



**MAY 2025**

# **BI-ANNUAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY REPORT**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This bi-annual report provides a strategic overview of proposed workforce development initiatives across the Central Valley Mother Lode region, grounded in the work of the Regional Directors of Employer Engagement (RDs) and certified Strong Workforce Program (SWP) projects from Rounds 8 and 9. It is designed to support the region CTE Deans in aligning program planning with statewide priorities, regional labor market needs, and the long-term goals outlined in Vision 2030, the California Career Education Master Plan, and the CVML Regional Strategic Plan.

The report offers:

- A summary of Regional Director activities from January through March 2025, focused on progress on industry engagement, equity-driven workforce access, and simulation-based training innovation.
- An analysis of 20 plus active SWP-funded projects that highlight both sector strengths and structural gaps, particularly in employer feedback systems, faculty externship models, and emerging industry programming.
- Ten new regional project proposals, each with high-level objectives, deliverables, and alignment to the three core strategic frameworks. These projects address needs such as rural simulation access, real-time advisory data, dual enrollment pathways, and equitable health workforce pipelines.
- A two-step next phase implementation process: (1) surveying colleges to express interest in the projects, followed by (2) project planning tools using a standardized worksheet to facilitate NOVA readiness.

This report provides a foundation for deeper collaboration, coordinated investment, and scalable regional innovation. It invites colleges to engage with actionable opportunities that can drive equity, workforce alignment, and long-term economic resilience for the CVML region.

## REGIONAL DIRECTOR REPORTS SUMMARY (JANUARY – MARCH 2025)

Across the first quarter of 2025, Regional Directors intensified employer-led collaboration, digital upskilling, and equity-focused strategies. January showcased AI-powered student supports, wrap-around internship models, and strong construction-energy partnerships, leading to recommendations to scale AI tools, apprenticeships, and grant-funded sustainability programs. February deepened Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) work, connecting clean-energy and advanced-manufacturing employers with dual-enrollment and pre-apprenticeship pathways; strategic priorities centered on co-designed curricula, labor-market data integration, and stronger employer governance. March highlighted the rapid embedding of stackable micro-credentials, especially SACA, EV-battery, and semiconductor certificates, alongside expanded director “office hours” and regional agriculture/forestry consortia. Recommendations emphasized fully integrating industry credentials, leveraging intermediaries for

apprenticeship expansion, and boosting digital literacy for all learner demographics. Together, the quarter paints a cohesive picture of data-driven, equity-minded workforce innovation aimed at accelerating student success and regional economic resilience.

### **Sector Analysis**

Manufacturing, energy, healthcare, and agriculture remain the region's highest-demand arenas, with clean-energy sub-sectors (hydrogen, small modular reactors, renewables) posting double-digit growth projections. Advanced manufacturing continues to seek automation technicians, mechatronics specialists, and logistics managers, while Amazon-style apprenticeships signal broader industry adoption. Construction and utilities project 10 % growth in skilled trades, HVAC, welding, and renewable installation, requiring immediate curriculum alignment. Healthcare and retail/hospitality repeatedly cite soft-skill and digital-literacy gaps, reinforcing the need for cross-sector foundational training. Agriculture and emerging forestry/ICT intersections demand precision-ag and drone-technology competencies. Across these sectors, employer partners consistently call for stackable, industry-recognized credentials embedded in dual-enrollment and adult-re-skilling pathways, supported by holistic services that remove transportation, childcare, and food insecurities.

### **Gap Analysis**

Three critical gaps surfaced.

- **Credential Deployment:** While micro-credentials are expanding, adoption remains uneven. Many colleges still lack the lab capacity, faculty certifications, or credit-mapping needed to embed SACA-level badges at scale.
- **Work-Based Learning Capacity:** Internships and apprenticeships are in short supply, particularly in rural communities, because mentors, intermediary funding, and standardized wage models are limited.
- **Digital & Equity Divide:** Students from underserved backgrounds continue to face barriers to AI tools, broadband access, and wrap-around supports, stalling completion rates in high-tech programs. Addressing these gaps requires
  - Accelerated faculty upskilling and shared equipment hubs to universalize credential offerings
  - Region-wide apprenticeship consortia that pool employer mentors and braid WIOA, SWP, and federal climate dollars
  - An equity-first infrastructure plan that pairs device/broadband grants with expanded transportation, childcare, and stipend supports.

Closing these gaps will convert promising sector opportunities into inclusive, scalable career pathways that drive the Central Valley Mother Lode's economic growth.

***See the complete reports for January, February, and March earlier in the report. [HERE](#)***

# ANALYSIS OF CERTIFIED NOVA SWP PROJECTS (ROUNDS 8 & 9)

## Sector Coverage & Strengths

- **Health Care**: Regional investments in simulation labs, faculty convenings, clinical partnerships, and culturally competent training support a responsive and high-quality workforce pipeline. Programs address pressing demands in nursing, mental health, and allied health.
- **Advanced Manufacturing**: Projects integrate SACA-aligned credentials, noncredit training, and advanced technologies such as robotics and additive manufacturing. Regional consistency and culturally inclusive curriculum stand out as best practices.
- **Agriculture & Water Technology**: Career pathway development and subregional program alignment address regional economic drivers. Strong dual enrollment models and climate-smart curriculum contribute to workforce readiness.
- **Public Safety**: Regional summits, faculty-industry collaboration, and scenario-based simulation training have increased the visibility and relevance of CTE public safety programs.
- **Hospitality, Tourism & Retail**: Modernization of culinary programs and integration of entrepreneurship and business principles support economic recovery sectors. K14 alignment and equity-focused outreach are positive indicators.
- **Business & Entrepreneurship**: Faculty PD, industry credential development, and integration with dual enrollment provide strong foundations for future scalability.

## Gaps & Opportunities

- **Employer Advisory Data**: Despite widespread employer engagement, there is no standardized process for capturing, analyzing, or sharing qualitative and quantitative input from advisory committees across the region.
- **Simulation & Technology Access**: Not all colleges have access to mobile or updated simulation equipment. This limits student access to hands-on learning, especially in rural areas.
- **Faculty Externship Infrastructure**: Professional development opportunities for faculty remain decentralized and limited. There is a clear opportunity to create a regionwide externship model tied to curriculum innovation.
- **Emerging Industry Programming**: Minimal programming exists in high-growth, emerging fields like green energy, AI-enhanced logistics, and sustainability. Strategic development is needed.
- **Digital Career Tools**: Career navigation platforms are in place but underutilized. A consolidated, regional hub could significantly enhance student outcomes and support.

# PROPOSED STRATEGIC REGIONAL PROJECTS

Each of the ten proposed projects below includes a project overview, proposed scope, deliverables, and alignment with Vision 2030, the CA CTE Master Plan, and the CVML Strategic Plan.

## Mobile Simulation & Career Labs Network

### **Project Overview/Objective:**

To increase access to hands-on training in underserved regions through a network of mobile labs.

### **Proposed Scope:**

Build and deploy mobile labs in sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, and public safety sectors.

### **Proposed Deliverables:**

- Fully equipped mobile labs
- Regional scheduling system
- Sector-specific mobile curricula

### **Alignment:**

- **CVML:** Expands rural access
- **Vision 2030:** Mobile delivery innovation
- **CTE Plan:** Flexible access to career education

## Emerging Industries Accelerator

### **Project Overview/Objective:**

To design training programs in emerging and high-growth fields.

### **Proposed Scope:**

Industry roundtables, curriculum pilots, and equity/inclusion frameworks.

### **Proposed Deliverables:**

- 6 credential pilots (Cannabis, AI, Green Logistics)
- Regulatory and workforce guides
- Industry playbooks

### **Alignment:**

- **CVML:** Future-focused regional growth
- **Vision 2030:** Innovative sector strategies
- **CTE Plan:** Emerging program responsiveness

## Climate Careers and Resilience Collaborative

### **Project Overview/Objective:**

To train a workforce for climate resilience and sustainability careers.

### **Proposed Scope:**

Design short-term credentials with employer input in fields like forestry, EV, and water management.

### **Proposed Deliverables:**

- Climate workforce map
- 3–5 stackable certificates
- Employer and agency partnership agreements:

**Alignment:**

- **CVML:** Supports climate response sectors
- **Vision 2030:** Sustainability mission
- **CTE Plan:** Regional workforce readiness

## Bilingual Allied Health Access Program

**Project Overview/Objective:**

To expand the bilingual healthcare workforce pipeline.

**Proposed Scope:**

Create bilingual instructional tracks and provide wraparound services for students.

**Proposed Deliverables:**

- Dual-language health curriculum
- Set a goal for a specific number of bilingual certifications per year
- DEIA-aligned faculty training

**Alignment:**

- **CVML:** Builds equity in health sector
- **Vision 2030:** Access for underserved populations
- **CTE Plan:** Inclusive program models

## Faculty Innovation Incubator

**Project Overview/Objective:**

To support cross-college faculty pilot projects in high-need and emerging areas.

**Proposed Scope:**

Provide funding, peer exchange opportunities, and an annual pitch showcase.

**Proposed Deliverables:**

- Set a goal for a specific number of faculty-led pilots/year
- Innovation showcase event
- Regional instructional resources repository

**Alignment:**

- **CVML:** Faculty collaboration
- **Vision 2030:** Innovation and experimentation
- **CTE Plan:** Instructor-led program development

## NEXT STEPS

To operationalize the ten proposed regional projects and ensure alignment with each college's interests, the following steps are recommended as part of the CVML implementation process:

### **Regional Project Interest Survey**

Each college will receive a digital survey requesting input on which of the proposed regional projects they are most interested in participating in or leading. The survey will capture the level of interest, existing assets that align with project scopes, potential challenges, and any initial recommendations.

### **College Convenings & Project Planning Sessions**

Based on the results of the survey, a project-specific planning convenings should take place. These sessions will utilize a standardized Project Planning Worksheet to help colleges:

- Define scope, goals, and metrics
- Identify key personnel and partners
- Outline budgets and resource needs
- Establish timelines and early implementation milestones

The completed worksheets will be used to inform the development of regional project entries in NOVA and ensure colleges are appropriately positioned for funding and execution.

These next steps are intended to provide a structured process to move from proposal to implementation, ensuring that each college has a voice in project prioritization and a roadmap for success.