

The Community Economic Resilience Fund Program (CERF) PY 22-24 grant focus is to address the development of the High Road Transition Collaboratives (HRTCs). The applicant should demonstrate in the Proposal Narrative how the applicant’s approach will form their respective regional HRTC to engage in strategic planning for economic resilience and equitable pathways to high road opportunities. HRTCs will work across industries, agencies, and communities to encourage engagement from all stakeholder groups, create inclusive and equitable economic plans, build capacity, break down silos to maximize the effectiveness of planning and implementation projects, and generate systemic changes to advance equity, sustainability, job quality, and economic competitiveness and resilience.

Applicant Name: Kern Community College District
Project Name: Kern High Road Transition Collaborative (KHRTC)

IMPORTANT: Follow the Proposal Instructions and Checklist when completing each section of this form. The Proposal Narrative is limited to 20 pages, single-sided, with Arial 12-point text font and 1-inch margins and on standard 8.5 x 11-inch pages.

Note: The text in the boxes under each section of this form provides guidance and may be deleted to make more space for the narrative. Additional information on the sections below can be found in the Section IV. Application Package Requirements and Submission and Section V. Award and Contracting Process of the CERF PY 22-24 Solicitation for Proposal.

Section I: Project Planning

I.1. Concept Proposal (Score Range 0-35 points)

Describe the vision and goals for the HRTC that demonstrate the applicants understanding of ongoing regional, subregional, and interregional processes, and how they will connect to the deliverables and goals of the Planning Phase.

KHRTC, driven by community aspirations, leadership, and data, will set a shared investment agenda with metrics to create more quality jobs and ensure access to them for all residents – focused on eliminating disparities while promoting durable economic growth and diversification alongside social and environmental resiliency.

Despite years of extraordinary job growth and economic mobility for residents, Kern County is falling behind its peers and the nation in economic performance, competitiveness, opportunity, and inclusion. Market pressures, policy changes and an influx of lower quality jobs are some of the challenges. Currently only 30% of available jobs meet quality job metrics. Half of Kern residents struggle to cover basic expenses, and Hispanic or Black workers are 80% and 60% more likely to struggle.

Momentum has been building to maximize emerging economic opportunities in the region. CERF will further this work by bridging the gaps among disinvested communities and traditional economic actors, ensuring representation, shared decision-making, and the equitable distribution of resources to maximize shared regional prosperity.

I.1.1. Fiscal Agent & Convener

KHRTC Fiscal Agent: Kern Community College District (KCCD) will serve as the fiscal agent for the KHRTC. Geographically, KCCD is one of the largest community college districts in the United States serving more than 34,500 students across a 24,800 square mile service area that spans Kern, Inyo, Mono, Tulare, and San Bernardino counties. KCCD includes Bakersfield, Porterville, and Cerro Coso Community Colleges, and are Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) with a high percentage of students in poverty.

The KCCD management team is highly qualified and experienced, managing \$67.9 million in federal, and \$45 million in state awards in FY2021. KCCD management will work closely with the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA), Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), and Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to ensure that the CERF implementation is consistent with regulations, scope of work, workplan, objectives, outcomes, and budget.

KHRTC Convener: The following organizations will jointly serve as the KHRTC Convener: Better Bakersfield and Boundless Kern (B3K), a City of Bakersfield County of Kern led public-private partnership; Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK); Kern Community College District (KCCD); the Kern Inyo Mono Central Labor Council (KIM CLC); and Building Healthy Communities (BHC). Together these five agencies, jointly serving as the Regional Convener, are collectively known as the Kern Coalition. These five agencies have complementary skill sets, extensive experience engaging disinvested communities and stakeholders, including being a trusted messenger, have experience in bringing the community together, have the ability to represent diverse voices, and analyze and synthesize input from community meetings. Together these five organizations meet the requirements of the Regional Convener:

Identifying resources: CAPK, KCCD, BHC have decades of experience identifying economic development, community service, and workforce development resources. B3K has hired consultants experienced in identifying economic growth and development resources and sustainable economic recovery models. The KIM CLC advocates for local hire provisions and member resources.

Convening: CAPK, KCCD, BHC, and KIM CLC have decades of experience bringing their respective members, disinvested community members, and stakeholders together including public, private, academic, industry, workforce, labor and community leaders. The City of Bakersfield, rural Kern County cities, and the County of Kern all have extensive experience bringing community members together to engage in visioning and planning. B3K, supported by city and county funding, has invited stakeholders to webinar presentations of its data analyses and developed input and feedback workgroups. The community has asked these five agencies to come together and support the development of a singular vision for an equitable economic transition based on High Road principles for Kern County. The five agencies nominated to serve as the Kern CERF Regional Convener are committed to completing this challenge.

Hiring and Contracting: CAPK, KCCD, BHC, and the KIM CLC all have significant experience hiring or contracting with and overseeing qualified coordinators to support community outreach. CAPK and KCCD have experience filling positions that meet state (and federal) job descriptions and qualifications.

Coordinating: B3K, CAPK, KCCD, KIM CLC, and BHC will jointly serve as the central coordinator of economic development plans and future implementation projects. They

will have a dedicated transparent and coordinated line of communication among themselves to ensure seamless and coherent coordination. In addition, the Fiscal Agent and the Regional Convener will also establish a coordinated line of communication among KHRTC members to foster stakeholder connectivity and between the KHRTC and the fiscal agent to accelerate collaboration and support.

Balanced Representation: The composition of the co-conveners ensures that the KHRTC includes balanced representation from labor organizations, employers, businesses, and business associations, grassroots and community-based organizations, community organizers, and community members, government agencies, economic development agencies, philanthropic organizations, education and training providers, workforce entities, environmental justice organizations, disinvested communities, California native tribal and service organizations and other regional stakeholders capable of contributing to the success of the project.

KHRTC Fiscal Agent & Regional Convener Role Justification

KCCD was chosen to be the fiscal agent and a co-convener due to its experience as an impartial facilitator, bringing community stakeholders together to problem-solve and address community issues. KCCD has a deep history of partnership with disadvantaged community groups, labor, employers, and industry, and as described earlier, significant history managing large multi-million-dollar collaborative projects.

The Kern Community College District (KCCD), fiscal agent, serves in partnership with the Regional Convener (Kern Coalition: B3K, CAPK, KCCD, KIM CLC & BHC). The regional co-conveners are well-known and respected within Kern County for their work providing community services, supporting economic development planning, community engagement, addressing and supporting community and workers' needs.

The Regional Convener (Kern Coalition co-conveners) have deep networks among worker, union, civic, community, and employer stakeholders. Worker organizations, which have been a crucial component of other high road partnerships, do not exist in the Kern CERF region. The Regional Convener will engage stakeholders often excluded or under-valued in economic and workforce development planning.

The Regional Convener has secured commitments and support from a lengthy list of labor organizations, employers, businesses, and business associations, grassroots and community-based organizations, community organizers, and community members, government agencies, economic development agencies, philanthropic organizations, education and training providers, workforce entities, environmental justice organizations, disinvested communities, California native tribal and service organizations and other regional stakeholders capable of contributing to the success of the project. A full list of partners may be found in Section II of this Proposal Narrative, under II.2. Collective Partnership Agreement Letter.

I.1.2. Major Economic Development Projects or Initiatives

Key KHRTC economic development stakeholders include the City of Bakersfield, the County of Kern, the Kern Economic Development Corporation (KEDC), and B3K provide leadership in developing research to support economic initiatives, incentives, planning and permitting. As key stakeholders, they support the equitable and effective geographic representation and decision-making KHRTC structure.

Key stakeholders' recent economic assessments include: The Bakersfield Economic Development Strategic Plan [Ref11], the Kern County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy [Ref17], the KEDC 2022 Kern County Market Overview [Ref18], and the B3K Market Assessment [Ref2]. These documents describe the economic landscape and identify threats, weaknesses, strengths, and opportunities for economic diversification, expanding renewable energy, utilizing the regions' potential for carbon storage, electrification of transportation and supporting the California decarbonization and climate resiliency goals. A sampling of major economic development projects and initiatives with significant impact on communities and industries in the region include:

[Advanced Manufacturing Alliance of Kern County \(MAK; KEDC / B3K\)](#) brings together over 20 regional manufacturing firms. The MAK is engaging educators, parents and manufacturers, marketing training programs, retraining employees, and providing speakers and resources for educational and industry events.

[Aerospace Talent-to-Industry Exchange \(B3K/CSUB\)](#) employer and educational institution partnership that will enhance the reliability of the local talent pipeline and broaden access to good and promising jobs. This is a new initiative that is expected to have an impact in the coming years.

[California Energy Research Center \(B3K/CSUB\)](#) engages CSUB faculty and students in collaborative research efforts with local energy-related industry and agencies for the benefit of the local community, the region, and the state of California. This is a new initiative that is expected to have an impact in the coming years.

[California Resources Corporation Carbon TerraVault](#) - a series of carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects that inject carbon dioxide (CO₂) captured from industrial sources into depleted underground oil and gas reservoirs and permanently store CO₂ deep underground. This project is in the permitting process.

[City of Bakersfield Transformative Climate Communities Planning & Implementation Grant](#) - a community vision for neighborhood-level transformation and investments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide economic, environmental, and health benefits. Grant submitted July 1, 2022.

[US Dept of Energy - Communities LEAP](#) - receiving technical assistance regarding development of Bakersfield/Kern Communities' Resiliency & Microgrids Project.

[US Dept of Energy - Communities LEAP](#) - receiving technical assistance to develop a Kern County Clean Energy & Carbon Management Business Park.

[Kern High Road Training Partnership \(Kern H RTP\)](#) - Strategic Workforce Development Planning Project (2022-2024) - three major areas of work: 1) industry and workforce research; 2) coalition-building to deepen regional collaboration; and 3) identification, implementation, and expansion of high road training.

[AltaOne Credit Union \(B3K\)](#) - is the first Kern County Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), providing capital to disinvested communities. Recently certified, impact data not yet available.

[Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tejon](#) - \$600M entertainment destination that will bolster Kern County's economy, generate increased tourism, approximately 5,000 jobs, increased investment and purchasing, providing resources and services for Tejon Indian Tribe members, and privately funded infrastructure improvements.

[Valley Strong Energy Institute \(Bakersfield College, KCCD\)](#) - a public private partnership committed to addressing research, policy issues, workforce

development, and innovative projects in the energy sector. Energy sector programs are in development, multiple university and national laboratory partnerships are yielding important local and regional benefits.

Together these projects are representative of the energy and momentum in Kern County to address and respond to its challenges by leveraging opportunities, new technologies, and the K-20 educational systems to meet the moment.

I.1.3. Economic Landscape

Kern County is the third largest county (8,132.2 sq.mi.) in California, and home to nearly 917,673 people [Ref25]. The majority, roughly 56.1% of the population, is Hispanic, 31.1% are white, 6.3% Black, and Asian residents represent 5.6% of the total population [Ref25]. Approximately 18.3% of persons in the county were in poverty, and the per capita income in the past 12 months was \$23,858, with a median income of \$54,851.

The Kern County 2020 real GDP was \$48,674,498, a slight decline of -1.1% from the prior year [Ref25]. Out of 58 California counties, Kern County ranks 21 in real GDP for 2020 [Ref2]. UC Merced [Ref 22] finds that while Kern County's workforce grew by 51 percent between 2000 and 2019, which continues to increase the overall GDP for the area, per capita GDP has been highly volatile. Between 2000 and 2009, per capita GDP grew more than any other California county at 34.9 percent; however, it has declined by 4.4 percent since 2009, which is the third-worst rate in the state.

There is a recognized need to diversify the County's industry and employment base; strengthen existing and emerging industry clusters; ensure social equity in economic development measures through targeted training and geographic areas of focus; provide greater resiliency and adaptation for the oil and gas and agricultural sectors as a result of the current policies affecting environmental, water management, and the general business climate; and leverage the range of benefits associated with opportunities for remote work, spurred by the Covid-19 pandemic [Ref 11&17].

Kern County's sub-regional economies are distinct. East Kern is dominated by government and military installations, commercial scale solar and wind, and aerospace. In West Kern, fossil fuels are the primary industry and area holds the most promise for carbon management and storage solutions. In the North, Central and South Kern subregions, agriculture, food manufacturing, and business services, healthcare, retail, and logistics are the leading industry sectors.

In West Kern, the fossil fuel industry is facing significant climate change related shifts toward carbon management and storage. In East Kern, the aerospace industries relocated outside California in the last few years although the Mojave Air and Space Port infrastructure is a critical component to growing area research, scientific, and technical industries. The North, Central and South Kern subregions are facing significant drought, extreme heat, increases in energy prices, and reduced grid stability affecting its Agriculture, food manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, and retail industries.

Several economic development and resiliency opportunities such as carbon management, transportation electrification, expansion of solar and wind commercial energy production, implementation of microgrid technology to offload energy demand from the grid, and other innovative energy solutions - all make sense to develop, test, and implement in Kern County.

I.1.4.a) Major Industries

Historically, Kern's major industries have been agriculture and oil and gas extraction, with healthcare, renewable energy production, public services, defense / aerospace, and retail / services industries rounding out the local economy. Currently, Kern County has the largest economy in the San Joaquin Valley [Ref 18]. The County also ranks 4th in the nation for STEM jobs, due to the area's prevalence of energy, value-added agriculture, aerospace and defense, healthcare, and logistics/warehousing industries.

Agriculture: The integration of advanced technology has improved the effectiveness and efficiency of modern agricultural operations. Precision agriculture processes and the utilization of robotic systems that manage data from temperature and moisture sensors, aerial imaging, and GPS technology result in higher crop productivity, decreased use of inputs such as water, fertilizer, and pesticides which keeps prices down, less chemical runoff, and reduced impact on natural ecosystems, and increased worker safety (1). Climate change is accelerating the need and demand for precision agricultural technologies and a trained workforce to implement and manage the related business processes, which pay between \$18 to \$35 / hour.

Energy - Oil & Gas Extraction: Kern County has been an oil and gas powerhouse since the 1890's, when oil was first discovered on the county's west side. In 2019, Kern was ranked the #7 oil-producing county in the nation, yielding 119 million barrels of oil and 129 billion CF of gas annually. These amounts represent 71% of California's oil production and 3% of the total U.S. oil production. Kern County produces 78% of CA's total natural gas production [Ref 19].

Energy - Renewable Energy: Commercial scale solar and wind renewable energy generation began in the early 1980s and has significantly increased its footprint over the past 40 years, scaling up in the past five years and powering thousands of California homes [Ref 16]. Kern features the largest US wind farm and the 2nd largest solar farm. Today, Kern County solar farms generate 60% of California's renewable energy [Ref 18], and Tehachapi Mojave wind farms generate 7.2% of all power in California [Ref 7].

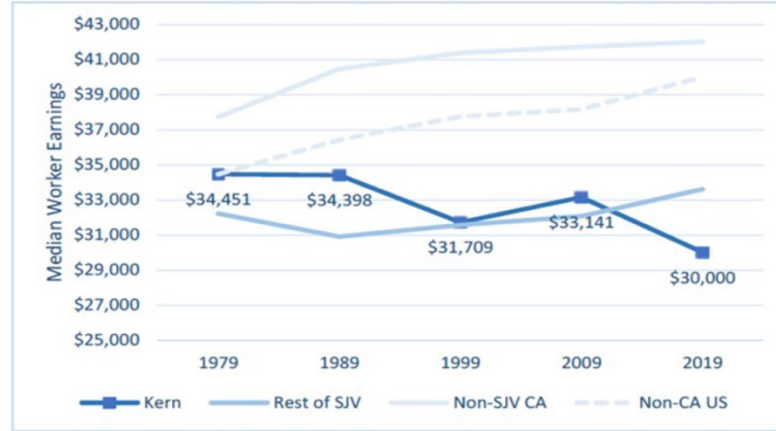
Carbon Management: Kern County is in one of two areas in the state that together could conservatively store 17 billion tons of CO₂ which is more than enough to meet the negative emission needs of California [Ref 1]. Over the last few years, local oil and gas businesses have been working to scope, develop, permit, and open commercially viable carbon management (CCS) projects in Kern County. Projects currently in development include the [California Resources Corporation Carbon TerraVault](#), and a Chevron carbon capture and storage (CCS) project near the Kern River Eastridge cogeneration plant.

1.1.4.b) Economic Shifts & Challenges

Kern County has experienced significant economic shifts and challenges. California has adopted climate resiliency and carbon neutral policies that have had significant impact on Kern County's oil and gas extraction industry and related service industries including construction and business services and resulting in quality job losses.

Since 1979, Kern County median wages have declined by 13 percent, making it the worst among all California counties [Ref 22]. Approximately 40 percent of wage earners reported making less than a living wage (the amount needed to avoid "consistent and severe housing and food insecurity"). Since 2009, 22 out of 30 industries in Kern County have experienced job growth, but the majority has been in low-wage industries [Ref22].

Figure 4.3 Median wage and salary income (in 2019 dollars), by area, 1979-2019



These data emphasize why the KHRTC members have joined together to support economic diversification and expansion into carbon neutral climate resilient industries and align the region’s economic and workforce development infrastructure to meet workforce needs. KHRTC members understand the need to ensure climate resiliency and are committed to achieving the CERF goals of equity, sustainability, job quality, economic competitiveness, and resilience. Long term sustainable growth opportunities in emerging and traditional industries are examined in the next section.

Opportunities that can impact CERF Objectives

City, county, and independent assessments and plans have agreed on the areas of opportunity that will address CERF goals of equity, sustainability, job quality, economic competitiveness, and resilience [Ref 11,17 & 2]. The target sectors showing substantial growth potential and offering opportunities for high quality jobs and economic growth and diversification include Agriculture: Precision Ag & Food Manufacturing; Renewable Energy; Aerospace; Export-oriented trade and Business Services.

- **Agriculture: Precision Ag & Advanced Food Manufacturing:** Accelerate the growth and integration of high tech and food manufacturing subsectors that concentrate higher-quality jobs and improve workforce access by prioritizing industry support and talent efforts that are common practice in other regions.
- **Energy:** Establish Kern County as a hub for clean energy and carbon management innovation and implementation – including renewable and low-to-negative carbon energy, fuels, products, technology and services – while stimulating durable economic growth and high-quality jobs for its residents. Several analyses and employer discussions have identified overlapping skill sets across extraction, advanced manufacturing, and carbon management jobs. KHRTC expects to leverage existing talent and provide rapid upskilling to ease workers into sustainable quality manufacturing and carbon management jobs.
- **Aerospace:** Expand economic and workforce development to bolster East Kern’s aerospace cluster anchored by China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, Edwards Air Force Base, and the Mojave Air and Space Port (e.g. Virgin Galactic and Masten Space Systems). Enhance cluster supports, enhance entrepreneurship, and commercialization and implement the Aerospace Talent-to-Industry Exchange.

- **Business: Export-Oriented Trade and Business Services:** Expand the business and professional services sector to achieve regional industry diversification over the long term, including firm-level support and general digital skills workforce development needed for success in the tech economy. Expand SBDC and US Department of Trade Export Services provided to Kern businesses. Continue to focus on STEM career pathways to support employer STEM job demand across industries.
- **Across all sectors: Entrepreneurship and Business Ecosystem:** Address major gaps in basic supports and barriers creating disparities in business ownership by race and gender and increase their durability and expansion, particularly in traded sectors offering highest growth potential but also established mid-size companies and Main Street firms, engaging the CA GO-Biz Office, the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Small Business Administration to accomplish these objectives.

Individually and collectively, industry, governments, higher education, community-based organizations, and community stakeholders have all been looking for the opportunity to support and inspire strategic investment that will leverage Kern County’s physical assets, workforce talent, and training capabilities to develop a climate resilient Kern County economy that offers sustainable quality jobs in renewable energy production, carbon management, and transportation electrification.

I.1.5. Planning Phase Goals & Deliverables & Existing Processes

The KHRTC partners recognize the scope of the challenge: a) significant economic and technological changes to traditional industries (agriculture and oil); b) income disparity between the wealthy and poor; and c) environmental, economic and health impacts -- without addressing the others, they are interdependent dimensions of a community, thus it is important to address them simultaneously to ensure both economic, environmental, and community health. To this end, the KHRTC is created around a 3-legged stool: industry sector expertise; sub-regional worker and community representation to empower rural communities to be decision-makers; and research expertise in environmental, economic and health impacts.

The integration of local economic and workforce development planning processes and plans is essential to achieving the deliverables and goals of the planning phase and the implementation of KHRTC CERF projects. Therefore, the KHRTC CERF planning process will build on the existing alignment between economic, education, and workforce development plans to implement the aforementioned projects in targeted sectors. The alignment of KHRTC CERF goals and deliverables is described below:

Economic Development Plans

The Kern CEDS and Bakersfield EDSP, featuring robust public input processes, highlights Energy as a priority element in maintaining and improving community and economic health. The plan identifies two objectives that directly relate to CERF planning activities: 1) Planning for future energy resource diversification; and 2) Anticipating new opportunities for development of Kern County’s energy production, including oil, natural gas, geothermal, wind and solar power, renewable biofuels, hydrogen and agricultural or woody biomass, and carbon capture and storage (ccs) development. CEDS and EDSP plan goals align with the CERF KHRTC goals endeavoring to create new quality in economically distressed areas and among disadvantaged populations, attract new firms in targeted growth industries, support small business development and support

economic resilience and sustainability of the Kern County economy.

Kern, Inyo and Mono Workforce Development Board Plan 2021-2024 Goals [Ref17]

As articulated in the KIM WDB Local Plan 2021-2024, the WDB's role in promoting the economic competitiveness is significant and includes:

- Continuing to tie the local board's jobs agenda to larger economic priorities.
- Focus training and skills preparation on demand and emerging sectors with middle class wages. Develop and promote career pathways for growth industries.
- Collaborate to develop innovative training and work-based training models.
- Expand the partnership with education and other system partners to increase
- foundational skills, work readiness skills, digital literacy skills, and job-specific skills of all workers through the region.

Kern H RTP Strategic Workforce Development Plan

The Kern H RTP Strategic Workforce Development Plan aligns with CERF goals in its focus on quality jobs, in high-demand emerging career pathways in sustainable industries and supports economic development that ensures equity, sustainability, job quality, economic competitiveness and economic resiliency. The Kern H RTP plan is centered on upskilling disadvantaged and incumbent workers, links with non-profit and community-based organizations for wrap-around services, and works with employers and subject matter experts to facilitate curriculum development and hire program graduates from programs in healthcare; energy; manufacturing; agriculture, water and environmental technologies; aerospace and defense; business and entrepreneurship, key industry sectors with sustainable living wage job opportunities. [Ref 9&10]

I.1.6. Preliminary Metrics

Kern County CERF Planning	
Key Performance Indicators	Metric
Program Management	
Completion of all subawards and contracts	Nominal Y/N - by 10/31/2022
Formal election of representatives to the Governance Council	Nominal Y/N - 1/25/2023 Equity metrics: 1) Quantity of nominees from each subregion, n>5; 2) Do the nominees reflect the population (race and socioeconomic status) of each subregion Y/N
Completion of branding and multilingual outreach material	Nominal Y/N
Planning & Engagement Process	
Finalized Community Visioning and Planning Meeting (CVPM) schedule and location	Nominal Y/N - 11/30/2022
Finalized outreach plan with partners including digital and written input processes	Nominal Y/N 11/15/2022
Completion of analysis and asset mapping for each convening	Nominal Y/N - 1/31/2023, 3/3/2023, 3/17/2023, 4/14/2023, 4/28/2023
Completion of 5 CVMPs per	Nominal Y/N, 2/20/2023-3/3/2023, 3/20/2023-3/31/2023, 4/17/2023-4/28/2023, 5/15/2023-5/26/2023, 11/13/2023-

subregion	11/21/2023 Equity Metrics: 1) Quantity of attendees from each subregion, n>25% of population; 2) Do the attendees reflect the population (race and socioeconomic status) of each subregion, Y/N
Community Satisfaction Survey (short surveys using Likert scale)	Success measured by N>90% of respondents satisfied with the input process
SWOT synthesis for each topic & subregion	Nominal Y/N
Final Product	
Completion of each section for the plan, review, edits according to deadlines	Nominal Y/N
Completion of KC Regional Economic Recovery & Transition Plan (KC RER&T) & Lessons Learned Report	Nominal Y/N
Finalized list of initiatives and projects for CERF application	Nominal Y/N
Community Satisfaction Survey for Project Investment Identification	Success measured by N>90% of respondents satisfied with the input process
Development of Kern County Sustainable Community Indicator Dashboard	Nominal Y/N

I.1.7. KHRTC Sustainability: Long Term Operation and Maintenance

The KHRTC Fiscal Agent (KCCD) and Regional Convener (B3K, CAPK, KCCD, BHC, KIM CLC co-conveners) are committed to a consensus-based decision-making model that is sustained and maintained long term. As evidence of this, co-convener KCCD has committed personnel and funding within the Economic & Workforce Development Division to provide management and leadership for and with the KHRTC during and beyond the funded planning and implementation phases, providing additional resource development support to ensure its long-term operation and maintenance.

California Community Colleges' primary mission is "to advance California's economic growth and global competitiveness ..." and "[t]o advance California's economic and jobs recovery and sustain economic growth through labor market aligned education workforce training services...in emerging industry sectors and industry clusters." (CA Education Code §88600(b)(1) and (b)(2).

KHRTC Regional Convener, members and stakeholders are all committed to ensuring the expansion and diversification of the Kern economy in a way that meets the CERF goals and thereby supports the needs of our residents. KHRTC members will all continue to support and sustain local and countywide economic development, capital investment, and business ecosystem support and development.

I.1.8. KHRTC Effective & Equitable Geographic Representation

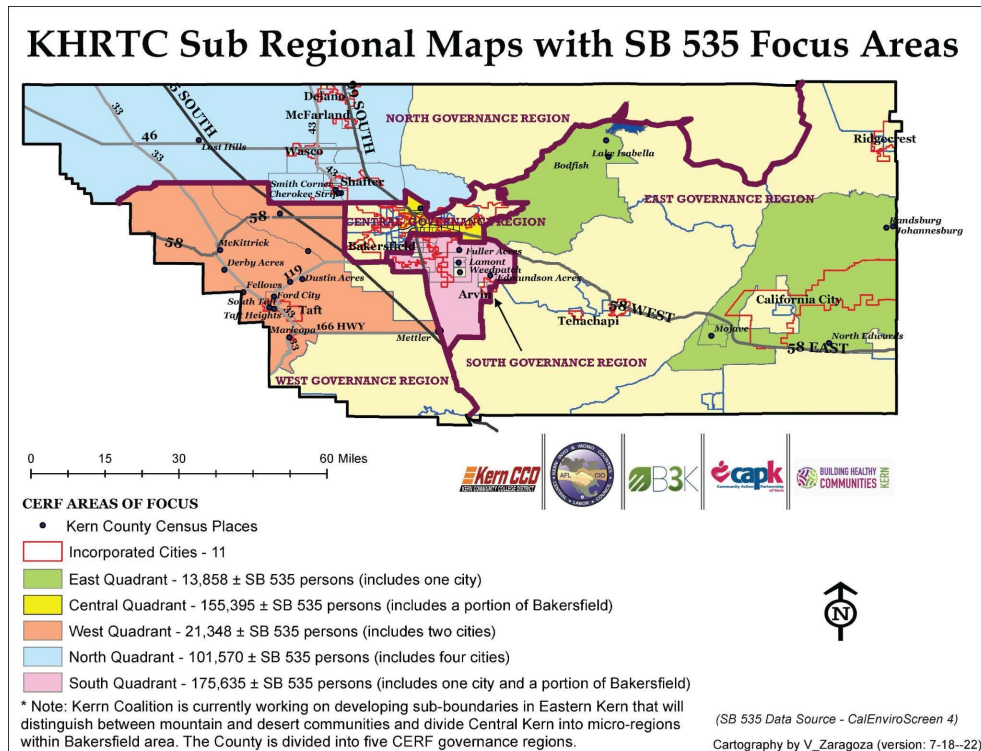
The KHRTC ensures equitable geographic representation by establishing five subregions and ensures equitable distribution of resources across the CERF Region

and subregions through its governance structure.

The CERF planning process will occur within each of the five (5) Kern County subregions: East, West, North, South, and Central Kern. (See Region Map below). Subregional meetings will be held in-person in the subregion and hybrid / online. Meetings will be archived for later review. Input and participation will be available live during meetings (synchronous) and later (asynchronous). In addition, subregion and regional stakeholders will have multiple opportunities to participate, provide initial planning input, and provide reflective post-project selection input.

The initial Kern HRTC Governance Council is a democratic, representational, power-sharing voting council that includes a balanced representation from labor, business, disinvested communities, government, and other community stakeholders such as economic development, philanthropy, education and workforce partners. Its purpose is to implement transparent and inclusive processes to advance long-term shared prosperity by focusing on equity in health, economic opportunities, and the environment.

Projects that are developed must demonstrate that viability, shovel-readiness, and potential to address CERF objectives of equity, sustainability, job quality, economic competitiveness and economic resilience. Projects recommended for implementation will be forwarded to the Governance Council. The Governance Council will review and approve investment proposals in accordance with the tenets of the CERF grant and will approve CERF documents, including the regional economic transition plan.



The five subregions East Kern, West Kern, North Kern, South Kern, and Central Kern, shown in the map, include the following cities and census designated places:

East Kern

asynchronous input opportunities including surveys for each *Community Visioning and Planning Meeting (CVPM)* topic, drafts, and final project investment concepts and proposals throughout the decision-making process. The Regional Convener will evaluate and continuously improve the Community Engagement process in order to timely achieve the CERF Impacts and Vision put forth in the CERF Theory of Change. Finalization of the Initial Governance Council Structure. The initial Governance Council structure will be finalized by 1/25/23 (Q2), including the selections for the Governance Council. The KHRTC will also finalize the CVPM schedule in all five subregions, and identify accessible locations within each community, establishing a formal outreach plan with the co-conveners and partners by the end of Q1.

Community Outreach and Engagement. KHRTC will work with trusted sub regional stakeholders to ensure meaningful engagement with disinvested communities throughout Kern County. This is envisioned as an iterative process that will be scheduled, directed by, and ultimately will meet the needs of each sub region.

The CVPM process, divided into four areas, will occur throughout the project period: 1) economic, labor market, and industry analysis; 2) environmental impact and climate; 3) community health; and 4) entrepreneurship. There will also be a final CVPM held in each subregion to review the final list of CERF investment projects. A CVPM on each topic will be held in each of the five subregions.

Public input will be gathered via these CVPMs (live, recorded, and archived), and the KHRTC will also collect input in digital and written form for those who are unable to attend the in-person convenings. This approach will address historical challenges pertaining to representation and input gathering from marginalized populations and lower socioeconomic income households that have limited participation due to the opportunity cost of civic engagement over work and childcare/eldercare obligations. Additionally, participant surveys will be conducted at the close of each CVPM to better identify what is working in the consensus-based process and what is not. By using a continuous improvement process methodology, the KHRTC will be able to keep an eye on disproportionate participation and adjust engagement strategies to achieve the greatest participation possible from underserved and disinvested communities.

TOC Activities: Research & Reporting to State
CERF Objectives: Sustainability *Beginning in Q1, All Quarters*****

The KHRTC project period Q1 is primarily reserved for program management processes such as: setting up MOUs with partners and contracts with technical assistance providers. During this period, branding and multilingual outreach materials for the Kern County CERF initiative will be finalized. Investing in multilingual outreach is expected to address traditional barriers to participatory democracy for marginalized communities.

KHRTC will development the Kern County Sustainable Communities Dashboard, grounded in social, economic, and environmental indicators reviewed during the planning process. The dashboard will identify leading, leveraging, and linking indicators to gauge progress towards attaining goals set forth in this and other local area plans. The production and maintenance of the dashboard will be outsourced to ensure subject matter expertise in the design of the indicator set, beginning in Q2.

A comprehensive and contextualized Data Deck and/or Asset Map will be developed for

each CVPM containing local, state, and federal statistics reflecting the CVPM topic. The data deck will include subregional baseline data including contextualized equity gaps, and potential for progress toward the CERF objectives. The data deck will support sub regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analyses and lead to the development of strategies that will improve community health, environmental justice, high quality jobs, economic growth, expansion of sustainable industries, and more resilient economies. These data will be used to spur conversation and consensus building during the CVPM process and will be disseminated ahead of meetings to allow time for the public to adequately digest the information. Technical assistance will be provided to ensure disinvested communities are participating and advancing.

Following each CVPM, real-time surveys will be distributed to gather feedback on the participatory processes and provide the KHRTC with direction for continuous improvement. The outcome of each CVPM will be contextualized SWOT analyses, reports, strategies, and recommendations that will be reviewed by the Governance Council. CVPM meeting records, participant surveys and input data will be gathered to ensure effective geographic representation and engagement of disinvested communities in the planning, and project approval decision-making.

The Governance Council will review synthesized reports for each CVPM to maintain focus on and develop strategies to achieve equity, sustainability, job quality & access, and economic competitiveness and resilience (Q4).

The Research Team (multiple technical and research consultants) will compile existing demographic, socioeconomic, industry, and LMI data, and will prepare baseline data on CERF objectives. These data will be compiled into data decks that identify unique assets, challenges, and equity gaps to support subregional decision-making.

The KHRTC commits to participating in the following administrative and reporting tasks:

1. Monthly Reports:

- a. Progress Status Reports (PSR): summarizing what KHRTC has done, next steps, lessons learned, if there have been any challenges, or if the Collaborative needs course correction.
- b. Monthly Budget Report: preparing and disseminating financial reports on a quarterly basis pursuant to state reporting requirements.

2. Planning Phase Plan (Q1): submission of a report laying out:

- a. Structure of the KHRTC, including the governance structure, and
- b. Plans with estimated expenses for the following:
 - i. Convening the Collaboratives and an inclusive regional planning process
 - ii. Developing a comprehensive plan for the region's High Road transition, including a timeline for conducting analyses and developing the roadmap.

3. Regional Summary Report: (by 3/31/23) submission of the analysis.

4. Lessons Learned Report: (by the end of the Planning Phase) to establish a baseline of best practices for inclusive economic planning, KHRTC will provide:

- a. detailed analysis of grantee challenges and achievements relating to:
 - i. convening an inclusive regional planning process; and
 - ii. developing a comprehensive high road recovery plan; and iii. implementing strategies to create high road jobs.
- b. A written narrative explaining how the KHRTC could improve its process towards a more successful outcome.

- c. A written narrative discussing how the State could improve the structure of the CERF program.
5. Evaluation Report: provide reports, data, and information to the State to guide the detailed evaluation of the planning phase.

TOC Activities: **Regional Plan and Strategy Development**

CERF Objectives: **Sustainability, Job Quality, Economic Resilience & Economic Competitiveness** **Beginning in Q1, All Quarters**

In Q4 and Q5, the KHRTC and Research Team will begin working on content to include in the KC RER&T Plan and Lessons Learned Report. The report will be produced in four steps with the public in each of the 5 subregions and the Governance Council reviewing the strategies and recommended projects and investments:

Step 1: review synthesized reports for each, present to the Governing Council and maintain focus on equity, sustainability, job quality & access, and economic competitiveness and resilience.

Step 2: Consolidate demographic, socioeconomic, industry, and LMI data into regional summary with subsections to address the 5 subregions and their unique attributes and equity gaps. Identify target industry clusters and corresponding workforce development needs; plan for economic diversification; plan for creating greater economic and community resilience to shocks (natural disaster, economic recessions, health pandemics, etc.); identify strategies for integrating equity and addressing barriers to resilience in historically underserved and disinvested communities; identify strategies for investment in environmentally sustainable target sectors and sectors that address the negative externalities of production; identify strategies that will boost the economic competitiveness of the region and enhance resiliency; identify cross-cutting strategies that enhance entrepreneurship and access to capital, counseling, and government contracting for historically underserved populations in disinvested census tracts that overlay Hub Zones and Opportunity Zones. Develop current project alignment matrix to increase leveraging of public and private initiatives and reduce duplication.

Step 3: Identify strategies and action steps to increase economic equity for historically marginalized populations and disinvested communities in the 5 subregions; identify strategies and action steps to mitigate environmental impact of development and improve environmental conditions that impact public health in each subregion; identify strategies to mitigate worker dislocation from at-risk industries.

Prior to step 4, develop a rubric to assess potential CERF projects and investments to ensure alignment with CERF priorities (equity, sustainability, job quality and access, and economic competitiveness and resilience). Indicators within the rubric will operationalize the elements: investment in historically marginalized communities, feasibility of the project, access to high quality jobs, equity in access to education and training, mediation of harmful environmental impacts and environmental justice issues, investment in carbon-neutral production, alignment and leveraging existing public and private projects, and alignment to state climate goals. The rubric is scheduled for completion and review by the Governance Council and finalization by Q4.

Step 4: Assessment of regional economic development strategies, alignment to state policy and investment priorities, alignment to current local and federal public investment priorities. Develop a draft list of strategic investment and project priorities based on

subregional analyses and asset mapping of education and training resources, infrastructure, entrepreneurship and community priorities.

While this timeline is ambitious, the KHRTC is confident that the target timeline will produce the outputs and outcomes intended by the state CERF initiative. The KHRTC has a head start to collaborative decision-making (noted as a gap in the Kern CEDS) with the initial formation and ongoing activity of the KHRTC, and the gathering of contextualized data due to the work already accomplished by the KHRTC co-conveners.

I.2.2. Impact of Activities on Region’s Ability to Achieve CERF Objectives

In Q4 and Q5, the draft Kern County Regional Economic Recovery & Transition Plan (KC RER&T Plan) is compiled and disseminated for comment. The plan will be produced in four steps with the Governance Council reviewing the strategies and proposed projects and investments.

CVPMs will be held during Q5 to provide the subregions with the opportunity for feedback on the draft list of CERF investment projects. The rubric will also be shared with the public at this CVPM and a Community Satisfaction Survey for Project Investment Identification will be performed. After receiving feedback from the CVPM on the list of draft projects, the final Kern County Regional Economic Recovery & Transition Plan (KC RER&T Plan) will be composed during Q6, with a full draft completed by 12/8/23, reviewed by the Governance Council and disseminated to each of the five subregions for feedback between 12/11/23-12/22/23, and edited to integrate feedback with a final draft tentatively due by 12/28/23.

Finally, monthly Progress Status Reports and Monthly Budget Reports are scheduled into the Work Plan to be completed the last day of each month for submission. KCCD has dedicated two staff members to completing these requirements, thus capacity for compliance and monitoring is assured. The bulk of the Work Plan is scheduled over an 18-month period, though the entire project period will remain 24 months, permitting monthly reporting during Q7 and Q8 if needed.

Section II: Community Engagement and Governance Structure

II.1. Outreach and Engagement Plan (Score range 0-20 points)

Describe the outreach and engagement strategy, including specific methods and means that will be utilized to solicit, receive, and incorporate community feedback and describe ways for the public to remain inform and engaged. Include detailed descriptions and timelines of a diverse set of community activities. The plan must include strategies for removing barriers to participation and have a strong connection to the CERF Objectives and vision of the program.

II.1.1. Outreach and Engagement - Activities Descriptions and Timelines

The **KHRTC Outreach and Engagement Plan** will focus on three areas of engagement: transparent communication, ongoing community outreach and inreach, and continuous technical assistance to bridge gaps among disinvested communities and community-based organizations as they interact and engage with key stakeholders of varying power dynamics and influence.

Transparent communication will occur in a variety of ways to ensure maximum engagement, beginning with a website for an online presence and planning subregional and region-wide convenings. The website will be interactive to encapsulate CERF

information from what the mission of CERF is; an FAQ; when HRTC community meetings will be held; community research related to industry sector data, economic resilience; project proposals; agendas and minutes; and other resources, including a blog to extend the conversation, and to help onboard community members. Other avenues of transparent communication will include a newsletter, public meetings, and press releases. The website will feature an email for community members to ask questions and to provide suggestions.

Outreach and engagement efforts will ensure that equity is at the forefront. HRTC coordinators will vet **HRTC Community and Outreach Experts (COE)**. The KHRTC budget will include participant engagement expenses such as interpretation services, refreshments, and childcare. The HRTC COE will include members from various key stakeholder areas who are the trusted messengers for disinvested communities and lower-capacity organizations. HRTC COEs will be selected via an application process, and upon selection, provided with professional development in mediation, cultural sensitivity, and consensus-building to promote greater awareness of the disinvested communities needs within the five micro-CERF regions of Kern County.

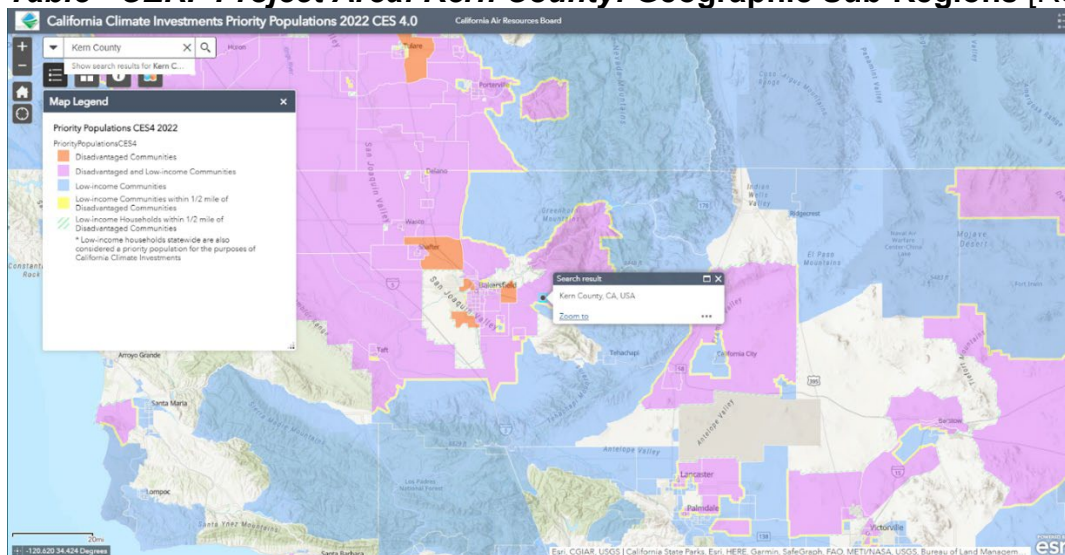
II.1.B. Outreach and Engagement - Inclusive Process

The Kern HRTC’s governance structure, subregional geographic representativeness, outreach and engagement process, and continuous improvement process provides opportunities for improvement of the process or structure and ensures inclusivity.

This HRTC COE team is tasked with conducting ongoing outreach for subregional and region-wide community meetings. They will work with the HRTC Coordinators to ensure that locations are physically accessible, and that written and verbal communication is linguistically diverse to ensure maximum engagement. Meetings will be held during the evening and/or on the weekends at high-density community locations.

The following California Air Resources Board’s California Climate Investments Priority Population 2022 Map below shows Kern County’s disinvested communities (Disadvantaged Communities, DACs), low income communities, and communities that are both disadvantaged and low income. The map also illustrates the size of Kern County (8,132.2 square miles).

Table - CERF Project Area: Kern County: Geographic Sub-Regions [Ref3]



Technical assistance will be provided through informational webinars on technical aspects of the grant, such as the budget, the data informing industry priority sectors, and on the development of investment proposals. Experts in the high road transition model, labor market research and data, grant writing, community building, equity, and sustainability will host these informational sessions and will provide FAQs that will be housed on the website and printed. The Kern CERF Website will include archived meeting recordings, regional labor market and economic data by subregion, and opportunities for community member input.

Proposed Budget and Proposed Budget Narrative \$5M

The KHRC budget categories are designed to ensure a transparent and inclusive process that accomplishes the CERF Phase 1 outcomes, and deliverables.

Creation of an inclusive planning table (\$2.2M) - The KHRC prioritizes the formation of an inclusive, geographically representative, and provides for direct input and shared decision-making power with disinvested communities.

Production of the Kern Regional Economic and Recovery Transition Plan (\$1.7M) - The KHRC provides funding for data and strategy development to achieve CERF objectives.

Other Operations (\$630,000) - Funding is provided for convenings to support the Phase 1 outcomes, and independent evaluation of the achievement of the deliverables.

Administrative Costs (\$454,545) - 10% of the grant agreement, as stipulated, for administrative oversight by the fiscal agent and regional convener.

II.2. Collective Partnership Agreement Letter (Score range 0-30 points)

Describe the relationships between all of the partners to demonstrate, anticipated success, commitment to the partnerships, support to the policies and deliverables in this proposal, and demonstrate a decision-making process that is democratic, transparent, equitable, and centered around disinvested communities.

II.2.A.1.&2. Collective Partnership Agreement Letter (page 1 and 2)

The Signatures of Initial HRTC Members are included in Appendices 7. Other resources and information are housed on the [KERN CERF](#) webpage.

The KHRTC Collective Partnership is comprised of key stakeholders characterizing a diverse representation of the region, based on the five sub-regional Kern County areas: East, West, North, South, and Central Kern. The CERF Participation Agreement Letter (CPAL) documents KHRTC partners' agreement and strong commitment to support project policies and deliverables as the project evolves. Each partner's unique strengths and proven track records will be utilized to serve these communities, especially disinvested communities. Each of the KHRTC partners demonstrate a strong commitment to the partnership and agree to support the policies and development of deliverables in the proposal as they evolve.

KHRTC's Collective Partnership Agreement Letter provides:

- a clear description of the relationship between all the partners to demonstrate anticipated success of partnerships
- proposed processes that will build trustful and resilient partnerships across members of the HRTC, disinvested communities, local government agencies, and other local and/or regional stakeholders
- documentation of the KHRTC partners' agreement and strong commitment to support project policies and deliverables as the project evolves

- a demonstrated decision-making process that is democratic, transparent, equitable, and centered around disinvested communities.

The KHRTC’s proposed process will share and build decision-making power with grassroots and community-based organizations, environmental justice organizations, labor unions and central labor councils, workers, and disinvested communities.

II.2.B.1. Documentation of Meaningful Engagement - Involvement of Stakeholders

KHRTC has documented the direct involvement and participation of disinvested community members and key stakeholders by maintaining sign-in sheets, meeting notes, photos, and archived recordings of in-person and hybrid KHRTC public meetings held in all five Kern County sub-regions, East Kern, West Kern, North Kern, South Kern, and Central Kern. The KHRTC meetings supported the development of the Concept Proposal, Collective Partnership Agreement Letter, Outreach and Engagement Plan, and Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative. Together this documentation illustrates how the community planning process shaped and informed this proposal.

Over 30 stakeholder Collaborative Participation Agreement Letters (CPALs) are attached, a sampling includes those representing Disinvested Communities: the Dolores Huerta Foundation and California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, African American Network of Kern County, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation and Vision y Promiso. Key Environmental Justice groups Dolores Huerta Foundation and California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation. Key Labor stakeholders include: IBEW Local 428, and SEIU 521. CPALs from cities, the county, business, and industry as well as over 60 support letters are attached.

II.2.B.2. Documentation of Meaningful Engagement - Community Process

The documentation provided in Appendix 4 includes the documentation described above and evidences how the community planning process activities shaped and informed this proposal through multiple meetings held in all 5 KHRTC subregions, East Kern, West Kern, North Kern, South Kern and Central Kern.

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STATE USE ONLY	EXHIBIT A
Subgrant Number:	
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