



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

Request for Proposals (RFP)

**No. 2025-01-RCRC-SJF: Feasibility Study for the Sierra
Jobs First Industrial Arts Training Program**

Release Date: November 3, 2025

Issued By:

Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)

1215 K Street, Suite 1650

Sacramento, CA 95814

www.rcrcnet.org

Responses due: December 3, 2025

Dear Applicant,

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) invites you to submit a proposal to conduct a feasibility study for the Sierra Jobs First Industrial Arts Training Program. This Request for Proposals (RFP) outlines the requirements for your proposal and marks the first phase of a regionally driven initiative to expand access to vocational education and workforce development in the industrial arts in Amador County as well as adjacent counties within the Sierra Jobs First region.

This RFP is part of a competitive selection process to identify a qualified consultant or team of consultants with experience in workforce strategy, educational program design, labor market analysis, and rural economic development. The selected consultant will be responsible for developing a comprehensive strategy to guide the creation of a regionally accessible training program that addresses local workforce needs, infrastructure readiness, and long-term program sustainability.

This public process is intended to support transparency and accountability in the use of state funds and the advancement of California Jobs First regional planning priorities. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated according to the criteria set forth in this RFP. Please review the confidentiality provisions carefully and direct any questions to RCRC prior to submitting any documentation that you consider proprietary or confidential.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Interested parties must submit a Notice of Intent to Respond by 5:00 P.M. Pacific Time on November 14, 2025, in order to participate in this RFP process. Final proposals must be received by 5:00 P.M. Pacific Time on December 3, 2025. Late submissions will not be considered.

Please direct all questions via email to Bob Burris (bburris@rcrcnet.org) and Jason Hansen (jhansen@rcrcnet.org). Answers to all questions will be shared with interested parties in accordance with the schedule outlined in this RFP.

We look forward to receiving your proposal and collaborating to strengthen educational and economic opportunities for rural communities in the Sierra Jobs First region.

Sincerely,
Bob Burris
Deputy Chief Economic Development Officer
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)

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1. Background Information

1.1 The Entity

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) is a forty-member county service organization representing the collective interests of California's rural counties. Formed in 1972 as a Joint Powers Authority under California law, RCRC advocates for sound public policies, fosters regional collaboration, and advances initiatives that enhance the economic and social well-being of rural communities.

RCRC's Board of Directors is composed of one elected Supervisor from each of its member counties, providing local leadership and governance over the organization's advocacy, programmatic, and development efforts. RCRC's member counties include all seven counties that comprise the Sierra Jobs First (SJF) region: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, and Tuolumne.

Through its affiliated entities and partnerships, RCRC delivers programs focused on infrastructure, economic development, natural resource stewardship, workforce advancement, and educational access. In recent years, RCRC has prioritized expanding postsecondary opportunities in underserved areas through initiatives such as the Rural College Access Working Groups. These efforts have convened key stakeholders in counties outside of community college districts—like Amador, Alpine, and Mariposa—to explore innovative educational strategies and partnerships.

In administering this RFP, RCRC will serve as the contracting entity, oversee the selection process, and manage the consultant agreement on behalf of the SJF Catalyst initiative. The selected consultant will work in close coordination with RCRC staff and regional partners, including Amador College Connect, to complete the feasibility study and support the development of a regional workforce training strategy rooted in local workforce development relevance and sustainability.

1.2 The Project

The SJF Industrial Arts Training Program was established to address persistent educational and workforce development gaps in the seven-county SJF region—comprising Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, and Tuolumne Counties. These counties face significant barriers to postsecondary education access and job training, particularly in high-demand sectors such as advanced manufacturing, construction trades, and green energy.

Funded through the California Jobs First Catalyst Program, the initiative is entering an exploratory phase to assess the feasibility of developing a regionally accessible and industry-aligned training program in the industrial arts. The overarching goal of the initiative is to build a sustainable workforce pipeline that supports middle-skill, family-sustaining jobs across the Sierra region. However, the initial development and feasibility study will be centered in Amador County, in partnership with Amador College Connect (ACC). The consultant selected through this RFP will work closely with ACC to evaluate local infrastructure, engage stakeholders, and design a pilot program that primarily serves graduating high school students in Amador County, with the intent of expanding access regionally through partnerships in neighboring counties.

Amador College Connect is a nonprofit, one-stop higher education resource center based in Amador County that provides residents with access to online courses, dual enrollment, certification programs, and apprenticeship pathways. ACC partners with Columbia College, the California Community Colleges system, and local high schools to deliver educational opportunities in areas without a physical community college presence. As a core partner in this initiative, ACC will provide the on-the-ground coordination necessary to pilot and refine the program design, serve as a conduit for local outreach and engagement, and ensure that program recommendations are grounded in existing institutional capacity.

While the feasibility study and early planning will be rooted in Amador County, the intended impact of the program extends beyond county borders. RCRC and ACC are committed to engaging education and workforce partners across the region to explore opportunities for replication, shared resources, and cross-county collaboration. This inclusive approach will help ensure the program reflects the broader needs and strengths of the SJF region.

Exhibit A provides visual maps of the SJF region, highlighting:

- The boundaries of each of the seven participating counties,
- The location of ACC

The selected consultant will be responsible for developing a comprehensive feasibility study that includes:

- A labor market and industry analysis, which includes;
 - Defining high-demand occupations within the broader “industrial arts” field, with emphasis on middle-skill jobs that do not require a four-year degree but offer family-sustaining wages.
 - Evaluating the credentialing, certification, and technical skillsets required by employers in the region.
 - Quantifying the gap between current educational offerings and the scale of regional workforce demand.
- An assessment of facility and infrastructure readiness at ACC;
- Stakeholder engagement with educators, employers, and workforce agencies;
- Program design recommendations, including credentialing and operational models;
- A fiscal and implementation roadmap supporting long-term sustainability.

By aligning educational infrastructure with regional labor market demand, the SJF Industrial Arts Training Program aims to create a durable framework for improving career outcomes, closing workforce gaps, and advancing inclusive economic growth throughout the Sierra region.

Current Challenges in Postsecondary Education Access

Rural communities across the SJF region face a distinct and persistent set of challenges when it comes to accessing postsecondary education and workforce training. These challenges are particularly acute in RCRC and SJF member counties like Amador, Alpine, and Mariposa, which do not belong to a designated community college district and have limited local infrastructure for delivering hands-on, career-technical education.

In Amador County, RCRC's preliminary research conducted in late 2024 has found that:

- Only 20.6% of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the statewide average of 37%.
- The college-going rate is 53%, trailing the state average of 62%.
- The median household income is \$74,853, below California's average of \$91,551.
- Many areas, including East Amador, are classified as disadvantaged or disinvested by the State of California's mapping tools, with significant portions of Sutter Creek, Plymouth, and Amador City also identified as partially disinvested communities.

These disparities have created structural barriers to upward mobility, particularly for young adults and high school students residing in rural and underserved areas. Without local access to affordable, industry-relevant education and training, many students are forced to travel long distances or relocate to pursue postsecondary opportunities, contributing to outmigration, workforce shortages, and a disconnect between local talent and regional labor market needs.

The absence of permanent technical education infrastructure, along with insufficient regional coordination among workforce agencies, school districts, and postsecondary institutions, further limits the ability of rural residents to pursue careers in high-demand, middle-skill occupations. These conditions make it critical to explore new delivery models like mobile training labs, shared instructional resources, and hybrid credential pathways that are responsive to the region's economic context and physical geography.

The SJF Industrial Arts Training Program aims to address these structural barriers by developing a localized, regionally informed training model that not only improves educational access for Amador County's students but also serves as a replicable framework for the entire seven-county region.

2. Key Information

2.1 Administrative Guidance

This RFP is intended to provide interested parties (referred to as "respondents") with sufficient information to prepare and submit a proposal that is responsive to the goals and requirements set forth by RCRC. This RFP is not intended to limit creative solutions or disqualify respondents who may propose innovative approaches to the scope of work. Respondents who believe they can fulfill the objectives of the RFP using alternative methods or models are encouraged to provide clear justification and documentation to support those proposals.

Respondents are advised of the following responsibilities:

- Review the entire contents of this RFP carefully, including all instructions, requirements, and attachments.
- Ensure that all required components of the proposal are completed and submitted by the deadline.
- Submit questions by the specified deadline if clarification is needed regarding any part of the RFP.

- Avoid including conditional statements, assumptions, or exceptions that may conflict with the intent of the RFP.
- Ensure that all information provided is accurate, complete, and appropriately documented.

This procurement process is designed to promote fairness, transparency, and the selection of a qualified consultant that can deliver high-quality work on behalf of participating counties. RCRC reserves the right to modify or cancel any portion of this RFP at any time before contract execution.

2.2 Confidentiality

All submissions, including all supporting documentation, become public after contracts are awarded. Submissions will not be released to any other bidder or any member of the public prior to the contract award date.

RCRC is subject to the California Public Records Act (Government Code section 7920.000 et. seq.) (“PRA”), which provides public access to all records in RCRC’s possession – including submissions to this RFP. Everything submitted to RCRC is presumptively a public record. If material a respondent has marked “confidential,” “proprietary,” or “trade secret” is requested from RCRC pursuant to the PRA, RCRC will make an independent assessment about whether it is exempt from disclosure. If RCRC determines that a record a respondent has submitted is public, RCRC will notify the respondent and give them a reasonable opportunity to support an opposite conclusion or obtain a court order protecting the material from disclosure.

Respondents should be aware that marking a document “confidential,” “proprietary,” or “trade secret” in a Final Proposal may exclude it from consideration for award and will not keep that document from being released after notice of award as part of the public record unless a court has ordered RCRC not to release the document. The content of all working papers and discussions relating to any proposal shall be held in confidence indefinitely, unless the public interest is best served by an item’s disclosure because of its direct pertinence to a decision, agreement, or the evaluation of the proposal.

Any disclosure of confidential information by a respondent is a basis for rejecting the respondent’s proposal and ruling the respondent ineligible to further participate.

2.3 Proposal Preparation Costs

RCRC is not liable for any cost incurred by the respondent associated with the preparation of their proposal nor the negotiation of a contract for services prior to the issuing of the contract.

2.4 Proposal Terms

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the respondent agrees to the terms and conditions set forth in this document. Respondents are responsible for understanding all requirements, obligations, and expectations outlined in the RFP, as well as any subsequent addenda issued prior to the final submission deadline.

Submission of a Notice of Intent to Respond is required. Any proposals submitted without such notice may be subject to disqualification or may not be reviewed. It is the responsibility of the respondent to ensure that all required materials, including supplemental documentation, are submitted to RCRC by the final deadline specified in this RFP. Conditional responses may be rejected.

Participation in this RFP process does not create an obligation on the part of RCRC to award a contract. RCRC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, and to request clarification or additional information from respondents at any point during the review process. RCRC also reserves the right to modify the scope of work, timeline, or evaluation process if it is determined to be in the best interest of the participating counties.

All terms and conditions set forth in this RFP, and any attachments or exhibits, will be incorporated into the final agreement with the selected consultant unless otherwise modified by mutual written agreement. In submitting a bid, Respondent agrees to enter into an agreement on a form prepared by RCRC consistent with the provisions of this RFP.

3. Administrative Requirements

3.1 Legal Requirements and Attestations

Respondents must include the following documentation and attestations as part of their submission:

- **Proof of Legal Entity:** Provide documentation verifying that the respondent is legally authorized to do business in the State of California.
- **Insurance Requirements:** Confirm that the respondent holds, or will obtain prior to contract execution, commercial general liability insurance with a minimum coverage amount of \$1,000,000.
- **Non-Discrimination Assurance:** Certify that the respondent does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability in employment practices or service delivery.
- **Litigation Disclosure:** Disclose any current or recent litigation or legal claims filed against the respondent or key personnel within the past three years that could affect the organization's capacity to perform the scope of work.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Attest that the respondent will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations throughout the duration of the contract, including the Public Records Act.
- **Subpoena and Legal Cooperation Clause:** Acknowledge that any materials submitted or communications with RCRC may be subject to subpoena or public records requests, and agree to cooperate fully in any resulting legal or compliance matters.

These requirements are intended to ensure that the selected consultant(s) possess the legal and operational capacity to fulfill the obligations of the contract in a public sector environment.

4. Submission

4.1 Notice of Intent to Respond

A notice of intent to submit a proposal, including the name and contact information for a primary contact, must be provided via email to **both** Bob Burris (bburris@rcrcnet.org) **and** Jason Hansen (jhansen@rcrcnet.org) by **5:00 P.M. Pacific Time on November 14, 2025**. Any proposals submitted without the respondent providing this notice by the due date may not be considered.

4.2 Questions

Any questions pertaining to the RFP must be submitted via email and can be submitted at any point up to the question deadline: **5:00 P.M. Pacific Time on November 21, 2025**. RCRC shall provide a summary of all questions and RCRC's response to all respondents who have submitted an Intent to Respond after the period for questions has passed. Responses to questions will be issued as an addenda to this RFP and will be a binding component of this RFP.

Respondents requiring clarification on the intent, terms and conditions, content of this RFP, or on procedural matters regarding the competitive bid process may request clarification by submitting questions in writing to RCRC. Respondents must submit all questions via email to Bob Burris (bburris@rcrcnet.org). Only questions submitted in writing to this email address shall be binding and official.

If a respondent who desires clarification or further information on the content of the solicitation, but whose questions relate to the proprietary aspect of its proposal and disclosure exposes its proposal to other bidders, the question may be submitted using the same criteria above with the notation "CONFIDENTIAL." The respondent must explain why the question is sensitive in nature. If RCRC concurs that the disclosure of the question or answer would expose the proprietary nature of the proposal, the question will be answered, and both the question and answer will be confidentially maintained. If RCRC does not concur with the proprietary aspect of the question, the question and answer will not be confidentially maintained, and the respondent will be notified.

4.3 Form of Submission

The preferred method of submission is email. Electronic submissions should be submitted in a searchable portable document file (PDF) format, though files may also be submitted in their native format for readability, such as Microsoft Excel files for data tables. If a respondent is unable to provide a submission via email due to technical considerations means, they may do so with RCRC's consent and by alternative means acceptable to RCRC. Requests for alternative submission means shall not toll the submission deadline, and Respondents who seek to do so, do so at their own risk.

It is the respondent's responsibility to ensure its proposal is submitted in a manner that enables RCRC to easily locate responses to all requirements in the Scope of Work, descriptions, and supporting documentation.

Final submissions must include a cover letter signed by an individual authorized to bind the respondent's organization contractually. The signature block must indicate the title or position that the individual holds in the organization. An unsigned final proposal may be rejected.

Signatures may be scanned copies of wet signatures or digital signatures made consistent with Government Code section 16.5, as interpreted by Chapter 10 of Division 7 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations. Digital signatures created in Adobe software are presumed to comply with this requirement.

A respondent is responsible for ensuring all submission material is submitted by the deadline, whether submitted via email or as hard copy. Please submit applications via email to **both** Jason Hansen (jhansen@rcrcnet.org) and Bob Burris (bburris@rcrcnet.org).

For hard copy submissions that have received RCRC's consent, please deliver the following address:

**1215 K Street, Suite 1650
Sacramento, CA 95814**

4.4 Withdrawal and Resubmission

A respondent may withdraw its final submission at any time prior to the submission deadline, by submitting a written notification of withdrawal via email signed by an authorized representative of the respondent. The respondent may thereafter submit a new or modified proposal prior to the respective submission deadline. Modification offered in any other manner, oral or written, will not be considered. Other than as allowed by law, final proposals cannot be changed or withdrawn after the submission deadline date and time.

4.5 Irrevocable Offer

A respondent's final submission is an irrevocable offer for 90 days from the scheduled contract award date. A respondent may extend the offer in the event of a delay of contract award. Offer extensions must be confirmed in writing via email sent to RCRC signed by an authorized representative of the respondent.

4.6 Additional Information Requests

Prior to the award of contract(s), RCRC must be assured that a selected respondent has the resources to successfully perform under the contract. This includes, but is not limited to, personnel in number and requisite skill; equipment of appropriate type and quantity; financial resources sufficient to complete performance under the contract; and experience in similar endeavors. If, during the evaluation process, RCRC is unable to assure itself of the respondent's ability to perform under the contract if awarded, RCRC has the option of requesting from the respondent any information that RCRC deems necessary to determine the respondent's responsibility. If such information is required, the respondent will be so notified and will be permitted five (5) business days to submit the information requested in writing.

4.7 Contract Award

Contracts are anticipated to be awarded on **December 19, 2025**, but this date is subject to change at RCRC's sole discretion. Should RCRC award the contract at a date following the Bid Irrevocability Period and a bidder opt not to accept the award at that time, RCRC may choose to award the contract to the next lowest responsive and responsible bid, and so on, reject all remaining bids, or reissue the RFP.

4.8 RFP Schedule

This RFP follows a 30-day proposal window. Final submissions to this RFP must be submitted via email by 5:00 P.M. Pacific Time on **December 3, 2025**.

RFP Process	Date
RFP issued	November 3 rd , 2025
Deadline to provide notice of intent to respond	November 14 th , 2025
Deadline for question submissions	November 21 st , 2025
Deadline for final submissions	December 3rd, 2025 @ 5:00pm Pacific Time
Anticipated contract award	December 19 th , 2025
Offer irrevocability period ends	March 19 th , 2026

5. Evaluation

This section presents the evaluation process and scoring procedures RCRC will follow to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. A responsive proposal is one that best meets all the requirements set forth in this solicitation.

The selected respondent must demonstrate a strong understanding of the SJF region, the role of Amador College Connect, and the broader goals of the program.

5.1 Point Distribution Matrix

All proposals will be assigned points according to the following matrix. The matrix identifies each evaluation component, the scoring methodology, and the maximum points available for scored components. Each evaluation component relates to a requirement from this RFP, as noted.

Evaluation Component (Relevant Section of RFP)	Maximum Score
Notice of Intent to Respond Submitted (4.1)	Pass/Fail
Submission Validation (4.3)	Pass/Fail
Legal Requirements and Attestations (3.1)	10 Points
Administrative Information (6.1)	Pass/Fail
Labor Market and Industry Analysis (6.2)	15 Points
Infrastructure and Capacity Assessment (6.3)	10 Points
Program Design Recommendations (6.4)	15 Points
Stakeholder Engagement (6.5)	10 Points
Final Deliverables (6.6)	10 Points
Consultant Qualifications and Staffing Plan (6.6)	15 Points
Cost Proposal and Fiscal Reasonableness	10 Points
Proposal Narrative Format and Completeness (Section 7)	5 Points
Total Maximum Score	100 Points

5.2 Scoring

RCRC will review each proposal in detail to determine its compliance with the solicitation requirements. RCRC reserves the right to use multiple means to validate and determine the respondent's response to a requirement. This may be through details in its description and/or supporting documentation provided or material that is publicly available, that may either support or contradict the respondent's claim of intended compliance.

5.3 Minimum Point Threshold

A respondent must pass all pass/fail components and score at least 50 points to be awarded a contract. Failure to meet this requirement will disqualify a submission.

5.4 Award Determination

RCRC will award one contract to the respondent whose proposal is determined to best meet the objectives outlined in this RFP. Proposals must meet all pass/fail criteria and achieve a competitive score, as determined through the evaluation process described herein, to be eligible for award consideration.

The final award will be made to the highest-scoring respondent based on the total evaluation score, provided the proposal demonstrates the respondent's capacity to complete the full scope of work within the project timeline and budget.

RCRC reserves the right to:

- Make no award if it determines that no proposal sufficiently meets the RFP requirements;
- Negotiate with one or more respondents to clarify or improve proposed terms prior to final award;
- Modify or reduce the scope of work if it better aligns with project needs or available funding.

The final contract award is subject to review by RCRC and consultation with project partners, including Amador College Connect.

5.5 Rights Conferred

An award under this RFP does not confer any exclusive right to future contracts, project implementation, or continuation beyond the scope of work defined herein. The contract resulting from this RFP shall not establish any claim, interest, or entitlement to future work with RCRC, participating counties, or their affiliates.

RCRC reserves the right to issue additional solicitations, engage other consultants, or modify the project approach at its discretion.

5.6 Protests

An unsuccessful respondent shall have the right to protest any scoring decision or contract award decision to RCRC's CEO/President. The CEO/President, at their sole discretion, may award a contract notwithstanding the scoring process. In exercising this discretion, the CEO/President may request to confer with a respondent and/or request additional information or documentation. Should a respondent fail to confer or provide such information or documentation, the

CEO/President may decline to consider the appeal. The CEO/President shall have an unlimited amount of time to make any such decisions.

6. Scope of Work

RCRC's objective is to identify a consultant or consultant team who can provide a high-quality and evidence driven study to assess the feasibility of an industrial arts training program undertaken by ACC, as well as provide preliminary program design recommendations while prioritizing the region's current workforce gaps.

The RFP includes base requirements for submitting a proposal as well as recommendations for proposals. The scope of work, as defined herein, may be modified after final selection of the respondent, if any. The general terms and conditions are part of any submitted proposal and will be incorporated into any subsequent contract.

All submissions must address each of these requirements and include all requested information. Narrative descriptions must be clear and apply directly to the solicitation requirements. Any documentation necessary to support narrative descriptions must be included in the submission. Any conflicting information may result in the proposal being deemed non-responsive and may result in the Bidder being disqualified.

The contract period will run from **December 19, 2025, to August 31, 2026**, and proposals should reflect a project budget of up to **\$100,000**.

RCRC may reject any or all proposals and may waive any immaterial deviation or defect in a proposal. RCRC's waiver of any immaterial deviation or defect shall in no way modify the solicitation documents or excuse the respondent from full compliance with the solicitation specifications if awarded the contract.

6.1 Administrative Information

Respondents must include the following administrative information in their proposal. All documentation must be clearly labeled, complete, and submitted by the RFP deadline in order for a proposal to be deemed responsive.

- **Primary Contact Information**
Provide the name, title, organization, phone number, and email address for the individual authorized to act on behalf of the respondent and serve as the primary point of contact throughout the duration of the project.
- **Proposed Project Team**
Identify all key personnel who will be assigned to the project. Include each individual's role, area of expertise, and anticipated level of involvement. Resumes or bios must be included in an appendix and should demonstrate relevant experience with feasibility studies, workforce analysis, and/or postsecondary program development.
- **References**
Provide a minimum of three (3) professional references from prior clients or partners who can speak to the respondent's qualifications, performance, and integrity. References from public sector clients, educational institutions, or workforce development agencies are

strongly preferred. Each reference should include a contact name, title, organization, phone number, email, and a brief description of the project or engagement.

- **Project Management Approach**

Include a brief description of how the respondent will manage communications, stakeholder engagement, timeline tracking, and quality control throughout the duration of the 10-month project. Describe any project management tools, platforms, or strategies that will be used to ensure transparency and accountability.

- **Acknowledgment of Contract Administration by RCRC**

Respondents must acknowledge that RCRC will serve as the contract administrator and fiscal agent for this project. The selected consultant must agree to coordinate all deliverables, reporting, and invoicing with RCRC staff and designated partners.

Proposals must demonstrate that the respondent is capable of successfully managing a multi-part feasibility study involving workforce and education partners in a rural regional context. Strong project management capabilities and experience with cross-sector collaboration will be considered favorably during the evaluation process.

6.2 Labor Market and Industry Analysis

The consultant will conduct a comprehensive labor market and industry analysis to inform the feasibility and design of the SJF Industrial Arts Training Program. This analysis should draw from quantitative and qualitative data sources to evaluate the current and projected demand for middle-skill and industrial arts-related occupations across the SJF region, with a particular focus on Amador County and adjacent rural counties.

At a minimum, the analysis must include the following components:

- **High-Demand Occupation Identification**

Define the high-demand occupations within the “industrial arts” sector that are aligned with regional workforce needs. Example occupations may include:

- Green construction and sustainable building technologies
- Advanced manufacturing and fabrication
- Carpentry and general construction trades
- HVAC and electrical systems
- Welding, machining, and metalworking
- Automotive and heavy equipment repair
- Industrial design and CAD/CAM operations

The consultant will identify the required skillsets, certifications, and credential pathways associated with these occupations.

- **Workforce Supply and Demand Gap Analysis**

Evaluate and quantify the gap between current educational and training offerings and employer demand. Identify key mismatches between local workforce preparation and the skills, competencies, or credentials required by regional employers in industrial arts fields.

- **Industry and Employer Engagement**

Engage local and regional employers to validate findings and assess workforce development needs from the employer’s perspective. Document which credentials, programs, or competencies are most valued in hiring decisions.

- **Economic and Demographic Context**
Examine the economic profile and demographic trends of the SJF region, with emphasis on high school graduation rates, income levels, population projections, and employment trends in career-technical fields.
- **Credentialing and Training Pipeline Review**
Map out existing credential and training pipelines serving the region, including programs offered by community colleges, high schools, regional occupational programs (ROPs), adult schools, and workforce development boards. Assess gaps in accessibility, affordability, and program relevance.
- **Equity Considerations**
Evaluate how the design of a new Industrial Arts Training Program can address access and outcomes disparities for underserved populations, including low-income and first-generation students, students of color, and residents of disadvantaged communities.

This labor market and industry analysis will serve as the foundation for the consultant’s program design recommendations and implementation roadmap. The analysis should leverage publicly available datasets as well as interviews or surveys with employers, educators, and workforce agencies to produce a regionally grounded and data-informed profile of industrial arts career opportunities.

6.3 Infrastructure and Capacity Assessment

The selected consultant will evaluate the physical and institutional infrastructure necessary to deliver a high-quality Industrial Arts Training Program in the SJF region. This assessment will identify facility readiness, resource gaps, and logistical considerations that may influence the design and implementation of the program. While the initial geographic focus is Amador County, the findings should be generalizable and scalable across the broader seven-county Sierra region.

At a minimum, the assessment must include the following components:

- **Facility Inventory and Evaluation**
Collaborate with ACC to identify and assess existing facilities in Amador County and surrounding areas that could serve as potential training sites. These may include high school campuses, community colleges, adult education centers, workforce training sites, or other publicly owned facilities. The evaluation must consider square footage, equipment availability, accessibility, and compliance with safety and ADA requirements.
- **Site Readiness for Hands-On Technical Education**
Determine the suitability of each facility for hosting hands-on technical instruction. This includes evaluating the adequacy of lab space, utility infrastructure (e.g., ventilation, power, plumbing), and any modifications needed to support industrial arts curricula such as welding, carpentry, machining, or advanced manufacturing.
- **Mobile Lab Feasibility**
Assess the potential for developing mobile training labs to serve remote or underserved parts of the Sierra region. This includes outlining equipment needs, cost estimates, vehicle retrofitting requirements, and operational logistics.
- **Technology and Equipment Needs**
Identify and estimate the cost of specialized equipment, tools, and technology required to

support a full range of industrial arts instruction. Include recommendations for procurement strategies that prioritize industry-aligned and scalable assets.

- **Partnership and Facility Access Agreements**
Recommend strategies for establishing formal agreements (e.g., MOUs) with school districts, colleges, or public agencies to secure access to facilities or shared resources. The consultant should highlight models for cross-agency collaboration that reduce duplication and increase access.
- **Environmental and Regulatory Considerations**
Determine whether any planned program locations or facility modifications would require environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or other applicable regulations. Where needed, outline a process for timely compliance.
- **Scalability Across the Region**
Identify any infrastructure-related best practices or barriers that could affect expansion of the program to additional counties in the SJF region. Recommendations should include strategies to replicate or adapt infrastructure investments in similar rural contexts.

This section of the feasibility study will help determine where and how the Industrial Arts Training Program can be physically delivered, what capital improvements are needed, and how infrastructure decisions influence long-term program sustainability and scalability. This section will be completed collaborating closely with ACC, utilizing their local relationships and knowledge regarding current infrastructure.

6.4 Program Design Recommendations

Based on findings from the labor market analysis and infrastructure assessment, the consultant will provide a set of clear, actionable program design recommendations to guide the development of a regionally responsive Industrial Arts Training Program. The design should support a phased implementation strategy, starting in Amador County, and be adaptable for eventual expansion throughout the seven-county Sierra Jobs First region.

At a minimum, the consultant's recommendations must address the following elements:

- **Credential and Certification Pathways**
Identify industry-recognized credentials and certifications that align with regional labor demand in the industrial arts sector. These may include OSHA safety certifications, welding certifications, or community college certificate programs. Propose pathways that are stackable and lead to long-term employability in sectors such as construction, green building, manufacturing, and equipment repair.
- **Curriculum and Instructional Framework**
Recommend a curriculum structure for specific course sequences, incorporating hands-on learning, including safety training, project-based instruction, and career readiness. Suggest flexible formats such as dual enrollment, adult education tracks, or evening/weekend options to increase access for diverse learner populations.
- **Delivery Models**
Propose appropriate instructional delivery models for rural settings, including site-based instruction, mobile training units, hybrid models (in-person + online), and/or satellite partnerships with neighboring institutions. Tailor recommendations to facility readiness, instructor availability, and learner needs.

- **Cost Estimates for Program Launch and Operation**
Provide estimated costs for launching and operating the program over its first three years. This should include projected personnel costs (e.g., instructors, coordinators), equipment and supply needs, facilities usage or modifications, and administrative expenses. Include budget assumptions and potential cost ranges.
- **Program Administration and Staffing**
Recommend an operational model for program oversight, including options for staffing, coordination with Amador College Connect, and partnerships with local educational institutions. Address instructor recruitment strategies, credential requirements, and professional development needs.
- **Student Recruitment and Retention Strategies**
Propose outreach and engagement strategies targeting high school seniors, out-of-school youth, adult learners, and underserved communities. Recommendations should consider barriers such as transportation, childcare, or digital access, and incorporate support services to improve student success and program completion.
- **Work-Based Learning and Employer Partnerships**
Recommend opportunities to integrate internships, job shadowing, apprenticeships, or direct job placement into the training program. Identify existing or potential employer partners and outline how work-based learning can be structured to enhance career readiness.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Metrics**
Define a preliminary set of success metrics to track program impact, including enrollment figures, credential attainment, job placement rates, employer satisfaction, and demographic equity outcomes. Recommend systems for data tracking and continuous program improvement.
- **Sustainability and Long-Term Planning**
Identify potential long-term funding streams and governance models that support sustainability beyond initial implementation. Highlight key partnerships and program elements that would increase the likelihood of institutionalization.

These recommendations will help ensure that the proposed training program is not only technically and fiscally feasible, but also responsive to local needs, accessible to rural learners, and grounded in strong education-industry alignment.

6.5 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of this feasibility study. The selected consultant will be expected to implement a robust engagement strategy that gathers meaningful input from local and regional partners across the education, workforce, and employer sectors. Collaboration with ACC, the local education provider that will serve as the initial implementing entity for the program, is essential throughout the study. The consultant will work closely with ACC to coordinate interviews, site visits, and information-gathering activities. Throughout the contract's duration, stakeholder outreach should include local educators, high school representatives, industry employers, workforce boards, and community organizations, with an emphasis on understanding barriers to postsecondary access and opportunities for program alignment.

6.6 Final Deliverables

The consultant will produce a comprehensive feasibility study that provides actionable guidance for the development and potential regional expansion of an Industrial Arts Training Program, beginning with implementation through ACC. The final deliverable must include all research findings, program design recommendations, labor market analysis, facility assessments, stakeholder input, and an implementation roadmap that is grounded in the realities of the rural SJF region.

The report must be professionally formatted and suitable for presentation to county officials, educational institutions, funders, and workforce stakeholders. In addition to the full narrative report, the consultant will be required to prepare an executive summary highlighting key findings, visual exhibits to support data interpretation (e.g., tables, charts, or maps), and appendices for any technical documentation or interview protocols.

The consultant will also present their findings at a convening of local and regional partners, including RCRC, ACC, and representatives from adjacent counties. The presentation must be structured to support discussion, answer clarifying questions, and assist stakeholders in planning next steps. A digital version of the final report, along with any presentation materials, must be submitted to RCRC in both PDF and editable formats. RCRC will work with the consultant to determine a deadline for receiving a rough draft of the report, to allow RCRC to make any suggestions or recommendations prior to the final draft.

6.7 Consultant Qualifications and Staffing Plan

Respondents must demonstrate that they possess the qualifications, capacity, and relevant experience necessary to complete the scope of work outlined in this RFP. The selected consultant will be expected to engage with a range of stakeholders, analyze complex education and workforce data, and deliver actionable recommendations that are sensitive to the unique challenges and opportunities facing the SJF region.

Proposals must include a staffing plan identifying all key personnel who will be assigned to the project. For each team member, respondents should describe their role, relevant qualifications, and availability throughout the contract term. The consultant team should include personnel with demonstrated expertise in labor market analysis, educational program development, rural or place-based workforce initiatives, and stakeholder engagement. Experience working in or with rural California counties, or with small-scale education delivery models like ACC is strongly preferred.

The proposal must identify a designated project lead who will serve as the primary point of contact and oversee day-to-day project management and communication with RCRC and ACC.

Resumes or brief biographies for each team member should be included in an appendix. Proposals should also confirm that the consultant team is available for the full duration of the contract period, from **December 19, 2025, to August 31, 2026**, and will participate in all required meetings, presentations, and deliverable development.

7. Proposal

7.1 Proposal Narrative Format

Respondents must submit a clearly written and well-organized proposal narrative that addresses all elements outlined in this RFP. The proposal must follow the structure and content requirements specified below to facilitate consistent review and evaluation.

The narrative portion of the proposal must be organized using the following section headers and sequence:

1. **Cover Letter and Executive Summary**
A signed letter from an authorized representative summarizing the respondent's interest, qualifications, and the regions proposed to be served.
2. **Administrative Information and Contact Details**
Identification of the primary contact, project team members, organizational background, and legal entity status.
3. **Staffing Plan and Key Personnel**
Description of project roles, personnel assignments, qualifications, and availability, with supporting resumes or bios included as appendices.
4. **Technical Approach to Scope of Work**
A comprehensive narrative describing how the respondent will fulfill each component of the Scope of Work, including methods, tools, and timeline assumptions.
5. **Experience and References**
Overview of the respondent's relevant experience, especially with public sector clients or correctional health care projects, and at least three references.
6. **Cost Proposal**
A detailed cost breakdown for each region proposed, including direct and indirect costs, estimated hours, labor rates, and assumptions.
7. **Attachments and Supporting Materials**
Any additional documentation relevant to the proposal, including personnel resumes, proof of insurance, litigation disclosures, and required attestations. See Section 7.2 for more details.

The narrative should not exceed 20 pages, excluding appendices and attachments. Proposals must be submitted in PDF format, with clearly labeled sections and consistent pagination. Font size should be no smaller than 11-point and margins must be at least one inch on all sides. Failure to follow this required format may result in disqualification or reduced scoring during the evaluation process.

7.2 Required Attachments and Documentation

To be considered responsive, all proposals must include the following attachments and supporting documentation. These materials will be used to verify eligibility, assess capacity, and support the scoring of narrative responses:

1. **Resumes or Biographies of Key Personnel**
Provide current resumes or professional bios for all individuals identified in the staffing plan. Each document should clearly indicate the person's role on this project and

highlight relevant experience in correctional health care, regional planning, or public sector consulting.

2. Proof of Legal Entity and Business Status

Submit documentation confirming the respondent's legal status and ability to operate in California, such as articles of incorporation, business license, or a certificate of good standing.

3. Certificate of Insurance

Include documentation demonstrating current general liability coverage of at least \$1,000,000, or a statement confirming the intent to secure coverage prior to contract execution.

4. Non-Discrimination Policy

Attach the respondent's equal employment opportunity or a signed statement affirming nondiscrimination in hiring and service delivery practices.

5. Litigation Disclosure

Provide a summary of any ongoing or recent litigation involving the respondent or key personnel that may be relevant to the project performance or contracting eligibility.

6. Three (3) Professional References

Include the name, title, organization, phone number, and email address for each reference, along with a brief description of the work performed. At least one reference should be from a public sector client.

7. Cost Proposal and Budget Detail

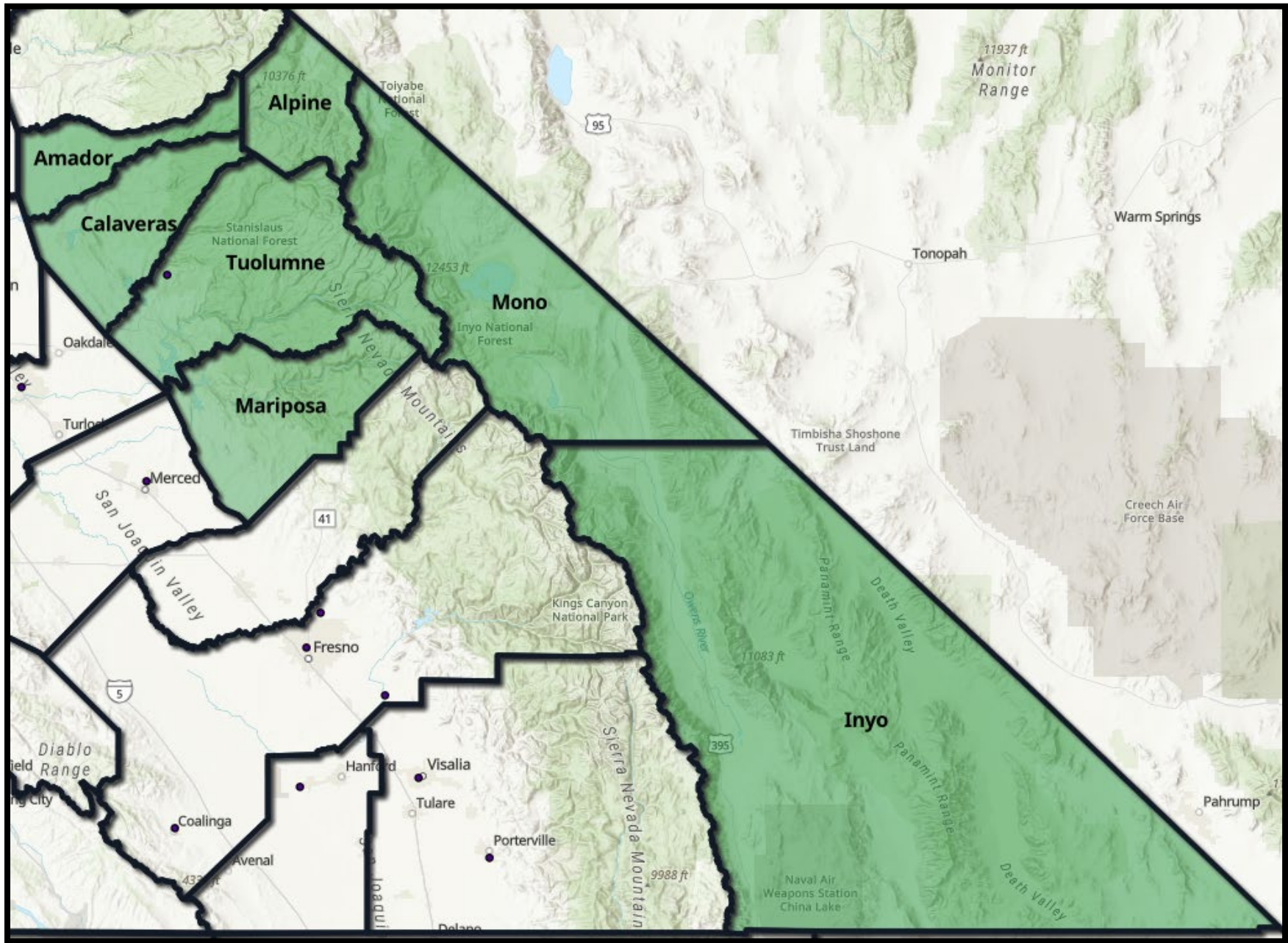
Attach a budget document outlining the total proposed cost, broken down by region (if applicable), with detailed line items for personnel, travel, indirect costs, and any subcontracted work. Each cost proposal should clearly match the narrative description of work plans.

8. Signed Attestation of Regulatory Compliance

Include a signed statement attesting that the respondent will comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, including the California Public Records Act.

EXHIBIT A: MAPS

*Map 1: Sierra Jobs First Region and nearby California Community Colleges,
revealing the lack of postsecondary education access throughout the region*



Map 2: The location of Amador College Connect, located in Sutter Creek in Amador County

