



3600 M Street, Merced CA 95348-2898
 (209) 384-6000
 www.mccd.edu

April 1, 2025

Industry Coordinator(s) for Clean Energy Sector Development in the North San Joaquin Valley (“NSJV”)

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 fulfill 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 (inclusive of Carbon Management). (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 then mobilize around them. In Clean Energy and Carbon Management (collectively just “Clean Energy” forthwith) in particular, the region possesses significant potential in renewable energy production, energy efficiency innovations, and workforce development, but these assets have not yet been organized into a comprehensive strategy that promotes sector growth and benefits from a coordinated talent pipeline.

B. OBJECTIVE

The Clean Energy Industry Coordinator(s) (“Coordinator”) will lead the development and execution of a comprehensive strategy to advance the Clean Energy sector in the NSJV, including the development of the NSJV’s Clean Energy 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 Clean Energy 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:

Familiarity with the energy ecosystem and relevant key stakeholder groups, including;

- Energy utilities and large energy developers (working knowledge of interconnection queues, basics of utility rate setting and regulation, energy project development and siting processes, etc).
- State and local governments and their role in energy policy, including zoning and permitting as well as incentive programs.
- Energy innovation ecosystem, including energy technologies at various technology readiness levels, and principles for increasing clean energy technology adoption and integration.

Familiarity with a broad range of clean energy technologies and the policies that incentivize and regulate them. These technologies include but are not limited to:

- Hydrogen, solar, onshore wind, energy storage, virtual power plants and distributed energy resources, electric vehicles (EV) and EV infrastructure, fuel cell vehicles, carbon capture utilization and storage, and biofuels.
- Strong project management skills, with the ability to coordinate complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives;
- Excellent communication and facilitation skills to engage diverse partners effectively;
- Demonstrated ability to deliver data-driven strategies and actionable plans.

C. KEY TASKS AND DELIVERABLES

1. Develop the NSJV Clean Energy Activation Plan

Timeline: May 2025 – June 2025

Deliverable: Initial Draft by June 20, 2025

The Coordinator will develop a comprehensive Clean Energy Activation Plan that aligns with the Clean Energy 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 Renewable Energy Expansion, Workforce Training, and Industry Partnerships.

To effectively develop the Activation Plan, the Coordinator will engage in 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 Clean Energy 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 partnerships with energy sector associations and clean energy businesses headquartered within the North Valley THRIVE region of Merced, Stanislaus, or San Joaquin County. The Coordinator, will be responsible for the identification, recruitment of, engagement with, and continued stewardship of employers.

3. Develop and Refine Clean Energy 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 Clean Energy strategies, providing regular updates on proposals. This work will include building a regional Clean Energy Advisory Table with key stakeholders and prioritizing activities such as clean energy workforce development, regional marketing and business attraction, specialized supportive services, and coordinated training programs within the NSJV and with other regions in the Northern California Megaregion.

4. Collaborate on Education and Marketing Campaigns

Timeline: July 2025 – June 2026

Deliverable: Clean Energy 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 Clean Energy sector. The Coordinator will work with JPW to develop a campaign capable of showcasing the region's competitive advantages to clean energy firms within and beyond the Northern California Megaregion.

5. Develop a Sustainability Plan for a Regional Clean Energy 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 Clean Energy entity. This plan will identify key regional opportunities and value propositions to sustain and grow Clean Energy 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).

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

Timeline: May 2025 – June 2026

Deliverable: Comprehensive inventory and mapping report with quarterly updates.

To ensure the successful implementation of the Clean Energy Activation Plan and related strategies, the Coordinator will conduct a thorough inventory of key stakeholders, policies, initiatives, and funding opportunities relevant to the NSJV Clean Energy sector. This work will support all other tasks by providing a foundational understanding of the region's existing assets, gaps, and opportunities.

D. COORDINATOR TEAM

Given the range of desired skills, North Valley THRIVE recognizes that the Coordinator may consist of "Coordinator Team" that includes a partnership of various clean energy capabilities. It is expected that whether a single organization or a Coordinator Team, the applicant will clearly possess the necessary capabilities to effectively complete the objective (Section B) and tasks (Section C) outlined above.

E. Budget:

North Valley THRIVE will make available no greater than \$325,000 for a coordinator /coordinator team 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 expenditures.

F. Contract Term:

The contract is expected to begin on **May 14, 2025**, and conclude by **June 30, 2026**.

G. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

Interested parties are invited to submit their proposals by 10:00 A.M. April 15, 2025. Late submissions will not be considered. Submit proposals through Submittable [SUBMIT HERE](#)

E. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Demonstrated experience in engagement with labor stakeholders and labor related initiatives.
- Strength and feasibility of the proposed approach.

- Alignment with the objectives of North Valley THRIVE and the California Jobs First Fund Regional Investment Initiative.
- Budgetary considerations.
- Contact information.

F. 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
- For additional information or clarification, please contact Yolanda Meraz at yolanda@northvalleythrive.org

Sincerely,

Merced Community College District
Chuck Hergenraeder, Director, Purchasing & Risk Management
charles.hergenraeder@mccd.edu
209-384-6300
3600 M Street
Merced, CA 95348

Superintendent/President

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