor capable of providing an item or service, therefore it is not possible to obtain competitive bids), justification must be provided on why this cannot be competitively procured along with why the provider was selected.

Record Keeping

Awardees and subrecipients will be required to maintain project and fiscal records sufficient to allow state and local reviewers to evaluate the project's effectiveness and proper use of funds. The record-keeping system must include both original and summary (computer-generated) data sources. Awardees and subrecipients will retain all records pertinent to the grant contract for a period of five years from the date of the final payment of the contract unless a longer period of record retention is stipulated. Awardees, not GO-Biz or any other state agency, will retain possession, custody, and control of all records related to the funded projects, and will make such records available for inspection and audit upon request for verification of compliance with the grant program's terms and conditions, and to ensure awardees have effectuated their projects consistent with the statutory requirements and goals of the program.

Public Records

By applying for this grant funding opportunity, applicants acknowledge that GO-Biz is subject to the California Public Records Act (PRA) (Government Code section 7920.000 et. seq.). Application materials submitted by applicants

pursuant to this grant funding opportunity may be subject to disclosure pursuant to a PRA request, except in the event that such documents submitted are considered confidential information and exempt from disclosure under the PRA. In the event records of an applicant are requested through a PRA request, GO-Biz will notify the applicant, as soon as practicable that a PRA request for the applicant's information has been received, but not less than five (5) business days prior to the release of the requested information, to allow the applicant to seek an injunction. GO-Biz will work in good faith with the applicant to protect the information to the extent an exemption is provided by law.

Fiscal Requirement and Reporting

The Implementation Phase is a reimbursable grant. Awardees are required to submit invoices and supporting documentation to receive reimbursement for all expenditures incurred. Awardees must maintain a separate ledger for each program that shows the total amount of funds available for each program, and monthly program deductions (i.e., payments to subcontractors). At a minimum, each ledger entry must include the subcontractor agreement number, invoice date, payment date, and a description of the payment. Individual divisions may require additional ledger information.

Additionally, the awardee will prepare and submit monthly financial reports and quarterly expenditure reports, or as requested, in formats prescribed by GO-Biz, on behalf of the Jobs First Council. Awardees must establish, manage, and maintain an appropriate system of internal controls, accounting records, and documentation of the receipt and disbursement of the funds for review or reproduction upon written request by GO-Biz, on behalf of the Jobs First Council, according to Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures, other state regulatory requirements, and the direction of GO-Biz.

Infrastructure

For any rights of way, real and personal property, leases, improvements, and infrastructure funded as a reimbursable direct cost of the Implementation Phase, the awardee must be the sole owner of the title or leasehold.

Prior to the execution of a grant agreement, the awardee must provide documentation that they either hold ownership rights to the land on which an implementation project is to occur or has land tenure permission from the landowner(s) to implement the approved project(s).

If the awardee does not own the property on which the project is to be implemented, the property owners(s) must sign a document or enter into an agreement with the awardee acknowledging landownership, access rights and the period of time for access for project implementation. If there is an existing agreement that provides land tenure for the time periods required, it may be used.

Each site acquired or improved upon with the funding related to this RFP must be maintained in a state of good repair and remain permanently dedicated to the described use for its full useful life.

If the ownership or use of equipment, vehicles, or infrastructure changes to a use not in accordance with the program guidelines or contract agreement, the awardee may be required to reimburse the State in a manner determined by GO-Biz, on behalf of the Jobs First Council.

Equipment

For any equipment purchased or built with funds that are reimbursable as a direct cost of the Implementation Phase, as determined by GO-Biz, on behalf of the Jobs First Council, the awardee or subcontractor, as applicable, must be the sole owner on title. During the period of performance, equipment must be dedicated to the described use in the same proportion and scope as was in the contract agreement, unless GO-Biz agrees otherwise in writing. On completion or early termination of the contract agreement, the State will either require that the equipment be returned or authorize the continued use of such equipment in the benefitting community; in making that determination, the State will consider the useful life of the equipment, and the awardee may be required to refund the State for the fair market value of equipment that continues to have a usable life, but is no longer required for the project implementation. Awardee will be required to maintain an inventory record for each piece of non-expendable equipment purchased or built with funds provided under the terms of a grant agreement.

Prevailing Wage

Requirement

Projects funded by this RFP may involve construction, alteration, demolition, installation, repair, or maintenance work over \$1,000. Such projects might be considered "public works" under the California Labor Code (See California Labor Code Section 1720 et seq. and Title 8 California Code of Regulations,

Section 16000 et seq.). Public works projects require the payment of prevailing wages. Prevailing wage rates can be significantly higher than non-prevailing wage rates.

Determination of Project's Status

Only the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and courts of competent jurisdiction may issue legally binding determinations that a particular project is or is not a public work. If the Recipient is unsure whether the project funded by the Agreement is a "public work" as defined in the California Labor Code, it may wish to seek a timely determination from DIR or an appropriate court. As such processes can be time consuming, it may not be possible to obtain a timely determination before the date for performance of the Agreement. By accepting this grant, the Recipient is fully responsible for complying with all California public works requirements, including but not limited to payment of prevailing wage. As a material term of this grant, the Recipient must either:

1. Timely obtain a legally binding determination from DIR or a court of competent jurisdiction before work begins on the project that the proposed project is not a public work; or
2. Assume that the project is a public work and ensure that:
 - Prevailing wages are paid unless and until DIR or a court of competent jurisdiction determines that the project is not a public work;
 - The project budget for labor reflects these prevailing wage requirements; and
 - The project complies with all other requirements of prevailing wage law, including but not limited to keeping accurate payroll records and complying with all working hour requirements and apprenticeship obligations. California Prevailing Wage law provides for substantial damages and financial penalties for failure to pay prevailing wages when such payment is required.

Subrecipient and Vendor Flow-down Requirements

The Recipient will ensure that its Subrecipients, any lower-tiered level of Sub-Subrecipients, and Vendors also comply with the public works/prevailing wage requirements above. As applicable, the Recipient will ensure that all agreements with its Subrecipients and Vendors to perform work related to this

Project contain the above terms regarding payment of prevailing wages on public works projects, and also as applicable that Subrecipients and Vendors also contain these terms. The Recipient is responsible for any failure of its Subrecipients, any lower tiered level of Sub-Subrecipients, and Vendors to comply with California prevailing wage and public works laws.

Indemnification and Breach

Any failure of the Recipient or its Subrecipients, any lower-tiered level of Sub-Subrecipients, and Vendors to comply with the above requirements will constitute breach of this Agreement which excuses GO-Biz's performance of this Agreement at GO-Biz's option and will be at the Recipient's sole risk. In such a case, GO-Biz will refuse payment to the Recipient of any amount under this award and GO-Biz will be released, at its option, from any further performance of this Agreement or any portion thereof. The Recipient will indemnify GO-Biz and hold it harmless for any and all financial consequences arising out of or resulting from the failure of the Recipient and/or any of its subcontractors to pay prevailing wages or to otherwise comply with the requirements of prevailing wage law.

Budget

The Recipient's budget on public works projects must indicate which job classifications are subject to prevailing wage. For detailed information about prevailing wage and the process to determine if the proposed project is a public work, the Recipient may wish to contact DIR or a qualified labor attorney for guidance.

Covered Trades

For public works projects, the Recipient may contact DIR for a list of covered trades and the applicable prevailing wage.

Questions

If the Recipient has any questions about this contractual requirement or the wage, record keeping, apprenticeship, or other significant requirements of California prevailing wage law, the Recipient should consult DIR and/or a qualified labor attorney before entering into this Agreement.

Certification

The Recipient will certify to GO-Biz on each payment request form either that: (a) prevailing wages were paid to eligible workers who provided labor for work covered by the payment request and the Recipient and all contractors and

subcontractors otherwise complied with all California prevailing wage laws; or (b) the project is not a public work requiring the payment of prevailing wages. In the latter case, the Recipient will provide competent proof of a DIR or court determination that the project is not a public work requiring the payment of prevailing wages. Prior to the release of any retained funds under this Agreement, the Recipient will submit to GO-Biz the above-described certificate signed by the Recipient and all Subrecipients, any lower-tiered level of Sub Subrecipients, and Vendors performing public works activities on the project. Absent this certificate, the Recipient will have no right to any funds under this Agreement and GO-Biz will be relieved of any obligation to pay any funds.

Intellectual Property Rights/Creative Commons Attribution License

Awardees of a state award obtain the title to intangible property once it has been acquired. The awardee must use the property for the originally authorized purpose and must not encumber the property without approval from GO-Biz. Further, GO-Biz has the right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under a state award, and authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data for state purposes.

Compliance

All funds are subject to their related state statutory and regulatory requirements. The awardee is responsible for evaluating the risk of noncompliance based on a set of common factors. These risk assessments may include factors such as prior experience in managing state general funds and regulatory requirements, previous audits, personnel, and policies or procedures for award execution and oversight. Ongoing monitoring of any given subrecipient or contract as a result of this award should reflect its assessed risk and include monitoring, identification of deficiencies, and follow-up to ensure appropriate remediation.

Application

The Implementation Phase is designed as a two-phase competition and will include a mandatory Notice of Intent.

All materials must be completed in Century Gothic 12-point font and follow all applicable criteria.

If you have any questions regarding the Application Package after having carefully reviewed the RFP and Appendices, please email GO-Biz staff at regionalinvestment@gobiz.ca.gov.

Notice of Intent

An eligible lead entity representing a project cluster must submit a Notice of Intent outlining the targeted sector and the region(s) anticipated being included in the cluster. Any lead entity is eligible to submit a maximum of one Notice of Intent in each review cycle.

The Notice of Intent must be submitted via email to regionalinvestment@gobiz.ca.gov by 5:00 PM PT on March 26, 2025 (round 1) or March 20, 2026 (round 2). No late submissions will be accepted.

- Lead Entity (organization name)
- Primary Point of Contact (name and email address)
- Identified Sector
- Identified Region(s)

The Notice of Intent must be no longer than one-page and in Century Gothic 12-point font.

Pre-Application Questionnaire

The lead entity that submitted the Notice of Intent is eligible to submit, and will receive from GO-Biz, a project cluster pre-application web-form.

The pre-application web-form must be completed by 5:00 PM PT on April 23, 2025 (round 1) or April 17, 2026 (round 2). No late submissions will be considered.

The pre-application web-form must include answers to the following questions in <300 words per question/request:

1. Provide a brief overview of each project comprising the proposed project cluster. Specifically:
 - a. Project description
 - b. Name of entity leading the project
2. Why is this project cluster relevant to the economic future of California and the region?
3. In what ways is the regional coalition well-positioned to advance this project cluster?
4. What evidence suggests that all proposed contributing projects are critical for the success of the project cluster?
5. What is the job creation potential for the project cluster overall, and what is the profile of those jobs (e.g., wages, accessibility by education level)?

6. What is the financing plan for the proposed project cluster?
Specifically:
 - a. Total and per project upfront capital investment needed
 - b. Funding requested through Regional Investment Initiative implementation funds (total and per project)
 - c. Plan to identify and secure other sources of capital for upfront capital expenses
 - d. Plan to cover ongoing operating expenses
7. What potential blockers do you see to successful implementation, and how will the applicant proactively address them?
8. What is the proposed timeline for completing activities, and how with the applicant ensure this timeline is achieved?

Teams of reviewers will score and rank the pre-applications web-forms that are received and meet eligibility criteria. Only those applications that score in the top tier, are deemed meritorious, and are in the best interest of the state will be invited to submit a Full Application. The scoring value for each question is as follows:

Question	Points Available	Response Components
1	Pass/Fail	Includes descriptions of all projects proposed and clearly identifies the project leads
2	3	Identifies selected tradable sector
3	3	Identifies how the regional coalition is collaborating and maps existing and relevant stakeholder relationships
4	3	Outlines how each project is meeting a clearly defined employer, worker, or community need
5	3	Outlines the number of jobs anticipated to be created due to these projects
6	3	Includes a clear plan to fully fund the projects, including identify other secured funding sources
7	3	Identifies most relevant risks and includes strategies to mitigate and/or address them
8	3	Outlines a clear schedule with measurable deliverables

Full Application

Selected pre-application finalists will be eligible to apply for the second phase and will receive the full application at that time. GO-Biz and LWDA will notify the lead entities on behalf of the regional coalition.

The full application must be submitted via email to regionalinvestment@gobiz.ca.gov by 5:00 PM PT on May 28, 2025 (round 1) or May 22, 2026 (round 2). No late submissions will be considered.

NOTE: GO-Biz, on behalf of EDD, and LWDA, may negotiate with individual project applicants to reduce the proposed budget for an awarded project pending budget availability.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding the Application Package after having carefully reviewed the RFP, please email GO-Biz at regionalinvestment@gobiz.ca.gov.

All questions submitted will be made publicly available via a Frequently Asked Questions document on business.ca.gov within two-weeks of the final submission deadlines for the pre-application questionnaire and full application during both rounds. Questions must be submitted by:

Round 1:

NOI Question Deadline – March 18, 2025, at 5PM (PST)

Pre-Application Question Deadline - April 9, 2025, at 5PM (PST)

Full Application Question Deadline - May 14, 2025, at 5PM (PST)

Round 2:

NOI Question Deadline – February 24, 2026, at 5PM (PST)

Pre-Application Question Deadline - April 3, 2026, at 5PM (PST)

Full Application Question Deadline – May 8, 2026, at 5PM (PST)