

CJF Los Angeles Catalyst Phase Q&A

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Submission Deadline: Monday, March 10, 2025, 5:00 PM

Submission Instructions: Submit application materials via the [Catalyst Submission Form](#)

Application Questions: Send questions to CCF-CERF@calfund.org no later than February 6, 2025, 5:00 PM

Award Information: \$9 million funding opportunity aligned with the [LA Regional Plan](#) for a minimum of 22 projects

The final deadline to update this document was 2/13/25. After this date, no more updates will be made. Applicants are responsible for checking the [Catalyst RFP Website](#) to obtain current information.

About the CA Jobs First LA Collaborative

1. Who is part of the California Jobs First (CJF) Los Angeles Collaborative?

A: The California Jobs First LA Collaborative includes a 38-member Steering Committee, a Stewardship Committee comprising the LA County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) and the California Community Foundation (CCF), a Sector Investment Coordinator led by HR&A Advisors, and over 700 collaborative partners, organizations and individuals. For more information on the CA Jobs First LA Collaborative Governance Model please visit the [LA Collaborative's website](#).

2. How does California Jobs First define “disinvested communities”?

A: California Jobs First seeks to center disinvested communities in economic development planning. The Catalyst RFP will prioritize projects that benefit disinvested communities, as defined by the State of California, which includes:

- Census tracts identified as “disadvantaged” by the CA Environmental Protection Agency
- Census tracts with median household income at or below 80 percent of the statewide average median household income, or household incomes partnerat or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development
- “High poverty area” and “High unemployment area” as designated by the CA Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)
- CA Native American Tribes as defined by the CA Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)

3. How will you ensure that Catalyst funds benefit underrepresented communities and communities of color?

A: The Catalyst RFP will prioritize projects that benefit disinvested communities, as defined by the State of California, which includes the categories listed in Question 2. Additionally, the Sector Investment Coordinator, HR&A Advisors, and the LA CJF Outreach and Engagement team have developed an equitable and transparent process for soliciting projects from the LA CJF Collaborative and the wider public. This process was shared with the CJF Steering Committee for review and comment.

Onboarding & Eligibility Requirements

1. The Catalyst Phase RFP specified that project applicants must be onboarded as LA HRTC Partner as well as include at least one CBO or worker-based organization as a project partner. Can you define a partner in these two contexts? Are they the same or is it different?

A: In the Catalyst Phase RFP, there are two categories of "partner" with distinct meanings:

1. **CJF LA Collaborative Partner** (Formerly called LA HRTC Partner): The lead applicant must have officially become an onboarded partner of the CJF LA Collaborative by January 27th, 5:00 PM (PT). This is a formal eligibility requirement.
2. **Project Partner:** The LA Collaborative encourages projects to partner with other entities based in the community the project aims to benefit. Lead applicants can be community-based organizations (CBOs), nonprofits, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor organizations, academic institutions, or local governments. If the lead applicant **is not** a community-based organization (CBO), then the lead applicant **must** have at least one project partner that is a community-based organization (CBO) or worker-based organization involved in the project. A [public list](#) of entities that have completed onboarding to the LA HRTC/LA Jobs First Collaborative by the Catalyst RFP deadline, as determined by the Catalyst RFP Subcommittee, is available on the [Catalyst RFP webpage](#).

2. Is there a public list of entities that have been onboarded to the LA HRTC/LA Jobs First Collaborative? How do we confirm if we are already onboarded with the collaborative?

A: Yes. A [public list](#) of entities that have completed onboarding to the LA HRTC/LA Jobs First Collaborative by the Catalyst RFP deadline, as determined by the Catalyst RFP Subcommittee, is available on the [Catalyst RFP webpage](#). Lead applicants for the Catalyst RFP must have submitted the L.A. County California Jobs First Onboarding Form by **Monday, January 27, 2025**, to be eligible. For further inquiries about onboarding, including confirmation of your onboarding

status, please reach out to cerf@laedc.org.

3. Are for-profit entities eligible for onboarding to the LA HRTC/LA Jobs First Collaborative?

A: For-profit entities are not eligible to receive funding directly, nor can they act as the lead applicant for Catalyst funding. However, non-profit entities can be onboarded as partners within the LA HRTC/LA Jobs First Collaborative and submit a Catalyst proposal in partnership with other eligible entities.

4. My organization was not onboarded to the LA HRTC/LA Jobs First Collaborative by the required deadline but am still interested in submitting a Catalyst Proposal with an onboarded partner – how do I do this?

A: Lead applicants for the Catalyst RFP must have submitted the L.A. County California Jobs First Onboarding Form by **Monday, January 27, 2025**, to be eligible. You can still submit a Catalyst proposal as part of a collaborative so long as the lead applicant was onboarded to the LA HRTC/LA Jobs First Collaborative by the required deadline.

5. I am interested in finding a partner to collaborate on my Catalyst project proposal – how do I do this?

A: If you are interested in collaborating with another entity, we recommend reviewing the [public list](#) of entities that have completed onboarding to the LA HRTC/LA Jobs First Collaborative, as well as [Project Ideas Portal](#) to discover opportunities for collaboration. We also encourage you to post a message on the "Partner Connections" discussion board on the [CJF LA hub](#). You are welcome to reach out to entities directly or contact cerf@laedc.org for additional contact information.

6. How do you define a community-based organization (CBO), a nonprofit, and a nongovernmental organization (NGO)?

A:

- A **community-based organization (CBO)** is as a public or private nonprofit organization, which includes fiscally sponsored entities, that is representative of a community/group or significant segments of a community/group and provides economic development, educational, physical, or mental health, recreational, arts, or youth development or social, support or related services to individuals or other members in the community¹.
- A **non-profit** is a tax-exempt organization with 501(c)(3) status. Nonprofits exist to serve the public good without aiming to make a profit for owners or shareholders. Their income is reinvested into the organization's mission and activities. They may work in a wide range of sectors and typically operate solely within a local or national context.

¹ [CJF LA Collaborative Bylaws](#)

- A **nongovernmental organization (NGO)** is an independent organization that operates outside of government control and with the objective of improving social conditions. NGOs are usually focused on international development, human rights, environmental issues, or humanitarian aid. Some examples of NGOs include the American Red Cross and Amnesty International. NGOs may or may not have tax-exempt status.

7. If the lead applicant is based in Los Angeles County, can they still partner with CBOs outside of Los Angeles?

A: Yes. As long as the lead applicant is based in Los Angeles County and the project primarily serves the LA region, they can partner with CBOs located outside of LA County. The key requirement is that the lead applicant must be LA-based, and the project must still align with the goals and objectives set forth in the RFP for serving disinvested communities within LA County. Please view additional information below:

- **Lead applicant location:** Per the Catalyst RFP, the lead applicant must be based in Los Angeles County. This typically means having a physical location or headquarters in LA County and being representative of the local community, in alignment with the HRTC bylaws.
- **CBO Partner Lead applicant location:** The RFP does not prohibit a community-based organization (CBO) partner from serving beneficiaries in multiple counties, including Orange County, as long as the CBO partner is part of a project that primarily aligns with the LA Collaborative goals and involves an LA-based lead. In other words, a CBO could potentially serve individuals across different regions but still participate in a Catalyst-funded project if the lead applicant is located in LA County.
- **CBO serving other counties:** If a CBO is only based in another county and only serves clients from that county, it would not be eligible to serve as the lead applicant under this RFP. The project must focus on Los Angeles County beneficiaries, per the LA Collaborative's mandate. For such a scenario, that CBO could participate as a partner or subrecipient if the lead organization is LA-based and the overall project aligns with Los Angeles-centric objectives.

Proposal Requirements

1. My organization is interested in submitting more than one application for Catalyst funding. Is there a limit to the number of applications one organization can submit?

A: There is no limit on the number of applications that one organization can submit, so long as each proposal is distinct in scope and work plan and the lead applicant meets the eligibility criteria for each proposal.

2. My organization is interested in applying to Catalyst funding with a group of other organizations – how do we determine who the lead applicant should be?

A: The decision on who should serve as the lead applicant should be made collaboratively among the organizations involved. It is essential to ensure that the selected lead applicant meets all eligibility requirements.

3. My organization received funding for a previous phase of the California Jobs First program – are we still eligible to apply for Catalyst Funds?

A: If you have already received funding from the California Jobs First Planning Phase and/or Economic Development Pilot Projects, you are still eligible to apply for Catalyst funds so long as you meet all the eligibility requirements listed in the Catalyst RFP.

3. If my project does not align with the targeted industries listed in the CJF LA Regional Plan, am I still eligible to apply?

A: Catalyst Phase applications must align with at least one of the 7 target industries and/ or 3 sector-neutral and economic mobility strategies identified in the CJF LA Regional Plan [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

The 7 target industries include:

- Aerospace Manufacturing
- Clean/ Renewable Energy
- Transportation & Logistics
- Construction
- Bioscience
- Healthcare
- Video Production & Distribution

The 3 sector-neutral and economic mobility strategies include:

- Enhancing the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Ecosystem
- Building and Aligning Career Pathways
- Transitioning Industries into the Carbon-Neutral Economy

We encourage all potential applicants to review the [CJF LA Regional Plan Part 2 report](#) to assess how their potential projects align with the strategies in the report. Project application reviews will consider the project's alignment with the target sectors and whether it implements one or more strategies in the report.

4. What if my project spans multiple target industries and/or includes sector-neutral strategies?

A: Catalyst Phase applications must align with at least one of the 7 target industries and/ or 3 sector-neutral and economic mobility strategies identified in the CJF LA Regional Plan [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#). Your project can span multiple target industries and/or include sector-neutral strategies so long as your proposal clearly explains how you plan to achieve your objectives in each relevant area.

5. If my project is already partially developed - am I still eligible to submit a Catalyst proposal?

A: Catalyst Phase funds aim to support project predevelopment—those activities that prepare a project to be implementation-ready. Pre-development projects are, by definition, not ready for implementation. They may be in the early stages of ideation or development ('exploratory'), or they may be near completion and just need to clear a few additional hurdles to be implementable ('last-mile'). If your project is near implementation or 'shovel-ready,' it may not be the right fit for this funding. You can find more information on Pre Development Activities in *Section II. Catalyst Pre-Development Phase Description and Objectives* of the [LA Jobs Jobs First Catalyst RFP](#).

Funding Available & Contract Term

1. Will there be multiple rounds of solicitations for the Catalyst Phase?

A: No, there will only be one round of solicitations for Catalyst phase funding. The Catalyst RFP was on Monday, January 27, 2025, and will be open for six weeks, closing on Monday, March 10, 2025.

2. How many projects will you be funding through Catalyst funds? Is there a maximum and/or minimum amount of projects that will be funded?

A: Applicants may request any amount of funding up to \$400,000. There is no minimum threshold for funding. We highly encourage applicants to request funding based on the scale and need of your project. Smaller funding requests are encouraged to apply. The final number of funded projects will depend on factors such as the types of applications received, alignment with the goals of CJF goals, quality of proposals, among other things.

3. If an awarded project is made up of multiple organizations/entities, will they receive joint offers? Who will CCF be contracting with?

A: No, joint offers will not be provided. Where two or more applicants desire to submit a single proposal in response to this RFP, they should do so as a Primary Recipient/Lead Applicant and Subrecipient relationship, rather than as a joint venture or informal team. CCF intends to contract with a single organization for each project, and not with multiple organizations doing business as a joint venture.

4. The Catalyst RFP states that the contract term is TBD, no later than August 1, 2025 - why is the contract date TBD?

A: The notification of awards will go out by Tuesday, June 10, 2025. If feasible and mutually agreed upon, the awarded applicant(s) and CCF can execute a contract between June 10, 2025, and August 1, 2025, but no later than August 1, 2025. Awarded projects will have one year to perform their predevelopment activities, ending by July 31, 2026.

5. Is it possible to extend Catalyst-funded activities past July 31, 2026?

A: No, all Catalyst-funded activities must be concluded by July 31, 2026. Catalyst awardees will be in regular communication with the CA Community Foundation and HR&A Advisors to monitor project progress.

6. What is the close out period for this funding? Does it fall within the one year contract term, or extend past it?

A: The contract term runs from August 1, 2025, to July 31, 2026, with July 31, 2026, marking the conclusion of all deliverables and approved programmatic activities. Following this date, there is a 30-day close-out period (August 1–August 31, 2026) strictly reserved for preparing and submitting your final programmatic report and final invoice, which must reflect only those costs incurred on or before July 31, 2026. A limited portion of the budget may be allocated for these administrative close-out tasks; however, no additional programmatic work may occur after July 31, 2026. As such, the actual operational period for program activities is within the 12-month contract term, with a final month dedicated solely to administrative tasks and financial reconciliation

6. Does the Presidential temporary pause of agency grant, loan, and other financial assistance programs impact Catalyst funding?

A: No, the \$9 million available for Catalyst predevelopment projects come from the state's General Fund and is not affected by federal funding pauses.

Budget & Financial Projections

1. a. For the budget and financial projections requirement of the Catalyst applications, is there a template that you can provide?

A: We do not have a standard budget template because we anticipate receiving a range of different project proposals. Instead, we ask applicants to submit their budgets in the format that best fits their proposed activities, ensuring all necessary project expenses are clearly included.

b. Can you provide a list of unallowable costs?

A: The following costs are examples of ineligible uses for Catalyst funds:

- Exceeding the 10 percent cost cap for administrative cost
- Lobbying or advocacy work, such as direct lobbying for the passage of specific bills or local propositions
- Expenses not related to Regional Investment Initiative planning efforts
- Commission fees
- Ongoing operational costs beyond the grant term
- Using funds for mitigation activities that are already mandated by local or state governing bodies or agencies

- Expenses for publicity not directly related to Catalyst Pre Development efforts
- Bonus payments of any kind
- The purchase of alcohol
- Paying down debt or debt servicing fees
- Damage judgments arising from the acquisition, construction, or equipping of a facility, whether determined by judicial process, arbitration, negotiation, or otherwise
- Services, materials, or equipment obtained under any other state program.
- Real estate brokerage fees and/or expenses
- Stewardship of legal defense funds

2. Can you provide a list of allowable costs?

A: We do not have a list of allowable costs because we anticipate receiving a range of different project proposals with project funding needs. Instead, we ask applicants to outline major expense categories, their respective costs, the necessity of expenses, how costs were calculated, and how they directly support and align the project's goals and activities. Please review the list of unallowable costs in the question above (Budget & Financial Projections, Question 1B). You can find more information in *Section XI. Budget* of the [LA Jobs Jobs First Catalyst RFP](#).

3. What is the administrative cap for Catalyst Phase Budget Requests?

A: The administrative cap is 10% of the entire Catalyst Phase Budget request.

4. If a Catalyst Proposal is awarded funding, will the awardee(s) need to incur any costs before funding is disbursed? Will an advance of funds be available?

A: We plan to offer advances where applicable and feasible. Once agencies are selected, the possibility and amount of advance funds will be determined during the contract negotiation process.

5. What is the earliest date that funds will be disbursed to Catalyst awardees?

A: Advances will be offered to Catalyst awardees where applicable and feasible. If an advance of funds is offered to a Catalyst awardee, funds could become available shortly after August 1, 2025, once the contract is executed and all required paperwork is finalized. After the initial advance, all subsequent payments will be made on a cost-reimbursement basis. Awardees must submit monthly invoices with the proper supporting documentation before further reimbursement can be processed.

6. If my organization has already obtained funding from another source for a similar project, can we still apply for Catalyst funding?

A: Yes, if your organization has already obtained funding from another source for a similar project, you can still apply for Catalyst funding. However, the activities in your Catalyst proposal should not already be fully covered by another source.

Please make sure to articulate how the request Catalyst funds will complement, rather than duplicate, existing funding.

7. If my organization has already obtained and/or we anticipate funding from another source for a similar project, how do I structure my budget?

A: In your Budget Summary and Budget Narrative, please include all other funding sources that you expect to use for your Catalyst project. Explain how these funds (or in-kind support) will align with and complement the Catalyst Phase request. The more detail you provide, the easier it is to assess the feasibility and sustainability of your project. You can find more information in *Section XI. Budget* of the [LA Jobs Jobs First Catalyst RFP](#).

8. In our Catalyst Budget, is it possible to include expenses that have already been paid out?

A: No, in your Catalyst Budget you may NOT include expenses that have already been paid out. CCF cannot reimburse costs incurred before the contract start date or outside the contract term.

Fiscal Sponsors

1. a. My organization is fiscally sponsored by another entity – are we still eligible to apply for the Catalyst Request for Proposals (RFP)?

A: Yes, if your organization is fiscally sponsored by another entity, you are eligible to apply for Catalyst funding, provided that your fiscal sponsor meets the eligibility requirements listed in the RFP. If your proposed project is selected for funding, the funding agreement (contract) will be executed between the California Community Foundation and your fiscal sponsor. The lead applicant must be onboarded by January 27th. Fiscal sponsors are not required to onboard the LA Regional Collaborative.

b. Does my fiscal sponsor need to be located in LA County?

A: No, the fiscal sponsor does not need to be located in LA County. However, they must be based in the US and they must demonstrate capacity to provide their service in LA County.

2. If I have a fiscal sponsor, do they also need to submit the required contractor qualifications, or just one entity?

A: The required contractor qualifications apply to whichever entity enters into an agreement (contract) with CCF. If the entity that is entering into a contract with CCF is the fiscal sponsor, then the fiscal sponsor must meet and submit all required qualifications.

3. If I have a fiscal sponsor, do I need to submit the budget and financial projections for both my organization and fiscal sponsor, or just one entity?

A: The budget and financial projections apply to whichever entity enters into an agreement (contract) with CCF. If the entity that is entering into a contract with CCF is the fiscal sponsor, then the fiscal sponsor must meet and submit the budget and financial projections.

Technical Assistance

1. How do I sign up for technical assistance for my Catalyst Proposal?

A: Through individual appointments and weekly office hours, our Sector Investment Coordinator will provide informal opportunities for potential applicants to seek guidance on how they can tailor their proposal to be competitive. Please note that technical assistance will be provided by SIC staff who are not directly involved in the development of the RFP or in scoring responses. The technical assistance will be delivered via two methods:

- **Direct Technical Assistance by Appointment**– Applicants may submit a request for a virtual technical assistance appointment by filling out the [Catalyst Phase - Technical Assistance Intake Form](#). The SIC TA team will review submissions and reach out with relevant resources, answers to questions, or schedule a 1:1 appointment. Should you encounter any issues with the form, please email your request to CCF-CERF@calfund.org directly.
- **Technical Assistance Virtual Office Hours** – Applicants are welcome to join/drop by weekly office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays to seek guidance on their proposals. The SIC TA team will provide a brief overview of RFP requirements and then open the meeting for questions from the group. *Please note that office hours are meant to be group sessions open to any and all applicants.*
 - Tuesdays starting from February 11 to March 4 2:00–3:00 PM PT - [\(link to join\)](#)
 - Thursdays starting from February 13 to March 6 4:00–5:00 PM PT - [\(link to join\)](#)

Other Questions

1. How will final Catalyst Award decisions be made? When can we expect notifications?

A: Final decisions will be based on the review and recommendation process outlined in the RFP, which includes an evaluation of feasibility, alignment with the LA Regional Plan, equity, climate, job quality, and community engagement. Notifications will be made according to the RFP Timeline (Section XIII). Generally, applicants can expect to hear back on or around the dates specified in the RFP (e.g., June 10 for notification of award).

2. If a project is not awarded funding, can they appeal the decision?

A: There is a formal Process Appeal procedure outlined in Section XVII: Appeals Process of the RFP. If you believe that CCF did not follow the procedures specified in the RFP when making its funding recommendations, you may file a written Process Appeal within two (2) business days of receiving the Quality Review Results.

However, please note that simply disagreeing with the evaluation outcome or points awarded is not grounds for appeal. Your appeal must demonstrate that, but for CCF's alleged failure to follow its established procedures, you would have been a successful applicant. For complete requirements—including format, length, and submission instructions—please refer to Section XVII: Appeals Process of the RFP.

3. When do you expect the CA Jobs First Implementation Phase RFP to be released?

A: The Implementation Phase of the CA Jobs First Regional Investment will fund shovel-ready projects aligned with LA regional strategy. The state plans to open Implementation Phase applications in Q1 of 2025.