

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 (CO<sub>2</sub>) captured from industrial sources into depleted underground oil and gas reservoirs and permanently store CO<sub>2</sub> 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 \(Kern HRTP\)](#) - 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**























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.

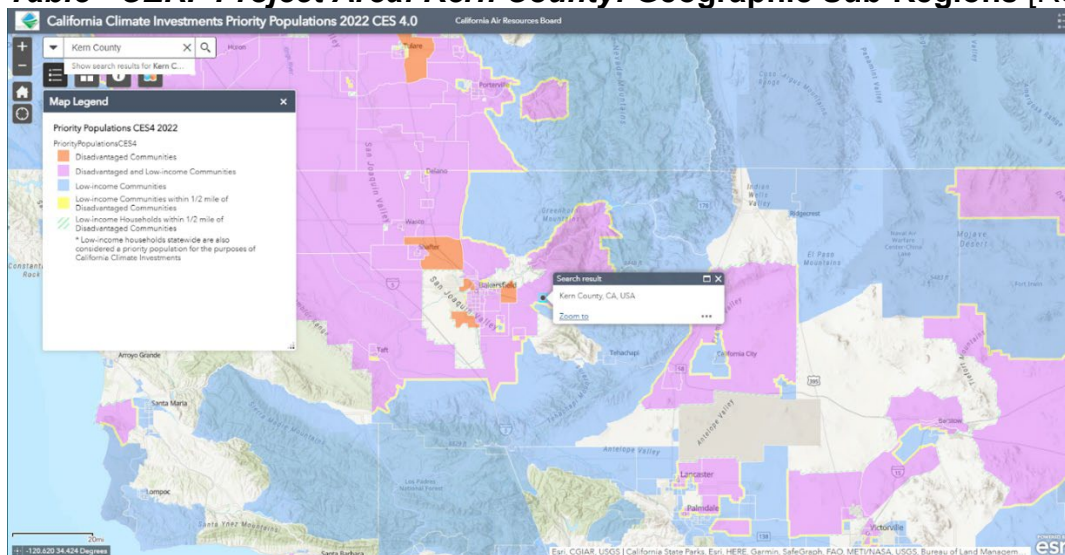
**II.1.B. Outreach and Engagement - Inclusive Process**

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
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