CENTRAL VALLEY MOTHER LODE REGIONAL CONSORTIUM

BUILDING THE WORKFORCE, PARTNERING IN CAREER EDUCATION

SWP Regional Share Planning & Project Funding Process

Annual process for allocating, selecting, funding, and monitoring Strong Workforce Program Regional Share projects

1. Purpose and Scope

This document sets out a transparent, documented process for allocating, soliciting, reviewing, selecting, funding, and monitoring Strong Workforce Program (SWP) Regional Share projects in the Central Valley/Mother Lode Regional Consortium (CVML). It covers the full annual cycle, from allocation planning through implementation, reporting, and review. Roles, voting, and meeting rules are defined in the CVML Consortium Governance document and are not repeated here.

2. RFA Requirements

Under the Regional Collaboration and Coordination (RC&C) Grant RFA, CVML must:

- Issue a regional call for proposals aligned with labor market priorities, SWP goals, and the regional plan.
- Stand up a Regional Selection Committee of diverse institutional stakeholders.
- Score and select applications fairly, using standardized rubrics and documented criteria.
- Align investments with labor market demand, avoid duplication, and show clear potential to improve student outcomes.
- Provide technical assistance, particularly for emerging and equity-centered projects.
- Track implementation and compliance, and report investment and performance data in NOVA.

3. Guiding Principles

- Funding decisions are transparent, documented, and follow adopted governance.
- Project funding is awarded through a competitive project plan and review process. District shares are a planning reference only and do not function as automatic distribution.
- Every project is multi-college, aligned with labor market demand, non-duplicative, and focused on improving student outcomes.
- Technical assistance is built into the process, with emphasis on emerging, under-resourced, and equity-centered efforts.
- Funded projects are monitored for progress, spending, compliance, and NOVA reporting.

4. Funding Structure

Category	Share	Use
Regional Plan & Project Investments	85%	Competitive multi-college regional projects awarded through this process
Region-wide Strategic Initiatives	10%	Consortium-led strategic priorities approved by the Steering Committee
Administrative Costs	5%	Grant administration, coordination, communications, compliance, and process management

Planning assumption. The Chancellor's Office releases the allocation memo in June or July, after projects have been reviewed. Project planning therefore assumes 90% of the prior year's 85% project pool, and final awards are adjusted once the actual allocation is received. Of the Regional Share, 83% is base funding and 17% is performance-based incentive funding.

District shares. District planning percentages remain unchanged unless the Steering Committee approves a change. They may inform reconciliation but do not override proposal merit or RFA alignment.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility in this process
CVML Team	Prepares the preliminary and final funding frameworks, reconciles awards to the actual allocation, issues award documents, and coordinates fiscal reporting
Program Director, SWP	Manages the cycle: releases the call, runs technical assistance and screening, convenes reviewers, and monitors projects
Regional Directors	Provide labor market and industry insight and technical assistance to applicants. They do not score proposals.
Regional Selection Committee	Scores eligible project plans and recommends a project slate (see Section 6)
Steering Committee	Approves the preliminary framework and authorizes the call; recommends the final framework and project slate to the CEO Council
CEO Council	Approves the final framework and project awards in August or September; informed of the 4-Year Regional Plan and project plans
Project Leads and partner colleges	Develop project plans, complete NOVA workplans, implement projects, and report

6. Regional Selection Committee

To meet the RFA requirement for diverse institutional stakeholders, the Regional Selection Committee includes:

- **Voting members:** the 15 Steering Committee voting members, who vote on the recommended project slate.

- **Non-voting reviewers:** recruited each cycle by CVML staff. Examples include CTE faculty, Workforce Development Board staff, K-12 or K-14 TAP partners, Adult Education Consortia, and industry representatives. Non-voting reviewers score proposals and provide written comments that become part of the review record.

All reviewers use the approved rubric (Appendix B) and score sheet (Appendix C). Reviewers do not score proposals for which their own college is the lead institution, and must disclose any other conflicts. CVML staff compile scores and comments for the committee's discussion.

7. Annual Cycle

The cycle repeats the same way every year. Each year's project selection runs from the **Mid-Year Planning Retreat**(January or February) through **NOVA certification by October 31**, so projects are chosen in the spring, reconciled when the allocation arrives in the summer, approved by the CEOs in August or September, and certified in NOVA in the fall. Funded projects then have 24 months to spend their awards.

Because funded projects overlap from year to year, each meeting serves two purposes: moving the new cycle forward and checking on active projects. The table below shows both.

When	New funding cycle	Decision
January–February	Mid-Year Planning Retreat: COE labor market briefing; confirm priorities; preliminary funding framework (90% planning assumption); review project lead responsibilities	SC approves framework; authorizes call
Late February – early March	Regional Call for Proposal Project Plans released	—
March	Proposal Project Plan Workshop; office hours	—
Third Friday of April	Proposal Project Plans due; administrative screening and revision requests (Appendix A)	—
May	Selection Committee review and scoring	—
June	Annual Planning Retreat: scores and recommended slate presented	SC recommends slate
June–July	Allocation memo received; final framework set; awards reconciled to actual funds	—
August	Final framework and reconciled slate presented; preliminary award notices; Project Leads begin NOVA workplans	SC recommends to CEOs
August–September	CEO Council acts on the final framework and project awards	CEOs approve
October 31	Project workplans entered and certified in NOVA	—
November–December	Project kickoff and Project Lead orientation	—

8. Process Steps

Phase 1: Preliminary Funding Framework (January–February)

The Fiscal Team prepares a preliminary allocation and planning table showing the projected Regional Share (using the 90% planning assumption), the amounts reserved for administration (5%) and region-wide initiatives (10%), the amount available for regional projects (85%), and district planning

percentages for reference. At the Mid-Year Planning Retreat, the Steering Committee confirms regional priorities, approves the preliminary framework, and authorizes release of the call.

Phase 2: Call for Project Plans and Technical Assistance (February–April)

The Regional Call for Project Plans includes:

- Funding priorities aligned with regional labor market needs, SWP goals, and the 4-Year Regional Plan
- Eligibility requirements, including that every project must be multi-college
- Allowable and non-allowable uses of funds
- Instructions, required templates, and budget forms
- Timeline and due dates
- The completeness checklist, scoring rubric, and selection criteria (Appendices A–C)
- Expectations for workplans, implementation, reporting, and NOVA compliance

CVML offers technical assistance to all applicants, with added emphasis on emerging, under-resourced, and equity-centered projects. Assistance includes a March proposal workshop, office hours, proposal clinics, templates and toolkits, labor market data support, equity coaching, budget guidance, and NOVA guidance.

Phase 3: Submission and Screening (April)

Lead institutions submit project plans by the third Friday in April. CVML staff screen each plan against the completeness checklist (Appendix A), which also lists all required proposal components. Each plan is marked Complete, Revision Required, or Ineligible. Plans requiring revision may be resubmitted within the window stated in the call.

Phase 4: Review, Scoring, and Recommendation (May–June)

The Regional Selection Committee scores complete plans in May on seven criteria (Appendix B, 28 points maximum). Using the scores and documented discussion, voting members develop a recommended project slate with funding amounts and rationale, and the Steering Committee votes on it at the June Annual Planning Retreat. The slate is contingent on the actual allocation.

Phase 5: Reconciliation and CEO Approval (June–September)

When the allocation memo arrives in June or July, the Fiscal Team sets the final framework and reconciles the recommended awards to available funds. If funds are higher or lower than planned, adjustments are based on score, strategic fit, implementation readiness, and committee rationale. District percentages may be considered as a secondary reference only. In August, the Steering Committee reviews the final framework and reconciled slate and recommends them to the CEO Council, which approves them in August or September. CEOs also receive the approved project plans for their information. Preliminary award notices go out in August so Project Leads can begin NOVA workplans while CEO approval is pending.

Phase 6: Workplans, Implementation, and Monitoring

Each funded project enters a workplan in NOVA, and CVML certifies all workplans by October 31. The workplan covers goals, activities, timeline, responsible parties, outputs, outcomes, reporting deadlines, and budget phasing. CVML monitors progress, spending, allowability of expenditures, and compliance

throughout the 24-month spending period, provides technical assistance, and reports investment and performance data in NOVA. Projects submit fiscal and programmatic reports by February 15 and August 15.

At the end of Year 1, each project must have spent at least 40% of its award. Project Leads report out to the consortium within 15 days of the August 15 reporting deadline. If a project has not met the 40% benchmark, CVML notifies the Steering Committee and the CEO Council.

Phase 7: Annual Review

At the Mid-Year Planning Retreat and the June Annual Planning Retreat, CVML reviews proposal outcomes, funding patterns, implementation progress, and process effectiveness. The results inform next year's priorities, technical assistance, and process changes.

9. Required Records

For each cycle, CVML maintains the preliminary and final allocation and planning tables; the call with its templates, checklist, and rubric; screening results, score sheets, and reviewer comments; the funding recommendation summary; Steering Committee and CEO Council approval records; award documents; and NOVA workplans, monitoring schedules, and compliance materials, in accordance with consortium policy and state requirements.

10. Effective Date

This process takes effect upon approval by the Steering Committee and the CEO Council. It remains in effect until revised or replaced.

Appendix A: Project Plan Completeness Checklist

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Project Plan Completeness Checklist

All required components must be present before a plan advances to scoring.

Required Component	Yes	No
Project title	☐	☐
Lead institution, Project Lead, partner institutions, and each partner's project and fiscal contacts	☐	☐
Problem statement describing the need that motivates the project	☐	☐
Labor market alignment with LMI provided (COE report referenced)	☐	☐
Regional relevance and alignment to consortium priorities	☐	☐
How duplication is avoided, including differentiation from existing or previously funded projects	☐	☐
Equity rationale identifying target disproportionately impacted populations, if applicable	☐	☐
Goals, activities, outputs, intended outcomes, and SWP metrics to be tracked	☐	☐
Workplan objectives: name, type, description, regional strategy alignment, and sector/priority alignment	☐	☐
Workplan activities: name, objective, description, completion date, student success and SWP metrics, priority sector, dependencies, and responsible person	☐	☐
Implementation timeline with project duration and key milestones	☐	☐
Budget narrative and expenditure breakdown by object code (1000–7000)	☐	☐
Reporting and accountability commitments, including forecasting	☐	☐
Sustainability strategy, if applicable	☐	☐
Industry partner engagement, if applicable	☐	☐
Project risks and mitigation strategies	☐	☐

Determination: ☐ Complete and eligible for review ☐ Revision required ☐ Ineligible

Appendix B: Scoring Rubric

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Scoring Rubric

Maximum score: 28 points.

Criterion	4- Exceeds Expectations	3- Meets Expectations	2- Developing	1- Needs Improvement
Labor Market Alignment	Strongly aligned with documented regional demand and priority sectors; current COE data clearly supports the need	Aligned with demand; sufficient supporting LMI	Some alignment; limited data or regional connection	Little evidence of demand or alignment
Student Impact & Outcomes	Clearly defined, measurable outcomes with strong potential to improve SWP metrics, completion, employment, or earnings	Measurable outcomes reasonably connected to activities	Outcomes identified but vague or weakly connected	Outcomes unclear or unsupported
Equity & Access	Identifies equity gaps or impacted populations with intentional strategies to improve access and outcomes	Equity addressed and integrated into activities	Equity acknowledged; strategies limited	Minimal or no equity rationale
Regional Collaboration & Non-Duplication	Strong multi-college collaboration; leverages regional resources and ongoing projects; clearly avoids duplication	Meaningful collaboration; reasonably distinct from existing efforts	Limited collaboration or unclear differentiation	Significant duplication or minimal regional value
Project Design & Implementation	Comprehensive objectives and activities with measurable milestones and strong readiness	Complete and feasible design with sufficient detail	Gaps in objectives, activities, timelines, or accountability	Incomplete design; feasibility questionable
Budget & Cost Effectiveness	Complete, well-justified, cost-effective budget that clearly supports outcomes	Appropriate budget generally aligned to goals	Incomplete justification; some costs not tied to outcomes	Incomplete, unreasonable, or misaligned budget
Sustainability & Scalability	Clear plan to sustain outcomes beyond funding; strong regional scalability	Reasonable sustainability and continuation plan	Limited or nonspecific sustainability planning	No meaningful sustainability strategy

Appendix C: Reviewer Score Sheet

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Reviewer Score Sheet

Project title: _____

Reviewer: _____

☐ Voting member ☐ Non-voting reviewer

☐ I have no conflict of interest with this proposal, or I have disclosed it to CVML staff.

Criterion	Score	Comments
Labor Market Alignment	____ / 4	
Student Impact & Outcomes	____ / 4	
Equity & Access	____ / 4	
Regional Collaboration & Non-Duplication	____ / 4	
Project Design & Implementation	____ / 4	
Budget & Cost Effectiveness	____ / 4	
Sustainability & Scalability	____ / 4	
Total	____ / 28	

Appendix D: Transition to the New Cycle

The FY 2026-27 Regional Share projects due in NOVA by October 31, 2026 are being completed under the existing process. The first cycle under this process is **FY 2027-28**, and it can run on the standard annual cycle in Section 7 without compression. Between now and the first Mid-Year Planning Retreat, CVML will complete the following steps.

When	Step	Lead
October–November 2026	Steering Committee reviews this process and the governance document, and recommends adoption	Regional Chair
Next available CVHEC meeting	CEO Council acts on the governance document and this process	Regional Chair
November–December 2026	Recruit non-voting reviewers; finalize call templates, checklist, and rubric; COE prepares labor market briefing	Program Director, COE
January 31, 2027	4-Year Regional Plan submitted to the Chancellor's Office; its priorities shape the FY 2027-28 call	Regional Chair
January–February 2027	Mid-Year Planning Retreat launches the FY 2027-28 cycle	Regional Chair, Fiscal Team
October 31, 2027	FY 2027-28 project workplans certified in NOVA	Program Director