

**Community Economic  
Resilience Fund (CERF)  
Program  
Annual Report – December 31,  
2022**

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## Executive Summary

In 2021, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA), the Employment Development Department (EDD), the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) began collaboration efforts for the implementation of the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) program. The CERF program aims to deliver a sustainable and equitable recovery from the economic distress of COVID-19 and other macroeconomic impacts such as global transition to carbon neutrality. The program will provide financial support to establish and support High Road Transition Collaboratives (HRTCs) in designing region and industry-specific economic recovery and transition strategies that help diversify regional economies and develop or expand environmentally sustainable industries that create high-quality, broadly accessible jobs for all Californians. The Inter-Agency Leadership Team was formed to collaborate on a wide range of activities related to the management, design, oversight, and administration of the CERF program. Throughout the life of the program, the CERF Inter-Agency Leadership Team will participate in regularly scheduled reporting meetings to discuss stakeholder input, agendas, policy recommendations and program guidelines.

Each agency is tasked with a different responsibility ranging from grant administration, program design, and technical assistance. Below are brief descriptions of the responsibilities of each agency:

- **CERF Inter-Agency Leadership Team:** The Inter-Agency Leadership Team shall be responsible for planning, oversight, and decision-making for the CERF program.
- **The Labor and Workforce Development Agency:** The LWDA will provide oversight to ensure that CERF program and evaluation objectives remain in alignment with labor and workforce development objectives.
- **The Employment Development Department:** EDD's Workforce Services Branch (WSB) will be responsible for the management and execution of all grants and contracts, including the administration of and accountability for CERF's Planning Phase, Implementation Phase, Evaluation, and Technical Assistance grants.
- **The Governor's Office of Planning and Research:** The OPR will manage the design and operations of the program. In addition, OPR will be responsible for providing technical assistance, intended to support and guide processes and deliverables for Phase I, Phase II, and Evaluation.
- **The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development:** GO-Biz will provide support with outreach, technical assistance, and capacity building in collaboration with the Evaluation and Technical Assistance providers. Collaboration across regions will be required to collectively create a more resilient statewide economy that brings equal opportunities to every region.

## Annual Summary of Awards

### CERF Planning Phase

**Funding Availability:** \$65 million

**Number of awards:** 13

During the Planning Phase, the CERF program will provide up to \$5 million planning grants per HRTC per region in 13 regions for a total of \$65 million in planning grants. The HRTCs will be composed of an administrative Fiscal Agent, a Regional Convener, and a wide range of diverse partners reflecting the diversity of each region. Planning grants will be administered jointly by the Fiscal Agent and/or Regional Convener.

The 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 change and economic resilience. The success of HRTCs in building inclusive planning tables depends on various factors, including the following:

- **Meaningful engagement:** The ability of HRTCs in informing, engaging, and empowering diverse communities, especially disinvested communities.
- **Partnerships:** The ability of HRTCs in building effective partnerships that can positively influence the implementation of HRTCs' proposed investments and projects.
- **Capacity building:** The ability of HRTCs in developing social infrastructures for inclusive regional planning processes and building cross-regional collaborations.

### Summary of Awards:

The project descriptions in this section were composed by the applicants but have been slightly modified for clarity, where applicable.

#### **1. North State – Award – \$5 million**

**Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent: North State Planning and Development Collective – Chico State Enterprises

Regional Convener: Partnership between Sierra Institute for Community and Environment and North State Planning and Development Collective – Chico State Enterprises

**Project Description:**

In partnership, the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment (the Institute) and the North State Planning and Development Collective (the Collective) at Chico State Enterprises will lead the North State region's HRTC and facilitate an inclusive planning and collaborative process resulting in a regional plan. This process will center on climate initiatives, land stewardship, identification of high-growth sectors, and connection to sub-regional initiatives to build capacity and strengthen the region's economic and workforce backbone.

The Institute and the Collective are committed to building strong partnerships through joint work and accomplishment ensuring sustainability of the North State CERF. The regional plan will support projects and policies that equitably advance regional and community needs. Projects with multiple beneficiaries will sustain the HRTC. The Institute and Collective are committed to engaging in inclusivity and equitable investment.

For decades, rural economic development activities and natural resource and forest management initiatives have not generated a sufficient economic base or high-quality jobs in the region. Coupled with climate change, drought, overly dense forests and the pandemic, the North State Region faces increasingly catastrophic wildfire seasons and land in need of restoration. As a result, the region is faced with acute challenges along with new opportunities for innovation and growth across most sectors, communities and demographics.

Sierra Institute will serve as the regional convener and North State Planning and Development Collective will serve as the fiscal agent. By mutual agreement, the two entities will share leadership in convening the region, building on the strengths of each entity including topical expertise and existing partnerships.

### **2. Redwood Coast – Award – \$5 million**

#### **Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent: Arcata Economic Development Corporation

Regional Convener: California Center for Rural Policy at CalPoly Humboldt

#### **Project Description:**

Redwood Region RISE is positioned to make rapid progress toward our Vision: over the next decade, the region will become a vibrant, regenerative economy catalyzed by the implementation of community-driven innovations and collaborative governance. Our Goals are: Build economic development capacity to maximize opportunities for growth and effective implementation of projects across industries, agencies, and disinvested/ Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color communities; create an inclusive and equitable regional economic plan aligned with existing plans and informed by data, community participation and community priorities; increase diversity of the regional workforce employed in high road occupations by ensuring training and pathways to flourishing-wage careers for people historically under-represented in growth sectors; and identify funding opportunities driven by stakeholder participation in decision-making for priority projects.

A history of genocide, extractive practices and boom and bust cycles in timber, agriculture and cannabis industries coupled with the ravages of wildfires and pandemic-related shocks have acutely affected the region's disinvested communities. Opportunities including a pending off-shore wind lease, energy microgrids, land trust-based affordable housing, the Noyo Harbor Ocean Science Center, Klamath Dam removal project, and cooperative timber operations demonstrate the region's readiness to accelerate sustainable development and build inclusive blue and green industry clusters.

Arcata Economic Development Corporation is the Fiscal Agent. The California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) at Cal Poly Humboldt, as Regional Convener, will manage the planning process. The CCRP is a research and evaluation center using community-based participatory approaches to involve

stakeholders in all phases of project activity and is committed to informing policy, building community, and promoting the health and well-being of people living in rural California.

### **3. Sacramento – Award – \$5 million**

#### **Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent and Regional Convener: Valley Vision, Inc.

#### **Project Description:**

The Sacramento Region HRTC will advance an inclusive, transparent, co-owned, and data-informed planning process. This process will support our goal of developing a regional economic recovery and transition plan that emphasizes job quality and access, economic competitiveness and resilience, regional equity, and long-term sustainability. It will also align with state policies across a broad range of objectives, including the need to advance a climate-resilient and carbon-neutral economy. To engage and share decision-making power, the HRTC will prioritize targeting disinvested communities; recognizing unique subregions and creating tailored processes as needed; and creating accessible channels to share input and lived experience, supported by culturally competent communications.

The Sacramento Region — Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties — features diverse physical, geographic, cultural, and economic attributes. Profound demographic shifts have brought widening disparities, and the ongoing pandemic and ensuing economic fallout have further exacerbated hardships. The healthcare sector has seen the fastest growth, but growth in other sectors, especially tradable industries, is needed to diversify and grow the economy. Promising growth sectors include food and agriculture, forestry management, health and life sciences, innovative clean mobility, and others.

Valley Vision is the Regional Convener and Fiscal Agent. For 27 years, Valley Vision has served as a trusted nonprofit civic leadership organization in the region, driven by a “triple bottom line” approach of co-equally advancing social equity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability, and with a proven record in bringing diverse groups together to develop long-term solutions to the region’s greatest problems. This history of civic leadership and engagement runs across local, regional and statewide platforms, and across sectors and disciplines. Valley Vision also manages large-scale financial operations, including distributing funds, adhering to state and federal regulations and financial controls, contracting, grant management, and reporting.

### **4. Bay Area – Award – \$5 million**

#### **Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent: Bay Area Good Jobs Partnership for Equity, with the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development as the Fiscal Lead

Regional Convener: All Home

#### **Project Description:**

The Bay Area High Road Transition Collaborative (BA-HRTC) re-envision regional economic development centered around equity, high-road employment, and climate resilience, and shaped by workers and community members. The BA-HRTC will empower communities to participate in and lead regional development projects; build worker-industry partnerships that elevate worker voice and

improve job quality, racial and gender equity, and climate resilience; invest in sub-regional economic planning; emphasize grassroots leadership of workers and disinvested communities; ensure meaningful community engagement; design projects that prioritize racial, economic, and environmental justice; and leverage existing Bay Area economic and workforce development efforts.

Economic growth in the Bay Area has historically outpaced the nation, though the region's economic prosperity has not been shared by all communities and recovery from COVID-19 is uneven across the region. While the Bay Area economy includes a variety of robust industries—including information, professional services, education, healthcare, child and elder care, hospitality, manufacturing, construction, transportation, and agriculture—there are significant wage disparities among workers. For economic prosperity to reach all communities, the Bay Area must establish better pathways to high-road jobs and adopt strategies to improve job quality, while supporting the Bay Area's sub-regional economy.

All Home is the BA-HRTC's Regional Convener and Bay Area Good Jobs Partnership for Equity is the Fiscal Agent. All Home advances regional solutions that disrupt cycles of poverty and homelessness, redress racial disparities, and create economic mobility opportunities for people with extremely low incomes. The Bay Area Good Jobs Partnership for Equity, an association of ten workforce development boards across the nine-county Bay Area region, will be the Fiscal Agent.

### **5. Eastern Sierra – Award – \$5 million**

#### **Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent and Regional Convener: Sierra Business Council

#### **Project Description:**

Sierra Business Council's (SBC) goal for the Eastern Sierra CERF Region is to develop a regional economic recovery plan and prioritized investment schedule that will generate sustainable high road jobs. The SBC will build upon the skills and knowledge of local organizations and on-going regional processes through an inclusive, equitable, transparent, multi-lingual, data-informed planning process. The planning process will advance equity in the region by focusing on regional stakeholders, with special emphasis on historically marginalized groups in disinvested communities. This process will be governed by a diverse High Road Transition Collaborative and a series of topical committees.

With a long history of work in the seven counties within the Eastern Sierra CERF Region, SBC understands how it has been impacted by the economic shifts generated by climate change and wildfire, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the housing crisis. In 2019, the Eastern Sierra had 92,103 jobs. More than half of total jobs were in the Service Industry, a quarter were Government Jobs, and the remaining were Non-Service Jobs.

The SBC is the Regional Convener and Fiscal Agent for the Eastern Sierra Region. The SBC is best suited to represent the Eastern Sierra CERF region due to our:

- Extensive network of businesses, community organizations, and local governments across the region built over 30 years.
- Recent experience infusing 100s of millions of dollars in capital and infrastructure investment into rural Sierra communities.

- Longstanding role in convening solution-focused stakeholder groups to tackle problems and elevating the triple bottom line.

### **6. Northern San Joaquin Valley – Award – \$5 million**

**Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent: Merced Community College District

Regional Convener: County of Merced, Department of Workforce Investment

**Project Description:**

The North San Joaquin Valley (NSJV) HRTC was born from the engagement of nearly one hundred community-based, education, and economic and government organizations. This deep network of partners is wholly committed to a new framework of economic development, one that centers on marginalized communities and that seeks to build a shared agenda for economic prosperity. The goal of the HRTC is to bring together a broad coalition of stakeholders to identify and champion economic development opportunities that have far-reaching impact on all residents, including the region’s most disinvested communities.

The three counties that comprise the region – San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced – are the most northern section of California’s heartland. The region is unique in its economic and geographic relationships, with ties to the Bay Area and Silicon Valley, the Sacramento region to its north and Fresno to its south. This wide swatch of urban downtowns, farmland and vineyards, the California Delta, and growing suburbs are home to three major universities, leading logistics and manufacturing companies, and more than 1.6 million residents. The region also faces serious, longstanding barriers to economic development, environmental justice, and health equity.

The NSJV HRTC will be convened by the Merced County Workforce Development Board and the Merced Community College District will serve as the fiscal agent. Selected through a democratic process, the Workforce Board has a track-record of bringing together diverse stakeholders and is committed to serving as a neutral convener among a deep bench of respected stakeholders, experts, and grassroots organizations. The Workforce Board will be aided in this work through three county-specific organizations charged with engaging their respective communities in the work of the HRTC.

### **7. Central San Joaquin Valley – Award – \$5 million**

**Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent and Regional Convener: Central Valley Community Foundation

**Project Description:**

The Valley CERF coalition shares a vision of a Central San Joaquin Valley that provides equitable, sustainable economic access to all. Through a community-driven process grounded in data that challenges biases and invites diverse viewpoints and experiences, we seek to answer this question, “What will it take to fundamentally transform our region and foster an inclusive, resilient and sustainable economy?” Our goals are (1) build/sustain four, local HRTCs that then inform the Regional Central San Joaquin Valley HRTC; (2) ensure a transparent process that shares power and responsibility; (3) implement an Outreach Plan that centers disinvested communities as “customers” of economic



development investments; (4) develop the Economic Recovery and Transition Plan; and (5) participate in the statewide CERF community of practice.

Our region is globally distinctive for its agriculture economy with over 10,000 farming enterprises producing 350 commodities, including 60% of the nation's fruits and nuts and 30% of its vegetables. Despite this bounty, the region remains one of the most persistently challenged in the United States. Disinvested census tracts are concentrated within this region at 4.5 times the statewide rate.

The Valley CERF team includes the Central Valley Community Foundation (Fiscal Agent/Regional Convener); Tulare County Workforce Investment Board, Fresno State, United Way-Fresno/Madera Counties (local conveners); Urban Institute (research partner); California Forward (policy partner); Sierra Resource Conservation District, Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council (Climate/Mountain Region Research Partners).

### **8. Central Coast – Award – \$5 million**

#### **Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent: Economic Development Collaborative

Regional Convener: REACH, EDC, and Monterey Bay Economic Partnership

#### **Project Description:**

The Uplift Coalition embraces a shared mission: to uplift our residents as we uplift our regional economy, growing from within to create transformative opportunities for more than 2 million people across an area larger than 10 states over more than 300 miles from Santa Cruz to Ventura.

The Uplift Coalition has engaged widespread regional participation to design a governance structure, build capacity, resource communities, and develop a stakeholder engagement plan to overcome geographic and socioeconomic barriers and realize a collective vision for an equitable and inclusive economy. Our ultimate goal is the creation of thousands of high-quality carbon-neutral jobs that are broadly and equitably accessible to all Central Coast residents.

This region faces persistent and emerging economic challenges: extreme income disparities, an overabundance of low-wage jobs, high costs of living, and acute, often highly uneven, impacts of climate change, the energy transition and the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also home to a handful of future-oriented industries including space and aeronautics, renewable energy and technology as well as world-class educational institutions, military bases and other economic drivers that can be linked and integrated to harness untapped potential and provide opportunities for residents to advance economically.

Regional Convener: REACH, in the geographical center of the region, has significant experience convening diverse groups of stakeholders to address regional issues.

### **9. Kern – Award – \$5 million**

#### **Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent: Kern Community College District

Regional Convener: Kern Coalition, a partnership between Better Bakersfield and Boundless Kern, Community Action Partnership of Kern, Kern Inyo and Mono Central Labor Council, Building Healthy Communities, and Kern Community College District

### **Project Description:**

The Kern Coalition is an intersegmental partnership of labor, community, workforce development, economic development, environmental and social justice groups that have pledged to engage the broader community, disinvested communities, key stakeholders, and community members. The CERF structure democratizes and centers diverse voices to meaningfully engage, participate, develop, and direct the implementation of the Phase 1 work to develop the Kern Regional Economic and Recovery Transition Plan, a sustainable economic development strategy leading to equity and shared prosperity.

Achieving a sustainable and equitable economic recovery at the same time as the shift to a carbon neutral economy is underway offers unprecedented challenges and opportunities. The Kern Coalition of key stakeholders, disinvested communities, community-based organizations, city and county governments, and public entities, including economic development, philanthropy, education, and workforce partners, are committed to inclusive and transparent processes that improve equity and prosperity, increase access to quality jobs in sustainable industries, and improve environmental and social determinants of health.

The Kern Coalition is a five-entity strong Regional Convener comprised of Building Healthy Communities (BHC), Better Bakersfield and Boundless Kern (B3K), Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK), the Kern Community College District (KCCD), and the Kern Inyo Mono Central Labor Council (KIM CLC). The KCCD will serve as the fiscal agent. Together, they have committed to collaborate in developing a sustainable and equitable economic recovery plan.

### ***10. Los Angeles – Award – \$5 million***

#### **Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent: California Community Foundation

Regional Convener: The Economic Development Corporation of Los Angeles County

#### **Project Description:**

The Los Angeles Region High Road Transition Collaborative (LA HRTC) is committed to building an equitable and sustainable economy that fosters long-term economic resilience in the transition to a carbon neutral economy. Our vision is of an LA region where disinvested communities become our first priority for investment. We fully support the state's vision for CERF, including each of the CERF objectives of equity, sustainability, job quality, economic competitiveness and resilience, with a primary focus on equity as the key to achieving CERF goals.

The LA HRTC Outreach Plan uses an “uplift all voices approach” anchored in affinity-based subgroups made up of disinvested communities to ensure that all constituents have an equitable opportunity to participate in the planning process.

LA County has more residents living in poverty than any other American county, the majority of whom are persons of color. In addition, the LA region and its economy experienced profound impacts from the

pandemic and has been slower to recover than the rest of the state. These COVID-related burdens have fallen disproportionately on the region's disinvested communities.

California Community Foundation (CCF) will serve as the Fiscal Agent and the Economic Development Corporation of Los Angeles County (LAEDC) as the Regional Convener.

LAEDC is uniquely suited to serve in the role of Convener having served as the trusted convener for many regional efforts that bring together cross-sector partners to plan for equitable economic growth. LAEDC regularly produces research on regional economic needs, challenges, and opportunities, including detailed analyses of the region's major industry clusters and labor markets.

### **11. Orange County – Award – \$5 million**

#### **Applicant:**

Fiscal Agent: Charitable Ventures of Orange County

Regional Convener: Orange County Business Council

#### **Project Description:**

Orange County High Road Transition Collaborative will be the first cross sector collaborative in the region with the mission of driving equitable, sustainable, and resilient economic development. Our vision is to realize an economy that can support residents in disinvested communities with pathways to move up the economic ladder and grow quality jobs in industry sectors that can withstand economic downturns and expedite California's green energy revolution, moving forward together with a collective and diverse decision-making body.

Orange County (OC) has one of the most diverse and powerful economies in the United States. Orange County's largest employment sectors are construction, tourism, and health services, and is a leader in sectors such as dental laboratories, computer storage device manufacturing, surgical and medical instrument manufacturing, and biomass electric power generation. While growing, OC suffers from significant income inequality. Real wages for top earners increased by 24% between 1979 and 2016, but wages for low earners decreased by 26%. Lower-paying jobs are expected to account for the majority of county job growth. Retail, hospitality, and tourism employ entry-level workers at wages insufficient for the county's cost-of-living. Poverty is disproportionately concentrated in immigrant communities in northern and central OC. This initiative will recognize these long-standing hardships and design strategies and policies aimed at supporting these residents.

This grant's fiscal agent will be Charitable Ventures, a 501(c) (3) community-based organization that offers incubation, social impact consulting, regional collaboration supports, and grant administration to help other community-based organizations maximize impact. The Orange County Business Council (OCBC) will serve as the HRTC Regional Convener. OCBC's mission is to enhance Orange County's economic development so that the region's vibrant economy continues to expand, bringing the benefits of prosperity to every person in Orange County. OCBC and its predecessor organizations have promoted economic development in the region for over 125 years.

### **12. Inland Empire – Award Pending**

### **13. Southern Border – Award Pending**

## CERF Program Evaluation

**Funding Availability:** \$3.75 million

**Number of awards:** 1

The CERF Inter-Agency team currently has an active solicitation through the EDD. Award announcement is expected in late 2022.

## Economic Diversification Pilot Projects

**Funding Availability:** \$50 million

**Number of Awards:** 13 projects

The CERF Economic Diversification Pilot Projects will fund projects aligned with the values of the CERF program that demonstrate potential uses of CERF implementation funds. The final Pilot Projects Solicitation for Proposal (SFP) is slated to be released in January 2023.

## CERF Implementation

During the CERF Implementation Phase (2023-2026), CERF will fund an estimated 70 implementation projects on a rolling basis identified during the planning phase based on criteria such as demonstrated community support, alignment with state climate goals, and demonstration of labor standards and job quality. Implementation Phase solicitation and detailed criteria will be released in 2023.

## CERF Tribal

In addition to the CERF Implementation, \$20 million has been set aside to specifically fund Tribal communities' efforts to achieve CERF objectives. The tribal community solicitation and criteria will be released in 2023.

## Fiscal Compliance

The EDD is currently in the contracting process for the awards related to the CERF SFP Planning Phase (total SFP award amount: \$65 million). Planning Phase projects will have a period of performance of 18-24 months. At this time, we anticipate that 11 contracts will be in place by the end of 2022 and two pending in 2023.

## Reporting and Invoicing

The fiscal agent will prepare and submit financial reports on a monthly basis for reimbursements, or as requested, in formats prescribed by the EDD. At a minimum, each entity will be required to provide the total amount of funds available for each budget category, and monthly program deductions (e.g., payments to subcontractors, participant compensation).

## Program Objectives and Metrics

### CERF Objectives

The objective of CERF is to build an equitable and sustainable economy across California's diverse regions and foster long-term economic resilience in the overall transition to a carbon-neutral economy.

To achieve this objective, CERF includes a focus on investments that target equitable economic outcomes for workers. The means by which CERF aims to achieve this objective is through regional and worker-centered inclusive economic planning, while aligning with and leveraging state investments (e.g., High Road Training Partnerships, infrastructure investments, community capacity building programs), federal investments (e.g., Economic Development Administration’s Building Back Better Regional Challenge,)), and philanthropic and private-sector investments to maximize COVID-19 recovery efforts.

### CERF Metrics

In collaboration with the CERF leadership team and the regional HRTCs, the evaluator will lead the design and implementation of the evaluation plan for the planning and implementation phases of CERF. The evaluator is expected to serve as a learning partner and provide data-driven recommendations to inform the decisions of the Inter-Agency Leadership Team and the HRTCs. The program evaluation will examine the CERF theory of change – the inputs provided by the State (funding, technical support, coordination), the outputs (quality of HRTCs and their regional economic plans), and the outcomes (such as job quality and access for workers; climate-smart industry development; sustainability of HRTC funding).

There is currently an active solicitation for the evaluation of the program. The Inter-Agency team anticipates to make an award for the evaluator partner in late 2022. Recommended performance metrics that align with the program performance measures, goals, and objectives will be established in 2023.

## Community Economic Resilience Fund Program



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