Application Report

Applicant Organization: Progressive Employment Concepts

Project Name: Creating a cadre of skilled Customized Employment mentors and professionals in California to increase quality employment outcomes

Application ID: ███████

FundingAnnouncement: DDS Employment Grant

Requested Amount: ███████

Project Summary: The objective of our proposal is to submit a Customized Employment (CE) Curriculum to ACRE for certification and provide training and mentoring to 25 employment professionals to increase quality employment outcomes for 15 job seekers in ACRC's 10 counties.

Authorized Certifying Official: ████████ ███████████████████████████ ████████████

Project Director/Manager: ██████ ████████████████████████ ████████████

Project Manager/Coordinator: █████████ ██████████████████████ ███████████

Compliance/Fiscal Officer: ███████ ████████████████████ █████████████

Section Name: Applicant Eligibility

Sub Section Name: Applicant Information

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1. Applicant Question: Organization Type

Check all that apply. If selecting "Other" please specify your type of organization.

Applicant Response:

- Regional Center Vendor
- Department of Rehabilitation Vendor
- Community-Based Organization

Applicant Comment:

Progressive Employment Concepts has been providing Customized Employment services since 1995

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2. Applicant Question: Description of Agency/Organization

Provide a brief description of the organization or group. You may add a website link for additional information.

Applicant Response:

Progressive Employment Concepts (PEC) is a leader in the area of diversity employment support for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Founded in 1995, funded through regional centers and the DOR, PEC's services are designed to assist individuals in finding and maintaining meaningful employment in their community. PEC's strong philosophical core, commitment to excellence, and use of evidence based practices has resulted in successful employment outcomes for its clients.

Attachment:

About PEC .pdf - PDF FILE

3. Applicant Question: Applicant in Good Standing

Is the applicant in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration? Please upload confirmation letter(s) or proof of good standing.

Applicant Response:

Yes

Attachment:

████████████████████████
████████████   ████████

4. Applicant Question: Subcontractors in Good Standing

Are the applicant's subcontractors in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration? Select "N/A" if you do not plan to use subcontractors for your project.

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

Section Name: Grant Application

Sub Section Name: Proposal Summary

1. Applicant Question: Project Type

Choose one project type that best describes your activities.

Applicant Response:

Training and Implementation - Professional and Staff

2. Applicant Question: Duration of Project

Choose the duration of your project, 12 months or 18 months.

Applicant Response:

18 months

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3. Applicant Question: Regional Centers in Service Area

Identify the Regional Center(s) in the community to be served by this project. Select all that apply. For a regional center map, see Attachment F.

Applicant Response:

- Alta California Regional Center

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4. Applicant Question: Counties Served

List the county or counties that the project will serve. Check all that apply.

Applicant Response:
- El Dorado County
- Placer County
- Sacramento County
- Yolo County
- Alpine County
- Colusa County
- Sutter County
- Sierra County
- Nevada County
- Yuba County

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5. Applicant Question: City of Los Angeles

If your project proposes to serve the City of Los Angeles, list the zip codes your project will serve.

Zip code information for Los Angeles County can be found here. If your project does not serve the Los Angeles area, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:
Not Applicable

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6. Applicant Question: Collaborating Organizations or Other Entities

Does your project include partnerships with one or more organizations either as a co-applicant or subcontractor? If "yes", please upload a letter of support from each organization, that includes an explanation of their role in the partnership.

Applicant Response:

No

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7. Applicant Question: Consultants and Trainers

Describe the qualifications of the consultant/trainer/training organization, including their subject matter expertise in competitive integrated employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. Describe their prior experience as a consultant/trainer, professional credentials, including names of other organizations/entities for whom they have provided consultation or training.

If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A"

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

Section Name: Target Population

Sub Section Name: People Served

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1. Applicant Question: Number of youth (under 18) with I/DD that will be served

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

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2. Applicant Question: Number of adults (18 and older) with I/DD that will be served

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

15

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3. Applicant Question: Number of family members that will be served

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

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4. Applicant Question: Number of professionals and staff that will be trained

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

25

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5. Applicant Question: Number of other individuals that will be served/trained

Specify number of people to participate or be served by this project. Please describe the individuals that will be served. If question does not apply to your project, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

1

Applicant Comment:

We would extend the training to the Employment Specialist at ACRC

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6. Applicant Question: Ethnicity Group Served

Select the ethnicity group(s) the project will serve. For "Indian", "Pacific Islander", "Slavic" or "Other" use comment section to list specific groups.

- **"Indian"** includes: Indian (nationals of the present-day Republic of India), Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan.
- **"Pacific Islanders"** includes: individuals whose origins are the original peoples of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Polynesia includes Guam, Hawaii (Native Hawaiian), Samoa (Samoan), American Samoa (Samoan), Tokelau (Tokelauan), Tahiti (Tahitian), Tonga (Tongan) and other Pacific Islands.
- **"Slavic"** includes: Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian (East Slavic), Polish, Czech, Slovak, and Sorbian (West Slavic), and Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian, and Slovene (South Slavic).
- The **"other"** category includes ethnicities not specified in the ethnicity options.

Applicant Response:

- African American
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Hispanic
- Hmong
- Indian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Mien
- Native American
- Vietnamese
- Pacific Islander
- Slavic
- White
- Other

Section Name: Project Application

Sub Section Name: Project Application

1. Applicant Question: Project Abstract

Provide a clear and concise project summary that includes a defined target population, geographic area, and project design. Specifically describe what your project will accomplish and the intended impact it will have on the employment of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Applicant Response:

The initial phase of this project aims to create and submit a curriculum to the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) in the area of Customized Employment (CE). This curriculum will be in line with ACRE requirements and will be applicable to any geographic location however as it is being designed by professionals who work in California it will be relevant and applicable to the unique systems of support available in California. Additionally the curriculum will incorporate newly vetted evidence based practices such as use of the Discovery Fidelity Scale (attached).

The second phase will involve applying the curriculum by training 25 employment professionals from the 10 counties in Alta California Regional Centers catchment area. Those 25 professionals will receive 40 hours of in person and or virtual training on Discovery and Customized Employment. Each individual receiving training will have a job seeker with intellectual and developmental disabilities identified to support in job development.

The third phase of the project will involve mentoring the 25 employment professionals and the job seekers in applying the training they received. Given the training and mentoring we estimate that at least 15 individual job seekers will find employment by the conclusion of the grant. As part of the training and mentoring each individual job seeker will also receive benefits counseling.

The final phase of the project will consist of working with the individual job seekers, the regional center and the local providers to establish any ongoing supports needed for the newly employed individuals. Finally, we will compile all data collected during the project in order to make modifications and or recommendations for future use. The curriculum submitted to ACRE, once approved, will be available for use to all employment professionals in California and throughout the country.

Attachment:

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2. Applicant Question: Need for Project Question 1

Please describe the underlying problem, challenges, or issues that your project will address.

Applicant Response:

Properly trained employment professionals provide a critical foundation for the overall successful quality employment outcomes of individuals with developmental disabilities. Training leads to competence and competence to higher satisfaction. When we have such a severe shortage of support professionals in general, provision of training which leads to competence and satisfaction as well as career advancement is one way we can attract/retain employment professionals. Attached articles of support

Attachment:

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3. Applicant Question: Need for Project Question 2

Provide facts or data to support the need for this project

Applicant Response:

Employment rates for individuals with I/DD in California remain very low despite employment first proclamations, the CIE Blueprint and recent efforts to incentivize outcomes, The passage of SB 639, while commendable, must make sure that people do not lose employment when their current employment is no longer available. Unemployment rates for people with all disability types is double the general population and for those with DD the rates are far greater.

Per Paul Wehman, in his article *Toward Competitive Employment for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: What Progress Have We Made and Where Do We Need to Go*. "customized employment requires a high level of competence and flexibility on the part of the employment specialist to identify employer needs and match them with an individual's competencies and available resources".

It stands to reason one area that needs to be addressed in combating these high unemployment rates is training for employment professional.

Attachment:
BLS labor stats people with disabilities.pdf - PDF FILE
Toward Competitive Integrated Employment......pdf - PDF FILE

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4. Applicant Question: Need for Project Question 3

Describe how the project will involve and benefit participants who are from diverse backgrounds

Applicant Response:

This project will offer the training to all 10 counties of ACRC's catchment area which represents a diverse population of individuals and geographic types. We will work with ACRC to identify and target our outreach to include historically underserved populations and regions. Additionally, as this project aims to utilize Customized Employment methodology it is targeted toward individuals with the most complex needs. We will use ACRC's POS expenditure report as one means of identifying underserved populations in the are of employment and target our recruitment accordingly.

Attachment:
ACRC POS Expendittures.pdf - PDF FILE

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5. Applicant Question: Approach Question 1A

For Business Focused Practices, Employment Preparation Services and Supports, Service Models for Individuals with High Support Needs, and Training and Implementation project types.

- Describe the objective for your project
- Describe the new or innovative methods and activities that will be used that correspond to the proposed objective and project type that:

    - Use innovative, evidence-based, best, or promising practices, services and /or supports
    - Promote increased and meaningful opportunities for participants to make an informed choice for career options and prepare for CIE
    - Are designed to achieve, maintain, or advance individuals with I/DD in competitive integrated employment
    - Are designed to be replicable

- Include how you used input from the community and/target population in the design of the project
- Describe any project deliverables

If your project is not Business Focused Practices, Employment Preparation Services and Supports, Service Models for Individuals with High Support Needs, or Training and Implementation, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

The objective of our proposal is to submit a Customized Employment (CE) Curriculum to ACRE for certification and provide training and mentoring to employment professionals to increase quality employment outcomes in ACRC's 10 counties. ACRE certification in CE is recognized as a necessary base training for employment professionals seeking to assist individuals with I/DD to obtain quality employment outcomes. However, there are only 3024 individuals who currently hold ACRE CE certification. This can be attributed, in part, to the fact there are only a handful of organizations providing the ACRE training in CE. While there are many more organizations providing the certification in Employment Services, Customized Employment is seen as the leading way to support even the most complex job seekers in finding quality employment. While CE has been seen as a valued strategy it had not had rigorous validation testing until recently. With the validation testing of Discovery and Job Development and creation of the Discovery Fidelity Scale this strategy has moved ahead as an evidence based best practice. The current CE -ACRE certified trainers are also not located in California posing a problem for California employment specialists in accessing the training, especially if they prefer in person training. It also presents a problem in that California has a complex system of supports unique to our state. Trainers who know and understand our system are better prepared to address the needs of employment professionals in this state. Additionally, the ability to create our own unique CE ACRE certified training allows us to move closer to building a cadres of trained California employment specialists prepared to mentor the next generation of employment specialists.

Discovery and Customized Employment are person centered practices designed to support even the most complex job seeker in obtaining quality employment. Once the Curriculum is developed and submitted to ACRE we will provide training to 25 employment specialists in the 10 counties ACRC serves. Along with the 40 hour training we will mentor each employment specialist as they walk through the Discovery and CE development process with a job seeker. The goal of this mentoring is two-fold. First, the employment specialist will have dedicated mentoring to enrich, enhance and solidify their understanding and application of the curriculum and secondarily, as a result, the job seeker will secure employment.

Being an active member of the ACRC and statewide provider community for over 30 years I am acutely aware of the need for well trained professional in the employment field. Against the odds, we have been able to train and retain some of the best trained CE professionals including DFS administrators. We want to be able to pass this on to others so more individuals with I/DD can experience the power of employment.

Deliverables: Curriculum created, 25 professionals trained, 15 individuals secure employment.

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6. Applicant Question: Approach Question 1B

For project type, Service Model Transformation

- A description of the transformation team that will be developing the action plan and includes representation by individuals with ID/D, family members, those who provide direct support, and other relevant community members (e.g., businesses, peer organizations, partnerships, etc.,)
- The objective and activities to be used in developing the action plan, including an outline of the areas to be addressed in the transformational planning and organizational change that will affect the CIE employment services.
- Include how you used input from the community and/target population in the design of the project?
- A detailed description of the planning process that will be used

  - Descript project deliverables
  - Describe how you plan to engage the regional center in the transformation plan

If your project type is not Service Model Transformation, select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

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7. Applicant Question: Sustainability Question 1

How will individuals served by the project continue receiving employment services and supports once the project has ended?

Applicant Response:

This will be a pilot project designed to train employment professionals. Through the process of them being trained and mentored they will work with one individual each to walk through the discovery process with them. We will work with ACRC to make sure all of those individuals will have the level of ongoing support needed provided through their local provider.

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8. Applicant Question: Sustainability Question 2

How will your project continue its work after the grant funding has concluded?

Applicant Response:

Once the curriculum is created, submitted and accepted through ACRE the course and mentoring will be provided for a fee to future employment specialist. The ACRE curriculum development, submission and ongoing training provision will be designed to meet the needs of employment specialist as the first step in developing their skills in Customized Employment. Ongoing, work with employment specialists to increase their skills leading to the development of trainers and mentors within California will help enrich services to job seekers.

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9. Applicant Question: Sustainability Question 3

Describe your plan to engage the regional center for future sustainability of the project and individuals served.

Applicant Response:

We will work with ACRC and local providers to identify individuals who will participate in the training as well as individual job seekers who will go through he Discovery process with the employment specialist. At each step of the process ACRC and the individuals' service coordinators will be involved in the planning along with the rest of their team. This project will provide additional data for ACRC and DDS on the efficacy of CE training and mentoring on quality employment outcomes.

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10. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 1

Please include details about the history of the organization, its mission or purpose, summary of major programs, services and activities and details about how they tie to the target population. If from a large organization with multiple departments, provide a brief overview of entire organization and then focus on the department or program involved with this proposal. Describe any ongoing collaborative partners in your community.

Applicant Response:

PEC began services in 1995. Our services are funded by ACRC, the DOR, and through contracts with schools or individuals. Services are designed to assist and support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in finding and maintaining employment, in finding and maintaining volunteer work, attending college, running businesses and in being contributing, valued members of their communities. Our mission, in collaboration with the people we serve, is to develop and discover opportunities which promote dignity, respect, inclusion, and meaningful contributions so all our lives and communities are enriched. We envision communities as welcoming and supportive. We believe all people have a right and responsibility to make choices affecting their lives, have the right to earn a living wage., that businesses and communities profit from inclusion, that people don't need to be "fixed" or to "get ready". The right to a life of value is a birthright

Attachment:
PEC Participant Handbook 2022.pdf - PDF FILE

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11. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 2

Describe your agency's experience supporting the proposed target population.

Applicant Response:

PEC has been supporting individuals served by ACRC to find direct hired at or above minimum wage employment since 1995. We are known and respected locally and nationally for our commitment to and success in partnering with individuals known to experience multiple barriers to employment to find and maintain meaningful employment. We are also respected for our commitment to training both in house and for our local partners.

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12. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 3

 Describe employment (or other relevant services) you currently provide.

Applicant Response:

PEC currently provides employment supports to individuals referred by ACRC, a local charter school and or self referred through SDP. Our services are funded through a variety of service codes as well as through individual's SDP budgets, through DOR, and contracted with a school. PEC also provides Person Centered Thinking and plan facilitation training as well as IF training. We have provided training for local providers for many years related to employment supports.

Attachment:
PEC Participant Handbook 2022.pdf - PDF FILE

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13. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 4

 How will the grant help the organization/agency build expertise to support individuals with I/DD to achieve competitive integrated employment?

Applicant Response:

The grant will allow the organization to meet the training needs of employment professionals in California which in return will increase employment outcomes for job seekers. Additionally, these trained professionals will be part of a cadre of individuals on a path of skill development they can in turn use to mentor others through the process.

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14. Applicant Question: Organizational Capacity Question 5

Describe your organization/ agency experience and current capacity to support grant-based activities and reporting.

Applicant Response:

PEC has a highly trained leadership team that has been together for 10 plus years. Many of the leadership team hold advanced degrees in Social Work, Organizational management and teaching. All of the employment professionals in leadership are ACRE trained in Discovery and CE development and supports. Several are also among the first Fidelity scale administrators trained in California.

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15. Applicant Question: Engagement Plan Question 1

Describe how the organization/agency will recruit participants and/or families for participation in the project.

Applicant Response:

PEC will work with ACRC and local providers to find individuals interested in participating in the training and subsequently developing their skills further in order to mentor future employment professionals. We will expect employment professionals to have shown a commitment to the field and a desire to remain in the field.

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16. Applicant Question: Engagement Plan Question 2

Describe how the organization/agency will collaborate with other groups, organizations, employers, and/or agencies to achieve the objective of the project.

Applicant Response:

PEC will do a thorough review of all available research related to Customized Employment, the Discovery fidelity scales and the Job development fidelity scales. PEC will engage with national subject matter experts when preparing and developing the curriculum to submit to ACRE incorporating the best evidence based practices and newly vetted processes into our design. We will work with the ACRE certification board to design and submit a curriculum which will meet the needs of employment professionals in California. We will work with ACRC and local providers who are interested in receiving the training. We will work with employers as they connect with the individual job seekers through the process of developing employment.

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17. Applicant Question: Engagement Plan Question 3

Service Model Transformation Projects must also include a plan to make two community presentations to key stakeholders and community members. The first presentation is to receive feedback about the proposed changes within the agency. The second community presentation is to present the completed action plan. Describe your plan for these two community presentations.

If your project is not Service Model Transformation, please select "N/A"

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Applicant Comment:

Not Applicable

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18. Applicant Question: Project Activities

Clearly and specifically state how the schedule of activities demonstrates the steps that the project will take to achieve its stated objective and measures. See Attachment H for instructions on entering objective and activities into GrantVantage.

Applicant Response:

1. **Create Curriculum that meets all requirements for ACRE certification in Customized Employment-** The initial phase of our project is to create and submit a curriculum for review and certification to the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE). This first activity is designed to meet the initial phase of our project
2. **Submit Curriculum for certification-** Once created the curriculum will be submitted to the board at ACRE for review, revision and certification. This is the second step in the initial phase of our project
3. **Test curriculum by administering minimum 40 hour training in Customized Employment to 25 employment specialist within ACRC's 10 county catchment area-** The second phase of our project involves testing the curriculum. We will do this by conducting a 40 hour training with 25 employment specialist
4. **Mentor the employment specialist and their identified job seeker through the process they received training in to assist job seeker in securing CIE.-** This is the second half of phase two. This activity is clearly tied to overall objective of the project and will demonstrate the positive impact training in CE has on quality employment outcomes
5. **Analyze pre/post test data**- The analysis of data allows us DDS and ACRC to assess the success of the project
6. **Report training data, individual job seeker data and complete all DDS reporting requirements** This final activity is the culmination of all of the work of the project.

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19. Applicant Question: Project Data

Provide a clear plan of how data will be collected to track project objectives, activities and measures (e.g., what data collection tools will be used, who will collect, software used, who will summarize, etc.).

Applicant Response:

All standard project measurement data will be collected in accordance with DDS requirements for the sections on training and implementation and Individual participant outcome data. We plan to use Google Suites to administer the pre and post tests as a survey accessible at the beginning and end of the training. Additionally we will create and administer a pre and post competency based survey for employment specialists to complete. Data related to the employment specialists ability to take the training and then apply it to their individual job seeker in real life situations will be tracked via online submission of activities completed and feedback given through mentoring. All data related to the job seekers demographics will be collected and housed on spreadsheets in Google Suites as will data related to the employment outcomes. All individuals will sign agreements to provide all requested data to participate in the project. Individuals who do not have access to the internet or a computer will be provided access in our offices to those items or will be provided with physical copies and that information transferred to the data base in Google. The project trainers and mentors will be responsible for collecting all data related to training, mentoring and job seeker and employer demographics.

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20. Applicant Question: Budget Template and Narrative

Explain how the project budget is consistent with the stated project objective and activities, and clearly and concisely explain how the proposed expenditures support the overall project design.

Applicant Response:

The project budget consists of wages and benefits for staff to develop and submit the curriculum to ACRE, to prepare for and provide 40 hours of training to 25 employment professionals and to mentor those employment professionals and their job seekers through the process resulting in the job seeker obtaining employment. The cost for the employment specialist to attend and participate in the 40 hour training is necessary because many individuals and providers would not be able to absorb those costs otherwise. The transportation fees will be used to cover mileage for the trainers to go with the employment specialist and job seeker while mentoring them through Discovery activities. The administrative fees are set at 8% of the project costs which is well below the15% threshold. The admin costs will be used to cover all administrative fees for banking, payroll, invoicing, accounting time and labor as well as use of equipment and facilities to complete those activities.

21. Applicant Question: Budget Costs

Confirm that that budget does not include non-allowable costs or costs funded by other sources. See Attachment D for allowable and non-allowable costs.

Applicant Response:

I Confirm

Section Name: Proposal Certification

Sub Section Name: Certification

1. Applicant Question: Confirm Proposal Discussion with RC(s)

Applicants are required to discuss their proposal with each RC(s) service area to be served. Have you discussed your proposal with each RC you are intending to serve?

Applicant Response:

Yes

2. Applicant Question: RC Contact

Applicants are required to submit their application concurrently to the Department and to each RC(s) service area the applicant is intending to serve. State the name(s) of the contact person(s) at each RC you have discussed your proposal with.

Applicant Response:

John Decker Community Services Director   jdecker@altaregional.org (916) 978-6489

3. Applicant Question: Regional Center Service Provider

If you are a vendored regional center service provider, are you in compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4652.5?

If you are a not a vendored regional center service provider, please select "N/A".

Applicant Response:

Yes

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4. Applicant Question: Confirm review of Standard Measures

DDS has developed standard project measures for each project type. Have you read the guidelines and agree to the standardized measures for your project type. See Attachment C for Standard Project Measures.

Applicant Response:

Yes

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5. Applicant Question: Applicant Certification

By submitting this application, the applicant is certifying the truth and accuracy of the proposal. The applicant also certifies that if you have subcontracting organizations, each participating organization has reviewed your project and agrees to their assigned activities, measures, and the budget.

Applicant Response:

Yes