CALIFORNIA JOBS FIRST

Sierra Region

Catalyst/ Project Funding Questions from 4/25/24 Strategy Workshop:

1. **How are we going to maximize our impact if we are focusing on five sectors? Why wasn't one sector prioritized?**
    a. The State's guidelines for Planning and Catalyst have always focused on "up to 5 industry sectors." During our initial community engagement and Governing Council meetings last year, five sectors emerged (Sustainable Rec & Tourism, Natural & Working Lands, Community Healthcare, Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems, Clean Energy & Energy Resilience), and it was evident that in order to best represent the region and the population, all five sectors should be considered so that not one sector, demographic, or community was favored. In addition, best practices for sustainable economic development indicate that diversification of local economies renders the most resilient communities. Focusing or prioritizing just one sector may show preference and the entire point of this project is equity. It should be noted that there is significant crossover between all five sector strategies and core issues – housing, infrastructure, governance, etc.

    Per state guidance, the Catalyst Fund is not designed to fully fund any one project or be allocated 100% to any particular project. Therefore, proposal budgets should include evidence of match funding or commitments of cash and/or in-kind support from the project proponent and partners. This can include investments to date that have advanced the idea or project to be eligible for Catalyst funding.

    If you would like to get involved in the industry sector workshops, email jobsfirst@sierrabusiness.org to express your interest.

    See question 16 for a description of the Industry Sector Coordinators' duties

2. **I have heard a great deal about regional projects. How do we plan to put together these types of projects?**
    a. We will be hosting project identification workshops (later this summer?) specifically to work on this issue in addition to our regularly scheduled collaborative meetings. Check the calendar of workshops here to learn about those workshops.

3. **What communication platform will we use across the region to network, build regional projects, etc.**

a. The SBC team has set up a Slack channel and will provide launch information soon. In the meantime, SBC has set up multiple communication platforms to facilitate the process including our Sierra Jobs First Website, regular newsletters, a community calendar, open subcommittee meetings, and office hours (all posted to calendar on the website). Further, we have over 25 community engagement meetings scheduled between May and July throughout the region.

4. **How will we identify potential links and connections between and across projects? Will SBC help with this?**
    a. Yes, our team is currently working on this in the background for project ideas already submitted to the tracker tool, and is planning to do some potential matchmaking before the project identification workshops (where these things will be flushed out before the RFP is released). The project tracker is still accepting project ideas and can be submitted here.

5. **Will projects be higher priority if they are regionally adopted?**
    a. The project subcommittee will be finalizing the criteria before the workshops, and there will most likely be a weighting system for regional projects.

6. **On what date in August will the final draft document be published before it is submitted to the state?**
    a. Right now, our team is working to release the most final version of the strategic plan deliverable by August 16, so the Council has one more review cycle before submitting to the state on August 30, 2024. We will be releasing a preview of the draft for comment in mid-June. It will also be posted on the Sierra Jobs First website. If you would like to be notified when the draft is ready for comment, be sure to join the mailing list here.

7. **What is the project selection process, scoring, and timeframe?**
    a. The project identification process and framework is currently being drafted by the project subcommittee. We are hoping to release it by the end of June

at the latest. However, the minimum criteria provided by the state is already available.

8. **Do we know where this Jobs First funding is coming from? VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) is being cut by 44.7%. Is this to help CA Jobs First?**
    a. "On September 23, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 162 (Chapter 259, Statutes of 2021)10, which established the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF). SB 162 supports regionally centered plans to respond to the diverse needs across our state and to build sustainable and resilient regional economies. Initially, $600 million was appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Fund of 2021 until the 2022 budget revised the source of funds to the State General Fund in SB 115 (Chapter 2, Statutes of 2022)." (May 2022 SFP – pg.3)

9. **If the criteria are equity, climate, and job quality and access, are projects penalized if they don't meet all 3 areas?**
    a. There will be a weighting system that will incorporate this. The major issue is that projects must promote 3 things: job creation, positive impact on disinvested communities in the region, and not add carbon emissions. As noted, the Project Identification subcommittee is currently developing the criteria based on state guidelines.

10. **How vetted do projects need to be to be proposed?**
    a. All project proponents must submit a complete RFP response to be considered for funding. We encourage all applicants and project proponents to attend one one of the project ideation sessions this summer to learn how to strengthen their application. This is a competitive regional process with specific guidelines, and we remind project proponents to pay close attention to the scoring rubric included in the RFP to be released on September 1st.

11. **Will the state help integrate the goals and projects of this region with the actions coming from other state strategies - e.g. Wildfire Task Force, Outdoors**

for All strategy, etc. For example, the Governor's Wildfire Task Force is also focusing on workforce development?

a. Yes, our state representatives have been helpful in pointing to alignment with statewide initiatives. It is ultimately our regional collaborative's responsibility to align with state initiatives and the CA Jobs First Statewide Council which is focused on alignment across agencies including: . the Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development, Labor & Workforce Development, Governor's Office of Planning & Research, California Natural Resources Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Environmental Protection Agency, California Health & Human Services Agency, California Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Public Utilities Commission.

12. **How will projects be submitted and advanced? Who is developing and submitting projects?**
    a. Anyone can submit projects through the official RFP process following the outlined criteria. The plan is to release the RFP on September 1st subject to any changes from the State with respect to guidelines. A draft RFP will be released for comment in mid-May. For the first round, the RFP will be open for two months until November 1 after which time, the Project Identification subcommittee will review all applications for completeness and eligibility. The council will be voting/advancing projects at the end of the year.

13. **It's true that horrible things happened in the past. But why do you assume that the housing burden is partially due to "the forcible removal of tribes from their native homeland?"**
    a. Excerpt from the Regional Summary:

> *"Building intergenerational wealth in the Eastern Sierra region is difficult for the majority of disinvested communities. Nearly half of the households are housing burdened, and many of the barriers to homeownership are the result of historical land grabs (e.g., the forcible removal of tribes from their native homeland), mortgage discrimination, and high housing costs due to the strong second-home market in the region."*

This statement IS providing a "housing barrier example" of how tribal communities became disinvested over time. This statement is NOT illustrating that this is the only means to be housing burdened in the region.

Both federally recognized and unrecognized tribes today have experienced, and continue to experience, generational trauma from colonialism. One aspect of that trauma includes the displacement of these people from their ancestral homelands, and the historical unwillingness of state agencies to assure the longevity and success of these communities.

14. How will the state's budget deficit of $90B affect this program? Is $300 million for implementation and $14 million already secured?

a. The primary impact of the state's budget deficit is that $200 million of the implementation funding is deferred to 2025 and 2026. The first $100 million for implementation and the $14 million for Catalyst are secured.

15. Will you be allowing/accepting projects on federal public lands?

a. Yes, as long as the federal agency is a project partner in the application.

16. Please explain the role of the industry sector coordinators?

a. Per the State of California Notice of Available Funds by the Employment Development Department in coordination with the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development on behalf of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, Industry Sector Coordinators are tasked with promoting system change and alignment activities. Sector Coordinators will:

- Support the Governing Council in cataloging projects that will support the proliferation of the prioritized industries and enhance high-quality job creation;
- Work with GO-Biz staff and regional partners to find and apply for state, federal, and private grants;
- Align Governing Council -identified projects with federal funding;
  - Liaise with workforce and economic development partners, High Road Training Partnerships, community-based organizations, and others capable of contributing to the success of the project to build an ecosystem around identified industries or sectors;
  - Provide or procure Technical Assistance for Implementation grant applications and administration.

17. **Will the project identification committee do a pre-screen feedback for the RFP process? What happens to existing proposals?**
    a. There are no existing proposals at this time. Only rudimentary project information has been collected by SBC through the project tracker which represents only an inventory of potential projects. The actual RFP requires a much more thorough level of detail and a budget. SBC staff can provide pre-screen feedback and technical assistance. The Project Identification subcommittee will be rating the projects prior to review by the Governing Council.

18. **What does the outreach look like to solicit public feedback from communities?**
    a. Over 25 community meetings are scheduled during May and July to solicit public feedback from communities. Those meetings can be found here. In addition, the first draft of the Strategic Plan will be posted for feedback in mid-June on our website.

19. **What local agency/jurisdiction/entity will own the strategic plan for purposes of regional implementation?**
    a. This is an excellent question. Currently, it is the Governing Council which is not an official or elected body. Consideration must be given as to how the strategic plan can best be governed for long-term sustainability and implementation.