

CALIFORNIA JOBS FIRST MEMO

DATE: August 28, 2025

SUBJECT: RII Implementation Phase Awards

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BACKGROUND

California Jobs First was designed to support regional governance and strategy development, pre-development of regional projects, and direct investments into industry-specific and regionally driven projects. Central to California Jobs First is the Regional Investment Initiative (RII) designed to fund signature investments in key industries across California.

The RII implementation Phase includes \$125 million in funding over two rounds to fund interconnected projects that advance “Accelerate” or “Bet” sectors.



AWARDED CLUSTERS

The Council Co-Chairs confirmed \$80 million in funding for four proposed clusters, each focused on a different sector: life sciences, aerospace and defense, agtech and farm equipment, and the bioeconomy. Together, these projects anticipate creating more than 23,000 direct and indirect jobs across 18 counties, in seven of the 13 economic regions (Redwood Coast, North State, North San Joaquin Valley, Central San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast, Los Angeles County, and Southern Border).



Regional Cluster #1

- **Coalition Lead:** LA County Department of Economic Opportunity (LA DEO)
- **Sector Focus:** Life Sciences
- **Regional Focus:** Los Angeles County
- **Award Amount:** \$23,920,000
- **Leveraged Funds:** \$9.5M
- **Projects:**

BioscienceLA – \$920,000 (Ecosystem Support)

- Convenor, asset mapping, career pathway development, business support, etc.

Larta Institute – \$3,300,000 (Ecosystem Support)

- Expand an existing business accelerator and provide financial assistance to small startups via a revolving loan fund.

LA DEO – \$19,000,000 (Infrastructure)

- Develop a revolving loan fund to support startups (particularly those coming out of the Larta Institute's accelerator) in constructing and expanding to graduated lab space in LA County.

LAEDC – \$700,000 (Ecosystem Support)

- Develop a business attraction and marketing campaign to attract large life science employers into the region (Funds limited to business attraction efforts to companies outside of California).

Regional Cluster #2

- **Coalition Lead:** REACH Central Coast
- **Sector Focus:** Aerospace & Defense
- **Regional Focus:** Central Coast
- **Award Amount:** \$16,951,467
- **Leveraged Funds:** ~\$5M
- **Projects:**
 - REACH Central Coast* – \$9,499,467 (Ecosystem Support, Workforce Development, Infrastructure)
 - Develop “Space Vandenberg,” an initiative to support the space, defense, and satellites industry.
 - Monterey Bay Economic Partnership* – \$7,452,000 (Ecosystem Support, Infrastructure)
 - Develop a regional Advanced Air Mobility corridor between four public airports.

Regional Cluster #3

- **Coalition Lead:** UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR)
- **Sector Focus:** Agtech & Farm Equipment
- **Regional Focus:** North State, Redwood Coast, North San Joaquin Valley, Central San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast, Southern Border
- **Award Amount:** \$28,632,344.18
- **Leveraged Funds:** \$25M
- **Projects:**
 - UC ANR* – \$15,125,793 (Ecosystem Support)
 - Develop the CA AgTech Alliance to serve as a statewide network to convene regional actors, promote workforce development, launch an accelerator fund, and support business attraction.
 - Chico State* – \$1,272,700 (Infrastructure)
 - Support the utilization of agtech among small farmers, including more sustainable irrigation equipment and fenceless cattle grazing.
 - Community Foundation of Merced County* – \$9,233,851.18 (Infrastructure)
 - Develop and expand three smart farms (farms that promote the use of technology in agriculture), including at UC Merced focused on R&D, and at Merced College focused on workforce development and support for early-stage startups.

Foundation for California Community Colleges – \$3,000,000 (Workforce Development)

- Expand the agtech certificate program (utilizing credit for prior learning and competency-based education, which was launched in the Central Valley, to 3 additional community colleges across the state.

Regional Cluster #4

- **Coalition Lead:** BEAM Circular
- **Sector Focus:** Bioeconomy
- **Regional Focus:** North San Joaquin Valley
- **Award Amount:** \$10,367,000
- **Recommended Award:** \$10,367,000
- **Leveraged Funds:** \$22M
- **Projects:**

BEAM Circular – \$10,367,000 (Ecosystem Support)

- Develop the California Bioeconomy Innovation Campus to house the accelerator program and expand on the existing work including business support with an investment fund (opening 2026).
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