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August 20, 2025

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

A. BACKGROUND

The North San Joaquin Valley (NSJV), comprising Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus counties, is advancing a coordinated strategy to grow its Clean Energy sector through the California Jobs First initiative. Guided by the North Valley THRIVE collaborative, the region has developed an initial Clean Energy Activation Plan that outlines a business- and community-informed roadmap to expand deployment, develop a high-road workforce, align planning regionally, and foster a more robust innovation ecosystem. The plan aims to lower energy costs, reduce pollution, create quality jobs, and position the NSJV as a leader in California’s clean energy transition.

The Activation Plan outlines four integrated strategies to generate and use more affordable, clean, and future-ready electricity. These strategies leverage the region’s unique assets, including abundant land, solar potential, growing research capacity, and an industrial base well-suited for clean energy innovation. Implementation will require sustained coordination, broad stakeholder engagement, and institutional capacity.

This work builds on the broader California Jobs First initiative, a statewide economic development effort that has organized the state into thirteen regions. In the NSJV, the initiative is led by North Valley THRIVE, convened by the Merced County Workforce Development Board and fiscally administered by Merced Community College District. The region’s Strategic Plan identifies three priority sectors: Clean Energy (including Carbon Management), Bioeconomy, and Advanced Manufacturing. Each is supported by a dedicated Activation Plan.

B. OBJECTIVE

The Clean Energy Industry Coordinator Team (“Coordinators”) will lead the implementation of a comprehensive strategy to advance the Clean Energy sector in the North San Joaquin Valley (NSJV). This includes developing tactics aligned with the region’s Clean Energy Activation Plan. Working closely with the North Valley THRIVE strategy team, the Coordinators will help operationalize key strategies, build regional capacity, and position the NSJV as a clean energy leader within the Northern California Megaregion.

The role is envisioned to include two primary areas of responsibility:

1. Strategy Development and Resource Identification – Advancing and refining clean energy strategies while identifying funding sources to sustain long-term growth in the NSJV’s clean energy sector.
2. Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration – Convening local partners and identifying technical and strategic collaborations that accelerate implementation and support ecosystem development.

The North Valley THRIVE strategy team consists of:

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

North Valley THRIVE seeks a Coordinator Team with the following qualifications:

- Familiarity with the clean energy ecosystem and relevant stakeholder groups, including:

- o Energy utilities and developers (e.g., knowledge of interconnection queues, utility rate setting, regulatory processes, and project siting).
- o State and local governments' role in energy policy (e.g., zoning, permitting, and incentive programs).
- o The clean energy innovation ecosystem, including understanding of technology readiness levels and pathways to adoption.
 - Knowledge of a broad range of clean energy technologies, funding mechanisms, and policy drivers, including but not limited to:
 - o Hydrogen, solar, nuclear, onshore wind, energy storage, virtual power plants, distributed energy resources (DERs).
 - o Electric vehicles (EVs) and infrastructure, fuel cell vehicles.
 - o Carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS), and biofuels.
 - Strong project management skills, with the ability to lead complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives.
 - Excellent communication and facilitation skills, with a track record of engaging diverse partners.
 - Proven ability to deliver data-driven strategies and actionable implementation plans.

C. KEY TASKS AND DELIVERABLES

Responsibility Area One: Primary Clean-Energy Sector Coordinator

1.1. Develop and refine clean energy strategies and tactics

Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Refined strategies and implementation frameworks

Refine and develop NSJV Clean Energy strategies in the Activation Plan, providing regular updates on proposals. This area of responsibility will concentrate on developing and refining existing strategies and tactics, but particularly program design, team structure, as well as funding and cost estimates.

1.2. Develop strategy for opportunities and challenges from emerging modular nuclear technologies

Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Emerging Nuclear Technologies Strategy

Develop a targeted strategy to advance emergent nuclear technologies in the NSJV, including small modular reactors (SMRs) and advanced reactor designs. This work will involve assessing regional readiness, identifying potential partners and sites, and aligning with state and federal policy and funding opportunities to position the NSJV as a hub for next-generation nuclear innovation.

1.3. Develop a Government Affairs/Engagement Strategy to support Clean Energy development aims

Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Regional Government Engagement Strategy Brief

Initiate and develop a regional government affairs and engagement strategy to support clean energy development across the NSJV. This includes identifying key policy and regulatory priorities, mapping relevant public-sector stakeholders, and coordinating with local, regional, and state entities to align permitting, infrastructure, and investment support with clean energy goals. The strategy will be designed for long-term use and handoff, enabling other partners or institutions to carry it forward beyond the initial development phase.

1.4. Assist in development of industrial lands framework

Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Ongoing

Collaborate on the development of a regional Industrial Lands framework that identifies strategic opportunities to align clean energy development with advanced manufacturing. This includes supporting region-wide industrial lands strategy and its land-use assessments, stakeholder engagement, and planning efforts to promote co-location, assess infrastructure readiness, and promote long-term economic growth.

1.5. Propose a broad funding and institutional advocate framework and plan

Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Regional Clean Energy funding and institutional framework

Develop a comprehensive funding and institutional advocacy framework to support the growth of the Clean Energy sector in the NSJV. This includes identifying and aligning local, state, and federal funding opportunities, while building coalitions of institutional partners to champion regional clean energy priorities.

1.6. Contract and Project Administration

Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Ongoing

Support contract compliance and day-to-day project coordination, including tracking deliverables, managing budgets and timelines, preparing required documentation, and facilitating communication with partners. This work ensures the project stays aligned with its scope, deadlines, and reporting requirements.

Budget Responsibility Area One:

North Valley THRIVE estimates this responsibility area will encompass 65% of the total budget or a value not to exceed \$185,000 for the tasks and deliverables.

Responsibility Area Two: Clean Energy Engagement and Strategy Support Lead

2.1. Collaborate on Strategy and Tactic Refinement

Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Ongoing

Collaborate on the ongoing refinement of the NSJV Clean Energy Activation Plan by developing and adjusting core strategies and tactics. This includes shaping program design, refining implementation structures, and contributing to the development of team roles and funding models. The work will involve providing regular input and updates to ensure strategies remain actionable, aligned with regional goals, and grounded in realistic cost estimates and resource planning.

2.2 Convene Clean Energy Employers and Stakeholders

Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Ongoing

Convene employers, government, community and other key stakeholders around emerging clean energy industry clusters at both the regional and county levels. This work will be carried out in partnership with energy sector associations and clean energy firms based in Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin counties. This includes leading efforts to identify, recruit, and engage these stakeholders in building and maintaining relationships that support clean energy sector growth, workforce alignment, and strategic implementation across the region.

2.3 Collaboration on Clean Energy Marketing Strategy

3 Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Clean Energy awareness and marketing campaign

Collaborate with North Valley THRIVE and its marketing consultant, JPW Communications, to develop and execute a communications strategy that markets the NSJV as a prime location for clean energy development. The strategy will highlight the region's competitive advantages, target key audiences, and promote investment and business attraction across and beyond the Northern California Megaregion.

2.4. Collaborate on fund-development activities to support Clean Energy strategy implementation

Timeline: August 2025-June 2026

Deliverable: Ongoing

Collaborate in identifying and pursuing funding opportunities that advance implementation of the NSJV's Clean Energy strategies. This includes helping to scope funding needs, track relevant grant and investment opportunities, support proposal development, and align fund-development efforts with the region's strategic priorities. The goal is to build a sustainable funding base to support long-term clean energy initiatives across the region.

Budget Responsibility Area Two:

North Valley THRIVE estimates this responsibility area will encompass 35% of the total budget or a value not to exceed \$100,000 for the tasks and deliverables.

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.

D. COORDINATOR TEAM

While proposals covering the full scope of work are welcome, North Valley THRIVE recognizes that the range of desired skills may be best addressed by different applicants. As indicated by the separate budgets for each responsibility area, applicants are encouraged to submit a proposal for either Responsibility Area One or Responsibility Area Two, based on their expertise and interest. In such cases, selected applicants will work as part of a complementary team, with coordination overseen by the North Valley THRIVE Strategy Team. Regardless of whether the proposal is submitted by a single organization or a Coordinator Team, applicants must demonstrate the capabilities required to fulfill the objectives outlined in Section B and the corresponding tasks in Section C.

E. BUDGET

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 **September 10, 2025**, and conclude by **June 30, 2026**.

G. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

Interested parties are invited to submit their proposals by 3:00 P.M. August 27, 2025. Late submissions will not be considered. Email proposals to: purchasingbids@mccd.edu

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,

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