

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

GAPS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES



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Hollydale Park,
City of South Gate.
Photo by SGA Marketing

Executive Summary

The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) is committed to ensuring that its park and open space revitalization efforts along the Lower LA River (LLAR) corridor translate into tangible benefits for local communities. Workforce development has emerged as a key strategy to promote equitable development, reduce displacement risks, and build long-term capacity for revitalization.

This resource guide, developed as part of the LLAR Para Todos Campaign, maps the regional workforce development landscape, identifies strategic partnership opportunities, and highlights how the **RMC** can leverage its grantmaking to strengthen workforce pathways and contribute to broader regional coordination efforts.

For **RMC applicants** (park and open space project leads), it demonstrates why workforce development matters for project success, connects applicants to local partners and resources, and provides practical guidance for incorporating workforce development – even with limited capacity. By focusing on local hiring, utilizing potential partner resources, and adhering to best practices like wrap-around services and career pathways, applicants can ensure RMC investments directly benefit LLAR corridor residents and stay in their communities.

Key Findings

- **Growing Need for Green Jobs:** There is a regional need for "green" workforce development, particularly in Construction and, increasingly over time, Operations and Maintenance (O&M) for green infrastructure projects.
- **Persistent Entry Barriers:** Both job seekers and employers face significant barriers. Job seekers struggle with access issues (childcare, transportation, specialty certifications), while employers – especially small and local businesses – face challenges with high training costs, competitive wages, and uncertain long-term funding.
- **Policy Alignment:** Federal (WIOA), State, and local workforce policies emphasize equity, upward mobility, and High Road jobs – jobs that are well-compensated, stable, and resilient. Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) are increasingly prioritizing green jobs and using wrap-around services to support disadvantaged populations.



Merced Avenue Greenway Project,
City of South El Monte. Photo by RMC

Introduction

[The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy](#) (RMC) is one of ten California state conservancies that distributes grants to park and open space projects. Following the passage of State AB 530, the RMC chaired the 2016-2018 Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) Working Group to set out a vision for a greener, more community-serving River. The resulting [Lower LA River Revitalization Plan](#) (LLARP) identified 155 project opportunities along the 15 mile stretch from Vernon to Long Beach and within 1.5 miles on either side of the River. This plan is designed to bolster climate resilience while directly benefitting current residents through public investments.

In 2023, the RMC launched the LLAR Para Todos Campaign to evaluate the status of River revitalization efforts and identify strategies to promote equitable development moving forward. Through this process, workforce development has consistently emerged as one of the most direct, tangible ways park and open space projects can benefit local communities and reduce displacement risks.

Purpose

This report maps the regional workforce development ecosystem, revealing opportunities for strategic coordination along the Lower Los Angeles River. By understanding the policy landscape, existing initiatives, persistent barriers, and available partners, the RMC and its Grant Program applicants can play a key role in advancing local community workforce and overall economic stability.

For the RMC, specific opportunities have been identified per the LLAR Para Todos goals of **economic inclusion, anti-displacement, and long-term community resilience**. These include:

- Facilitating connections between applicants and workforce programs
- Piloting regional training initiatives
- Fostering partnerships with educational institutions and research organizations to ensure efforts are responsive to the community's evolving needs and labor demand gaps

For project leads and RMC applicants, this guide demonstrates that workforce development is both achievable and beneficial to park and open space projects. Each project can contribute to building regional capacity and ensuring LLAR revitalization creates tangible pathways to economic opportunity for local residents. However, RMC grantees are not expected to be workforce development experts or to build programs from scratch. Instead, this guide connects you to existing partners, shows you what's possible at different scales, and helps you understand why investing in workforce development strengthens both your project and the surrounding community.

This resource recognizes that different applicants have different capacities, and the extent of workforce development opportunities can depend on project phase, overall size or scale, and budget available. RMC applicants are encouraged to engage with what's feasible for your project scope, timeline, and organizational capacity.



Documented Case Studies: Existing RMC Initiatives

Urban Orchards Project, City of South Gate. Photo by Tara Dales

The RMC has a long-standing history of integrating workforce development and community stewardship into its projects. The following initiatives illustrate examples (non-exhaustive) of how the RMC leverages its funding and convening authority to meet regional needs and achieve measurable community benefits.

For the RMC, these examples highlight different models and partnership structures worth replicating or scaling.

For RMC applicants, they show that workforce development can take many forms – from formal ranger programs to youth engagement initiatives – and can be tailored to different project types and capacities.



Los Angeles River Rangers.
Photo by RMC

Los Angeles River Rangers

Led by the RMC and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), the [2019 Los Angeles River Ranger Establishment Plan](#) defines a unified program for making the Los Angeles River safer and more inviting through community stewardship-based employment opportunities for youth. The River Ranger Pilot Program was initiated in response to Assembly Bill 1558 and shaped by a public outreach and engagement process, which identified:

- **Local demand for "green" career pathways**, with 29% of residents actively seeking employment or volunteer opportunities related to the river.
- **Community need for safer, more convenient river access**, positioning the corridor as a vital asset for community health and vitality.

While "River Rangers" represent the legislative mission, "River Ambassadors" are the operational workforce of the program. These are local residents in 6-month, paid training cohorts led by the [Conservation Corps of Long Beach](#) (CCLB). With guidance from CCLB, River Ambassadors gain professional experience and technical skills while providing maintenance, safety, and outreach services.

- **Program Geography:** The Program focuses on approximately eight miles of Los Angeles River in the REACH Zone at the LA and Rio Hondo Confluence. The cities served along this corridor included Lynwood, Cudahy, Paramount, South Gate, Downey, and Bell Gardens.

This model demonstrates how sustained investment in a regional program creates both immediate community benefits and long-term workforce pipeline development.

- **Community Stewardship & Safety:** The presence of Ambassadors on bike and foot patrols has directly improved community perceptions of safety. Between 2024 and 2025, the program saw a marked increase in resident engagement in water quality testing, guided walks, and watershed clean-up events.
- **Professional Pathways:** By collaborating with partners like Rio Hondo College to develop non-credit courses, the program provides a bridge between entry-level service and long-term career growth in the environmental sector.



Urban Orchards Project, City of South Gate. Photo by RMC



Workforce Development Via RMC-Funded Projects

DeForest Park Environmental Education Center and River Rangers

The RMC awarded \$1.9 million in Grant Program funds to the City of Long Beach and the Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB) for the [Environmental Education Center at DeForest Park](#), which opened in 2022. It serves as a satellite office for CCLB and supports the River Rangers program, offering hands-on experience in watershed stewardship and habitat restoration for youth and young adults.

The DeForest Park model shows how capital projects can embed workforce development into the physical space itself, ensuring long-term program sustainability. For RMC applicants, consider how the project site could support workforce development programs. Even dedicating a small meeting space for workforce partners can significantly strengthen your project's community impact and provide a base for ongoing programming.

South Gate Urban Orchard

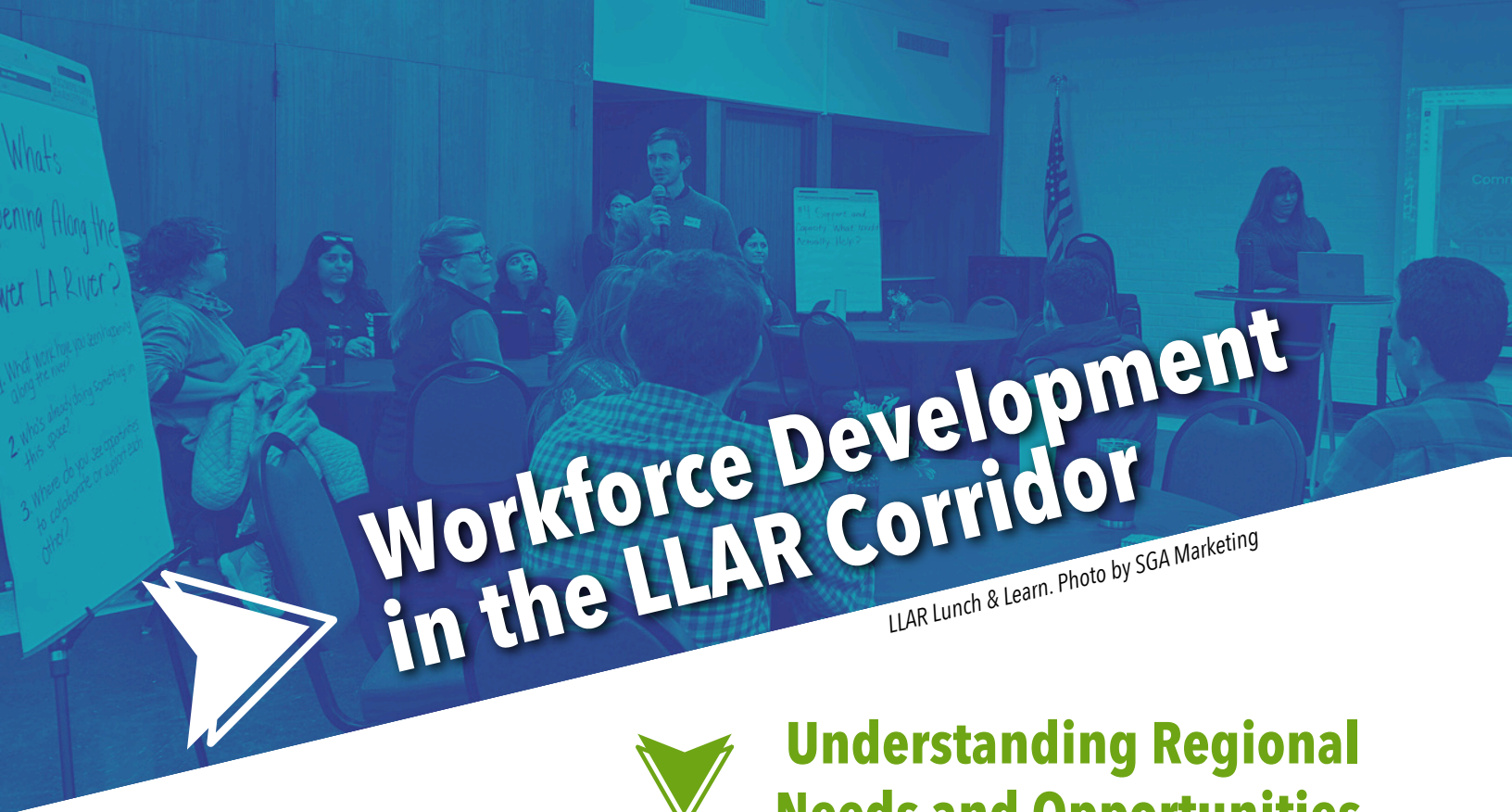
With over \$1 million in RMC funding, [Urban Orchard Park](#) – led by [Trust for Public Land](#) in collaboration with the City of South Gate – transformed 7 acres of post-industrial land adjacent to the LA River into a multi-benefit, community-serving park. The completed project includes 200 fruit trees, stormwater features, a nature-based playground, and Trust for Public Land's first workforce development program. Through partnership with CCLB, the project has created 30 new long-term job opportunities for underserved youth.

This project demonstrates how CBO-led projects can successfully integrate workforce development even when it's not their core expertise. The Trust for Public Land partnered with CCLB rather than building internal capacity, showing that strategic partnerships are key to successful implementation.

Community Benefits Tools

The original LLAR Revitalization Plan's [Community Stabilization Toolkit](#) emphasizes Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) and first-source hiring programs to protect residents from displacement as revitalization occurs. CBAs call for living-wage jobs, local hiring targets and workforce training opportunities. The toolkit also encourages project leads to partner with local workforce training programs while incorporating measures to support small, local businesses.

Future RMC Grant Program applicants are encouraged to utilize these tools throughout project development to ensure that RMC investments translate into tangible job opportunities for corridor residents.



Workforce Development in the LLAR Corridor

LLAR Lunch & Learn. Photo by SGA Marketing



Understanding Regional Needs and Opportunities

Los Angeles County is in the midst of a significant green economy transition, with billions of dollars of investment in green infrastructure, sustainable transportation, and climate resilience projects planned over the next decade. The LLAR corridor sits at the heart of this transformation, making local workforce development both timely and strategically important.

The Economic Scale of the Green Transition

Research from the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI) and HR&A Advisors indicates that the green economy is expanding faster than the general labor market. Los Angeles County is projected to grow from 338,000 green jobs to 600,000 by 2050, with growth outpacing the overall economy by nearly 40% ([GJRP Needs Assessment Report 2025](#)).

- **Public Investment = Job Creation:** Sustainable infrastructure spending creates significantly more jobs per dollar than traditional investments. For example, every \$1 million invested in renewable energy generates 7.5 full-time jobs, compared to just 2.7 jobs in fossil fuel sectors. RMC-funded projects, particularly those involving stormwater capture and habitat restoration, serve as local implementation sites for these broader regional investments.
- **Infrastructure as a Job Engine:** Major public investments in LA County are expected to generate 236,000 one-time construction jobs and nearly 7,500 permanent operations roles by 2050.

For the RMC, these projections underscore the opportunity to position LLAR projects as a coordinated workforce development pipeline rather than isolated initiatives. By facilitating connections between multiple projects and training providers, the RMC can amplify impact beyond what any single project could achieve.

For applicants, this context helps justify workforce development investments in your proposals. While you're creating jobs for one project, you're also contributing to a regional workforce transformation that will support California's climate goals for decades. This broader context can strengthen grant applications and help secure additional funding.

Regional Workforce Needs

Resilience Accelerator Los Angeles' [Workshop Report \(2019\)](#), a study led by Columbia University's Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes, explores opportunities to advance climate resilience through a holistic, equitable approach. The study supports the Lower Los Angeles River Para Todos learning that addressing regional workforce needs is an essential component to advance local ecosystem health and community stabilization in tandem.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 12.8% construction industry growth in LA County by 2030. Increased investment in workforce development will be needed to meet this demand, particularly as the existing workforce of skilled laborers is expected to decrease as 25% near retirement age.

Challenges

The retirement wave. LA County faces a critical shortage of 7,200 electricians and thousands of water-system technicians. Compounding this is a retirement wave, where nearly 25% of the current workforce in traditional trades is nearing retirement age.

High demand for operations & maintenance (O&M). The Para Todos engagement process captured community concerns around how park and open space projects will be kept clean, safe, and welcoming following their completion. Meanwhile, many municipalities in the River corridor face capacity and budgetary constraints to ongoing O&M.

Opportunities for RMC

Partner with training programs to create structured pathways from entry-level positions to skilled trades, ensuring knowledge transfer before experienced workers retire.

Launch a pilot program focusing on O&M training; consider creating an O&M endowment, pulling from General Bond funds and/or other funding streams as available.

Identifying "Steppingstone" Occupations

Recent research from the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) identifies thousands of "middle-skill climate-ready jobs" ([The Book of Green Jobs: A Guide to Middle-Skill Climate-Ready Jobs in Los Angeles County](#)). These positions require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree, many of which align with park and open space development:

- **Construction trades:** Electricians, plumbers, welders, and general construction workers are in high demand for building green infrastructure
- **Landscape and irrigation specialists:** Professionals trained in native plant landscaping, water-efficient irrigation systems, and sustainable maintenance practices
- **Environmental technicians:** Workers who monitor water quality, manage stormwater systems, and maintain ecological infrastructure
- **Operations and maintenance staff:** Long-term positions managing and maintaining completed parks and green infrastructure

Moving projects from the planning stage to on-the-ground implementation comes with clear construction labor needs. However, as projects are completed, there is a growing need for operations and maintenance workers who can care for green infrastructure over its lifetime. This presents an opportunity for RMC-funded projects to create not just temporary construction jobs, but also stable, long-term careers.

For applicants, this means your project (large or small) can contribute to regional workforce needs. Implementation phases create immediate training and job placement opportunities, completed projects yield ongoing O&M needs, and on-site programming creates opportunities for environmental educators and youth employment.

Persistent Barriers to Entry

While there's significant regional demand for workers, both job seekers and employers face barriers that workforce development partnerships can help address.

Barriers Job Seekers Face

Brookings Metro and the Urban Institute identify systemic hurdles that prevent residents from accessing these high-quality roles (see "further reading" below to access their full reports).

- **Transportation:** While green jobs are local, the most common requirement in job postings is a valid driver's license. In LA County, approximately 8.7% of households lack access to a vehicle. Licensing, insurance, and vehicle maintenance costs act as a "hard ceiling" for entry-level workers.
- **Childcare:** Parents and caregivers need childcare support to participate in training and maintain employment long-term.
- **Digital and Specialized Skill Gaps:** Many green infrastructure jobs require specialty certifications like native landscape maintenance or water-efficient irrigation in addition to OSHA safety training often needed to even be on a project site. However, without existing trade experience, awareness of and access to relevant training programs is often limited.
- **Limited English proficiency:** 20–40% of LLAR households have limited English proficiency. Training programs that are not bilingual or offered within the corridor remain inaccessible.

Job seekers also face workforce entry barriers associated with **racial inequities and socioeconomic discrimination**.

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions' [Race and the Work of the Future: Advancing Workforce Equity in the United States](#) study found that workers of color are underrepresented in "good jobs" – well-compensated, stable, and resilient to automation – even when controlling for educational attainment. This is a key consideration for upcoming workforce initiatives given the Lower Los Angeles River's majority Hispanic population; equitable implementation is crucial to effectively engage the immediate community. Furthermore, justice-involved individuals, youth, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations may face additional compounding challenges to entering the workforce.

> Further Reading

- Urban Institute's framework for [Equitable Access to Quality Climate Infrastructure Jobs](#) advocates for comprehensive technical assistance to help organizations build capacity, and for providing supportive services so that workers from marginalized communities can participate.
- The [High-Road Workforce Guide for City Climate Action](#) encourages cities to deliver wrap-around services (childcare, transportation, mentorship) and to incorporate local hiring and supportive service requirements into climate projects

Barriers Employers Face

- **Training costs:** Small organizations struggle to absorb the cost of training entry-level workers, especially when project timelines are tight, and face the risk of higher turnover rates that could delay project completion.
 - **Wage competition:** Local organizations compete with larger regional contractors who can offer higher wages, making it difficult to recruit and retain skilled workers
 - **Uncertain project pipelines:** Contractors often hesitate to invest in workforce development when unsure about future work and the reliability of long-term funding.
 - **Administrative capacity:** Small organizations often lack dedicated staff to manage recruitment, onboarding, and partnership coordination, which in turn contributes to low awareness of the current workforce development opportunities available for their projects.
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These persistent challenges illustrate why workforce development partnerships are so valuable. Effective workforce programs provide "wrap-around services" that address barriers job seekers face while supporting employers through the recruitment, training, and retention process.

For the RMC, understanding these barriers helps identify where grantmaking can have the most impact. Supporting applicants to partner with workforce programs that offer comprehensive services addresses both sides of the equation.

Opportunities for the RMC

- Connect with the LA Department of Economic Opportunity to ensure
- Assemble local training providers, wrap-around services and placement partners into a coordinated team
- Publish a schedule of training cohorts by geographic area and number of candidates per quarter, allowing RMC applicants to proactively align upcoming project work with local training supply
- Provide notification of workforce development opportunities and their requirements for residents that are clearly communicated, available in multiple languages, and broadly accessible
- Offer guidance to project applicants in identifying ideas for apprenticeship programs or workforce training initiatives that align with project needs and geographic location
- Encourage applicants to incorporate workforce development opportunities across project phases.

For RMC applicants, these barriers underscore why choosing the right workforce partner matters. Look for programs that don't just train workers, but also help them access transportation, childcare, equipment, and certifications. If working with small local contractors, recognize they may need support to participate successfully in local hiring initiatives.

Guidance for Applicants

Successful programs that combine technical training with wrap-around supports such as case management, housing stipends, and job placement assistance:

- **Los Angeles' LA:RISE program** bridges homeless or underemployed individuals into jobs by providing recruitment, case management and placement services alongside training.
- **Youth@Work** pays for the first 160 hours of entry-level employment and offers interview preparation, interpersonal skills and financial literacy training.
- **Theodore Payne Foundation** hosts trainings for a California Native Plant Landscaper Certificate Program which is focused on landscape training for entry level positions.
- **Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) Certificate Program** is geared toward traditional landscapers with a focus on irrigation and turf management.



Current Workforce Policy Landscape

Circle Park Grand Opening, City of South Gate. Photo by SGA Marketing



Federal & Statewide Programs Set the Foundation

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) provide the legal and strategic framework for the region. Their current focus is on "High Road" jobs – positions that are well-compensated, stable, and offer upward mobility.

- **Economic Resilience:** Long term unemployment coincides with periods of economic downturn. Green workforce training programs can facilitate continued employment and access to "High Road" jobs by providing transferable skills.
- **Equity Gap:** Policies specifically focus on reaching and engaging California's Hispanic population, who currently face the highest rates of job insecurity.
- **Adaptive Development:** State strategy encourages repurposing vacant commercial spaces for affordable housing and community infrastructure, creating new labor demand.



The LA County & Regional Framework

Workforce strategy in the region is led by the Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board (WDB) – one of seven Local Boards that comprise the LA Basin Regional Planning Unit – and the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). The County's [2021-2024 plan](#) and [2023 Biennial Modification Plan](#) center on three goals: aligning training with employer needs, enabling upward mobility, and maximizing resource efficiency through integrated programs and system collaboration. The 2025-2028 Regional Plan is currently [in development](#).

The Role of the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)

Created in 2022, the DEO integrates workforce and economic development to streamline regional growth.

- **Priority Sectors:** Infrastructure, utilities, and **green jobs** are the primary focus of DEO-led recruitment and training.
- **Labor Partnerships:** Increased collaboration with unions and labor organizations to ensure projects create high-quality career pathways rather than temporary roles.
- **High Road Training Partnerships (H RTP):** This model requires project partners to provide **wrap-around support services** (e.g., childcare, transportation) to ensure participants build a long-term foundation for employment.
- **Data-Driven Equity:** Using regional data to measure success beyond simple hiring numbers, focusing instead on long-term economic mobility for disproportionately impacted communities.

For the RMC: The DEO's High Road Training Partnership (H RTP) fund could potentially support RMC applicants who want to incorporate workforce development but need financial and technical assistance. RMC could facilitate connections between applicants and the DEO, or explore formal coordination agreements.

For Applicants: If your project aligns with DEO priority sectors (infrastructure, utilities, green jobs), you may be eligible for H RTP funding or technical assistance. Contact the LA County Department of Economic Opportunity to explore how their resources could support your workforce development goals. The DEO can also help you connect with vetted training providers who already meet High Road standards.



Local Workforce Development Boards

Regional Oversight & Coordination

The **Los Angeles Basin Regional Planning Unit** coordinates all seven L.A. County workforce boards to align investments with regional industry demands.

1. **Core Objectives:** Uniting workforce development with economic priorities, with focus on sectors such as Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics, and Healthcare.
2. **Dual Focus:** Balancing the needs of businesses (competitive labor) with the goals of job seekers (family-sustaining wages).
3. **Sustainability Mandate:** The plan explicitly commits to workforce strategies that support environmental sustainability and climate resilience – a direct alignment with the RMC's mission.

Southeast Los Angeles County Consortium (SELACO) Workforce Development Board

Serving the southeast region, SELACO specializes in industry-specific accreditations through partnerships with University of California Riverside, California State University Long Beach (CSULB), and the National Tools and Machining Association (NTMA).

SELACO is working to expand apprenticeship offerings and "stackable skills" training while providing wraparound services to ensure efforts are sustainable. Its [2025-2028 Local Plan](#) sets forth key goals that align with green workforce development.

- **Training Focus:** Engineering, Construction, and "Clean/Green" sectors (Renewable Energy, Sustainable Packaging, and Waste/Recycling).
- **Free Employer Resources:** Collaborates with the State Employment Training Panel (ETP) to provide no-cost training for employees of qualified companies.
- **Equity Focus:** Prioritizes justice-involved youth, immigrants, and English learners through "stackable" skills and wrap-around support.

South Bay Workforce Investment Board

The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) provides human resource services at no cost to business and job seekers in its jurisdiction. Its [2025-2028 Local Plan](#) grounds its strategy in "High Road" priorities, emphasizing the intersection of economic mobility and environmental health.

- **Green Career Pathways:** Actively identifies **Urban Forestry, Renewable Energy, and Sustainability** as high-growth sectors for local residents.
- **Sector Coordination:** Facilitates coordinated service delivery across education and economic development systems to reduce systemic barriers to entry.

Long Beach Workforce Innovation Network (LBWIN) Board

Serving Long Beach and Signal Hill, LBWIN is a critical resource for the southern end of the river corridor.

- **Developer Incentives:** Provides funding for on-the-job training for new hires and offers layoff aversion services.
- **Emerging Sectors:** The draft 2025–2028 plan specifically identifies Offshore Wind Energy as a primary workforce development opportunity.
- **Community Support:** Focuses on expanding affordable housing and providing wrap-around services to ensure equitable access to new green jobs.

> Read the State, County, and Local Plans here:

- California Workforce Development Board's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan, [Economic and Workforce Analysis 2024-2027](#)
- Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board's 2023 [Biennial Modification](#)
- LA Basin Regional Planning Unit's Program Year [2025-2028 Regional Plan](#)
- Southeast Los Angeles County Consortium's (SELACO's) [2025-2028 Local Plan](#)
- The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) [2025-2028 Local Plan](#)
- Long Beach Workforce Innovation Network [2025-2028 Local Plan Webpage](#)



Community College Workforce Development Programs

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) represents established, no-cost training infrastructure throughout the LLAR corridor. With nine colleges across LA County, LACCD offers workforce development programs tailored to meet current labor market demand in sectors critical to the region's economic and environmental future.

For the RMC, LACCD colleges represent strategic partners for creating pipeline programs where students gain hands-on experience directly with the RMC as a State agency or through RMC-funded projects, building individuals' professional skills and regional capacity. For example, the RMC could pilot an internship program with Long Beach City College (LBCC), creating a direct pipeline from the college's climate/sustainability cohorts to RMC positions. This pilot would provide students with state agency experience while testing a model that could then be replicated across other LACCD campuses along the corridor.

For applicants, LACCD colleges can provide pre-trained candidates ready for employment, customized training programs for your project needs, apprenticeship pathways, and often at no cost to your organization or the workers. The key is identifying which LACCD college serves your project area and connecting with their Workforce Development office early in your project planning.

Key LACCD Partners for LLAR Corridor Projects

Long Beach City College - Office of Workforce Development

Serving: Long Beach

Long Beach City College provides job placement services, education and training opportunities, and programs tailored to industry demand. Their climate/sustainability workforce division has expressed interest in creating direct employment pipelines with the RMC, offering cohort participants experience at a state agency while providing the RMC and RMC-funded projects with pre-trained candidates.

If you're developing a project in Long Beach, contact LBCC's Workforce Development office to explore how their climate/sustainability cohorts could support your construction or O&M needs. Students come with foundational training in green infrastructure and environmental conservation.

East Los Angeles College - Workforce Development Department

Serving: South Gate area

East LA College offers job placement and internship support, education and training, and programming through the Workforce Education Resource Center. Their focus areas include apprenticeships and employer partnerships with particular emphasis on logistics, transportation, and green infrastructure.

South Gate projects can tap into ELAC's green infrastructure training programs. Their Workforce Education Resource Center can help match trained candidates to your specific project needs, whether that's landscape specialists, irrigation technicians, or environmental monitors.

Los Angeles Trade-Technical College - Workforce Development and WorkSource Center

Serving: Vernon area

LA Trade-Tech provides job placement and training in skilled trades including carpentry, electrical, plumbing, welding, HVAC, and renewable energy. Specialized programs include the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) pre-apprenticeship pathway and union apprenticeship preparation – aligned closely with infrastructure, public works, and sustainable construction needs.

Vernon-area projects benefit from LA Trade-Tech's strong focus on construction trades and renewable energy. Their MC3 pre-apprenticeship program creates a clear pathway from training to employment, particularly valuable for projects with significant construction components.

Los Angeles Harbor College - Workforce Development

Serving: Wilmington and South Bay region

Harbor College offers job placement services, employer partnerships, and training programs in logistics, port industries, environmental technology, and healthcare. Their stackable credential pathways are designed to meet workforce needs of the Port of Los Angeles and the region's clean energy economy.

Projects in the South Bay can leverage LAHC's environmental technology programs and stackable credentials. Their port industry focus means students understand large-scale infrastructure projects and environmental compliance - valuable experience for LLAR corridor work.

Compton College - Workforce Development and Career Education

Serving: Compton

Compton College provides job placement and career counseling plus training in healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, and green technology. Through the Strong Workforce Program, career pathway development, and employer partnerships, Compton College focuses on economic mobility for underserved communities while meeting local and regional labor market needs.

Compton-area projects can connect with students through the Strong Workforce Program, which emphasizes career pathways and wrap-around support for underserved populations – aligning well with the RMC's equity goals.

Urban Orchards Project, City of South Gate.

Photo by Tara Dales





LB Must Wetlands construction site,
City of Long Beach.
Photo by SGA Marketing

What This Network Offers

For the RMC

- Established training infrastructure across the entire LLAR
- Opportunity to create coordinated job pipeline programs
- Potential to replicate the Long Beach City College model at other campuses
- Built-in equity focus through LACCD mission
- No-cost training for regional workforce development

For Applicants/ **Park & Open Space Projects**

- Pre-trained candidates in your project area
- Customized training programs that can be tailored
- Apprenticeship pathways with career progression
- Often no cost to employers or workers
- Wrap-around support services through college programs
- Stackable credentials that allow workers to advance

RMC Applicants - Getting Started:

1. Identify which LACCD college serves your project area (see list above)
2. Contact their Workforce Development office during project planning – not just before hiring
3. Discuss your project timeline and workforce needs
4. Explore how their existing cohorts align with your schedule
5. Consider creating structured internship or apprenticeship opportunities that benefit both students and your project



Workforce Agreements Across Overlapping Jurisdictions

Understanding these agreements helps both the RMC and applicants plan appropriately. For the RMC, this shows where applicants may face mandatory requirements and need additional support. For applicants, knowing these thresholds early helps you budget for workforce requirements and identify partnership needs.

Most RMC-funded LLAR projects fall below these thresholds. However, understanding these standards provides a framework for best practices, even when not mandated.

Jurisdiction	Agreement Type	Scope & Threshold	What it Means for RMC Projects
Los Angeles County	Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) with LA/OC Building & Construction Trades Council (County webpage)	County-administered capital projects \geq \$5M	Most RMC grants fall below this threshold. However, if the County is administering your project and it exceeds \$5M, the CWA requirements apply automatically. Plan for local hiring requirements and apprenticeship participation early in your budget.
City of Long Beach	Project Labor Agreement (PLA) with LA/OC Building & Construction Trades Council (City webpage)	City-administered projects \geq \$750K (non-street) or \geq \$1M (streets) Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% local hires (LA/OC residents) • 10% disadvantaged/veteran workers • Jobs Coordinator required • No work stoppages 	Long Beach projects have the most accessible thresholds in the region. If your project meets these amounts, factor in the 40% local hire requirement and Jobs Coordinator costs early. The Long Beach WDB can help connect you to trained local candidates.
Other Lower LA River Cities	No broad citywide PLAs currently identified	May use project-specific agreements or voluntary local workforce provisions. County CWA could apply if County is administering and contract \geq \$5M	Most RMC projects won't be subject to mandatory agreements, but consider adopting voluntary local hiring goals to demonstrate community benefit and strengthen future grant applications.
Regional Entities (For Reference - Less Likely to Apply to RMC Projects)			
LA Metro	PLA with LA/OC Building & Construction Trades (Metro webpage)	Measure R and Measure M Transit and Highway Projects; Construction projects \geq \$2.5M	Unlikely to apply to RMC park projects unless involving Metro property or facilities
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)	PLA with multiple Building Trades Councils (PLA Report 2024)	Large-scale water infrastructure projects; 60% local hire goal, 15% transitional workers	May apply if project involves significant water infrastructure managed by MWD

Additional Context for Applicants:

- Even if your project doesn't meet these thresholds, adopting elements voluntarily (like 20-30% local hire goals) demonstrates community commitment and strengthens grant applications.
- If you do meet a threshold, connect with the relevant Workforce Development Board early – they can help you meet requirements at lower cost through existing training pipelines.
- The Long Beach thresholds (\$750K-\$1M) are the most likely to apply to RMC applicants.



Additional Local Efforts

Beyond the formal agreements above, several regional and local initiatives provide additional support and frameworks for workforce development in the LLAR corridor.

Gateway Cities Climate Action Planning Framework

The Gateway Cities Climate Action Planning Framework offers guidelines for local entities to voluntarily develop Climate Action Plans that advance economic prosperity, build climate resiliency, promote equity, and create jobs while addressing climate change impacts. Though non-binding, the framework aligns with broader state policy goals including SB 375 and provides a valuable resource for municipalities in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region.

What This Offers:

- **For the RMC:** Shows how workforce development fits within broader climate action planning. The RMC could encourage applicants to reference this framework in demonstrating how their projects align with regional climate goals.
- **For Applicants:** Use this framework to show how your project's workforce components connect to your municipality's climate action goals, strengthening your narrative about regional impact and policy alignment.

Local Economic Development Initiatives

Many cities along the LLAR corridor have economic development departments or initiatives that include workforce development components, even if they don't have formal PLAs. These may include:

- First-source hiring ordinances or policies
- Local business enterprise (LBE) programs that prioritize local contractors
- Economic development zones with workforce training incentives
- Community benefits agreements on major development projects

For applicants: Contact your city's Economic Development Department to learn about local workforce initiatives. Even informal programs can provide valuable connections to local contractors and workers.

For the RMC: These local initiatives represent opportunities for alignment and coordination. The RMC could convene local economic development staff to share best practices and identify regional coordination opportunities.

Regional Sector Partnerships

The region has several sector-based partnerships focused on green jobs, infrastructure, and construction. These partnerships bring together employers, training providers, labor organizations, and economic development agencies to coordinate workforce development within specific industries.

Examples include partnerships focused on:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean energy and renewable infrastructure• Green building and sustainable construction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water infrastructure and environmental technology• Urban forestry and landscape management |
|---|---|



Recommendations

Los Angeles River. Photo by RMC.



RMC Strategic Opportunities for Regional Impact

1. Facilitate Connections Between Applicants and Workforce Programs

By serving as a trusted connector, the RMC reduces the burden on individual applicants to navigate the complex workforce development landscape while building regional coordination among providers. This positions the RMC as a strategic convener in addition to serving as a critical funding source in the region.

- a. Maintain a centralized menu of potential workforce development partners (see Directory below) and conduct semi-regular (annual or biannual) check-ins to build and sustain relationships.
- b. Offer to connect project applicants with potential workforce development partners that align with the scale, timeline, and overall nature of their project.
- c. Consider hosting annual convenings that bring together RMC applicants and workforce providers to facilitate organic relationship-building and partnership development.

2. Develop Regional Training Initiatives

With multiple RMC-funded projects happening simultaneously along the corridor, there's opportunity for coordinated training cohorts that serve multiple projects, rather than each project recruiting independently.

- a. Work with the Corps, the LA County Community College network and other providers to create training schedules aligned with project pipelines. For example, if three projects will break ground in Q2 2027, coordinate a construction training cohort that graduates just before construction begins.
- b. Consider funding an O&M training pilot focused specifically on green infrastructure maintenance. As more RMC projects are completed, the demand for ongoing maintenance will grow – creating a dedicated training pathway now prepares the workforce.
- c. Explore partnership with LA County DEO's High Road Training Partnership fund to leverage additional resources and ensure alignment with county workforce priorities.

3. Pursue Strategic Partnerships

Partnering with key regional entities would enhance the RMC's ongoing understanding of real-time gaps in labor demand, job availability, and existing skills of the workforce. This ensures the RMC remains adaptive to the evolving labor landscape within the region while facilitating valuable connections between RMC-funded projects and potential workforce partnerships.

- a. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with LA County DEO to formalize coordination and ensure RMC applicants can access H RTP and other county resources.
- b. Partner with LACCD to explore creating LLAR-specific workforce development programs at community colleges along the corridor.



Projects Getting Started with Workforce Development

Workforce development looks different at different project scales. The following guidance helps you identify what's feasible for your project:

Start Where You Are: Workforce Development by Project Scale

Small Projects (\$200K - \$500K):

- Partner with existing youth employment programs for seasonal positions (summer internships, weekend programming support)
- Include workforce development in project activation and programming rather than construction
- **Example:** Community garden partnering with Youth@Work for 4-6 summer internships focused on urban agriculture and environmental education

Medium Projects (\$500K - \$2M):

- Include local hiring requirements in construction contracts (work with contractors who partner with workforce programs)
- Partner with training programs for specific skills relevant to your project (irrigation specialists, native plant landscaping, etc.)
- Create 1-2 long-term O&M positions as part of project sustainability plan
- **Example:** Park renovation project working with Theodore Payne Foundation to train and hire a native plant landscaping specialist for ongoing maintenance

Large Projects (\$2M+):

- Comprehensive workforce development plans with dedicated coordinator
- Multiple partnerships across construction and O&M phases
- Formal agreements with workforce development providers, possibly with on-site training elements
- **Example:** Multi-acre river park development partnering with CCLB for River Ranger program, LA/OC Building Trades for construction apprenticeships, and creating 3-5 permanent O&M positions with career advancement pathways

Common Concerns and How to Address Them

“Our project team does not have capacity to take on workforce development”

Partner organizations provide the expertise, training, and placement services. The partnership directory below shows organizations that handle the workforce development components so you can focus on your core mission.

“Our project budget is too small”

Even small projects can incorporate workforce development through existing programs that cover training costs. Programs like Youth@Work and LA:RISE are specifically designed to reduce employer costs. Additionally, H RTP funding and other grant opportunities can offset workforce development expenses.

“Our timeline is too tight”

Connect with training programs early – even before project approval. Many programs run cohorts on a regular schedule you can align with. The earlier you engage, the more flexibility you have. RMC can help facilitate introductions to shorten the timeline.



Featured Partnership Opportunities

The following partnerships represent particularly strategic opportunities for the RMC and its applicants.

Long Beach City College - Direct Pipeline Partnership

There is significant potential to create a direct employment pipeline from LBCC training cohorts to both the RMC (as a state agency) and RMC-funded projects.

Benefits for the RMC:

- Creates a reliable pipeline of pre-trained candidates for RMC operations and oversight roles
- Provides LBCC students with valuable state agency experience, enhancing their career readiness
- Positions RMC as a workforce development leader by creating pathways from community college to state government careers
- Could serve as a model for partnerships with other LACCD colleges along the corridor

Benefits for Applicants:

- Access to trained candidates from LBCC climate/sustainability cohorts who already have foundational knowledge in green infrastructure and environmental conservation
- Opportunity to offer students hands-on experience that complements their academic training
- No-cost training pipeline – LBCC handles education and credentialing

Tomorrow's Talent - Youth Career Exploration

The RMC and funded projects could collaborate with Tomorrow's Talent to provide high school students with exposure to environmental/climate-focused careers that they might not encounter in their community.

Benefits for the RMC:

- Creates early awareness and interest in environmental careers among high school students across the LLAR corridor
- Builds long-term workforce pipeline by inspiring students before they make college and career decisions
- Demonstrates RMC's commitment to community investment and youth development
- Can be integrated across multiple RMC-funded projects for coordinated regional impact

Benefits for Applicants:

- Provides enthusiastic youth support for project activities (events, volunteer days, community engagement)
- Creates meaningful connections between your project and local schools/communities
- Opportunity to expose students to diverse careers: landscape architecture, environmental science, conservation biology, park management, green infrastructure engineering, and more
- Low barrier to entry – structured program designed specifically for high school student engagement



Local & Regional Workforce Directory

SCWP Microplastic Tour. Photo by SGA Marketing

This directory connects RMC and its applicants to workforce development partners across the LLAR corridor. You don't need to work with all of these organizations – even one strong partnership can make a meaningful difference.

For the RMC: These organizations represent strategic partners for regional workforce coordination. Consider how the RMC might facilitate introductions, create collaborative initiatives, or develop preferred partnership frameworks.

For Applicants: Use this directory to identify partners whose services align with your project phase, size, geographic location, and workforce needs.



Potential Partners or Collaborators by Project Phase

Early Planning & Community Engagement

- Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI) - Community engagement and leadership development
- LA County America's Job Centers - Early workforce needs assessment and planning
- Tomorrow's Talent - Career exploration and exposure for high school students
- LACCD Network - Early partnership discussions for training alignment

Construction Phase

- LA/OC Building and Construction Trades Council - Skilled trades apprenticeships
- PV Jobs - At-risk youth and veteran placement in construction
- Green Door Initiative - Green industry construction training
- LACCD Network - Pre-apprenticeship and construction training programs
- Conservation Corps of Long Beach - Youth construction crews and training

Operations & Maintenance

- Theodore Payne Foundation - California Native Plant Landscaper Certificate
- QWEL Certificate Program - Irrigation and water-efficient landscaping
- Watershed Wise Landscape Professional Certification - Irrigation system auditing
- Conservation Corps of Long Beach - Environmental stewardship and park maintenance
- LACCD Network - Climate/sustainability workforce programs with O&M focus

All Phases / Comprehensive Services

- LA County America's Job Centers - Full-service employment support
- LA County DEO / High Road Training Partnerships - Funding and coordination
- LACCD Network - Training, placement, and career pathways across entire project lifecycle
- Local Workforce Development Boards - Regional coordination and employer services



Comprehensive Partner Directory

Organization	Overview	Opportunities for RMC/ Relevance to Para Todos	Opportunities for Projects
<u>LA/OC Building and Construction Trades Council</u>	Union coalition focusing on apprenticeship programs, workforce training, and promoting high-quality, career-track jobs in traditional and green construction sectors.	Explore formal partnership to create LLAR-specific apprenticeship pathways. Convene contractors and applicants to streamline access to skilled trades workers.	Connect for skilled trades workers (carpentry, electrical, plumbing, HVAC) with established training and apprenticeship programs. Particularly valuable for projects with significant construction components.
<u>LA County Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)</u>	Administers High Road Training Partnership (H RTP) fund supporting industry and worker-centered training. Primary regional coordinator for workforce development.	Key strategic partner for regional coordination and funding alignment. Develop referral protocols to streamline applicant access to H RTP funding.	Contact DEO to access H RTP funding for workforce initiatives, technical assistance, and connections to vetted training providers.
<u>Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) Network</u>	Nine colleges offering workforce programs in climate/sustainability, construction trades, and green infrastructure. Includes pre-apprenticeship pathways and stackable credentials.	Create LLAR-specific training programs and direct pipelines from LACCD cohorts to RMC and RMC-funded projects. Potential to replicate Long Beach City College internship model across multiple campuses.	Partner with your local LACCD college for pre-trained candidates, customized training programs, and apprenticeship pathways - often at no cost to your organization.
<u>Long Beach City College - Climate/ Sustainability Division</u>	Specialized workforce development in climate and sustainability with training cohorts ready for placement. Interested in creating direct pipeline to RMC.	Opportunity for a pilot internship program creating a pipeline from LBCC climate cohorts to RMC positions, providing students with State agency experience while building regional capacity.	Long Beach-area projects can tap into pre-trained cohorts for construction and O&M positions. Students have foundational green infrastructure knowledge.
<u>Tomorrow's Talent</u>	Workforce program for high school students focused on career exploration and exposure to diverse pathways beyond their communities.	Potential to partner and create structured career exploration across multiple projects, exposing students to environmental careers and building a long-term workforce pipeline by inspiring students early.	Engage students for internships, job shadows, and project-based learning. Introduces them to landscape architecture, conservation, environmental science, park management, and green infrastructure careers.



Comprehensive Partner Directory

Organization	Overview	Opportunities for RMC/ Relevance to Para Todos	Opportunities for Projects
<u>Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB)</u>	Provides paid 6-month training cohorts in environmental stewardship, restoration, and park maintenance. Operates River Ambassadors and DeForest Park Education Center.	Current and ongoing RMC partner. Potential to expand regional programs and create coordinated training schedules across multiple projects.	Engage for construction-phase work crews and long-term O&M positions. River Ambassadors support project activation, community engagement, and ongoing maintenance.
Local Workforce Development Boards <u>(SELACO, South Bay, Long Beach)</u>	Regional boards coordinating workforce services, employer partnerships, and training programs. Each serves specific areas with programs for green jobs and sustainability.	Strategic partners for regional coordination and policy alignment. Convene WDB staff to share best practices and identify coordination opportunities.	Contact your local WDB for employer services, training provider connections, and regional funding access. SELACO, South Bay, and Long Beach boards all prioritize green jobs.
<u>Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI)</u>	Community nonprofit providing education, leadership development, and workforce programs to empower underserved populations. Actively seeks partnerships.	Potential to facilitate connection for applicants' community engagement and equity-focused programming, aligned with Para Todos goals.	Engage for early-phase community engagement, leadership development, and culturally responsive workforce programming.
<u>PV Jobs</u>	Places at-risk youth, adults, and veterans in construction careers. State and Federally funded with case management, job development, and supportive services.	PV Jobs focuses on the population groups that RMC aims to serve through Para Todos and beyond. Opportunity to track placement outcomes to demonstrate regional impact.	Support for construction hiring with comprehensive wrap-around services. They handle recruitment, training, and placement, reducing your administrative burden.
<u>LA County America's Job Centers (AJCCs)</u>	Comprehensive employment support with locations throughout LA County including LLAR corridor offices. Connects to Youth@Work, LA:RISE, and other programs.	Established infrastructure for workforce referrals. Offers a single point of contact for connecting applicants to multiple specialized programs.	Your local AJCC is a one-stop shop – job placement, training referrals, employer services, and connections to specialized programs.



Comprehensive Partner Directory

Organization	Overview	Opportunities for RMC/ Relevance to Para Todos	Opportunities for Projects
<u>Green Door Initiative</u>	Green industry employment preparation, training, and services for underserved populations. Specializes in environmental and sustainability workforce development.	Green-jobs-focused organization aligned with LLAR environmental mission. Potential for regional green infrastructure training programs.	Strong match for park and open space projects needing workers with environmental awareness and green industry training.
<u>LA:RISE Program</u>	Bridges homeless or underemployed individuals into jobs through recruitment, case management, and placement alongside training.	Addresses displacement and economic inclusion goals central to Para Todos. Demonstrates tangible anti-displacement impact.	Provides job-ready candidates with extensive support services, reducing employer burden while supporting vulnerable populations.
<u>Youth@Work</u>	Pays for first 160 hours of entry-level employment for youth ages 14-24. Includes interview prep, interpersonal skills, and financial literacy training.	Youth-focused pathway for long-term pipeline development. Low-barrier entry for smaller applicants to incorporate workforce development.	Ideal for smaller projects or ongoing programming. County covers initial employment costs while youth gain work experience.
<u>Theodore Payne Foundation - CA Native Plant Landscaper Certificate</u>	Training for California Native Plant Landscaper Certificate focused on native landscaping for entry-level positions.	Certification aligned with ecological restoration goals of LLAR projects. Encourage or incentivize in grant criteria.	Seek contractors or create positions requiring CNPLC certification. Ensures workers understand native plant ecology critical to restoration success.
<u>Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) Certificate</u>	Certification for landscapers focusing on irrigation and turf management with water efficiency emphasis.	Water conservation focus aligns with climate resilience goals. Support expansion into O&M training.	Require or support QWEL certification for irrigation specialists. Critical as water efficiency becomes increasingly important.
<u>Watershed Wise Landscape Professional Certification</u>	EPA WaterSense program for irrigation system auditing and water-efficient landscape management.	Supports water conservation objectives in LLAR projects. Include in recommended qualifications for O&M grants.	Include in O&M position requirements or support current staff in obtaining certification.



Potential Future Partners (Watchlist)

Organization	Overview	Opportunities for RMC	Opportunities for Projects
<u>Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)</u>	Policy and advocacy nonprofit focused on economic, social, and environmental justice. Expertise in workforce standards and labor market analysis.	Potential partner for policy alignment and workforce standards guidance. May help define High Road criteria for RMC grants.	LAANE can provide insights on creating high-quality jobs and meeting High Road standards. May collaborate through H RTP fund initiatives.
<u>Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI)</u>	Supports green technology companies and workforce development. Administers Green Jobs Research Partnership with strong labor market data.	Possible research and data partner for green jobs analysis. Could provide regional workforce needs assessments.	Potential connection to emerging green technology companies and clean energy workforce programs.
<u>Urban Greening Coalition</u>	Coalition focused on urban forestry, green infrastructure, and environmental justice with strong LA County community connections.	Potential convening partner for urban greening workforce initiatives. Network spans multiple LLAR communities.	Network of organizations that may provide training, placement, or partnership opportunities for greening projects.