

California Department of Rehabilitation
Foundation for California Community Colleges
Student Training and Employment Program
(STEP)
SOLICITATION FOR PROPOSALS (SFP)

August 2023

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS
by the Department of Rehabilitation
in coordination with
Foundation for California Community Colleges

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Overview

Introduction

The California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), in coordination with the Foundation for California Community Colleges (FOUNDATION), announces the availability of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation funds through the Student Training and Employment Program (STEP):

- \$18,000,000 in total sustainable funding available for the three year program
- \$6,000,000 in sustainable funding available for year one
- Annual option for renewal and additional funds over three years

This funding opportunity represents a commitment to supporting projects that provide work experience; job preparation training; job exploration and postsecondary enrollment counseling; and self-advocacy training for students with disabilities (SWD). STEP is a continued investment in response to a real need for services.

Background

Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act

The Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act (WIOA), signed into law on July 22, 2014, supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and retains and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The WIOA established a broad vision of workforce programs. This vision:

- Reaffirms the ongoing role of American Job Centers;
- Requires coordination and alignment of key employment, education, and training programs;
- Promotes program alignment at the Federal, State, local, and regional levels;
- Builds on proven practices such as sector strategies, career pathways, regional economic approaches, work-based training;
- For Title IV, the vocational rehabilitation program, it establishes clear priorities in serving individuals with disabilities toward obtaining competitive integrated employment, reaffirms that business is a customer of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) system, and;
- Establishes that a priority of the VR system is serving youth with disabilities, particularly students.

DOR and FOUNDATION Partnership

The DOR and FOUNDATION established a partnership to provide meaningful support to SWDs in California in alignment with the vision of the WIOA. The DOR and FOUNDATION are committed to

collaboratively supporting local and regional initiatives that support SWDs in their transition to employment.

The FOUNDATION has a long-standing, effective working relationship with DOR and local and state workforce partners, including local boards, and the State Workforce Investment Board and its Labor Agency partners, including the Employment Development Department. The FOUNDATION has collaborated with DOR for the past five years on previous iterations of the STEP program.

The DOR provides services and supports to eligible individuals with disabilities and businesses requesting services at or referred from the America's Job Centers of California. As the Title IV representative, the DOR provides vocational rehabilitation services, knowledge, and expertise on the employment and accommodation of job seekers and employees with disabilities. DOR is a mandatory partner of the Workforce Development System.

Through its partnership with the FOUNDATION, the DOR proposes to fund services to SWDs through the Workforce Development Boards (WDB) and America's Job Centers of California (AJCC) system for prevocational skills training and paid work experience.

This SFP is governed by an agreement between FOUNDATION and DOR that terminates on December 31, 2026. Successful applicants agree to any changes in terms if FOUNDATION enters into a new agreement with DOR. FOUNDATION will provide notice of any substantive changes that will affect applicants.

Important Dates

Event	Date *
SFP release	Monday, August 14, 2023
Office Hours (60 minute sessions x 3) *Registration links available on STEP webpage	August 2023/September 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, August 22, 10:00am-11:00am • Wednesday, August 30, 1:00pm-2:00pm • Monday, September 11, 1:00pm-2:00pm
Last date to email questions	Wednesday, September 20, 2023
Q&A posted	Friday, September 22, 2023
Last date to respond to questions	Tuesday, Tuesday, September 26, 2023
Proposals due	Friday, Friday, September 29, 2023 by 5:00 p.m. PT
Award announcements**	Monday, October 30, 2023
Mandatory Virtual Grant Kick Off**	TBD

Event	Date *
Grant Contracts and Training Period**	November 2023-February 2023
Grant Term (Grant activities may not start prior to the contract execution date)*	January 1, 2024- December 31, 2026

***Note:** All dates after the final proposal submission deadline are approximate and may be adjusted as conditions dictate, without addendum to this SFP.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be either a Local Workforce Development Board of California (LWDB) or an America’s Job Center of California (AJCC) seeking to increase services provided to students with disabilities. Only one proposal will be accepted from each LWDB or AJCC.

Eligible Participants

To be eligible for enrollment into the STEP, a participant must be:

1. An eligible consumer with DOR prior to enrollment in STEP; and
2. An individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program who:
 - a. Is not younger than 16;
 - b. Is not older than 21 years (must be offboarded from STEP before 22nd birthday);
and
 - c. Is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ([20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq](#)); *or*
 - d. Is an individual with a disability for purposes of Federal Education Section 504, which defines a person with a disability as “any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment” ([34 CFR 104.3](#)).

Eligible Activities

Required Services:

Workplace readiness training. Training may begin as soon as participants are identified and enrolled in the project.

- Opportunities to acquire and apply work-appropriate social skills, such as communication and interpersonal skills.

- Development of independent living skills such as financial literacy, mobility, and job-seeking skills.
- Learning about employer expectations for punctuality, performance, and other "soft" skills necessary for employment.
- *Note: Workplace readiness training will not be required to be provided to SWDs who participated in work readiness training within the previous year from the date of enrollment in STEP.*

Work-based learning experience. These paid work experiences can be:

- Short-term employment (paid work experience).
- Paid internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training in the community.
- Participation in informational interviews, work site tours, job shadowing, and mentoring opportunities in the community.
- Paid work experience requirements:
 - a. Each SWD must receive a minimum of 75 hours or one full pay period's worth of paid, W2 based employment.
 - b. Awardee responsibilities in providing paid work experience:
 - Ensure work site compliance with all labor laws.
 - Check that the work site is safe and is the appropriate setting for SWDs to learn new skills.
 - Verify the conditions of employment are appropriate.
 - Certify SWDs are paid no less than minimum wages for the state, county, and city where SWD's work site is located. The current minimum wage for the State of California is \$15.50. See U.S. Dept. of Labor, Wage and Hour Division's [webpage](#) for wage information.
 - Ensure any required consent forms are signed and any required work permits are obtained and on file.
 - Include on-the-job work trials/work simulations.
 - c. *Note: paid work experiences are not restricted to summer months and may take place at any time within the contract period.*

Other Services:

These services may be added to the required services as additional training and support for participants.

1. Job Exploration Counseling: Trainings can include:
 - Exploration of information about labor market composition, in-demand industry sectors, and nontraditional employment.
 - Discussions regarding in-demand occupations, career pathways, and vocational interest inventory results
2. Postsecondary Enrollment Counseling: This is an opportunity for participants to explore their options after graduation, including:

- Reviewing information about college, vocational, or trade school application and admissions processes, course offerings, career options, and resources available to support student success.
 - Advising students and parents on academic curricula, postsecondary opportunities associated with career fields or pathways, and the type of academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace.
 - Support in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
3. Self-Advocacy Training: Training where SWDs learn to advocate for themselves can include:
- Learning about rights and responsibilities, and how to request accommodations or services and supports. Practice communicating thoughts, concerns, and needs.
 - Participation in youth leadership activities, peer mentoring, or mentoring with educational staff.

Partnerships

Partnerships are an important component of the STEP grant. One of the aims for this funding is to build strong partnerships among key stakeholders who support individuals with disabilities. For the application, partnerships will be listed on the Participating Partners Form and the nature of the partnerships outlined in the proposal narrative. See the [STEP website](#), where forms are available for download.

DOR Partnership

For the greater benefit of potential clients and consumers, one of the STEP program goals is to foster strong and lasting partnerships between WDBs/AJCCs and DOR. A working and collaborative partnership supports an open line of referrals and streamlined access to services for consumers or clients entering their local WDB, AJCC, or DOR office. Strong lines of communication across DOR and WDBs/AJCCs is also critical for awarded grantees to fulfill grant requirements such as monitoring SWD eligibility throughout the course of the program.

Partnership with applicants' local DOR district office is required. Applicants must submit a Letter of Support from their local DOR District Administrator. See Application Package and Scoring Rubric, below.

Additional Partners

In addition to DOR as a partner, the partners listed below are essential for the success of the grant as well as a critical component of a network of support for SWDs.

School Partners. High schools, community colleges, and other educational programs are key partners in supporting SWDs. School partnerships are intended to educate the community, inform outreach efforts, and improve collaboration with involved school staff. Best practices include

connecting with schools in the area where potential participants are enrolled, and providing information about DOR and STEP.

Business Partners. Strong business partnerships are an essential element of STEP’s goal to expand employment training and work experience for SWDs, including quality work sites and meaningful experiences. Applicants will be required to collaborate with a minimum of three businesses that will commit to providing W2-based paid work experience at no less than minimum wage for SWDs. The purpose of the paid work experience is to create a career pathway to self sufficiency. To that end, applicants are expected to curate quality and effective work-based learning experiences with their business partners.

Department of Developmental Services’ Regional Centers. In their local and regional planning, applicants are encouraged to engage and work with partners to align with the [State’s Competitive Integrated Employment](#) (CIE) strategy, also called “the Blueprint”. Establishing a partnership with the California Department of Developmental Services’ [Regional Centers](#) could assist with this requirement but also support increased participation by SWDs.

Additional funds for participant wages might also be available through the California Department of Developmental Services’ Paid Internship Program as administered through the Regional Center System in each area. Funding for students ages 18-22 of up to \$10,400 may be available for those eligible for Regional Center Services. For more information, see the [Department of Development’s website](#) and review the “Guidelines for Implementation of Competitive Integrated Employment Incentive Payments” document.

Grantee Requirements

Participant Management

Confirming participant eligibility is an ongoing requirement. Awardee shall ensure that a student satisfies the participant eligibility requirements before and for the full duration of providing any STEP services. Awardee will bear the cost if services are provided to ineligible participants. If a SWD participant becomes ineligible, reimbursement to applicant will not be provided on or after the date the SWD participant became ineligible, even if the services have already been provided and invoiced. Awardees are responsible for the following:

- Establish and maintain a process to collaborate with DOR to ensure all eligibility requirements are met prior to the provision of STEP services and throughout the grant term. Before services may begin for STEP participants:
 - All enrollment eligibility listed in the Eligible Participants section above must still be in effect;
 - The SWD must be enrolled with and have an open case with DOR;
 - Data outlined in [Appendix A](#) must be provided to the local DOR contract administrator or FOUNDATION at the time of a student’s enrollment and before any services begin; and

- Two forms must be completed, filed with DOR, and confirmation of receipt received.
 - DR260 Consent to Release and Obtain Information
 - DR203 DOR Student Services Request Form
- Provide verification of a participant’s eligibility status at the time of the participant enrollment and on a monthly basis.
- Recruitment, placement, and oversight of SWDs during work-based learning experiences.

Employer of Record Service

An Employer of Record Service is a required component of this grant to support the fulfillment of W2 paid work-based learning experiences. An Employer of Record service (EoR) stands in the place of a traditional employer to address human resources needs in support of a participant’s work-based learning experience. This differs from a payroll service in that the EoR additionally provides onboarding, I9 documentation review, insurance coverage, workers compensation and unemployment claims, personnel recordkeeping, along with payroll and wage/hour tracking.

To satisfy this requirement, applicants may choose to:

- Enroll with Career Catalyst, FOUNDATION’s employer of record service provider.
- Utilize their own in-house services.
- Provide their own federally-procured employer of record service.

Note: applicant’s choice of Employer of Record service provider will not be a factor in scoring of applications

Awardee Responsibilities. Applicants are required to:

- Facilitate W2 employment.
- Provide a minimum of 75 hours or the equivalent of a full pay period.
- Create a partnership with employer partners where SWD is at the center.
- Educate employer partners on STEP and SWD needs.
- Inspect work sites to ensure appropriate work environment, safety, and a good fit for SWDs.
- Audit work permits.
- Ensuring SWDs remain eligible for services. If eligibility status is not communicated with EoR and paid work experience is provided to ineligible participants, awardee will bear the costs.

EoR Service Selection

When selecting an EoR for the purpose of the STEP program, applicants must ensure that the EoR can meet the requirements for the program. The minimum level of service provided must include:

- W2 employment
- Ability to hire minors
- Onboarding of SWDs
- Compliance with state and federal labor laws
- Insurance coverage for SWDs

- Management of:
 - issues involving taxes, benefits
 - unemployment claims
 - workers' compensation
 - Payroll, including payment to SWDs
 - all relevant IRS forms

A. **In-House EoR.** Applicants may utilize their own in-house employer of record. In-house services must be established and operational prior to submitting the application. The application must include a demonstration of the services provided and the capacity to continue services through the grant period.

B. **Federally Procured EoR.** Applicants may use an already procured, contracted, and established employer of record service. Applicant is solely responsible for ensuring a competitive process in compliance with federal procurement policy set forth in [2 C.F.R. § 200.317-327](#) has been conducted in the selection of an employer of record service. Applicant is responsible for attaching the Procurement Policy and the relevant competitive process documentation.

If selecting an applicant-provided Employer of Record Service, FOUNDATION shall not be liable for any potential liability related to or arising from such Employer of Record services. All liability related to or arising from such Employer of Record services shall be allocated between and incurred by Applicant and Applicant-Provided Employer of Record.

Contracting. Applicants will undertake their own contracting with an EoR service. Contracting and implementation with the EoR service will occur separately from the STEP grant application process.

Fund management. In both self-provided EoR choices, awardees will manage funds for paid work experience. Awardees will need to provide monthly reports on progress of their identified grant activities as well as financial reports showing paid work experience expenditures, including a breakdown of hours worked, rate of pay, and total wages.

Awardee Responsibilities. If providing their own EoR, awardees will undertake the following responsibilities:

- Monitoring and reporting wages, hours worked, and start and end times
- Ensuring compliance with labor laws (e.g., that meal breaks are taken)
- Reporting on
 - SWDs' work-based learning placements location.
 - SWDs' Number of hours worked and wages paid
 - SWDs' start and end dates
 - Financials

Career Catalyst

If applicants select this option, FOUNDATION will serve as the official employer of record for all paid work experience through Career Catalyst, a service established in 1998.

Service offerings.

- All-in-one web-based Enterprise Resource Planning platform: Workday or Paperless employee acquisition
 - Online timekeeping
 - Payroll processing
 - Employee access to paystubs and W-2s
- U.S. Bank Pay cards for participants
- Year-end tax reporting
- Leave management
- Unemployment claims management
- Workers' compensation management
- Ongoing operational support and customer service
- Monthly Community of Practice convenings
- Offboarding coordination

Cost. The cost of services include a) a one-time \$100 onboarding fee per participant (if a student needs to be re-onboarded for any reason, the onboarding fee will not apply a second time), and b) an 18.8% federally-recognized indirect cost rate on all wages and taxes. See [Appendix B](#) for the cost estimator guide.

Fund management. FOUNDATION will manage funds and reporting for all paid work experience.

Awardee responsibilities. Awardee will commit to the responsibilities in coordination with Career Catalyst, including:

1. Identifying Program Manager and Timekeeping Supervisor(s) that will oversee paid work experience placements and be responsible for digital onboarding, timekeeping, and off boarding;
2. Timely communication of SWD work experience start and end dates, in alignment with Career Catalyst Onboarding/Off-boarding Policies;
3. Collection of work permits for minors, using the Foundation's work permit intent form;
4. Collection of Worksite Agreements from each external business partner, prior to start of paid work experience;
5. Verification of SWDs' DOR enrollment prior to provision of any service(s);
6. Ensuring all SWDs complete an online application that will serve as their employee intake form;
7. Electronic completion of Sections 1 & 2 of the I-9 through Workday within three days following the SWD's first day logging hours to be paid; and
8. Bi-weekly electronic input, approval, and submission of SWD timesheets, using Foundation's ERP, Workday.

More information. See the Career Catalyst website at:

<https://foundationccc.org/our-work/workforce-development/increasing-opportunities-for-apprenticeships-internships-and-skill-building/career-catalyst/>

Contracting

The FOUNDATION will oversee the contracting process for the SFP by managing and distributing contract funds.

The FOUNDATION will contact the awardees to finalize contract details. In some cases, FOUNDATION may request that the contracts incorporate changes to the original project proposals. After the contract negotiations, if any, the FOUNDATION will email the contract to the awardees for signature. The FOUNDATION expects contract negotiations to begin upon selection of awardees with a project start date estimated as early as January 1, 2024. Selected applicants must execute a contract with FOUNDATION to access awarded funds.

STEP activities may not begin until a fully executed contract is in place and must be completed by December 31, 2026 (contract term end date).

Contracting and Employer of Record Service Selection

Applicant's own EoR service or a federally procured EoR: contracting for this grant is mutually exclusive from any agreements for implementing EoR services with other parties. DOR and FOUNDATION will not be parties to the EoR service contract.

Career Catalyst as EoR: contracting for the STEP grant is combined with the Career Catalyst service agreement. FOUNDATION will be a party to the grant agreement/Career Catalyst service agreement.

A sample contract for each scenario is included in the solicitation package, found on the [STEP website](#).

Technical Assistance

FOUNDATION will provide technical assistance as needed throughout the grant term. Awardees will be required to attend certain technical assistance activities. More detailed information will be shared with awardees.

Personnel who are expected to attend:

- Grant/Program Manager. The person with oversight of grant implementation and reporting Work Experience Lead Coordinator.
- The person responsible for facilitation, timekeeping oversight, and document collection for paid work placements

Mandatory Kick-Off Event

Awardees must commit to participating in the Virtual Awardee Kick-Off to be hosted by the FOUNDATION. Awardees will be notified of the date and time of the kick-off event after awards are announced.

Other Technical Assistance

FOUNDATION may provide other technical assistance at its sole discretion. Examples of the type of technical assistance that may be provided:

- *Community of Practice*. Community of Practice Zoom calls create a platform for engaging grantees, building community, and sharing information.
- *Training Webinars*. Web-based training on grant administration topics, such as reporting and invoicing and provided either live or asynchronously.
- *Virtual Convenings*. Gatherings based on the needs of grantees, which may include Peer Learning Circles, workshops and webinars, and Learning labs.
- *Shared Drive/Information Hub*. A web-based hub for resource sharing of documents such as a grant resource guide, reporting templates, and user guides.
- *Support of Peer-led Topic Groups*. A space for focused discussions and resource sharing on topics identified by grantees.

Reporting Requirements

Applicants must have the capability to report expenditures, participant data, and outcome data to the state through a provided reporting template. Reports are expected to be timely, thorough, and accurate. Details regarding grant codes and specific data elements that need to be reported will be provided to all awardees.

Awardees are expected to document lessons learned, and effective/promising practices ascertained through this project.

Monthly Reporting

Awardees will be required to submit monthly reports on:

1. Verification that each SWD satisfies the participant eligibility requirements, as defined in the “Participant Eligibility” section above.
2. Participant training and work-based learning.
 - a. The type and amount of training provided to each SWD.
 - b. SWDs’ work-based learning placements location.*
 - c. SWDs’ Number of hours worked and wages paid.*
 - d. SWDs’ start and end dates*
3. Financials,* and

4. Data elements including participant information, project activities and services provided, and expenditures. See [Appendix A](#) for specific monthly data reporting metrics.

*Note: the starred metrics above are tracked by FOUNDATION for Career Catalyst employees. Grantees who select to provide their own Employer of Record service will be required to work with their EoR service to report on 2(b)-(d), and 3.

For guidance, please refer to *Monthly and Quarterly Financial Reporting Requirements* ([WSD19-05](#)) on EDD's website.

Quarterly Monitoring

The FOUNDATION and DOR will review awardee's progress on performance goals set out in the application on a quarterly basis.

Bi-Annual Reporting

Two narrative reports per year of the grant term will be required. The bi-annual narrative reports are critical to FOUNDATION's monitoring and oversight process. This report consists of a few narrative questions for qualitative feedback on how the program is progressing. Results will be used to inform Technical Assistance activities, learn about successes, and help the administration team assist with challenges. More details will be provided to selected awardees.

Close-Out Reporting

Within 60 days of the project term date, the following reports will be due:

- **Project closeout report.** Further guidance regarding reporting and closeout requirements can be found in *WIOA Closeout Requirements* ([WSD16-05](#)) on EDD's Website.
- **Activity report.** A two page summary of all activities that occurred during the contract period, including the number of students served, services provided, statistical data, and other relevant metrics gathered during the grant period.
- **Final Contract Evaluation Form.** See also Required Forms, below. Due no later than 60 days after the conclusion of grant activities.

Grant Program Forms

DOR Forms: these essential DOR forms will be used for SWD enrollment purposes throughout the grant term and are listed here for reference.

- **DR203 DOR Student Services Request Form.** Before services can be rendered, complete this form, return to DOR, and confirm receipt by DOR.
- **DR260 Consent to Release and Obtain Information.** Before services can be rendered, complete this form, return to DOR, and confirm receipt by DOR.
- **DR205 Student Services Plan.** Optional form.

Program Forms: These forms will be used throughout the grant term and are provided here for reference only.

- **Biannual Narrative Report.** Twice yearly report consisting of a few narrative questions for qualitative feedback on how the program is progressing.
- **Final Contract Evaluation Form.** Provides a summary of outcomes, grant activities, and SWD demographics, and a narrative summarizing grant activities. This form is due no later than 60 days after the conclusion of grant activities.
- **Sample Foundation contracts.** See the STEP [website](#) for sample contracts.
- **Monthly Invoice and Reporting Templates.** To be provided to awarded grantees.

Payment Provision & Invoicing

Monthly invoicing is required for all awarded grant funds. Invoices are due by the 10th of the month following costs incurred. Monthly invoice templates and training via webinar will be provided. Payments shall be issued within 45 calendar days from the date the invoice is received, in accordance with the [California Prompt Payment Act](#).

The FOUNDATION will compensate grantees for services provided upon receipt and approval of invoices in accordance with the approved budget. Total amounts invoiced shall not exceed the award amount. Grantees shall maintain thorough accounting ledgers to support all charges and year-to-date expenditures of grant funds.

Recordkeeping and Monitoring

Awardees must comply with the OMB cost principles set forth in the [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#). [2 C.F.R. 200 et seq.](#)

Records

Awardees will be required to maintain project and fiscal records sufficient to allow federal, state, and local reviewers to evaluate the project effectiveness and proper use of funds. The record keeping system must include both original and summary (e.g., computer generated) data sources. Awardees will retain all records pertinent to this contract for a period of three years from the date of final payment of this contract.

Monitoring

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

- Units of local government or non-profit entities: ensure that audits required under OMB guidelines are performed and submitted when due.

- Awardees under WIOA Title I that expend more than the minimum level specified in 2 C.F.R. 200 et seq: conduct an organization-wide audit in accordance with Uniform Administrative Requirements or a program-specific financial and compliance audit.

Evaluation

In the event that a statewide evaluation of workforce development is implemented, awardees will be required to participate in that evaluation by providing requested data and information. See WIOA, 29 U.S.C. §§ 3174, 3141(e). Therefore, all award recipients are expected to document lessons learned, and effective/promising practices ascertained through this project.

Funding and Application Requirements

Funding Requirements

Through this SFP, with sufficient qualified applicants, up to \$6,000,000 is available from federal WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation funds with the potential for an increase in funds available in the future, depending on fund availability.

Award amounts. Each applicant may request up to \$750,000 per contract year.

The estimated grant term. 36 months, starting January 1, 2024 and closing December 31, 2026. It is anticipated that the first two months of the project will be used for program organization and start-up, including identifying additional businesses and SWDs to participate in the project.

Project Budget. For the application, applicants should propose a budget for the **first 12 months** of the grant term. Budgets will be resubmitted annually for the remaining 24 months, with the opportunity to revise requested award amounts in each revision to up to \$750,000. Funds will roll over between each year for the duration of the grant agreement term. See Appendix B for budget worksheet guidance.

Administrative Costs. Up to 10% of total direct costs may be included in the budget as administrative costs.

- Direct costs include: staff salaries and benefits, work readiness stipends, and local travel.
- Administrative costs are not available for subcontractor fees or costs of an employer of record service.
- Subcontractors may include administrative costs in their own budget.

Please note: No obligation or commitment of funds will be allowed prior to or beyond the contract period of performance. Any contract funds not expended during the contract period shall be returned to the state.

If for any reason, the funds either do not become available or are reduced due to budgeting/fiscal/administrative reasons, the State shall have no liability to pay any funds or to furnish any other considerations under this SFP, and no awardee will be obligated to perform any provisions of this SFP.

Grant Award Amounts

Applicants may submit a proposal for up to \$750,000 per contract year. Final awards may be adjusted depending on the number of successful applicants.

Allowable Use of Funds

With the exception of the allowed 10% administrative costs, all grant funds shall be expended to provide direct services to students.

- Awardees shall comply with WIOA and the OMB Uniform Guidance ([2 CFR Part 200 et seq.](#)) while expending funds under this award.
- Direct services include staff time spent working directly with SWDs, businesses, schools or DOR for purposes of developing and performing grant services.
 - Examples of direct services: training direct service staff, training materials, direct service staff travel, staff wages/work expenses, and work readiness stipends.
- Subcontractors may be used to support direct services only. A subcontractor's role within the project:
 - Provides (commercial) goods and services to a variety of purchasers within normal business operations
 - Operates in a competitive environment
 - Provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operation of the state program
 - Does not participate in program design
 - Holds little or no independent discretion over program work or direction
 - Undelivered work will result in non-payment
 - Not required to directly support goals of grant
- Workplace Readiness Training stipends may be issued to SWDs by awardees.
 - Note that wages, stipends, or gift cards for training activities will not be issued by the FOUNDATION.
- Supportive services are not generally allowable.
 - Unallowable supportive services may include, but are not limited to: bus passes, equipment, and clothing.
 - Should a SWD require supportive services to access the paid work experience, please refer the SWD to their DOR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.
- While there is no matching funds requirement, this may be necessary. Any matching funds may include, for example, in-kind/co-enrollment expenses.

Application Requirements and Scoring Rubric

Applications should include the requested information below, along with completed forms and attachments. Please complete the application in the format provided.

Application Package

Awardees will be required to submit the following documents as part of the application package. See the STEP [website](#) for forms available to download.

- **SFP Form SIGPN.** Signature Page and Project Proposal Narrative (fillable Adobe pdf)
- **Excel Workbook:**
 - Participating Partners Form. This form is required to show the list of partners that will participate in the STEP project. Participating partners include 1) local DOR District Administrator; 2) schools that SWDs attend; and 3) a minimum of three businesses that are providing the work experience for SWDs
 - Budget Worksheet. The estimated grant expenditures for the first 12 months of the grant term. See Appendix B for guidance on completing the budget.
 - Career Catalyst Estimator (if applicable): for applicants choosing the Career Catalyst employer of record service only. See Appendix B for guidance on completing the estimator.
- **Letter of Support from local DOR District Administrator.** Note that no form is provided for this letter. The letter of support should be from the DOR District Administrator on their letterhead.
- **Federally Procured EoR (if applicable):** Attach the Procurement Policy and the relevant competitive process documentation.

Scoring Rubric

Applications will be scored and ranked by teams of independent reviewers based on the criteria set forth in this SFP.

The ranked scores will serve as the primary basis for making recommendations for funding in conjunction with other factors, such as geographic distribution of funds, uniqueness, and innovative aspects of the proposal. Only those proposals deemed to be meritorious and in the best interests of the state will be recommended for funding.

The scoring value of each section of the SFP is as follows:

Section	Description	Points
Forms	Complete these documents, available for download on the STEP website . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Signature Page and Project Proposal Narrative (SFP Form SIGPN), a fillable PDF form. ● Excel Workbook: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participating Partners Form 	5

Section	Description	Points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget Worksheet ○ Career Catalyst Estimator (if applicable) 	
Letter of Support	<p>Include a letter of commitment from applicants' local DOR District Administrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The letter must include a commitment to collaborating to ensure ongoing eligibility and enrollment of STEP participants no less than on a monthly basis. ● A full list of statewide DOR District Administrators is included with this SFP. 	5
Readiness to Serve SWDs	<p>Identify and explain applicant's knowledge, experience and capacity to serve participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate that a workplace readiness training program is ready to be implemented at applicants' location. ● For applicants with little or no experience serving SWDs, describe a detailed approach regarding the development and implementation of strategies for serving SWDs. 	5
Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the SWDs to be worked with through this grant and any recruitment and retainment strategies. Provide demographic information if possible. 2. Indicate the number of SWDs expected to be served and a rationale for the calculated costs per student, including which services will be provided and the anticipated student need. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Costs per student can be determined by factoring the number of students anticipated to participate by total grant funds being requested. b. Per student costs will vary depending on services to be provided and anticipated student need. 3. Outline plans for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Determining eligibility. Explain the processes utilized to ensure accurate and timely determination of eligibility, both for participant enrollment and for verifying ongoing eligibility status. b. Obtaining referrals. Explain the strategies and processes for gaining referrals, including key partners. c. Retaining participants. Include explanations of what services and strategies will be used. 	15
Partnership	<p>Include details for partnerships with DOR, school partners, business partners, and regional centers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>DOR Partner</u>. Detail the roles and responsibilities for both applicant and DOR partner. This description should include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What stage of partnership building: 	20

Section	Description	Points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New partnership: explain how collaboration with DOR will be undertaken, including what steps will be taken to build a strong, lasting collaboration. If working to reestablish a lapsed partnership, consider it a new partnership for the purposes of this SFP. • Ongoing partnership: provide a brief history of the partnership, explain how each partner contributes to the partnership, and outline the strategies for maintaining a strong, lasting collaboration. <p>b. Detail how applicant will undertake ensuring participant eligibility. Include an explanation of how applicant and DOR will work together to ensure <u>continued eligibility</u>.</p> <p>c. If applicable, attach the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the local DOR District Office.</p> <p>2. <u>Additional Partners</u>. Identify and outline plans for partnerships with:</p> <p>a. School Partners. Outline an outreach plan for creating partnerships with local school districts and individual schools.</p> <p>b. Business Partners. Identify a minimum of three businesses that are committed to curating a quality paid work experience for engaging with SWDs. Provide a clear engagement strategy with these employers to provide paid, W2 work experiences for minor SWDs at no less than minimum wage and in accordance with all labor laws. <i>See Project Work Plan, below.</i></p> <p>c. Competitive Integrated Employment Strategy. Address ways to engage and work with partners to align with the state’s CIE strategy. Name which Regional Center applicant will create a partnership with, if applicable.</p> <p>3. For each partner above, outline plans for gaining referrals:</p> <p>a. Plans for contacting each partner</p> <p>b. Strategy in working with partners, and</p> <p>c. The communication plan for maintaining the line to referrals</p>	
Employer of Record Service	<p>Select an employer of record service, either a self-provided EoR service or Career Catalyst, and:</p> <p>Self-Provided EoR. Demonstrate how the EoR will provide the minimum level of service outlined above. This may include providing additional documentation demonstrating an established capacity to provide support for W2 employment at minimum wage for minors and in compliance with all labor laws and regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide details of the costs associated with the employer of record service, including a breakdown of cost by type. <p>Specific requirements for each self-provided EoR:</p>	10

Section	Description	Points
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>In-house</u>. provide an explanation of the methods and procedures implemented by applicant’s own employer of record service. 2. <u>Federally procured</u>. Provide an explanation of the methods and procedures implemented by the EoR and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the contract/service agreement with the employer of record service • applicant’s Procurement Policy and any documentation for the competitive process to certify procurement was obtained through competitive process in compliance with federal procurement policy set forth in 2 C.F.R. § 200.317-327. <p>Career Catalyst as EoR. Indicate that Career Catalyst will serve as EoR and explain how awardee responsibilities outlined above will be undertaken, including the processes to be implemented and any foreseen challenges.</p>	
Project Work Plan	<p>Describe the services to be provided. Outline the plan for how each service will be provided. For detailed descriptions of each service, see Eligible Activities, above.</p> <p>Required services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Workplace readiness training</u>. Outline the curriculum and identify how services will be provided. 2. <u>Work-based learning experience</u>. Outline the training to be provided and identify how work-based learning experiences will be provided to participants. Include details about the partnerships to be leveraged. <p>Other Services. Explain the counseling to be provided, including the structure, frequency, and objectives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Exploration Counseling, • Postsecondary Enrollment Counseling, and • Self-Advocacy Training 	20
Outputs and Outcomes	<p>Explain performance goals and expected outcomes, and show how they align with program, state, and local goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance goals should align with serving the proposed number of SWDs, with a potential of co-enrolling these students into other DOR/WIOA programs. • In evaluating these outcomes, it is understood that local goals program designs may vary significantly and necessitate flexibility. 	15
Budget Worksheet	<p>Prepare a budget proposal for the first 12 months of the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a breakdown and explanation of the budget worksheet, see Appendix B. 	5

Section	Description	Points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include all anticipated costs, including the Employer of Record service selected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-selected EoR service: complete the Work-Based Learning Experience Sages and Employer of Record Service Cost section. ○ Career Catalyst EoR service: complete the Career Catalyst Estimator tab of the Excel Workbook. The total will auto populate in section 2 of the budget worksheet. <i>See Appendix B</i> for details on completing this section. ● Unused funds from the first year budget will roll over to the second year budget. ● Awardees will have the opportunity during the budget-making process to revise the requested award to up to \$750,000 each year. 	
Optional Bonus: Previous STEPS Awardees	Applicants who were grantees in past iterations of Summer Training Education Program for Students (STEPS) may earn points by demonstrating the quality and effectiveness of their services and describing positive outcomes for SWDs.	2
Total Points	Minimum and Other Requirements Total Maximum, Exclusive of Bonus Points	100

Application Format

Guidelines for application format:

- Page limit: Proposal narrative (SFP Form SIGPN) is limited to the space provided in the form. Additional pages will not be included in the review and scoring.
- Font size: 12 point

Application Period and Review Process

Application Deadline

Submit applications via email to step@foundationccc.org no later than **5:00 p.m. PT., September 29, 2023**.

Late proposals will not be accepted. Exceptions will not be allowed and there is no appeal for not meeting the proposal deadline.

Application Period Support

During the application period, the following technical assistance support is available through the FOUNDATION:

- Information session via Zoom July 24, 2023. A recording will be made available on the [STEP webpage](#).
- 60-minute Zoom support sessions led by the solicitation team:
 - Tuesday, August 22, 10:00am-11:00am
 - Wednesday, August 30, 1:00pm-2:00pm
 - Monday, September 11, 1:00pm-2:00pm
- Support via email at step@foundationccc.org until September 20, 2023.
- Questions and responses from support sessions and email will be posted on the [STEP webpage](#).

Application Review

Recommendation for Funding

Award decisions to be announced via email by October 30, 2023.

Rejection of Application

A proposal may be disqualified for not meeting the proposal requirements. An appeal of the disqualification decision may be filed. There is no appeal process for not meeting the proposal submission deadline. Final funding decisions cannot be appealed.

The FOUNDATION will send notice of disqualification via the email provided in the application.

Appeal

Applicants may file an appeal within three (3) business days via email to step@foundationccc.org after the Notice of Intent to Award in dispute of an action by FoundationCCC.

The appellant must submit the facts in writing with the following information:

- Appealing organization's full name, address, contact name and title, contact's email address, and telephone number.
- A brief statement of the reasons for appeal, including citations to the SFP and pertinent documents.
- A statement of the relief sought.
- Original signature of the authorized signatory authority of the organization.

FOUNDATION will review and evaluate the appeal documentation and provide a written decision to the appellant. FOUNDATION will consider providing an oral debrief at its sole discretion. The

written decision of FOUNDATION's authorized representative shall be final and not subject to reconsideration or appeal with FOUNDATION or FOUNDATION's Board

Appendix A: Data Report Metrics

Data required upon SWD enrollment and prior to services

Local Workforce Boards/AJCC operators will provide the following information at the time of a student's enrollment, at least once monthly, and prior to the provision of any STEP services.

Monthly data report shall be submitted via email to step@foundationccc.org.

- Student's name
- Birthdate
- School and dates of attendance (i.e. graduation dates and post-secondary ed dates)
- Type of, and proof of disability (could be by signature from school official)
- Start date of service(s) provided under the agreement
- End date of service (if applicable)
- Name and address of employer/ work experience placement
- Social Security Number
- Home and mailing address as appropriate
- Contact number and email if available
- Services to be provided
- Cost of services provided (projected)
- Outcome/results (projected)

Monthly Data Report Metrics

Local Workforce Boards/AJCC operators will provide the following information for all enrolled students participating in STEPS monthly and upon conclusion of the STEP to the local DOR contract administrator or the FOUNDATION.

- Student's name
- Services provided
- Cost of Services provided (STEP)
- Type and cost of other services provided (e.g., Title I funds)
- Outcome/results of services
- Student returned to school
- Student enrolled in post-secondary education/training
- Student obtained employment as a result of service (e.g., with STEP work experience employer)
- Student obtained employment separate from STEP
- Other (provide explanation)
- The type and amount of training provided to each SWD.
- SWDs' work-based learning placements.
- SWDs' Number of hours worked.

Appendix B: Budget Worksheet and Career Catalyst Estimator Guide

For the Career Catalyst Estimator guide, see below.

Budget Worksheet

Instructions

- Enter grant expenditures in the yellow cells.
- Enter leveraged expenditures in the blue cells. Leveraged funds are optional, as there is no matching requirement for this grant.
- The white cells automatically calculate values. Do not enter values into these cells.

Worksheet Guide

PROJECT BUDGET NEEDS

Total amount requested refers to the total grant award requested.

- Do not enter values in the “amount requested” or “leverage” cells. These will automatically populate from the totals at the end of the worksheet.

Number of students to be served is the estimated number of SWDs listed in the work plan and participant sections of the Project Proposal Narrative form.

- Do enter the number of students to be served.

Section 1. PERSONNEL

Salaries and benefits are estimated based on total FTEs assigned to STEP for engaging directly with participants and partners. Enter the values into the yellow and blue fields.

- Any time spent on administrative or leadership roles is not included.
- Note in the example that leveraged funds in the right column supplement grant funds.

Section 2. *WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCE WAGES AND EMPLOYER OF RECORD SERVICE COST*

This section includes the wages to be paid to participants as part of paid work-based learning experiences, split out based on the selected Employer of Record service.

Career Catalyst EoR Option. Do not enter any values into this section.

- Instead, go to the Career Catalyst Estimator tab in the Excel Workbook. See below for guidance and instructions.
- The values for this line automatically fill from the Career Catalyst Estimator tab.

In-house or Federally procured Options.

- **Employer of Record Service Administrative Fees** refers to the total costs of a grantee-provided EoR service, either in-house or federally procured.
 - Enter the total costs in this line, including the contract amount and any associated fees.
 - Provide the breakdown of these costs in the Project Proposal Narrative, Employer of Record Service section.
 - For example, the total costs of an in-house EoR service is \$20,000 for the year. Fill in \$20,000 to this line.
- **Total wages** refers to the value calculated by multiplying (number of students) x (wage rate) x (total number of hours worked).
 - For example, the work plan estimates 100 students will work 75 hours at \$15.50 per hour.
 - Total wages will be: (100 students) x (75 hours) x (\$15.50/hour) = \$116,250
- **Total Taxes** include: 20% of student wages = baseline taxes at 12% + workers' compensation at 8%.
 - (20% tax) x (wages) = tax total.
 - Note that estimated taxes and workers' compensation are a variable cost. The actual cost will be billed.
 - From the example above: (20% tax) x (\$116,250 wages) = \$23,250 total taxes
- **Total Program Cost** refers to the total cost of the selected Employer of Record service, Total Wages, and Total Taxes. This line will automatically populate with that total.
 - From the examples above: (EoR service \$20,000) + (total wages \$116,250) + (total tax \$23,250) = \$159,500
 - \$159,500 will automatically populate into the "Total Program Cost" line.

Section 3. TRAVEL

To be included in this line, travel needs to be for the purpose of direct services to participants.

Section 4. WORKPLACE READINESS TRAINING STIPEND (optional)

Providing stipends to participants for workplace readiness training is optional.

Section 5. SUBCONTRACTOR (optional)

Subcontractor fees are allowable if they support participants directly.

- For example, a subcontractor providing know-your-rights training to participants is allowable because it is a service working directly with participants on a program service.

ADMINISTRATIVE COST

Do not enter any values into these lines. They will automatically calculate.

- Direct Costs = (Salaries + Benefits) + (Travel) + (Workplace Readiness Training Stipends). This subtotal is used in calculating the total administrative cost.
- Administrative costs = 10% x (Direct cost)
 - For example, if direct costs total \$157,680, then (10% administrative costs) x (\$157680 direct costs) = \$15,768 total administrative costs.

TOTAL

The totals for grant expenditures and leveraged funds appear in the Total line.

- Grant expenditures include the values from: salaries, fringe benefits, (total program costs) *or* (total Career Catalyst Program), travel, stipends if applicable, subcontractor fees if applicable, and total administrative costs.
- Leveraged expenditures include values from the same lines as grant expenditures, totaled in the column on the right.
- These are the same values that automatically populate the totals at the top of the worksheet.

Career Catalyst Estimator

In the Excel Workbook, navigate to the tab titled Career Catalyst Estimator. This estimator will assist in calculating the budget for the “Total Career Catalyst Program” line in the budget worksheet. The total calculated here represents the total cost of Career Catalyst’s services. The values in the table are an example only, not a prescriptive set of values.

Complete table by filling values for *number of students, *hourly rate, and *total hours.

1. **Students.** Include the estimated number of students for the grant term. This will be the same number outlined in the “Participants” portion of the application
2. **Wage rate.** The hourly rate for participant wages will be either CA minimum wage (\$15.50) or the wage rate of the worksite’s municipality, whichever is higher.
3. **Hours.** Minimum total hours are 75 hours or one full pay period.

The remainder of the table automatically calculates the remaining values.

4. **Subtotal.** The Wages line is a subtotal of: (number of students) x (hourly rate) x (total hours).
 - For example, (10 students) x (\$20.00 wages) x (100 hours worked) = \$20,000 total wages
5. **Tax calculation.** Total taxes are estimated as:
 - 20% of student wages = (baseline taxes at 12%) + (workers’ compensation at 8%). The taxes apply to the subtotal in line 4.
 - (20% tax) x (wages) = tax total.
 - Note that the tax and workers’ compensation are variable costs, meaning the actual cost will be billed.
 - From the example above, the total estimated taxes for \$20,000 in total wages will be: (20%) x (\$20,000 in wages) = \$4,000 total taxes.
6. **Subtotal.** This line is a subtotal of (wages) + (taxes) from lines 4 and 5, respectively.
 - From the example above: (\$20,000 wages) + (\$4,000 taxes) = \$24,000 total wages and taxes.
7. **Indirect calculation.** FoundationCCC charges an 18.8% indirect cost rate on total wages and taxes from line 6.
 - For example, the calculation will be: (18.8% indirect) x (\$24,000 wages and taxes) = \$4,512 in indirect costs.
8. **Onboarding fee.** Foundation charges a \$100 one-time onboarding fee per participant, invoiced when the student is hired. If a participant offboards and wishes to be onboarded again in the future, the \$100 fee would not apply.

- The fee is not included in the calculations in lines 4-7. Rather, it is added at the end of the pricing sheet.
 - For example, for 100 students, the onboarding fees total \$1,000 (100 students x \$100).
9. **Total.** This is the grand total of the calculations above.
- Includes: subtotal in line 6 (wages + taxes) + line 7 (indirect costs) + line 8 (onboarding fee)
 - From the example above, the grand total is calculated: (wages plus taxes 24,000) + (indirect cost \$4,512) + (onboarding fee total \$1000) = \$29,512.00 total program costs.
 - Provide the total and breakdown of these costs in the Project Proposal Narrative, Employer of Record Service section.