



# Institutional Unit Annual Review (AUR)

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*Integrated Planning Template - Fall 2025*

**Note:** This process is completed annually by KCCD Office Units. A full review (all sections) is submitted in odd years (e.g., 2025), and an abbreviated update (Sections I, II, III, and VI only) is submitted in even years (e.g., 2026).

**Unit/Department Name:**

Public Affairs, Development Grants, and External Funding

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**Review Period:**

2024-2025

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**Prepared By:**

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**Date Submitted:**

January 16, 2026

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## I. Executive Summary & Mission Alignment

**Executive Summary:**

Public Affairs and Development provides districtwide leadership in public affairs, communications, government relations, partnerships, and resource development to advance Kern Community College District's Future Forward 2025–2030 priorities. The unit serves as a central coordinating function that aligns district and college efforts with regional, state, and community initiatives, strengthening transparency, collaboration, and institutional effectiveness in support of student achievement.

During the prior cycle, Public Affairs and Development strengthened districtwide communications and community engagement, supported legislative advocacy, and coordinated implementation and compliance for major regional initiatives, including California Jobs First and the Health Learning and Equity (HEAL) Collaborative. Through its integrated structure, the unit supported the acquisition of significant external resources (exceeding \$25 million in recent

cycles) to expand instructional, student services, workforce, and community-based programs across the colleges, advancing equitable access and opportunity.

Looking ahead, Public Affairs and Development will focus on advancing a districtwide communications strategy and rebranding aligned with Future Forward, strengthening district-college alignment, expanding advocacy and fund development efforts, and improving coordination and accountability for regional and statewide initiatives. Through continued integration of public affairs, grants, and applied innovation efforts, the unit will support student success, equity, and long-term institutional sustainability across the district.

#### **Subunit A: Grants Office**

The Grants Office, staffed by the Director of Programs and Compliance and the Director of Grants and Resources Development, facilitates the development of grants, investment proposals, and supports the development of external partnerships and funding opportunities. In the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years, the grants office directly or indirectly supported acquisition of over \$100M each year in external funding. Funding acquired supports College and District progress toward achievement of the 2022-2024 Strategic Directions #1-3 adopted by the Kern Community College District Board of Trustees. The Grants Office is committed to excellent service to our internal and external stakeholders and partners. New unit goals, activities, and AUOs were established and are the focus of the Grants Office evaluation for the next cycle.

#### **Subunit B: California Renewable Energy Laboratory (CREL)**

The purpose of the California Renewable Energy Laboratory is to connect industry, governmental agencies, and workers, including disinvested communities and high-road training partnerships, with the most up-to date information regarding carbon management technologies, clean energy innovation and microgrid and energy storage technologies, clean transportation, including hydrogen fuel and electrical vehicle technologies, that will shape the regional and statewide economy for decades to come. Under the direction of the new Managing Director new unit goals, activities and AUOs were established and are the focus of CREL evaluation for the next cycle. Major accomplishments and key metrics from prior years include the establishment of partnerships with 3 national laboratories, implementation of partnerships with statewide community colleges, and expansion of student research opportunities. Future focus areas include development of the newest center of Excellence in High Performance Buildings, expansion of demonstration projects, increasing community and student participation, and strengthening and expanding partnerships with national laboratories, environmental justice organizations, and community colleges across the state.

#### **Unit Mission Statement:**

Public Affairs and Development exists to support the Chancellor and the colleges. The unit's purpose is to provide support and leadership for external relations and provide highly complex professional assistance to the Chancellor regarding current and potential public relations, legislative and communication issues and identifies opportunities for collaboration and resource development. The unit develops and implements regional and community initiatives to advance Districtwide community initiatives and outreach. Public Affairs and Development is committed to serving our students, faculty, professional classified, the Chancellor, Board of Trustees, and the public. The Public Affairs and Development unit supports communication strategies and legislative advocacy for the Chancellor and the three colleges. In particular, the unit meets monthly with the college PIOs to develop and evaluate the board media report. In addition, the unit meets with special program areas (CREL) to discuss community engagement strategies and supports. The unit engages with CERF and supports project development, implementation, and oversight of partnerships. The Associate Vice Chancellor meets with community

stakeholders to identify opportunities to support student success and learning.

The Grant office purpose is to provide professional leadership in grant resource and program development. The unit serves both internal collegiate stakeholders and collaborates with external college/district partners. Unit activities include: i) identification and analysis of current and future relevant grant opportunities; ii) maintaining current awareness of funding agencies' interests, requirements, and competitiveness levels; and iii) promoting awareness of current district data, research findings, educational and student success approaches and initiatives for their relevance and inclusion in competitive grant applications. The unit will maintain grant seeking and grant awards records for the use of district and college leadership. The unit utilizes data in providing leadership, planning, organizing, reviewing, coordinating, and evaluating district-wide and college-specific support for the development of non-credit and credit programs, and grants to provide seed funding while new programs are self-sustaining through the funding metrics of the Student Centered Funding Formula, or any subsequent state or federal funding model.

The California Renewable Energy Laboratory (CREL) purpose is to advance California's clean energy transition by supporting community colleges and regional partners in applied research, demonstration projects, and the development of workforce-aligned curriculum and training pathways. Through cross-sector collaboration, technical assistance, and community engagement, CREL builds institutional capacity, prepares a skilled and equitable workforce, and strengthens education-to-employment pipelines in emerging energy and sustainability fields. CREL supports the colleges in achieving their mission of improving student learning and achievement by providing educational resources, establishing partnerships, and facilitating collective participation in project innovation and development. CREL collaborates with members of the colleges within the district to stay connected with the various campus programs' needs and opportunities for assistance with projects related to clean energy. In addition, CREL leadership coordinates consultative services with national laboratories, universities and colleges, and governmental and private agencies to stay current in climate change and sustainability developments and solutions.

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### **Scope of Services and Key Functions:**

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### **Primary Service Recipients/Customers:**

Public Affairs and Development primarily serves the colleges, the Chancellor's Office, and the district by providing districtwide leadership in communications, public affairs, and external engagement. The unit also supports regional community stakeholders through strategic partnerships and collaborative initiatives. The Public Affairs and Development unit will focus on legislative advocacy, community outreach, and development. This unit will continue to identify opportunities for cross-collaboration amongst the colleges, the community and develop regional partnerships. The Public Affairs and Development unit will focus on effective communication and development of relationships with key community groups and external agencies to advance districtwide initiatives.

The Grants office supports college and district stakeholders to support the development of non-credit and credit programs and grants to provide seed funding while new programs become self-sustaining through the funding metrics of the Student Centered Funding Formula, or any subsequent state or federal funding model.

The California Renewable Energy Laboratory (CREL) supports community colleges and regional partners in applied research, demonstration projects, and the development of workforce-aligned curriculum and training pathways. Through cross-sector collaboration with external stakeholders, technical assistance, and community engagement, CREL builds institutional capacity, prepares a skilled and equitable workforce, and strengthens education-to-employment pipelines in emerging energy and sustainability fields. CREL supports the colleges in achieving their mission of improving student learning and achievement by providing educational resources, establishing partnerships, and facilitating collective participation in project innovation and development.

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### **How the Unit Supports Student Success and Equity:**

Public Affairs and Development serves the colleges primarily through collaboration with the Presidents and PIOs to develop and implement a comprehensive public and government affairs program on behalf of the Chancellor who is designated for these responsibilities by the Board of Trustees. The priorities of the district are student access, student success, student equity, workforce and economic development that responds to industry needs, and organizational effectiveness which are priorities of this unit.

The Grants Office serves the Kern CCD colleges through collaboration with the Vice Presidents of Instruction, Vice Presidents of Student Services, and Deans of Instruction, as well as the appropriate Vice Chancellors and Deputy Chancellor, with oversight of certain instructional and student services on behalf of the Chancellor who is designated for these responsibilities by the

Board of Trustees. The number one priority of the colleges is student success and student equity. This unit supports these priorities by helping to secure funding for programs and services to make progress toward achieving these objectives.

The California Renewable Energy Laboratory (CREL) advances student success and equity by supporting workforce-aligned curriculum development, applied research, and hands-on learning opportunities in emerging clean energy and sustainability fields. Through partnerships with colleges, industry, and community organizations, CREL creates inclusive pathways for student engagement, skill development, and participation in high-growth sectors.

## II. Staffing Profile & Changes

### Current Organizational Chart or Staffing List:

[PAAD, Grants, and CREL Org. Chart and Detailed position descriptions\\_2025-2026.pdf](#)

### Review of Organizational Structure:

### Notable Staffing Changes:

Since the last Annual Unit Review, Public Affairs and Development and its subunits have experienced notable staffing changes related primarily to growth, vacancies, and transitional roles.

Public Affairs and Development staffing changes included the hiring of Program Directors supporting HEAL, California Jobs First, and Climate Initiatives, as well as Program Managers supporting community outreach and energy initiatives.

Several positions within CREL remain vacant as the unit continues to scale, including the Executive Director (CREL), Program Director, Energy Initiatives, Program Manager, Centers of Excellence, Program Manager, Communications, and Director-level positions supporting energy and workforce development. These vacancies reflect the evolving nature of CREL's implementation and the need to align staffing with expanding programmatic and technical demands. CREL has also relied on professional experts and consultants to provide continuity in leadership, technical expertise, and community engagement while recruitment efforts continue.

Within the Grants Office subunit, core leadership positions, including the Director of Grants and Resource Development and Director of Programs and Compliance, remain filled and stable.

### III. Look Back: Assessment and Gap Analysis

#### Narrative Summary of Major Projects/Initiatives:

Public Affairs and Development continues to advance districtwide capacity through coordinated communications, community engagement, and regional partnerships aligned with Vision 2030 priorities. The unit supports legislative and public affairs efforts, strengthens district–college alignment, and provides ongoing coordination and compliance oversight for major regional initiatives, including California Jobs First (CERF) and the Health Learning and Equity (HEAL) Collaborative. These efforts continue to enhance public visibility of district initiatives, support informed decision-making for the Chancellor and Board of Trustees, and strengthen engagement with regional and statewide partners.

The Grants Office continues to support the three colleges and the district developing external funding to support coordinated district-wide existing and emerging instructional programs, student services programs, and student services to maximize student equity, learning, success, and completion outcomes. Instead of relying on ad hoc opportunities, the Grants Office will implement an annual stakeholder survey and grants webpage to better drive external funding priorities, internal and external district wide collaboration, and more effectively communicate across the district. The primary external funding focus is to ensure the colleges have the funding necessary to provide quality instructional and student services programs that result in employment in quality jobs and high paying careers. An equal external funding focus will continue to support the regional economic and workforce transition to a vibrant Kern County net zero economy.

The California Renewable Energy Laboratory (CREL) continues to advance its role as a platform for climate, energy, and workforce innovation. CREL supports the planning and implementation of clean energy and climate-related demonstration projects, advances renewable energy and zero-emission infrastructure concepts, and strengthens partnerships with national laboratories, industry, community-based organizations, and educational institutions. CREL continues to engage colleges in climate initiatives through participation in the Centers of Excellence, facilitates information flow among college leaders and practitioners, and supports student engagement at all three colleges through research, outreach, and applied learning opportunities. These ongoing initiatives continue to lay the foundation for scalable, college-driven models that support workforce development, community engagement, and California’s climate and equity goals.

#### Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) & KPIs

Outcome or Indicator	SAO/KPI Description	Assessment Method(s)	Target	Prior Year Result
SAO 1: Districtwide Communication & Engagement	Colleges receive timely, coordinated public affairs support and media engagement that increases visibility of districtwide and	Monthly Board Media Reports; engagement tracking with College PIOs	Monthly Board Media Report; minimum media engagement thresholds per college (BC: 2/week, PC: 1/week, CC: 1/week)	Board Media Reports submitted; engagement tracked; thresholds met.

Outcome or Indicator	SAO/KPI Description	Assessment Method(s)	Target	Prior Year Result
	regional initiatives.			
SAO 2: Legislative Advocacy & Policy Communication	Colleges and district staff receive timely information on state and federal legislation affecting community colleges, with coordinated advocacy support.	Legislative updates; advocacy briefings; stakeholder feedback	Development and implementation of districtwide legislative advocacy plan	Legislative updates provided; submitted legislative funding requests, advocacy coordination ongoing
SAO 3: Community & Regional Outreach	Community stakeholders receive consistent information regarding districtwide and regional initiatives.	Outreach logs; media tracking	Sustained or increased outreach annually	Outreach expanded through regional initiatives
KPI 1: Board Media Reporting	Number of Board Media Reports completed annually	Annual report count	11 annually	11 annually
SAO 1: Grant Development & Submission	Facilitate Timely Submission of College and District grant applications that address student educational and service needs	Maintain records, provide interim reports, and complete a year end summative assessment of the status of grants attempted, completed, submitted, and awarded		

<b>Outcome or Indicator</b>	<b>SAO/KPI Description</b>	<b>Assessment Method(s)</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Prior Year Result</b>
SAO 2: Grant Support & Implementation Assistance	Provide grant applications, legislative investment proposals, and grant implementation support to college staff, faculty and administrators	Maintain records for inclusion in the year end summative assessment of support provided to college and district staff, departments, and divisions		
SAO 3: External Partner Liaison	Serve as the liaison and staff support for grant project partners, and between the awardee and funding organizations	Maintain records for inclusion in the year end summative assessment of support provided related to federal, state, and private grant projects.		
KPI 1: External Funding Secured	Number and dollar amount of competitive, categorical, and legislative funding supported	Year-end summative assessment report.	Maintain or increase annual totals	22 awards totaling \$20.45M; Activity spans BC, CC, PC, and District Office; totals reflect multi-college grants.
SAO 1: Clean Energy Visibility & Access	Clean energy technologies and initiatives are visible and accessible to colleges and communities.	Administrator feedback; project tracking	Demonstration projects planned and approved	Projects in development; approvals completed
SAO 2: Energy Education & Training Engagement	Colleges, industry, and community partners are engaged in clean	Participation records; partnership tracking	Sustained or increased engagement	Engagement ongoing; partnerships expanding

Outcome or Indicator	SAO/KPI Description	Assessment Method(s)	Target	Prior Year Result
	energy education and training.			
SAO 3: Educational Pathways & Partnerships	Educational pathways and access to clean energy opportunities are established through partnerships.	Partner feedback; pathway development tracking	Pathways aligned with CREL technologies	Pathways in development
KPI 1: Projects in Progress	Number of CREL projects in active development	Project tracking	Annual increase	13 projects in progress
KPI 2: Community & Academic Engagement	Number of outreach events, presentations, and webinars	Event logs	Sustained or increased engagement	60 outreach activities
KPI 3: Partnerships Established	Number of active industry, academic, and agency partnerships	Partnership records	Annual growth	12 active partnerships

### Gap Analysis Narrative:

SAO and KPI results demonstrate strong performance in districtwide communications, regional collaboration, and external funding acquisition, including significant growth in awarded and pending grants. However, increased scope and demand have outpaced staffing capacity. Public Affairs faces challenges scaling communications consistently across colleges, the Grants subunit manages growing grant volume without additional administrative support, and CREL continues to operate with key vacancies. Addressing these capacity gaps is essential to sustaining outcomes and advancing district priorities in student success, equity, and workforce development.

## IV. Look Forward: Two-Year Strategic Plan

### Goal 1

Goal Title:

Develop a districtwide communications strategy and rebranding aligned with 2025–2030 Future Forward: Elevating Student Achievement Together.

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**Strategies & Action Items:**

Engage an external communications and branding consultant to support assessment, facilitation, and strategy development.

Convene a districtwide communications workgroup, in collaboration with the consultant, to review current messaging and branding.

Develop core messaging pillars and updated branding standards aligned with Future Forward priorities.

Update district communication tools, templates, and digital platforms to ensure consistency.

Provide guidance and training to colleges and implement a phased rollout.

Evaluate effectiveness through engagement metrics and stakeholder feedback.

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**Timeline:**

Year 1: Consultant engagement, assessment, and strategy development

Year 2: Implementation, training, and evaluation

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**KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Student Culture, Employee Culture, Employee Technology

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**Goal 2**

**Goal Title:**

Strengthen districtwide coordination and oversight to ensure ongoing compliance and effective implementation of regional collaboratives, including Health Learning and Equity

(HEAL) and California Jobs First.

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**Strategies & Action Items:**

Formalize a districtwide coordination structure to support HEAL and California Jobs First implementation and oversight.

Establish a standing reporting calendar that aligns deliverables, deadlines, and fiscal requirements across collaboratives.

Schedule and facilitate regular coordination meetings with colleges, collaborative partners, and fiscal teams to monitor progress and address compliance needs.

Provide ongoing technical assistance and communication support to ensure timely and accurate reporting.

Monitor collaborative activities to ensure alignment with district priorities, workforce goals, and student success outcomes.

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**Timeline:**

Year 1: Formalize coordination structure, reporting calendar, and meeting cadence

Year 2: Ongoing coordination, monitoring, and continuous improvement

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**KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Student Culture, Employee Culture, Employee Technology

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**Goal 3**

**Goal Title:**

Strengthen legislative advocacy, fund development, and public affairs to advance district and college priorities and expand resources supporting student success, equity, and workforce development.

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**Strategies & Action Items:**

Align districtwide legislative advocacy and public affairs priorities with Board and college initiatives.

Engage elected officials and funding partners through briefings, site visits, and coordinated outreach.

Integrate advocacy messaging with grant, investment, and philanthropic opportunities.

Communicate outcomes and impacts through districtwide and Board reporting.

**Timeline:**

Year 1: Priority alignment and outreach plan

Year 2: Ongoing advocacy, engagement, and reporting

**KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Student Culture, Employee Culture, Employee Technology

**Goal 4**

**Goal Title:**

Acquire external funding to support Colleges and District in achieving 2025-30 Transformative Scenarios and addressing un- and under-funded needs of students, colleges, and District

**Strategies & Action Items:**

2025-30 Future Forward: Elevating Student Achievement Together-Transformative Scenarios

**Timeline:**

Continue to work with College and District staff to identify, apply, and submit external funding requests during the 2025-202 FY.

**KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Student Culture, Student Technology

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## **Goal 5**

### **Goal Title:**

Conduct iterative assessment and evaluation of Colleges and District educational, program and student support, capital and infrastructure needs to achieve the 2022-2024 Strategic Directions #1-3

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### **Strategies & Action Items:**

2025-2030 Future Forward: Elevating Student Achievement Together-Transformative Scenarios

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### **Timeline:**

Conduct Annual External Funding & Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey during the 2025-26 FY

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### **KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Student Culture, Student Technology, Student Physical Space

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## **Goal 6**

### **Goal Title:**

Establish College and District External Funding objectives and demonstrating progress toward 2025-30 Future Forward: Elevating Student Achievement Together-Transformative Scenarios

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### **Strategies & Action Items:**

Provide interim and annual summative External Funding reports disaggregated by college.

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### **Timeline:**

Continue to work with College and District staff to identify funding objectives and targets, and submit proposals to address 2025-30 Future Forward: Elevating Student Achievement Together-Transformative Scenarios during the 2025-26 FY.

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### **KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

## **Goal 7**

### **Goal Title:**

Review and recommend unit-related Board Policies and Procedures updates to the appropriate district committees for consideration in support of 2025-30 Future Forward: Elevating Student Together-Transformative Scenarios

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### **Strategies & Action Items:**

2025-30 Future Forward: Elevating Student Achievement Together-Transformative Scenarios

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### **Timeline:**

Review BP & AP 3280 at least annually. Provide update recommendations as appropriate.

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### **KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Employee Culture

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## **Goal 8**

### **Goal Title:**

Expand workforce-aligned curriculum, training, and applied demonstration projects across CREL Centers of Excellence to support student pathways in clean energy, sustainability, and advanced technologies.

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### **Strategies & Action Items:**

Coordinate learning and technology showcases (e.g., microgrids, agrivoltaics, EV training, high-performance buildings).

Support development of credit/noncredit curriculum, capstones, and student research tied to demonstration projects.

Partner with colleges to align training with industry-recognized skills and workforce demand.

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**Timeline:**

Year 1: Project prioritization and curriculum alignment

Year 2: Expansion of showcases, courses, and student participation

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**KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Student Culture, Student Technology, Student Physical Space, Employee Culture, Employee Technology

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**Goal 9**

**Goal Title:**

Strengthen CREL's role as a statewide technical assistance and regional coordination hub supporting colleges pursuing clean energy, climate, and sustainability initiatives.

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**Strategies & Action Items:**

Provide technical assistance and implementation guidance to colleges interested in developing clean energy and climate-related projects.

Share best practices, lessons learned, and models from CREL demonstration projects and partnerships.

Facilitate connections between colleges and industry, national laboratories, government agencies, and regional partners to support project development.

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**Timeline:**

Year 1: Define technical assistance focus areas and coordination approach

Year 2: Expand statewide and regional technical assistance engagements

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**KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Student Culture, Employee Culture

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## **Goal 10**

### **Goal Title:**

Increase CREL visibility and engagement through coordinated communications, partnerships and community engagement.

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### **Strategies & Action Items:**

Implement coordinated communications (website, newsletters, social media, presentations).

Host and support signature events (e.g., CREL Fall Forum).

Strengthen partnerships with national labs (NREL, LLNL, LBL), industry, nonprofits, and environmental justice organizations.

Expand K–12, community, and ambassador outreach.

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### **Timeline:**

Year 1: Develop communications plan, partner engagement cadence, and outreach calendar

Year 2: Expanded outreach, events, and partner participation

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### **KCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Student Culture, Employee Culture

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## **Goal 11**

### **Goal Title:**

Improve fiscal oversight, resource development, and community college network expansion

to support sustainable growth of CREL initiatives.

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**Strategies & Action Items:**

Strengthen planning, tracking, contracts/MOUs, and staffing coordination.

Develop seed-funding frameworks and sponsorship strategies for college projects.

Expand community college participation (faculty, administrators, CTE, baccalaureate programs) and regional hubs.

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**Timeline:**

Year 1: Develop internal tracking tools, funding framework, and network planning

Year 2: Expanded funding, sponsorships, and college participation

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**KCCCD Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Employee Culture, Employee Technology

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## V. Resource Requests & Prioritization

**Staffing Requests:**

The Grants and External Funding subunit requests two staffing resources to address increased grant volume and administrative workload.

**Priority Request:**

Professional Expert – Grant Writer (\$30,000 annually) to provide flexible capacity during peak grant cycles and support time-sensitive funding opportunities.

**Additional Request:**

Administrative Assistant – Classified (\$105,506.10 annually) to manage grant tracking, documentation, and coordination, improving efficiency and timeliness.

These positions are necessary to sustain grant performance, reduce delays, and support district and college priorities in student success, equity, and workforce development.

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**Professional Development Requests:**

\$15,000 for Grants Office to attend critical conferences such as: CASE FFTF, CCCCO, CCCAOE, Foundation for CCC, HACU, WestEd, and others.

\$5,000 for Grants Office professional dues and memberships.

\$15,000 for Public Affairs staff to attend critical conferences such as CCCCO, HACU, Foundation for CCC, CCCAOE

**Facilities, Equipment & Space Requests:**

Additional permanent space and furniture for administrative assistant and flex space for professional expert would be needed. Coll

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**Technology Requests:**

Requesting \$2000 for grants office for computers for new staff positions.

Requesting \$15,000 for grant management software/site license fees to include automated grant approvals, tracking, management assignment, etc.

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## **VI. Follow-Up on Prior Requests**

**Resource Request Follow-Up:**

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## **VII. College Feedback**

**Incorporation of College Input:**

College input was reflected and incorporated into last year's plan. College feedback has helped in streamlining goals and identifying partnership priorities.

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**Department Response to Feedback:**

