



Special Meeting Agenda  
Wednesday, April 10, 2024  
1250 Main Street  
El Centro, CA 92243  
12:00 P.M.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST ADVISEMENT**

**WDB members please be advised:** *If an item on the meeting agenda relates to the provision of services by you, your immediate family, the entity you represent, or any person who has made \$250 in campaign contributions to you during the last 12 months, or if approval or disapproval of an agenda item would have a foreseeable material affect on an economic interest of you, your immediate family, or the entity you represent, then please follow these procedures: When the agenda item is first introduced, please immediately announce that you are recusing yourself from participating in the agenda item, and then refrain from discussing, voting on, or otherwise influencing the WDB’s consideration of the agenda item. Supporting documentation is available for public review at the Imperial County Workforce Development Board Office.*

- 1. **Call to Order**
  - a. Pledge of Allegiance
  - b. Conflict of Interest forms
- 2. **Discussion of Agenda**
  - a. Items to be pulled from Agenda.
  - b. Approval of Meeting Agenda
- 3. **Approval of Minutes for February 28, 2024 ..... pg. 3-5**

**ACTION AGENDA**

- 4. Discussion/Action to approve Lithium Valley Workforce and Economic Development Needs Assessment funding award at a cost not to exceed \$640,908 with the Rand Corporation subject to successful negotiations.....pg. 6-34
- 5. Discussion/Action to approve attendance at the California Workforce Association WORKCON Rancho Mirage from May 28 – May 31, 2024 .....pg. 35

**INFORMATIONAL AGENDA**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** *This is an opportunity for members of the public to address the Board on any subject matter within the Board’s jurisdiction, but not an item on the agenda. Each speaker should complete and submit a “Public Comment Request to Speak” form to the ICWDB Chair. When addressing the Board, state your name for the record prior to providing your comments. Individuals will be given three (3) minutes to address the committee.*

- 6. **Committee Members’ Reports:**
  - a. Board of Supervisors
  - b. ICWDB Chair Report
  - c. Director’s Report

This WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

- d. Business Services Unit Report
- e. Budget and Finance Committee
  - i. February 2024 Financial Statement ..... pg. 36
- f. Business and Planning Committee
- g. One Stop Policy Oversight Committee
- h. Youth Committee

7. **Meeting adjournment**

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**Next ICWD Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday, May 29, 2024, at 12:00 p.m.**



**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

February 28, 2024  
12:00 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Elvira Anaya, Ruth Duarte, Erik Freeman, Mark Gran, Jason Jackson, Nicolas Jimenez, Timothy Kelley, Edwin Obergfell, Darrel Pechtl and Robert Rubio.

**ABSENT:** Daniel Machain, Cesar Rodriguez, Efrain Silva, and Annie Taamilo.

**GUEST:** David Baquerizo, Adrian Gonzalez, Ricardo Martinez, Gabriel Aguirre, Vivian Perez, Dania Luna, Gustavo Alatorre (via Zoom), Jason Vogel and Dave Duddy.

**STAFF:** Lilliana Sandoval, Tim Druihet, Jeff Burquist, Veronica Curiel, Allison Duran, Angelica Pacheco, Francisca German, Camilo Garcia, Priscilla Lopez, Roman Hernandez, Carlos Lopez, and Martin Robledo.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

1. **Call to order:** ICWDB Board Chair Erik Freeman, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. with a quorum present.
  - a. Conflict of Interest Forms: Mr. Obergfell on item # 4
2. **Discussion of Agenda:**
  - a. Items to be pulled from Agenda: None
  - b. Approval of Meeting Agenda: **MOTION** by Mr. Jackson, Second by Mr. Rubio, to approve the meeting agenda and include emergency agenda item # 6. Motion carried.
3. **Approval of Minutes for December 13, 2023:** **MOTION** by Ms. Anaya, Second by Mr. Obergfell, to approve minutes for December 13, 2023. Opposed: None. Abstained: None. Motion carried.

**ACTION AGENDA**

*Mr. Obergfell recused himself during discussion/action of item # 4.*

4. **Discussion/Action to approve release of WIOA Youth Program Services Request for Proposals for PY 24-25:**

Director Lopez provided an overview of the item and recommended approval. The release of the Request for Proposal for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program Services for program year 2024-2025 is to ensure the 14 WIOA

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***Discussion/Action to approve release of WIOA Youth Program Services Request for Proposals for PY 24-25 continued:***

Youth Program elements are made available to eligible youth in Imperial County. The services will be funded through the 2024-2025 WIOA Youth Allocation.

**MOTION** by Ms. Anaya, Seconded by Mr. Gran, to amend the request to include a funding contingency in the RFP under the Funding Available section and to approve the release of the WIOA Youth Program Services Request for the proposals of PY24-25. Opposed: None. Abstained: Edwin Oberfell. Motion carried.

*Mr. Oberfell stepped in after the discussion of item # 4.*

5. **Discussion/Action to approve release the increase of attendance at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals' 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference from May 20-22, 2024, in San Antonio, Texas:**

Director Lopez recommended approval to increase attendance at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals Conference from May 20-22, 2024, in San Antonio, Texas.

**MOTION** by Mr. Gran, Seconded by Ms. Duarte, to approve and amend the Board Members attendance request to 8 and a combination of Workforce Development Staff attendance request to 5, 13 in total to attend the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals' 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference from May 20-22, 2024, in San Antonio, Texas. Opposed: None. Abstained: None. Motion carried.

**EMERGENCY AGENDA**

6. **Discussion/Action to approve increase to Adult Work Experience allocation to an amount not to exceed \$488,462:**

Director Lopez provided an overview and recommended approval to authorize an increase of the Adult Work Experience allocation from \$266,434 to \$488,462 for PY 23-24.

Mr. Pechtl requested that in future requests, staff provide a complete cost breakdown and expenditure plan as backup for board review.

**MOTION** by Mr. Jackson, Seconded by Mr. Rubio, to increase the Adult Work Experience allocation from \$266,434 to \$488,462 for PY 23-24. Opposed: None. Abstained: None. Motion carried.

**Public Comments:**

New service providers Jason Vogel and Dave Duddy from Career Expansion gave a formal introduction and overview of their training program to the Board and attendees.

Mr. Tim Kelley from IV Economic Development Corp. provided an update on projects currently being worked on.

***Public Comments continued:***

Director Lopez introduced Gustavo Alatorre, EDD Regional Advisor, present at the meeting via zoom. Mr. Alatorre introduced himself to the board and attendees.

Ms. Perez from EQUUS provided an update on the LYFT project, coming soon to Imperial County. Nominated IVROP and invited others to join. Mr. T. Kelley and Ms. Anaya expressed interest.

Mr. Obergfell, Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program, provided updates on efforts being made for the 2024 Dancing with the Stars that is scheduled to be held on May 10, 2024.

**7. Committee Members' Reports:**

- a) Board of Supervisors: Board of Supervisor Michael Kelley reported the County of Imperial and Imperial Valley College Joint Press Conference Announcing New Lithium Training Programs meeting was postponed and mentioned the hire of the new Deputy CEO.
- b) ICWDB Chair Report: Mr. Freeman reported he continues to look for ways to further promote employment opportunities in the Imperial County.
- c) Director's Report: Director Lopez reported the mobile unit will be delivered on Thursday, February 29, 2024, roll out presentation details to follow and provided an update on the Lithium Valley Project.
- d) Business Services Unit Report: Mr. Lopez provided program(s) updates and reported on results of job fairs held in 2024 by Business Services Unit.
- e) Budget and Finance Committee: Mr. Freeman requested a cost breakdown to fully digitize the system as an effort to better assist disable and veterans. Ms. Duran provided an overview of the 2024 January financial statement.
- f) Business and Planning Committee: Mr. Burquist reported the next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2024 and that their last meeting was held on January 11, 2024.
- g) One Stop Policy Oversight Committee: Mr. Freeman reported the next meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2024.
- h) Youth Committee: Ms. Anaya reported the next meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2024.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 12:42 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting date is March 27, 2024.

**Imperial County Workforce Development Board  
Action Agenda Item 4**

**MEETING DATE:** April 10, 2024

**ITEM:** 4

**SUBJECT:** Discussion/Action to approve Lithium Valley Workforce and Economic Development Needs Assessment funding award at a cost not to exceed \$640,908 with the Rand Corporation subject to successful negotiations

**FROM:** Priscilla A. Lopez, ICWEDO Director

**RECOMMENDATION:**

ICWEDO Director recommends to award the RAND Corporation a contract not to exceed \$640,908 to conduct a Lithium Valley Workforce and Economic Development Needs Assessment (LVWEDA) for the period beginning May 1, 2024, and concluding June 30, 2025.

**BACKGROUND:**

On December 13, 2023, the ICWDB reviewed and approved the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a LVWEDA and officially released by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors on December 18, 2024. On December 19, 2023, the RFP was publicly released with a submittal deadline of March 1, 2024. A total of thirteen (13) proposals were received by the stated deadline.

On March 6, 2024, a RFP Scoring Orientation was held via Zoom with the Valley Works Evaluation Committee, which consisted of the following members:

**Organization**

Imperial County Board of Supervisors  
County of Imperial  
Controlled Thermal Resources  
Berkshire Hathaway/County of Imperial  
Imperial Valley College  
Imperial County Office of Education  
San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council  
IBEW Local 569  
Imperial Valley Food Bank  
Comite Civico del Valle  
Center for Employment Training  
Northwestern Mutual  
City of Holtville

**Member**

Ryan Kelly (Chairman)  
Miguel Figueroa  
Jim Turner  
Bari Beane  
Efrain Silva  
Todd Evangelist  
Kimberly Palacio  
Hector Meza  
Sara Griffin  
Christian Torres  
Elvira Anaya  
Erik Freeman  
Mike Goodsell

During the orientation, David Shinder, Professional Workforce Development Consultant, provided an overview of the 3 teams randomly formed and the proposals assigned to each team to discuss any potential conflict of interests. Additionally, the orientation covered the rating/scoring process and procedures in order to ensure clarity and consistency of the scoring process.

Following the orientation, staff distributed Proposals via email to each team assigned for review and scoring by a March 12<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 p.m. deadline.

On March 13, 2024, the Valley Works Steering Committee convened in-person to review all scores submitted for each proposal. The committee discussed scores to potentially identify any outliers in comparison to other scores. After identifying a few outliers, the committee made a decision to remove the top and bottom scores for each proposal to minimize variances. As a result, the scores were as follows:

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Round 1</b>
RAND Corporation	95.5
AECOM	92.5
Trailhead Strategies	91.5
Newmark	89
Catalyst	88
Lightcast	87.5
BW Research	84.5
Hatch	83.5
Deloitte Consulting	82.5
San Diego Regional Policy Innovation Center	79
Ernst & Young	77.5
Heartland Coalition	74.5
ECOnorthwest	71

The committee then decided to send out the top 4 proposals to the entire committee for a final review and scoring by March 19, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. The committee also decided that members would not rescore proposals already reviewed, and that the highest-scored proposal from the final review would be the formal recommendation for award.

Following a final review of scores submitted by the deadline, the scores were:

1. **RAND – 90.75/100**
2. Newmark – 89.67/100
3. AECOM – 88.5/100
4. Trailhead Strategies – 86.13

On March 22, a Notice of Intent to Award was posted on <https://www.iworkforce.com/funding-opportunities> announcing the ICWDB’s intent to enter into a Fixed Fee Contract with the RAND Corporation for the for the services solicited in the Request for Proposal. This notice triggered a five (5) working day window for Proposers to file an appeal, as outlined in the RFP, making the appeal deadline March 28, 2024, 5:00 p.m. No appeals were submitted. Therefore, the recommendation is to award the RAND Corporation a contract not to exceed \$640,908 to conduct a LVWEDA for the period beginning May 1, 2024, (or as soon as possible) and concluding June 30, 2025.

Approval of this item would allow ICWDB to initiate contract negotiations with RAND. Once successful negotiations are completed, it would allow the RAND Corporation to

begin an analysis focusing on the anticipated economic transformation in Imperial County. This projected change stems from the development of new local industries aimed at extracting lithium and other rare minerals, and the potential ripple effects on associated industries and businesses. The results will be a detailed report outlining the projected changes and offering specific recommendations to enable projected growth. These recommendations will serve as a roadmap for the county and its workforce to prepare for a significant shift in the economic landscape.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

\$640,908




**FORM A**  
**PROPOSAL COVER/SIGNATURE PAGE**

<b>Proposer Agency Name:</b> The RAND Corporation	
<b>Project Title:</b>	
Address: 1776 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401-3208	Telephone: 310-393-0411
	Fax: 310-393-4818
Contact Name/Title: Monika Lagaard, Contract Administrator	E-mail: mlagaard@rand.org
Type of Organization:	Proposed Budget: \$640,908
<input type="checkbox"/> For-profit organizations; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-profit organizations; <input type="checkbox"/> University <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development <input type="checkbox"/> Public agencies; and/or <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

<b>Collaborator Agency Name (Only applicable to Joint Proposals):</b>	
Address:	Telephone:
	Fax:
Contact Name/Title:	E-mail:
Type of Organization:	Proposed Budget: \$
<input type="checkbox"/> For-profit organizations; <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit organizations; <input type="checkbox"/> University <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development <input type="checkbox"/> Public agencies; and/or <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

A.	Proposer Signature (for "Lead Agency" if a Joint Proposal)
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To the best of my knowledge and belief, all data in this application are true and correct. The Governing body of the applicant has duly authorized the document and the applicant will comply with all contractual requirements as dictated by the Department of Labor, State of California and/or ICWDB if awarded.	
Name of Authorized Representative: Monika Lagaard	Title: Contract Administrator
Signature of Authorized Representative: 	Date: 2/29/2024

<b>B.</b>	<b>Collaborator Information (Only applicable to Joint Proposals)</b>
To the best of my knowledge and belief, all data in this application are true and correct. The Governing body of the applicant has duly authorized the document and the applicant will comply with all contractual requirements as dictated by the Department of Labor, State of California and/or ICWDB if awarded.	
Typed Name of Authorized Representative:	Title:
Signature of Authorized Representative	Date:

If the proposal includes more than one (1) collaborator (i.e., financial partner), attach additional pages to include "Collaborator Information" and "Collaborator Signature" for this agency(ies).

**FORM B  
PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

**Empowering Imperial County: A Comprehensive Workforce and Economic Development Strategy for Harnessing the Lithium Valley Opportunity**

**Part 1 – Capabilities and Experience**

1. Describe the organization or firm submitting the proposal, along with its capabilities. Describe your primary areas of expertise.

RAND is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier, and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest. The team has extensive experience in workforce and economic development with a proven track of successful prior work in these fields.

As a division of RAND, Education and Labor (E&L) is dedicated to improving education and expanding economic opportunities for all through research and analysis. RAND Education and Labor researchers—over 200 strong—address key policy issues in U.S. and international education systems and labor markets, from pre-kindergarten to retirement planning. RAND E&L has a strong record of research in the topic areas of education and workforce policy; education technology; postsecondary education, and cost-benefit analysis.

Five features distinguish RAND Education & Labor from other research organizations:

- **Unusually high bar for objective, publicly released research.** RAND is committed to ensuring that our research products and services reflect our core values of quality and objectivity. Our quality assurance process and publications policy are central to that commitment.
- **Exceptionally strong research methods.** RAND works at the cutting edge of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Known for rigorous impact studies, RAND has a long history of conducting randomized controlled trials that impact education and labor policy and practice. When experimental designs are not feasible, we employ the best available quasi-experimental methods such as regression discontinuity, machine learning, synthetic controls, instrumental variables analysis, interrupted time series, and event-study analysis.
- **Forward focus with a long-term view.** RAND identifies and defines problems early. RAND studies programs that are also focused on long-term impacts, such as the Appalachia Partnership Initiative’s K-12 STEM and workforce development programs aiming to impact the next generation of the regional workforce.
- **Outstanding dissemination of findings.** RAND’s unique qualities help us to carry out strong and relevant research for our clients and the public. We are equally committed to communicating this work and have the tools to do so well.

- **Well-developed infrastructure for research.** In addition to our researchers, RAND's infrastructure provides ample capacity to meet clients' research needs, including extensive computing operations, the RAND library system, and RAND's statistics groups.

The research team, as whole, reflects the necessary skills and expertise for this needs assessment. The members and their backgrounds are as follows:

Dr. Elie Alhajjar is a senior scientist at RAND and will serve as the principal investigator on the project. He has significant project management expertise as lead PI on projects sponsored by million-dollar grants from federal agencies and private-sector entities. His technical expertise spans the fields of machine learning, data analysis, STEM workforce development, and mathematical modeling. Dr. Alhajjar will provide both administrative and intellectual leadership for the project. He will also co-lead the quantitative tasks with Dr. Roer as well as the final report with Dr. Nguyen.

Dr. Peter Nguyen is a policy researcher at RAND and will be the co-PI on the project. His research is focused on identifying, understanding, and addressing, primarily racial, inequality in the postsecondary education context. Past work includes developing and administering a survey on diversity in nursing education and a case study of how the culture of Historically Black Colleges and Universities promotes more inclusive curriculum and pedagogy in STEM. He is currently conducting a longitudinal study on how low-income/first-generation college students, from a large and urban community college district, pursue their pathway to a four-year degree in STEM. Dr. Nguyen will provide intellectual leadership for the project. He will also co-lead the qualitative tasks with Dr. Kramer. Dr. Nguyen will also co-lead the final report with Dr. Alhajjar.

Dr. Elizabeth Hastings Roer is an economist at RAND and a former U.S. Air Force officer. Her recent work focuses on defense acquisitions and the defense industrial base as well as veteran transition. Liz has employed a variety of econometric and statistical methodologies in her work, with heavy emphasis on causal inference for cross-sectional and panel data. Dr. Roer will co-lead the quantitative tasks with Dr. Alhajjar and contribute to the final report.

Dr. Margaret Whitley is a policy researcher at RAND. Trained in population health science, her work examines health equity for multiple topical areas, including maternal and child health, complementary and integrative healthcare (CIH) and occupational/worker health. She applies a variety of research methods, including quantitative analysis with secondary datasets, community-partnered research, and qualitative approaches. Margaret is leading work to examine working conditions and racial/ethnic diversity among CIH providers. She is also studying work environment among Veterans in their civilian employment. Recently, Margaret was part of a team that studied how CIH providers can contribute to a public health crisis response. Other previous RAND work includes leading the design and implementation of two health promotion text message interventions for community-based projects and managing a

national data collection effort for a Center of Excellence focused on chronic pain and CIH. Dr. Whitley will support the qualitative tasks and contribute to the final report.

Dr. Jenna Kramer is a policy researcher whose recent areas of focus include credit for prior learning initiatives, financial aid, postsecondary student basic needs insecurity and support, foundational literacy and numeracy skills development, career-oriented education and skills development in secondary CTE initiatives, and student success, particularly at community and technical colleges. Jenna was a college counselor at a public high school; she worked with students and their families as they explored options for education and career through coursework, extracurricular activities, summer learning and work, service, and travel. Dr. Kramer will co-lead the qualitative tasks with Dr. Nguyen and contribute to the final report.

Lester Ledgister Jr. is a policy analyst specializing in industrial organizational psychology. He has experience in assessment development and administration, career development and coaching, job analysis, leadership, organizational development, project management, recruiting, and training, particularly in the realms of qualitative collection and research. Lester's research interests include career development, postsecondary education, employee engagement, employee well-being, healthcare disparities, life transitions, organizational culture and climate, individual and community health (emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual), social networks, talent management, and workforce development. Mr. Ledgister Jr. will support the qualitative task and contribute to the final report.

AK Keskin is an assistant policy researcher and fellow in the Research, Analysis, and Design stream at Pardee RAND Graduate School. His research interests include socio-emotional learning, noncognitive skills, experimental/behavioral policy research, teacher/principal quality, student outcomes, and migration. Mr. Keskin will support both the quantitative and qualitative tasks and contribute to the final report.

2. If the proposer (lead agency) is collaborating with one or more organizations and/or firms, describe the capabilities and experience of each partner.

N/A.

3. Describe the specific experience of your organization or firm in providing services of the type requested by this RFP. Indicate what the similarities are and how your organization or firm executed a plan of action to achieve the desired results.

RAND conducts studies to identify optimal ways to prepare tomorrow's workers to compete in the globally connected workplace, to enhance the skills of current workers, and to integrate traditionally underserved populations into the workforce. For example, RAND researchers assessed the development, implementation, and efficacy of the Marcellus ShaleNET program, a unique partnership between employers in the energy sector and a consortium of colleges in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and West Virginia. Findings from this [study](#) were used to assist ShaleNET meet their workforce development

goals as well as to inform future models of other sub-baccalaureate STEM credential programs. In another example related to the American energy workforce, RAND completed a 3-part [study](#) in 2020 that focuses on STEM education and the labor market in the Appalachia region — defined as the intersection of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia — with a focus on the mining and extraction industry. The first two volumes explore how local labor markets are adjusting to increases in demand for workers to fill STEM positions and assess the local talent pool of high school and college graduates with skills and in fields that could be utilized in the growing regional STEM labor market. The final volume focuses on what STEM fields workers in the mining and extraction industry come from.

In 2019, RAND completed a workforce development [study](#) for the City of New Orleans, Louisiana that examined the implementation, effectiveness, and cost-benefits of the Career Pathways program, designed to help lower-skilled, unemployed, and underemployed individuals train for and find skilled jobs in advanced manufacturing and energy, medical care, and information technology. The research team found that the program was reaching most of its goals in improving individuals' wage growth, job satisfaction, and the program's return on investment. The team also noted ways that the program can improve, such as in providing more hands-on experience for trainees (Effectiveness of Screened, Demand-Driven Job Training Programs for Disadvantaged Workers).

Productive labor markets are the backbone of strong communities. Labor markets are most effective when there is a sustained demand for goods and services, when businesses have incentive to invest in innovative means to provide those goods and services, and when decisionmakers ensure that such systems of supply and demand operate in ways that support the needs of everyone in the community. RAND conducts intensive research on labor markets to help decisionmakers understand how to utilize data to inform labor market and workforce policymaking.

4. Briefly describe why your organization or firm is ideally suited for this type of project and what unique skills your team will bring to the project.

For more than two decades, RAND researchers have conducted studies related to whether labor markets are functioning efficiently, and how they can be enhanced to provide opportunities for all. We have deep experience on both sides of the labor market: our work on the supply side examines human capital and workforce development, while our work on the demand side seeks to understand what drives firms' choices about how many and what types of, workers to employ. Given prior work, RAND is well suited to act on this opportunity and bring the following unique skills and capacities to this project:

- **Diverse Expertise and Experiences.** Projects, like this needs assessment, require a research team that can identify and understand the many, overlapping and intricate issues of workforce development as a result of regional economic shifts. The RAND research team is comprised of experts who will approach this project from multiple perspectives of economics, psychology, education, sociology and

public health. We will also draw on our expertise in evaluating regional and economic and workforce training needs, and coordinating with employers, schools, governments, and other stakeholders to develop meaningful recommendations.

- **Inclusive Methods.** The RAND research team will employ methods of data analysis and collection that are appropriate for the project’s objectives and desired outcomes. This approach is also buttressed by our capacity to tailor our data collection in ways that are accessible, engaging, and inclusive for all community members.
- **High-quality and User-friendly Dissemination Products.** RAND has the capacity to disseminate research findings for a wide range of stakeholders, including for those who do not speak English. Alongside a formal report, we are able to incorporate engaging visuals and develop infographs or briefs for easy consumption. We are also prepared to present research findings to different stakeholder groups which involves being sensitive to environment (e.g., in-person vs. Online, holding a presentation at a community center), time (e.g., providing a range of dates and times that respect community members’ schedules and obligations) and interaction (e.g., developing a presentation that allows folks to be a part of the dialogue).

## **Part 2 – Approach to Conducting the Needs Assessment, Developing the Report, and Providing Recommendations**

5. Describe your overall approach to conducting the needs assessment project.

This is the crux of the project, and our proposal’s approach will flow via the following sequence: identify the multiple stakeholders, assess the current state of the Valley (pre-Lithium), analyze the potential changes implied by Lithium extraction, determine the gaps between the planned and the current states, and provide recommendations to fill those gaps and achieve a smooth and equitable transition.

### **I. Identify stakeholders**

Based on our preliminary assessment of the Lithium opportunity, we identify four main stakeholders that will guide our work. First, the drivers of the Lithium extraction industry are the companies that have vested interest in operating their plants in the Valley. For the time being, there are three main ones: Berkshire Hathaway Energy Renewables, Energy Source Minerals, and Controlled Thermal Resources. These enterprises will provide the primary Lithium-related job opportunities in the area and will help establish adjacent industries along the way.

Second, the educational institutions in the San Diego area in general and the Imperial Valley in particular will be the major contributors to training the workforce needed to fill the jobs created by primary and secondary industries. Among such institutions, we identified San Diego State University, Imperial Valley College, Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program, Imperial County Office of Education, together with other school districts.

Third, the local community is at the center of this work as residents of the area are expected to reap the benefits of any economic development, and at the same time, may suffer from unintended consequences of this economic shift. Efforts should be consciously made to ensure this community will prosper as the opportunities expand around it. Finally, the local and state government play an important role in supporting the economic development, monitoring the evolution of the different industries, and protecting the local population from any intended or unintended harms.

## **II. Current state of the Valley**

Once the stakeholders are identified, the next step will be to assess the current state of the Imperial County at four different levels: workforce, industries, jobs, and educational services. We will leverage the publicly available datasets, and if needed, reach out to local government officials and business groups for additional support. Such datasets include the Lightcast report, U.S. Census Bureau data, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), and Labor Market Information Resources and Data. Moreover, recent reports will be investigated for a broader understanding of the economic profile of the region like the Imperial County Regional Profile and the Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation (IVEDC) report,

### **1. Workforce**

- **Demographics:** Analyze the age, gender, ethnicity, and other demographic factors of the local workforce to understand its composition and diversity.
- **Skills and Education Levels:** Evaluate the current skill sets, educational qualifications, and certifications available within the workforce, identifying areas of strength and previous successes.
- **Migration Patterns:** Examine trends in workforce migration, including both in-migration of skilled workers and out-migration of residents seeking opportunities elsewhere, to assess the net impact on the local talent pool.
- **Worker Readiness:** Assess the readiness of the workforce to adapt to new technologies, industries, and job requirements, considering factors such as digital literacy and soft skills.

### **2. Industries**

- **Sector Analysis:** Identify and analyze key sectors within Imperial County, focusing on their economic impact, growth trends, and employment numbers. This includes both established industries and emerging sectors.
- **Business Ecosystem:** Evaluate the number and size of businesses within each sector, understanding the ecosystem of small and medium enterprises versus larger corporations.
- **Supply Chain Dynamics:** Understand the local and regional supply chains that support these industries, including any dependencies or vulnerabilities that could affect economic resilience.
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** Identify the specific challenges faced by these industries, such as regulatory hurdles or skill shortages, as well as opportunities for growth or diversification.

### **3. Jobs**



- **Employment Trends:** Analyze current employment trends, including job growth or decline in specific sectors, wage levels, and job quality indicators such as benefits and stability.
- **Job Requirements:** Detail the qualifications, skills, and experience required for the most common and critical jobs within the county, highlighting any mismatches with the current workforce capabilities.
- **Vacancies and Hiring Needs:** Assess the current job openings, the duration of vacancies, and the sectors with the highest demand for workers, providing insight into the immediate needs of employers.
- **External Workforce Dependency:** Examine the extent to which industries rely on workers commuting from outside the county, and the implications for local employment strategies. Special focus will be on the proximity of the County to the U.S.-Mexico border and the workforce dynamics therein.

#### **4. Educational Services**

- **Educational Institutions:** Inventory the local and regional educational institutions, including K-12, vocational schools, community colleges, and universities, and their capacity to support the workforce needs.
- **Programs and Pathways:** Evaluate the existing programs and career pathways offered, particularly those aligned with local industry needs.
- **Workforce Development Initiatives:** Review workforce development initiatives and partnerships between educational institutions, industries, and government agencies aimed at closing skills gaps and preparing students for the workforce.
- **Access and Barriers:** Assess the accessibility of educational services and barriers to participation, including financial, transportation, and informational hurdles that potential students face.

### **III. Potential state of the Valley**

After establishing a clear understanding of the current workforce landscape in the Valley, our focus will shift to studying the potential changes to the economy and the workforce resulting from the Lithium Valley opportunity. In particular, we aim to analyze the expected jobs to be created by the Lithium extraction, the secondary industries induced by Lithium, and the broad economic impacts of this expansion. To this end, we will compile information on Lithium-induced opportunities from news articles, California governor's office, Assembly Bills, as well as meetings, notices and documents regarding the Lithium Valley Commission. In addition to that, our team will do a deep dive on other national and international Lithium extraction frameworks to infer potential similarities with the Imperial Valley case.

#### **Expected Jobs Created by Lithium Extraction**

- **Direct Employment:** Analyze the types of jobs directly associated with Lithium extraction, including technical positions such as geologists, mining engineers, and environmental scientists, as well as operational roles like machinery operators, technicians, and maintenance staff. This analysis should consider the skills, qualifications, and training necessary for these positions.

- **Wage and Employment Conditions:** Assess the expected wage levels, benefits, and working conditions for jobs in Lithium extraction, considering how these factors will contribute to economic growth and quality of life improvements for local residents.

### **Secondary Industries Induced by Lithium**

- **Manufacturing and Processing:** Beyond extraction, Lithium processing and manufacturing can spur the development of battery manufacturing, renewable energy storage solutions, and electric vehicle components. Analyze the potential for these industries to set up in Imperial County, considering factors such as proximity to raw materials, infrastructure, and logistics.
- **Service and Support Industries:** The growth of Lithium extraction and processing will most likely increase the demand for a range of support services, including logistics, maintenance, and professional services (e.g., environmental consulting, legal, and financial services). Assessing the capacity and readiness of the local service sector to meet these needs is crucial.
- **R&D and Innovation:** Consider the potential for research and development activities related to Lithium and battery technologies to emerge in the region. This could include partnerships with universities and research institutions, fostering innovation and high-value job creation.

### **Economic Impacts of Lithium Valley Expansion**

- **Economic Diversification:** Evaluate how the Lithium Valley opportunity might diversify the local economy, reducing dependency on traditional industries and increasing resilience to economic fluctuations.
- **Investment Attraction:** Analyze the potential for attracting national and international investment into the region, not only in Lithium extraction and processing but also in related sectors such as technology and renewable energy.
- **Multiplier Effect:** Assess the broader economic multiplier effects of the Lithium industry, including increased demand for local goods and services, improvements in infrastructure, and enhanced overall economic activity in the region.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Considerations:** Consider the environmental impacts of Lithium extraction and processing, including water usage, land disturbance, and potential pollution. Assessing how these challenges can be mitigated is crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the industry.

## **IV. Gaps and Challenges**

Given the current skills and jobs in the Valley and the projected needs for the multiple industries, identify the gaps that exist at the moment or may appear in the near future. Analysis of these gaps helps in pinpointing specific areas where the local workforce may lack the necessary skills or qualifications needed for the upcoming job opportunities. Existing challenges will be synthesized from multiple sources such as the Southern Border CERF Collaborative, previous health impact assessments, the Imperial Valley Food Bank, and other local documentations.

Paired with our quantitative analyses of the current and potential states of the valley, we will conduct qualitative data collection to capture insights on the gaps and challenges from stakeholders, including local residents. Qualitative data collection activities include:

- One-on-one interviews with representatives from industry and educational institutions; we expect to schedule 3-5 interviews per entity across the identified instruction and educational institutional stakeholders (additional participants may be added based on the recommendation of the funder). Participants from industry will include individuals from the C-suite, human resources/recruitment. Participants from educational institutions include district leaders, campus administrators (e.g., Dean of Workforce Development), instructors. Our questions will be focused on current capacities and future needs from the perspectives of industry and education. Interviews will take no more than 60-minutes and will occur via ZOOM. Follow up interviews with these individuals are a possibility depending on the nature of their involvement for workforce development.
- Townhall meetings and focus groups with local residents. Insights from the community are crucial to this work. We propose hosting two townhall meetings where community members can share their perspectives on the current workforce and the resources needed to prepare the community to engage in this shifting economy. We will have a researcher, who speaks both English and Spanish, facilitate these townhall meetings, while another researcher will take notes of the topics discussed, including areas of agreement and disagreement. Each townhall meeting will take no more than 60-minutes and be held in space that is agreed upon with a local representative. We will also work with the county and other stakeholders to promote these townhall meetings. After each townhall meeting, we will invite those who either couldn't make it to the townhall meeting or have additional perspectives to share to attend one of two focus groups. These focus groups will facilitate dialogue between community members on the topic of workforce development; we find that these dialogues often unearth insights about community context that are difficult to capture in quantitative data and one-on-one interviews. The focus groups will take no more than 90-minutes, and participants will be compensated for their time (\$50/person). In total there will be four focus groups (two per townhall meeting).

### **Technical and Specialized Skills Gaps**

- **Advanced Manufacturing Skills:** As the Lithium industry and related manufacturing sectors expand, there will be a heightened demand for workers skilled in advanced manufacturing techniques lacking in the current workforce.
- **Environmental and Geological Sciences:** Lithium extraction and processing require specialized knowledge in geology, hydrology, environmental science, and related fields to ensure sustainable practices. There needs to be an analysis of the shortage of professionals with these qualifications in the local area.
- **Renewable Energy Technologies:** With the growth of industries related to renewable energy storage and electric vehicles, there is a need for skills in designing, manufacturing, and maintaining renewable energy systems and components.

### **Soft Skills and Cross-Functional Skills Gaps**

- **Project Management and Leadership:** The expansion of new industries necessitates a workforce proficient in project management, leadership, and team coordination, especially for supervisory and managerial roles.
- **Digital Literacy and IT Skills Gaps:** With the digitization of industries, skills in IT support, cybersecurity, and data analysis become crucial. The current workforce may not fully meet the demand for these rapidly evolving skill sets.

### **Vocational and Technical Training Gaps**

- **Vocational Skills:** There is a potential gap in vocational skills specific to Lithium extraction, battery manufacturing, and related fields. This includes operational skills for new machinery, maintenance techniques, and safety protocols.
- **Certifications and Licenses:** Certain roles in the Lithium and renewable energy sectors may require specific certifications or licenses that are not currently widespread among the local workforce.

### **Educational Services and Workforce Development Gaps**

- **Alignment of Educational Programs:** Local educational institutions may not yet offer programs or courses directly aligned with the emerging needs of the Lithium and secondary industries, leading to a mismatch between graduate skills and industry requirements.
- **Access to Continuing Education and Training:** For the existing workforce, there may be gaps in access to continuing education, upskilling, and reskilling opportunities, particularly in rural or underserved areas.

## **V. Recommendations**

By systematically identifying and addressing the above gaps, Imperial County can prepare its workforce for the demands of the emerging lithium economy and ensure that local residents benefit from the job opportunities and economic growth that Lithium Valley presents. Our work will culminate in a concrete and tangible plan of action that will serve as a roadmap for the next 3-5 years in the Valley. To bridge these gaps, a multi-pronged strategy is needed, and our team will work on providing a wealth of recommendations for a plan of action; below are some of them.

- **Strengthening Educational Infrastructure:** Enhance existing educational programs and develop new curricula in partnership with industry to cover technical, vocational, and soft skills relevant to the lithium and secondary industries.
- **Workforce Development Initiatives:** Implement targeted workforce development programs, including apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and professional development courses, to upskill and reskill the existing workforce.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Foster collaborations between government, industry, and educational institutions to ensure workforce development efforts are closely aligned with economic development goals.
- **Community and Economic Development Policies:** Develop policies that support lifelong learning, digital inclusion, and equitable access to education and training opportunities across the county.

- Environmental/health issues mitigation: Reduce potential negative impacts associated with industrial expansion and ensure sustainable development that benefits both the economy and the community's well-being.
- Comparison with similar locations: Comparing Imperial County's Lithium Valley opportunity with similar locations that have experienced the development of resource-based industries can provide valuable insights into potential economic, workforce, environmental, and social impacts. Tentative candidates here are the Permian Basin in Texas, the San Joaquin Valley in California, and the Clayton Valley in Nevada.

6. How will your organization or firm make use of myriad existing reports, information summaries, and data analyses?

As a first phase in our work, the team will mine all the existing reports and data repositories related to the Imperial County opportunity herein. These include U.S. Census Bureau data, labor market reports, California vocational training programs, transportation and logistics maps, as well as other information provided by the County. We will develop an inventory of these information and data sources, indicating their purposes, the measures they possess, the insights that can be gleaned from them and their limitations; this will be cross walked against the project objectives and outcomes. We will then share this inventory crosswalk with ICWDB to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the list of data sources prior to determining our analytic strategies.

7. To supplement existing information, what data gathering processes will be used?

In addition to the existing data, the team will supplement the study with other data sources. Firm-level data (and data on industries that have few firms at the county level) is excluded from the economic statistics, so it would take some more investigating to fill in details. To do so, our team will reach out to the corporations intending to work in or around the Lithium industry to collect relevant job information from their respective human resources and planning offices. Datasets like Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) and O\*NET will be leveraged to augment the data made available by local authorities. Engagements with three types of stakeholders will take place to gather the missing information: Lithium industries, educational institutions, and local communities. First, the team will conduct systematic interviews with industry leaders to gauge the anticipated level of employment they plan to conduct. Second, meetings with the regional schools/community colleges/universities will occur to better understand the short-term plan for new programs and certificates initiatives. Third, the team will organize town halls at the community level to poll local residents on their demands, concerns, and expectations from the Lithium opportunity.

8. To what extent will your firm engage with key workforce and economic development stakeholders in the county?

Engagements with three types of stakeholders will take place to gather the missing information: Lithium industries, educational institutions, and local communities. First, the team will conduct systematic interviews with industry leaders to gauge the anticipated

level of employment they plan to conduct. Second, meetings with the regional schools/community colleges/universities will occur to better understand the short-term plan for new programs and certificates initiatives. Third, the team will organize town halls at the community level to poll local residents on their demands, concerns, and expectations from the Lithium opportunity.

9. How will your approach to the project take into account the interest of communities and individuals throughout Imperial County?

Communities are a main stakeholder in our proposed work. Two town halls will be administered in local places and participants will be recruited to engage in systematic conversations and workshops. After each event, we will also hold two focus groups (a total of four focus groups) for residents to be in dialogue with one another about the Lithium discovery and the needs of the community—we believe that this approach will help highlight areas of agreement, as well as where perspectives may diverge. The County residents’ perspectives from the townhall meetings and the subsequent focus groups will be aggregated in the recommendation plan and leveraged in the final report as a main factor in moving the Lithium opportunity forward.

10. How will your approach and processes lead to the development of a comprehensive workforce and economic development strategy for Imperial County?

Our approach and process are centered around engaging with and elevating the voices of residents and community members across Imperial County. Our recommended workforce and economic development strategies will reflect these insights to ensure that steps taken are aligned with the needs and vision of Imperial County.

### **Part 3 – Final Product – Report on Lithium Valley Needs Assessment and Recommendations for Action**

11. Describe how the final needs assessment report will reflect the objectives and deliverables established for the project.

The final needs assessment report will be structured to include the results of the assessment and the outcomes outlined in the RFP. The report will start with an overview of the topic and the gaps in knowledge as a result of the lithium discovery and the anticipated social and economic growth of the Imperial Valley. It will follow with the list of research questions and a description of how these questions are tied to the objectives and outcomes of the project. The report will then proceed with the analysis and findings, as organized by the objectives; these findings will then be tightly tied to the recommendations for a “plan of action” for Imperial County, ICWDB, and other stakeholders.

12. What will make the final product (i.e., the needs assessment report and recommendations) usable by Imperial County, the ICWDB, and workforce and economic

development stakeholders throughout the county?

The final products will be designed and drafted in an accessible manner so that the research approach and findings are understandable for all stakeholders; and this clarity will make clear how the recommendations were derived from the data collection and analysis. Moreover, the recommendations, which may vary by stakeholder group, will be policy-oriented, meaning they will provide clear and *measurable* steps.

13. How will your organization or firm promote the product to stakeholders upon its publication? How will you communicate its utility and optimal ways for transforming recommendations into actions?

RAND's unique qualities help us to carry out strong and relevant research for our clients and the public. We are equally committed to communicating this work and have the tools to do so well. RAND customizes research products to make them interesting and relevant to target audiences, such as briefings, webinars, and problems of practice workshops.

Upon its publication, RAND will promote the final report in the following ways:

- Provide a formal, in-person presentation to Imperial County, ICWDB and other workforce and economic development stakeholders throughout the county
- Series of presentations, both in-person and online, for stakeholder groups and community members-at-large (e.g., townhall meetings)
  - Presentations, in terms of structure and flow, will be tailored to the specific audience
- Develop a brief, or executive summary, and infographs that can be posted on the Imperial County website or other relevant sites frequented by residents
- Draw on RAND's Office of Communications to promote the report and findings to local and national media
  - Author op-eds that RAND's Office of Communications can field among local and national media

The project will also leverage RAND's Office of External Affairs, which provides strategic communications counsel, facilitating media coverage of RAND research and expertise, as well as connecting RAND's research to policymakers in Congress via meetings, briefings, newsletters, and targeted disseminations.

**FORM C**

**PROPOSAL BUDGET**

Provide a comprehensive summary of proposed expenditures for project team staff costs, travel costs and other costs related to completing the work and services proposed. Please add additional rows as needed while keeping the same or a very similar format.

Note: The billing rate may include salaries, fringe benefits, support staff, organizational overhead, and all other costs associated with each individual listed below.

<b>Budget Item/Category</b>		<b>WIOA Budgeted Amount</b>
A.	<b>Staff Name:</b> <u>Elie Alhajar</u> <b>Title:</b> <u>Information Scientist, Sr</u> <b>Number of Hours:</b> <u>400</u> <b>Billing Rate:</b> <u>\$362.25</u>	\$ <u>144,902</u>
B.	<b>Staff Name:</b> <u>Peter Nguyen</u> <b>Title:</b> <u>Policy Researcher, Full</u> <b>Number of Hours:</b> <u>400</u> <b>Billing Rate:</b> <u>\$276.67</u>	\$ <u>110,670</u>
C.	<b>Staff Name:</b> <u>Jenna Kramer</u> <b>Title:</b> <u>Policy Researcher, Full</u> <b>Number of Hours:</b> <u>320</u> <b>Billing Rate:</b> <u>\$258.38</u>	\$ <u>82,681</u>
D.	<b>Staff Name:</b> <u>Lester Ledgister, Jr.</u> <b>Title:</b> <u>Policy Analyst, II</u> <b>Number of Hours:</b> <u>160</u> <b>Billing Rate:</b> <u>\$145.70</u>	\$ <u>23,312</u>
E.	<b>Staff Name:</b> <u>Elizabeth Roer</u> <b>Title:</b> <u>Economist, Full</u> <b>Number of Hours:</b> <u>240</u> <b>Billing Rate:</b> <u>\$343.77</u>	\$ <u>82,504</u>
F.	<b>Staff Name:</b> <u>Margaret Whitley</u> <b>Title:</b> <u>Policy Researcher, Associate</u> <b>Number of Hours:</b> <u>280</u> <b>Billing Rate:</b> <u>\$230.93</u>	\$ <u>64,661</u>
G.	<b>Staff Name:</b> <u>AK Keskin</u> <b>Title:</b> <u>Policy Researcher, Assistant/PRGS</u> <u>Graduate Student</u> <b>Number of Hours:</b> <u>560</u> <b>Billing Rate:</b> <u>\$127.87</u>	\$ <u>71,609</u>



H.	<b>Staff Name:</b> <u>TBD</u> <b>Title:</b> <u>Communications Analyst, III</u> <b>Number of Hours:</b> <u>40</u> <b>Billing Rate:</b> <u>\$219.39</u>	\$ <u>8,776</u>
I.	<b>Staff Name:</b> <u>TBD</u> <b>Title:</b> <u>Internal Research Reviewer</u> <b>Number of Hours:</b> <u>16</u> <b>Billing Rate:</b> <u>\$381.57</u>	\$ <u>6,105</u>
J.	<b>Travel:</b> Travel costs to Imperial County	\$ <u>8,276</u>
K.	<b>Other Costs:</b> Description: <u>Participant Incentives</u>	\$ <u>8,079</u>
L.	<b>Other Costs:</b> Description: <u>External Reviewer</u>	\$ <u>1,605</u>
M.	<b>Other Costs:</b> Description: <u>Publication Costs</u>	\$ <u>19,792</u>
N.	<b>Other Costs:</b> Description: <u>Transcription Services</u>	\$ <u>7,936</u>
O.	<b>Total Project Funding</b>	<b>\$640,908</b>

**FORM D**

**PROPOSAL BUDGET NARRATIVE**

Provide a brief overview of the budget, highlighting key aspects such as distribution of costs and how each budget category contributes to the overall success of the project. Additional rows may be added as necessary.

Category/Explanation	Amount
<p>A. Staff Costs: Generally highlight what costs are included within billing rates for each staff member on the project team.</p>	
<p><b>DISCLAIMER</b>                      While RAND has included fully loaded billing rates in Form C, this information is for cost evaluation purposes only as we expect the awarded contract will be 1) fixed price and based on a deliverable schedule, and 2) will not reference billing rates in the agreement.</p> <p>All billing rates include salary, fringe benefits, computer services, indirect costs, and fee.</p> <p><b>Fringe benefits:</b> Fringe benefits (49.25%) provide the employee's holidays, vacation, sick leave, retirement plan, payroll taxes, etc. These costs are distributed on the basis of employee salary dollars, and the rates used in the proposal have been reviewed and accepted by the Defense Contract Management Agency. Fringe is applied to RAND Professional Employees (PE) and Non-Professional Employees (NPE). Fringe is not applied to labor categorized as Professional Consultant (PC), which includes Adjunct staff and PRGS researchers. The rate being applied against the applicable salary in accordance with RAND's Forward Pricing Rate Agreement with DCMA.</p> <p><b>Computer services:</b> Computer charges at RAND are budgeted in proportion to the percent time budgeted for staff on the project. These charges include all hardware, hardware maintenance, software (Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Office, Stata and SPSS and yearly license renewals, Endnote reference database, and communications software), software support, file backups and all other services provided by the RAND Computing Department. These amounts also include "self-serve" laser printing and photocopying, both of which are budgeted in proportion to the number of staff and their percent effort.</p> <p><b>Indirect Costs:</b> Overhead consists of a logical grouping of costs, such as office facilities costs, necessary for the support</p>	

<p>and operation of the organization, but which are not directly related to the conduct of the project. Overhead costs are not easily identifiable with a specific project and therefore are pooled and allocated to all projects. RAND is a non-profit organization but one of a select group of nonprofits specifically exempt from the federal Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations in OMB's Uniform Administrative Requirements (refer to Appendix VIII to Part 200—Nonprofit Organizations Exempted from Subpart E—Cost Principles of Part 200). Instead, RAND's applicable Cost Principles are those that pertain to Commercial Organizations, as defined in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) section 31.2. RAND's overhead allocation method under FAR 31.2, which has been approved by our cognizant auditors, the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA), allocates our pool of overhead costs to a base of direct personnel costs, including fringe benefits cost.</p> <p>*RAND's Fiscal Year goes from October 1st through September 30th annually*</p> <p>FY 24 Corporate, 70.25%; Education Unit Overhead, 39%; PRGS, 63.25%; FCCOM, 2.75%</p> <p>FY 25 Corporate, 70.25%; Education Unit Overhead, 39%; PRGS, 63.25%; FCCOM, 2.5%</p> <p><b>Fee:</b> The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision making through research and analysis. Contract fees are essential to RAND's ability to carry out its mission and to meet the dynamic needs of its research sponsors. The fees provide funds for cost sharing on government grants, and for RAND-sponsored research, which is essential if RAND is to maintain a first-class research staff and fulfill its charter as a nonprofit scientific and educational organization. The fees also provide working capital, including cash necessary to pay salaries, fringe benefits, and other costs of doing business in advance of reimbursement. Fee for this proposal is 7%.</p>	
<p>Elie Alhajar – Lead PI who will provide both administrative and intellectual leadership for the project; Elie will co-lead the quantitative analysis with Elizabeth, he will also lead the final report and presentation.</p>	<p>\$144,902</p>
<p>Peter Nguyen – Co-PI who will support Elie with both administrative and intellectual leadership for the project; Peter will lead the qualitative data collection and analysis, and he also will co-lead the final report and presentation with Elie.</p>	<p>\$110,670</p>

Jenna Kramer – Senior research personnel who will co-lead the qualitative data collection and analysis with Peter and contribute to the final report and presentation.	\$82,681
Lester Ledgister Jr. – Research personnel who will support Peter with qualitative data collection and analysis, and he will contribute to the final report and presentation.	\$23,312
Margaret Whitley – Senior research personnel who will support Peter with qualitative data collection and analysis, and she will contribute to the final report and presentation.	\$64,661
AK Keskin – Research personnel/PRGS graduate student who will provide support to Elizabeth and Peter for both the quantitative and qualitative tasks, and he will also contribute to the final report and presentation.	\$71,609
Elizabeth Hastings Roer – Senior research personnel who will lead the quantitative data analysis and contribute to the final report and presentation.	\$82,504
Communications Analyst (TBD) – Support staff that will help with editing, formatting and visuals for the final report and presentation.	\$8,776
Internal Research Reviewer – Research personnel that will review final report and slide deck to ensure it meet’s RAND’s standards for research quality.	\$6,105
<b>Total Staff Costs</b>	<b>\$595,221</b>
<b>B. Travel Costs: Provide the number of trips planned, who will be traveling, the duration of each trip (number of days on-site), and any other relevant details regarding travel costs.</b>	
Travel costs include fee. Budgeted travel costs include 5 trips to Imperial County:	
- 1 trip for meeting with stakeholders (Elie Alhajjar, 4 days)	\$1,635
- 4 trips for data collection (Margaret Whitley and AK Keskin, 3 days each)	\$3,666
- 2 trips for final presentation (Elie Alhajjar and Peter Nguyen, 4 days each)	\$2,975
<b>Total Travel Costs</b>	<b>\$8,276</b>
<b>C. Other Costs</b>	

All other costs include fee.	
- Incentives for interview/focus group participants - \$50/person x 151 participants	\$8,079
- External reviewer for RAND's Quality Assurance process	\$1,605
- Publication supplies and services for final report	\$19,792
- Transcription services for interview/focus group data at \$1.50/min	\$7,936
Total Other (Specify)	\$37,412
<b>TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING</b>	<b>\$640,908</b>

## FORM E

### PROPOSER'S WORK PLAN

Using the spaces provided below, provide concise descriptions of activities and deliverables that will be completed throughout the 14-month period of the contract. The list below should complement and correspond to information provided in the proposal narrative (Form B). Add as many rows as needed. Delete unused rows.

#### Quarter 1 Activities and Deliverables (May and June 2024)

##### *Activities*

1.	Kick-off meetings with funder and relevant stakeholders
2.	Discuss and review list of stakeholders
3.	Discuss and review outreach plan
4.	Apply for Institutional Review Board approval for needs assessment study

##### *Deliverables*

1.	Establishing routine meeting cadence
2.	Finalize working list of stakeholders
3.	Finalist working outreach plan
4.	Approval from Institutional Review Board for needs assessment study

#### Quarter 2 Activities and Deliverables (July through September 2024)

##### *Activities*

1.	Discuss and review list of data sources to elicit insights for "Current State of the Valley" across the following domains: Workforce, industries, jobs, and educational services
2.	Discuss analytic strategies for "Current State of the Valley"
3.	Conduct analyses for "Current State of the Valley"
4.	Discuss design and recruitment plan for qualitative data collection

##### *Deliverables*

1.	Finalist list of data sources to elicit insights for "Current State of the Valley"
2.	Share preliminary analyses for "Current State of the Valley" with funders and other relevant stakeholders

#### Quarter 3 Activities and Deliverables (October through December 2024)

### *Activities*

1.	(Cont.) Discuss and design and recruitment plan for qualitative data collection, in preparation for Quarter 4
2.	Develop protocols for interviews and focus groups, in preparation for Quarter 4 execution
3.	Begin reaching out to stakeholders to schedule date and time for interviews that will occur in Quarter 4; Work with local representative to plan and schedule two townhall meetings, including a private space for focus groups with local residents that will occur in Quarter 4
4.	Conduct quantitative analysis of the “Potential state of the Valley” across the following domains: Expected jobs created by lithium extraction, secondary industries induced by lithium, economic impacts of lithium valley expansion

### *Deliverables*

1.	Finalize design and recruitment plan for qualitative data collection
2.	Share interview and focus group protocols with funder and other relevant stakeholders for feedback
3.	Establish location and date/time for two townhall meetings and focus groups with local residents
4.	Share preliminary quantitative analysis of the “Potential state of the Valley”

### **Quarter 4 Activities and Deliverables (January through March 2025)**

#### *Activities*

1.	Incorporate feedback and finalize interview and focus group protocols
2.	Conduct interviews and focus groups with relevant stakeholders
3.	Conduct two townhall meetings and focus groups with local residents
4.	Begin analysis of qualitative data

#### *Deliverables*

1.	Share preliminary findings from the qualitative data collection/analysis with funder and relevant stakeholders
2.	Complete analysis of qualitative data
3.	Complete all analyses related to the quantitative data
4.	Share outline of needs assessment report with funder and relevant stakeholders for their feedback

### **Quarter 5 Activities and Deliverables (April through June 2025)**

#### *Activities*

1.	Meet with funders and stakeholders to discuss and finalize recommendations
2.	Based on the outline feedback, draft the needs assessment report; share draft with funders and stakeholders for their feedback
3.	Develop slide deck for presentation on needs assessment report
4.	Submit draft of report and slide deck to RAND Quality & Assurance process

***Deliverables***

1.	Finalize needs assessment final report and submit to funder
2.	Conduct needs assessment presentation to funder and relevant stakeholders



## FORM F

### PROPOSER'S REFERENCES

A minimum of 3 References from past customers should be provided in the following format.

1.	<b>Customer Name</b>	North Carolina Community Colleges
	Address	200 West Jones Street Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
	Telephone Number	919-807-6983
	Contact Name	Andrea Crowley
	Title	Executive Director, NC Student Success Center
	Email	<a href="mailto:crowleya@nccommunitycolleges.edu">crowleya@nccommunitycolleges.edu</a>

2.	<b>Customer Name</b>	Ohio Department of Higher Education
	Address	25 S Front St, Columbus, OH 43215
	Telephone Number	937-765-2720
	Contact Name	Dr. Thomas Sudkamp
	Title	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for the Ohio Department of Higher Education
	Email	<a href="mailto:tsudkamp@highered.ohio.gov">tsudkamp@highered.ohio.gov</a>

3.	<b>Customer Name</b>	Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
	Address	n/a
	Telephone Number	n/a
	Contact Name	Dr. Lon Gowen
	Title	Division Chief
	Email	<a href="mailto:lon.gowen@hq.dhs.gov">lon.gowen@hq.dhs.gov</a>

## FORM G

### PROPOSER'S WORK SAMPLES

Proposers must provide hyperlinks to work samples (e.g., needs assessments, analyses, reports, recommendations) for 2 to 4 past projects that are reasonably similar to the objectives, outcomes, and deliverables associated with services sought through this RFP. Provide the information requested in the tables below.

#### Work Sample 1

Name of project	Preparing Local Talent for Jobs in the Sub-baccalaureate STEM Economy: A Study of the Marcellus ShaleNET Program and the Energy Sector
Project funder	National Science Foundation
Project completion date	01/31/2019
Name of project report or document	Developing a Skilled Workforce for the Oil and Natural Gas Industry: An Analysis of Employers and Colleges in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia
Hyperlink to document.	<a href="https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2199.html">https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2199.html</a>

#### Work Sample 2

Name of project	Chevron North America Appalachian Partnership Initiative
Project funder	Chevron Corporation
Project completion date	3/23/2023
Name of project report or document	Education, Employment, and Wages in the Appalachia Region: Final Report (2020)
Hyperlink to document.	<a href="https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3217.html">https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3217.html</a>

#### Work Sample 3

Name of project	Creating Career Ladders for Unemployed and Underemployed Workers in New Orleans
Project funder	City of New Orleans; U.S. Department of Labor
Project completion date	9/30/2021
Name of project report or document	Effectiveness of Screened, Demand-Driven Job Training Programs for Disadvantaged Workers: An Evaluation of the New Orleans Career Pathway Training
Hyperlink to document.	<a href="https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2980.html">https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2980.html</a>

#### Work Sample 4

Name of project	Building Stackable Credential Pipelines that Support Equity and Provide Pathways to the Middle Class for Low-Income Students
Project funder	Ascendium Education Group
Project completion date	12/31/2023
Name of project report or document	Stackable Credential Pipelines and Equity for Low-Income Individuals: Evidence from Colorado and Ohio
Hyperlink to document.	<a href="https://doi.org/10.7249/RRA2484-1">https://doi.org/10.7249/RRA2484-1</a>

**Imperial County Workforce Development Board  
Action Agenda Item 5**

**MEETING DATE:** April 10, 2024

**ITEM:** 5

**SUBJECT:** Discussion/Action to approve attendance at the California Workforce Association WORKCON Rancho Mirage from May 28 – May 31, 2024

**FROM:** Priscilla A. Lopez, ICWEDO Director

**RECOMMENDATION:**

ICWEDO Director recommends to approve attendance of up to 6 individuals at the California Workforce Association WORKCON in Rancho Mirage, California, from May 28 – May 31, 2024.

**BACKGROUND:**

CWA's Spring Workforce Practitioners conference, WORKCON, is an event that will benefit anyone interested in helping people obtain sustainable employment. This year's theme, Bridging the Gap, recognizes the need to come together and link any inefficiencies that may exist in our work.

As we all know, California's economies and communities are not the same in all parts of our state, so it is our responsibility to seek out strategic partnerships and funding opportunities in our areas to improve program design and outcomes, and bridge any gaps present in our programs. WORKCON is a two-and-a-half-day conference that will feature over 100 workshop presenters, keynote presentations, over 50 workshops, networking opportunities, and thought-provoking panels designed to inspire, enlighten, and deepen your understanding of workforce trends and strategies. We are confident that you will not only learn from the conference, but also have a fun time. As of April 3, 2024, an agenda has not been provided.

Approximate Cost:

Registration: \$799 (Early Bird Non-Member ends May 3, 2024)

Roundtrip Airfare: \$0

Hotel: \$485 (Check-In May 29<sup>th</sup>, Check-Out May 31<sup>st</sup>)

Per Diem: \$192.5

Incidentals \$40

Total: \$1,517, per person

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Total approximate cost for 6 individuals to attend: \$9,102

**Imperial County Workforce and Economic Development Office  
Financial Statement  
As of February 29, 2024**

FY 2023-2024 WIOA Allocation		\$	7,885,068			
FY 2022-2024 Lithium Project		\$	750,000			
FY 2022-2023 WIOA Carryover		\$	6,853,947			
Total Budget FY 2023-2024		\$	15,489,015			
		Contract End Dates	Budget 2023-2024	YTD Expenditures	Unexpended	Percentage of Expenditures per Line Item
1	Workforce Development Office Salaries (10 Staff)	30-Jun-24	732,542	440,465	292,077	60%
2	Workforce Development Office Benefits (10 Staff)	30-Jun-24	416,727	287,080	129,647	69%
3	Workforce Development Office Cost	30-Jun-24	542,539	165,294	377,245	30%
4	Workforce Development Board Salaries (4 Staff)	30-Jun-24	371,090	164,396	206,694	44%
5	Workforce Development Board Benefits (4 Staff)	30-Jun-24	207,980	96,856	111,124	47%
6	Workforce Development Board Cost	30-Jun-24	314,321	39,776	274,545	13%
7	One Stop Operational Salaries (20 Staff)	30-Jun-24	855,561	558,951	296,610	65%
8	One Stop Operational Benefits (20 Staff)	30-Jun-24	562,721	444,641	118,080	79%
9	One Stop Operational Cost	30-Jun-24	1,023,534	822,082	201,452	80%
10	Business Center Salaries (3 Staff)	30-Jun-24	191,437	45,284	146,153	24%
11	Business Center Benefits (3 Staff)	30-Jun-24	83,380	26,152	57,228	31%
12	Business Center Cost	30-Jun-24	359,485	422,649	(63,164)	118%
13	CWA Membership Dues	30-Jun-24	14,260	14,260	-	100%
14	National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB)	30-Jun-24	2,300	2,300	-	100%
15	LIGHTCAST-EMSI Analyst Software	30-Jun-24	9,250	9,250	-	100%
16	Career EDGE - Annual License	30-Jun-24	30,000	-	30,000	0%
17	Bludot Technologies Inc. - Annual License	30-Jun-24	6,696	-	6,696	0%
18	SIERRA HR Hotline	30-Jun-24	10,008	5,004	5,004	50%
19	WDB Members, Meals, Travel, Conferences	30-Jun-24	55,000	15,331	39,669	28%
20	WDB/WDO Marketing & Other Services	30-Jun-24	60,000	40,696	19,304	68%
21	AJCC Operator 2023-2024	31-Dec-25	75,000	-	75,000	0%
22	Propath Inc., - AJCC Operator 23-24	31-Dec-24	75,000	7,400	67,600	10%
23	Propath Inc., - AJCC Operator 22-23	31-Dec-23	38,900	38,900	-	100%
<b>Year Round Youth 23-24</b>						
24	IVROP Operational Cost	30-Jun-24	992,010	632,473	359,537	64%
25	IVROP Work Experience/Stipends	30-Jun-24	1,200,940	581,194	619,746	48%
26	IVROP Supportive Services	30-Jun-24	7,050	4,536	2,514	64%
27	EQUUS Operational Cost	30-Jun-24	1,339,967	263,865	1,076,102	20%
28	EQUUS Work Experience	30-Jun-24	463,190	-	463,190	0%
29	EQUUS Supportive Services	30-Jun-24	9,600	298	9,302	3%
<b>Workers Compensation &amp; ADP WIOA Participant Fees</b>						
30	Workers Compensation WIOA Participant Fees	30-Jun-24	250,000	58,411	191,589	23%
31	ADP Participant WIOA Processing Fees	30-Jun-24	40,000	22,521	17,479	56%
32	Adult WIOA Supportive Services	30-Jun-24	140,000	94,671	45,329	68%
<b>201/501 30% Training Expenditure FY 2023-2024</b>						
33	Adult Vocational ITA 23-24	30-Jun-24	1,090,861	318,997	771,864	29%
34	OJT One Stop Centers 23-24	30-Jun-24	360,000	187,041	172,959	52%
35	IVROP Registered Nurse Mentorship Program XIII 24-25	30-Jun-24	376,000	-	376,000	0%
36	IVROP Licensed Vocational Nurse Mentorship Program II 23-24	30-Jun-24	338,108	100,230	237,878	30%
37	Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) 23-24	30-Jun-24	200,000	36,357	163,643	18%
38	Transitional Jobs	30-Jun-24	133,217	53,677	79,540	40%
<b>Adult Work Experience(WEX) 23-24</b>						
39	WEX-Adult Work Experience 23-24	30-Jun-24	488,462	280,699	207,763	57%
<b>Carry over Obligated Training Expenditure FY 2022-2023</b>						
40	Adult Vocational ITA 22-23	30-Jun-24	211,130	135,982	75,148	64%
41	OJT One Stop Centers 22-23	30-Jun-24	10,000	10,000	0	100%
42	IVROP Registered Nurse Mentorship Program XII 23-24	30-Jun-24	512,436	210,296	302,140	41%
<b>Adult Work Experience(WEX) 22-23</b>						
43	WEX-Adult Work Experience 22-23	30-Jun-24	323,944	264,354	59,590	82%
44	Lithium Valley Assessment Project (Rapid Response)	31-Mar-24	750,000	18,551	731,449	2%
Total Funds Allocated			15,274,646	6,920,918	8,353,728	
Funds available to be allocated			214,369		214,369	
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>15,489,015</b>	<b>6,920,918</b>	<b>8,568,097</b>	
Percentage of Expenditures						45%