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March 5, 2025

North Valley THRIVE Industry Coordinator: Advanced Manufacturing, Request for Qualifications #2025-03

A. BACKGROUND

California Jobs First is a statewide inclusive economic development initiative that has organized the state into thirteen regions. The counties of Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus comprise the North San Joaquin Valley (“NSJV”) region. To fulfil the goal of developing a regional economic plan under the California Jobs First initiative, the region formed a new collaborative, North Valley THRIVE. This collaborative is led by the Merced County Workforce Development Board and fiscally administered by Merced Community College District.

Central to the California Jobs First initiative is the development of a Strategic Plan identifying industry sectors of focus and additional strategies to enable economic growth. The North Valley THRIVE Strategic Plan centers on the development of the following industry sectors: Bioeconomy; Advanced Manufacturing and Clean Energy. (North Valley THRIVE’s Strategic Plan (“Plan”) can be found on its website, northvalleythrive.org). Each of the industry sectors is supported by an Activation Plan.

While this Plan identifies specific strategies and tactics in each of the three Industry Sectors, significant work is yet to be done to garner feedback from industry partners on the proposed strategies, and to then mobilize around them. In Advanced Manufacturing in particular, the region is rich in employers, manufacturing competencies, and diverse industry clusters, but these assets have not yet been organized into a comprehensive strategy that promotes sector growth and that benefits from a coordinated talent pipeline.

B. OBJECTIVE

The Industry Coordinator (“Coordinator”) will lead the development and execution of a comprehensive strategy to advance the Advanced Manufacturing sector in the NSJV, including the development of the NSJV’s Advanced Manufacturing Activation Plan. The Coordinator will work collaboratively with the North Valley THRIVE strategy team to operationalize strategies, build regional capacity, and position the NSJV as a leader in Advanced Manufacturing within the Northern California Megaregion.

The North Valley THRIVE strategy team (“strategy team”) is comprised of:

- Erick Serrato and Yolanda Meraz, Director and Associate Director of North Valley THRIVE;
- Dr. Thomas Pogue, Executive Director of the University of the Pacific Center for Business and Policy Research;
- Egon Terplan, North Valley THRIVE Chief Strategy Consultant; and
- BW Research, economic research consultant partner.

North Valley THRIVE seeks a Coordinator with:

- Proven experience in sector-based economic development, with a focus on manufacturing, workforce development, or related fields;

- Strong project management skills, with the ability to coordinate complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives;
- Excellent communication and facilitation skills to engage diverse partners effectively;
- Knowledge of the Northern California Megaregion's economic and industrial landscape; and
- Demonstrated ability to deliver data-driven strategies and actionable plans.

C. KEY TASKS AND DELIVERABLES

The Coordinator is expected to:

- Coordinate across stakeholders, including workforce development boards, educational institutions, local businesses, and government entities.
- Facilitate alignment between regional efforts and the broader goals of the Northern California Megaregion.
- Track and report progress against milestones, ensuring deliverables are completed on time and within scope.
- Address challenges and adapt strategies as needed to meet regional goals.
- Provide regular updates to North Valley THRIVE leadership team and its Steering Committee.

Specific areas of focus include the following.

1. Develop the NSJV Advanced Manufacturing Activation Plan

Timeline: March 2025 – June 2025

Deliverable: Initial Draft by June 20, 2025

The Coordinator will develop a comprehensive Advanced Manufacturing Activation Plan that aligns with the Advanced Manufacturing strategies outlined in the NSJV Strategic Plan and adheres to the State's Activation Plan Guidelines. This effort will include close collaboration with the strategy team to detail specific tactics, establish timelines, designate responsible parties, and identify resource needs to implement core strategies such as Translation Destination, Expand Markets, and Talent Development. (Though the content depth of the Advanced Manufacturing Activation Plan is not prescribed, applicants should note that the recently-completed Bioeconomy Activation Plan was 30 pages in length, with approximately 25% of the content being new material and the balance pulled from existing content. The Bioeconomy Activation Plan is posted on northvalleythrive.org)

To effectively develop the Activation Plan, the Coordinator will participate in a number of discussions with the strategy team to understand the strategies identified in the Plan and their underlying rationale, as well as provide feedback that could inform revisions or the inclusion of additional strategies. A final draft of portions assigned to the Coordinator must be delivered by June 20, 2025, so that the strategy team may synthesize it with additional content and submit a comprehensive and complete Activation Plan to the State by June 30, 2025.

2. Convene Advanced Manufacturing Employers and Stakeholders

Timeline: May 2025 – June 2026

Deliverable: Ongoing

The Coordinator will be responsible for convening employers around newly-identified industry clusters at both a regional and county level, through a partnership with an manufacturers' association headquartered within the North Valley THRIVE region of Merced, Stanislaus or San Joaquin County. The Coordinator, through its local convening partner, will be responsible for the identification, recruitment of, engagement with, and continued stewardship of employers. The Coordinator is responsible for all related costs, inclusive of space rental (if necessary), food, materials and supplies, equipment, parking, etc.

In addition, the Coordinator will develop a convening structure that includes a workforce-specific sub regional focus on workforce development, to be led by the three County workforce boards. The Coordinator will work closely with these three (non-funded) partners in supporting their local convening efforts and organize the cadence of this activity so that it is complementary to the broader, regional convening work. The Coordinator will manage the calendar of sub regional and regional convenings across the contract period.

3. Develop and Refine Advanced Manufacturing Strategies

Timeline: July 2025 – June 2026

Deliverable: Refined strategies and implementation frameworks

Following completion of the Activation Plan the Coordinator will refine and develop NSJV Advanced Manufacturing strategies, providing regular updates on proposals. This work will include building a regional Advanced Manufacturing Table with key stakeholders and prioritizing activities such as workforce pathway development, regional marketing and market opportunity promotion, resilience-focused specialized supportive services, and coordinated training opportunities within the NSJV and with other regions in the Northern California Megaregion. The Coordinator will further operationalize tactics from the Activation Plan, emphasizing collaborative and high-value initiatives that promote equitable access and address workforce and market gaps

4. Collaborate on Education and Marketing Campaigns

Timeline: July 2025 – June 2026

Deliverable: Advanced Manufacturing awareness and marketing campaign

The Coordinator will work with North Valley THRIVE and its marketing consultant, JPW Communications, to promote the opportunities within the NSJV's Advanced Manufacturing sector. The Coordinator will work with JPW to develop a campaign capable of showcasing the region's competitive advantages to businesses in the Northern California Megaregion that have minimal or no presence in the NSJV. The Coordinator will partner on the development of region-specific marketing materials, provide support at NVT sponsored events, and facilitate connections to deepen stakeholder engagement and understanding of the sector's potential.

5. Develop a Sustainability Plan for a Regional Advanced Manufacturing Entity

Timeline: January 2026 – June 2026

Deliverable: Final sustainability plan by June 30, 2026

The Coordinator will leverage insights and progress from previous tasks to develop a sustainability plan for establishing a dedicated NSJV Advanced Manufacturing entity. This plan will identify key regional opportunities and value propositions to sustain and grow Advanced Manufacturing efforts. It will also propose organizational structures, funding models, and governance frameworks to ensure long-term continuity beyond the California Jobs First Program's near-term funding (ending September 2026). Stakeholder engagement will be prioritized to secure buy-in and alignment on proposed pathways forward.

6. Inventory Key Stakeholders, Policies, Initiatives, and Funding Opportunities

Timeline: March 2025 – June 2026

Deliverable: Comprehensive inventory and mapping report with quarterly updates.

To ensure the successful implementation of the Advanced Manufacturing Activation Plan and related strategies, the Coordinator will conduct a thorough inventory of key stakeholders, policies, initiatives, and funding opportunities relevant to the NSJV Advanced Manufacturing sector. This work will support all other tasks by providing a foundational understanding of the region's existing assets, gaps, and opportunities. The inventory will serve as a living document to guide strategic engagement and resource alignment.

D. COORDINATOR TEAM

The Coordinator must propose a team that includes local convening capabilities. If the Coordinator itself is not a local Advanced Manufacturing association or industry intermediary, it is expected that it will partner with an organization based in and currently convening Advanced Manufacturing employers in the counties of Merced, San Joaquin and/or Stanislaus.

E. BUDGET

North Valley THRIVE will make available no greater than \$550,000 to support the aforementioned activities. Applicants should propose budgets that are inclusive of all travel, meeting expenses, production expenses, printing, subcontractor and partner costs, software and related.

F. CONTRACT TERM:

The contract is expected to begin on **April 1, 2025**, and conclude by **June 30, 2026**.

G. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

Interested parties are invited to submit their proposals by 10:00 A.M. March 18, 2025. Late submissions will not be considered. Email proposals to: Purchasingbids@mccd.edu

Proposal should include the following:

Respond to the following prompts in no more than seven (7) pages; single-spaced, using an 11-point font. Applicants may attach related, completed work product that exemplifies their experience and approach. This work product should be no more than 20 pages in length.

Narrative Response

1. Summarize your experience as an industry intermediary, highlighting past projects that are similar in scope and direction to what is being proposed here. If possible, include challenges in completing that work and how your team resolved these challenges.
2. Describe your approach to completing the Key Tasks and Deliverables (Section C). Describe your approach to each area listed, including anticipated number of convenings, key aims and outputs, and other information that provides a concise description of your planned approach.
3. Describe your approach to data visualization and how it may be utilized across the Key Tasks and Deliverables to communicate insights about the regional Advanced Manufacturing sector.
4. Describe the composition of your team, including organization staff and their respective roles and expertise, as well as your local industry convening partner, if applicable. Describe how you would incorporate the local industry convening partner (if applicable) in your work, as well as the three County workforce boards. Provide information about how you might structure regional and sub regional tables so that each is complementary of the other and contributes to the overall goals of the project.
5. Describe your approach to collaborating with the strategy team. Discuss how often you would suggest meeting with this team or other North Valley THRIVE stakeholders. Describe your project management approach, including how your team communicates progress. Describe how you would partner with the economic research consultant, BW Research, in developing key research questions for exploration.

Budget

Provide a one-page budget using your own template that identifies all project costs. Please specify the following costs: Personnel (salary and benefits); Operating Costs; Travel (Internal to the Region); External Travel; Printing and Production; Meeting Expenses; Subcontractors; Equipment Purchases; Employer-Participant Stipends; and Other.

In a separate sheet, please provide a budget narrative briefly describing each Line Item and/or the cost methodology utilized to arrive at the amount.

H. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Relevance and dept of manufacturing expertise.
- Demonstrated success in manufacturing development.
- Feasibility and quality of proposed methodology.
- Alignment with NVT goals and California Jobs First priorities.
- References and past performance.

I. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Selected vendors will be required to meet all MCCD vendor and insurance requirements. The insurance requirements are as follows:

Coverage Required Limits per Occurrence –
General Liability \$1,000,000
Automobile Liability \$1,000,000
Workers' Comp/Employers' Liability \$1,000,000

- Thank you for considering this request. We look forward to receiving your proposals and working together to strengthen community-industry collaboration through North Valley THRIVE

Sincerely,

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