

# Catalyst RFP Resource

Prospective Catalyst RFP applicants are encouraged to review the Catalyst RFP Resource with scoring rubric and evaluation criteria definitions to understand how their project proposals will be scored and evaluated by the Valley CERF Coalition.

## Scoring Rubric

Over the past few weeks, the Regional Table convened to create a scoring rubric for Catalyst RFP submissions. Through thoughtful deliberation, they allocated weights to criteria, totaling 100 points, and engaged in extensive discussions regarding the rubric's importance. Their collective effort resulted in the selection of a rubric that mirrors the diverse perspectives and expertise of our regional table representatives.

This scoring rubric will guide evaluators in their review process.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
Extent to which the project advances the Regional Table Principles.	<b>13</b>
Support the Valley CERF regional framework.	<b>8</b>
Demonstrate the potential to attract additional funding from local, state, or federal governments; philanthropy; or private investors.	<b>11</b>
Demonstrate use of relevant data to inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of the project.	<b>11</b>
Demonstrate strong partnerships and collaborations to maximize project impact.	<b>14</b>
Support the unique aspirations and/or meaningfully address the felt needs of our disinvested and disadvantaged communities.	<b>11</b>
Show responsible use of funds and reasonable costs through a detailed budget.	<b>8</b>
Demonstrate project feasibility and importance.	<b>16</b>
Alignment with State and Federal policies and climate goals	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

# Evaluation Criteria Definitions

The following evaluation criteria definitions are provided to ensure alignment of applicants' proposals with the goals of the Catalyst RFP. Additionally, guiding questions are included that will support evaluators in their review process.

1.	<i>Extent to which the project advances the <b>Regional Table Principles</b>.</i>
	<p><b>Definition:</b></p> <p>Regional Principles include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Equity</b> requires identifying how the benefits and burdens of economic development and regional planning are distributed within and across the four-county region and local communities. It involves eliminating barriers and meeting basic needs, like language access, to enable active participation in various opportunities, such as economic and academic activities to name a few. Considerations might include whether the proposal benefits and is accessible to disadvantaged communities; includes consideration of community voice/feedback in the design or implementation of the project, etc.</li><li>● <b>Environmental Stewardship</b> prioritizes equitable economic development, aiming for a regenerative, carbon-neutral economy that meets the needs of diverse and disinvested communities; support the region's wildlands and natural resources, spanning from the Valley floor to Mountain communities. Considerations might include whether the project has climate-positive outcomes, helps reduce carbon emissions, supports our natural and working lands, and upholds principles of environmental justice by not perpetuating harm or disparities.</li><li>● <b>Good jobs</b> are jobs that provide living wages, health and retirement benefits, consistent work hours, safe working conditions, promote career ladders, ongoing training and accessible educational opportunities, and opportunities to organize. Considerations might include whether jobs created offer compensation to meet basic needs, promote financial security, foster equitable access to career ladders, etc.</li><li>● <b>Strong and Resilient Economy</b> will support diverse industries, relevant to the needs and resources of the region; stand against external challenges like economic downturns, climate change and ensure stability and sustainability;</li></ul>

	<p>and support workers, hire and train a diverse workforce, and prioritize a climate-forward economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Data Informed</b> considers the use of data to make informed and strategic decisions. Considerations might include the reliability and validity of data sources used; how data was used to develop project's objectives, etc.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What regional principles are met through this project and how?</li> <li>● How does the proposal ensure equitable access and outcomes for all, particularly disadvantaged communities?</li> <li>● How does the proposal minimize harm to the environment and promote sustainability?</li> <li>● How does the proposal support the creation of good jobs and workforce development?</li> <li>● How does the project impact community health, including any negative consequences from environmental pollutants to air, land, and water? Are there any disproportionate impacts on communities of color?</li> <li>● How does the proposal strengthen the local economy and address economic challenges?</li> <li>● How does the proposal use data to make decisions and adapt as needed?</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Support the Valley CERF regional framework to build a “Community-Led, Climate Forward Economy” by advancing one or more priority areas: Responsible Food and Ag Systems, Circular Manufacturing, Climate Solutions, One Water, Broadband, Education and Skill Building; Small Business and Microenterprise for the climate economy; and Community Health.</b></p> <p><b>Definition:</b> The Valley CERF Coalition is setting out to <b>build a “Community-Led, Climate-Forward Economy”</b> that catalyzes inclusive, regional economic development. The Coalition has identified the following themes based on our first year of engagement, research, and discovery: Responsible Food and Ag Systems, Circular Manufacturing, Climate Solutions, One Water, Broadband, Education and Skill Building; Small Business and Microenterprise for the climate economy; and Community Health.</p> <p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the proposal address or support one of the eight focus areas?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specific actions does the proposal outline to advance priority areas?</li> </ul>
3.	<p><b><i>Demonstrate the potential to attract additional funding from local, state, or federal governments; philanthropy; or private investors.</i></b></p> <p><b>Definition:</b> One of the State goals of the Catalyst Program is to <b>maximize funding opportunities</b> for the region. By capitalizing on federal, state, and private investments, <b>the State hopes to enable CA Jobs First-aligned projects to compete for funding beyond the lifetime of the program.</b></p> <p>The aim is to secure and utilize funding effectively and ensure the long-term sustainability of initiatives beyond the program's duration, ultimately benefiting the region and its residents.</p> <p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal list specific funding sources?</li> <li>• What are the applicant's plans for getting financial support to keep the project going once the Catalyst funds have been spent?</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b><i>Demonstrate use of relevant data, such as the baseline data provided in the coalition's <a href="#">Regional Plan, Part 1</a>, to inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of the project.</i></b></p> <p><b>Definition:</b> The State requires that <b>effective strategic planning efforts must be grounded in evidence.</b> This includes data about the region, resident's current circumstances, and the major forces shaping those circumstances. Applications may use a combination of quantitative and qualitative supporting data as applicable from a variety of reliable sources.</p> <p>By grounding strategies in data, the Valley CERF Coalition is challenging the status-quo, and <b>ensuring that regional efforts are well-informed and aligned with the real needs and conditions of our community.</b></p> <p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal include relevant data to support the need for the project, a gap that is being addressed, or efficacy of the proposed methods/approach?</li> <li>• Can the proposal demonstrate a clear connection between the data used and the project's goals, objectives, and strategies?</li> <li>• Does the project propose mechanisms for evaluation to assess the effectiveness of strategies and potential impact?</li> </ul>

5.	<i>Demonstrate <b>strong partnerships</b> and collaborations to maximize project impact.</i>
	Definition: The Valley CERF Coalition values strong partnerships and collaborations. This is important because it indicates the potential for the project to <b>maximize impact by leveraging additional resources, accessing specialized knowledge, building credibility, expanding scope and reach, and ensuring long-term sustainability.</b>
	<p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Who are your project partners, and how do they enhance the project's effectiveness towards regional goals?</li> <li>● Are all essential partners included for the project's success?</li> <li>● How do partners' skills and collaboration contribute to the project's success, and does the partnership encourage trust and equitable participation?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>Linked here is a <a href="#">Project Inventory</a> with potential projects that have been shared with the Central Valley Community Foundation. We encourage Catalyst RFP Applicants to review this resource and connect with partners across the region for partnership and collaboration. Additionally, if you would like to list your project here, please complete the following <a href="#">Project Collaboration Google Form</a>.</i></p>
6.	<i>Support the unique <b>aspirations and/or meaningfully address the felt needs of our disinvested and disadvantaged communities.</b></i>
	<b>Definition:</b> The State requires that at least 40% of funds <b>provide direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to disinvested communities</b> ; applicants will need to identify and explain benefits in their applications.
	<p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Using the <a href="#">Cal Enviro Screen Map</a>, is the proposed project mainly designed to improve conditions for communities that are struggling the most?</li> <li>● What specific measures does the proposal outline to support or address the aspirations and needs of these communities in a meaningful way?</li> </ul>
7.	<i>Show <b>responsible use of funds</b> and reasonable costs through a detailed budget.</i>
	<b>Definition:</b> To use State funding, the State requires <b>detailed information on the use of funds and reasonable costs through a detailed budget.</b>

	<p>This will ensure accountability for how funds will be used, demonstrate that funds will be used responsibly, and establish credibility for the applicant if they can convey their ability to plan and manage their budget effectively.</p> <p>A detailed budget will also support the Regional Table when reviewing projects and assessing whether the proposed costs/expenses are justified and reasonable.</p> <p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Did the applicant provide a detailed budget?</li> <li>● Does the budget seem reasonable, given the scope of work?</li> <li>● Does the budget stay within the 10% limit for administrative costs?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>Catalyst RFP applications that are highly ranked and proceed to the second phase of review, will be contacted, and asked to submit a detailed budget narrative and provide information on their finance systems and processes.</i></p>
8.	<p><b>Demonstrate <i>project feasibility and importance.</i></b></p> <p><b>Definition:</b> A feasible project is one that can be <b>successfully completed within the grant term and is achievable given the circumstances and available resources.</b> A project’s importance can be assessed by considering <b>how the project may impact our region’s inclusive economic development, and lead to changes that support equity, good jobs, and environmental stewardship.</b></p> <p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is the project feasible given the proposed budget, partners, timeline, and objectives?</li> <li>● Does the project contribute to increasing equity, access to opportunities, quality jobs, a strong economy, and climate-positive solutions?</li> <li>● If the project goals were successfully completed, would it have a meaningful impact on our region’s inclusive, regional economic development?</li> <li>● What important problem does your project solve for the region?</li> </ul>
9.	<p><b>Alignment with State and Federal policies and climate goals such as:</b> <a href="#">Executive Order N-16-22</a>, <a href="#">Racial Equity Executive Order</a>, <a href="#">Sustainable Groundwater Management Act</a>, <a href="#">Executive Order N-82-20</a>, <a href="#">California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan</a>, and <a href="#">Justice40 guidelines</a>. See Resources below for more information.</p>

**Definition:** The State requires that projects adhere to state and federal policies and program specific Justice40 guidelines. This is important because many funding opportunities are linked to government policies. If an applicant can show alignment with government policies, the likelihood of future funding is greater than if no such alignment exists.

**Guiding Questions:**

- Does the applicant indicate whether the application aligns with government policies and goals?
- Does this project comply with Justice40 federal guidelines designed to ensure that benefits are provided to communities that have been historically underserved and marginalized?
- How does the proposal's alignment with government policies and climate goals enhance its potential for securing future funding opportunities and contributing to broader sustainability and equity objectives?