

Reference Information - Overview of key grant requirements:

CenCal Health currently serves one in three residents in Santa Barbara County and one in four in San Luis Obispo County. We work in partnership with our contracted providers, including with local primary and specialty providers, all hospitals in both counties, county health departments, health systems, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Indian Health Centers, private medical groups, and individual physicians. We work with provider and other stakeholders to bolster access to care through strategic and community-oriented investments. Projects must benefit CenCal Health Medi-Cal members either through direct care or create pathways to increase capacity and access to care. Key focus areas for the grant: Behavioral Health, Pediatrics and Primary Care, and Specialty Care Services. This investment is intended to improve healthcare access through strategic funding aimed at:

1. Provider Recruitment
2. Healthcare Workforce Training and Education
3. Overall Provider Practice Support

Projects must demonstrate sustainability and scalability beyond the funding period. Immediate impact projects and programs (up to one year in duration) that address capacity and access to care through the three areas of Provider Recruitment, Healthcare Workforce Training and Education, and Provider Practice Support, will be prioritized during the application review process.

Section I: Overview – 20% of score

1. Indicate the award type for which you are applying.

- ☒ Provider Recruitment
- ☒ Training and Educational opportunities
- ☐ Practice support

2. Does your proposal include a project to enhance Medi-Cal capacity, access, or workforce development in any of the 3 key focus areas of: (select all that apply)

- ☒ Behavioral Health
- ☒ Pediatrics and Primary Care
- ☒ Specialty Care Services

3. Please provide an overview of your proposal (500 max) including:

- ☒ Purpose of funding and whether it is for Provider Recruitment, Training and Educational Opportunities, or Practice Support.
- ☒ Whether applicant qualifies for enhanced funding due to being a direct service provider serving more than 40,000 *unique* CenCal members annually or being a consortium or educational institution.
- ☒ Overview of how funds will be spent within 12 months and how they will increase *capacity and access to care*.

(500 words max., 498 words):

The SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership is a consortium, with 42 members from 30 organizations representing healthcare employers, education/training providers, and workforce development in San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara Counties. The Partnership was formed in 2023 to address

the critical need for Access to Care, a key priority of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The Partnership is committed to building a strong healthcare workforce that is reflective of the local community. One member organization of the Partnership, Health Career Connection (HCC), will serve as the fiscal agent and Program Manager for this application.

This proposal is requesting funding to address two components of the Partnership's Strategic Plan, which are aligned with the CenCal Health focus areas.

Training and Educational Opportunities: These funds will support the design and pilot implementation of a tiered pathway program, the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program, to be launched in 2025. The Program will be custom designed to meet the specific needs of healthcare employers in San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara Counties. Initially, this Program will include two components: 1) Healthcare Career Exploration Fairs to expose high school students to healthcare occupations, training opportunities, and financial aid opportunities; and 2) 10-week paid full-time summer healthcare internships for 25 college students or recent graduates, based on HCC's proven model, implemented in other regions, which includes professional development, supportive services, mentoring, and job placement. To advance health equity, the Program will offer the career fairs and internships in targeted geographical areas that are designated "disadvantaged communities" with a high proportion of CenCal Health members and will prioritize the recruitment of interns who are CenCal Health members or are from targeted disadvantaged communities, underrepresented backgrounds, or are first generation college students.

This proposal is requesting funding for internship stipends for 12 of the 25 interns (to support local providers unable to cover the cost of the internship), a contracted Program Manager to implement the customized program, a contracted Grant Writer to research and apply for funding to support ongoing sustainability of the Program, along with marketing/outreach, materials, and supplies.

Provider Recruitment Funding: To enhance access to care, this proposal is also seeking funding to conduct two in-depth Provider Recruitment and Retention Studies to address the critical local shortage of: 1) primary, pediatric, and specialty care providers; and 2) behavioral health providers. Although the Partnership conducted extensive research on the healthcare workforce landscape, the unique challenges for physician recruitment and retention require a more focused and specific plan of action. In addition, two large geographical areas of SLO County are designated mental health professional shortage areas, which qualify for various state funding opportunities for workforce initiatives. For both projects, contracted healthcare consultants will conduct data analysis, compile research, evaluate innovative recruitment and funding strategies, assess best practices, identify career pathway development requirements, and convene experts and key stakeholders to collaboratively develop strategic action plans for expanding the pipeline of providers in these professions to enhance access for CenCal members and meet emerging regional needs.

4. How much funding are you requesting (\$400,000 max, for year 1)? \$267,900

5. Complete the CenCal Health budget form and attach to (upload with) your submission: See separate budget document.

Section II: Overview of Proposal – 10% of score

6. Legal name of your organization: Health Career Connection (HCC), Inc. (fiscal agent for the SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership)

7. Address and phone number for your organization: Health Career Connection (HCC), 300 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Suite 243, Oakland, CA 94612, 925-330-5363
8. Name and position of staff person submitting this application. Jeff Oxendine, CEO, Health Career Connection (HCC) & Susan McGraw, Project Coordinator, SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership
9. Please provide your organization's mission statement:

The mission of the SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership is to ensure universal, equitable access to high quality healthcare in SLO County and northern Santa Barbara County by investing in solutions to strengthen and diversify the County's healthcare workforce, implementing a sustainable model that responds to emerging health care needs and expanding access and pathways to high quality health jobs for local residents.

As the fiscal agent and Program Director for this project, Health Career Connection (HCC's) mission is to inspire, empower, and professionally prepare the next generation of health leaders and professionals who are from and reflect the communities they serve with the capabilities, commitment and connections to improve health for all.

5. Which counties does your organization serve? (Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, or both). Both
6. Tell us about your current programs and activities.

The SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership has three priority areas in its Strategic Plan: 1) Recruitment & Retention of Healthcare Employees; 2) Healthcare Career Pathway Development; and 3) Funding & Advocacy. In addition to building the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program, the Partnership is conducting best practice research to support local healthcare employers in implementing successful strategies to support recruitment and retention of employees at all levels of their workforce. The Partnership will also be identifying and implementing targeted advocacy efforts directed at the local, state, and/or national level on topics that support healthcare workforce initiatives and provide ongoing funding opportunities.

Through its paid health internship and health equity scholars programs, our program partner, Health Career Connection (HCC), provides community and 4 year college students with exposure, experience, mentorship, skill-building and networking to successfully pursue their authentic health careers, secure quality jobs and enter health professions training programs. HCC has a priority emphasis on students from first generation college, disinvested communities, and underrepresented backgrounds. HCC's paid experiences provide participants with invaluable economic and educational opportunities that lead to upward mobility and access to jobs in high demand health careers.

Since 1990, HCC has empowered 5,400 alumni to become leaders and professionals in healthcare, behavioral health, and public health. HCC also provides ongoing career, professional, and leadership development to its alumni throughout their health career journeys and connects them to employer and health professions educational partners who are seeking to meet their workforce, talent, excellence, diversity, and equity goals. HCC has adapted its proven program and operates cohort programs in 13 regions nationally, including 4 in California. HCC's Founder and CEO, and Co-Director of the California Health Professions Consortium, Jeff Oxendine, lives in SLO County, and is committed to developing a successful new local program.

7. Please upload/attach the following financial documents: HCC
 - Cash flow statement
 - Audited financial statements
 - Current operating budget

Section III: Proposal Details – 40% of score

1. Please describe the need which you seek to meet through Capacity Grant funding.

To prepare their Strategic Plan (completed in January 2024), the Partnership conducted a comprehensive assessment of local labor market data, key stakeholder interviews and surveys, and national/statewide best practices. To provide a few examples of the results of the labor market research, the 2032 projections for San Luis Obispo County indicated significant shortages of top-level healthcare professionals (i.e., 81 primary care and specialty care physicians, 197 psychiatrists and psychologists, and 49 dentists), which represents an average of 37% of current positions in these occupations needing to be replaced by 2032. The data on nursing indicates even more significant shortages with 2,576 CNA/LVN/RN/NP positions needing to be replaced, representing 83% of the current workforce. The need for support roles is even more dramatic with replacement for Medical Assistants at 989 positions/158% and for Personal Care Aides at 4,511/179%. The same pattern is reflected in behavioral health with the need for replacements for Marriage and Family Therapists projected at 193/97% and Clinical Social Workers at 89/102%.

The labor market data also illustrated a significant lack of equity in the San Luis Obispo County healthcare workforce. The need for a more robust, diverse health workforce to improve access to quality, racially equitable care is more urgent and important than ever. This is particularly true in San Luis Obispo County where the Hispanic/Latinx community makes up 23% of the population but only 5% to 8% of the top-level healthcare positions (i.e., physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, dentists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists). Positions requiring the least amount of education and providing the lowest wages more closely reflect the diversity of the community (24% to 27% Hispanic/Latinx).

In addition to labor market data, the Partnership also conducted a survey of local healthcare employers to identify the Top 9 Most Critically Needed Occupations by 2030, which were ranked as: #1 tied between Primary Care Physicians and Nurses (CNA/LVN/RN/ADN/BSN/NP), #2 Community Health Workers, #3 Marriage & Family Therapists, #4 Registered Dental Assistants, #5 Medical Assistants, #6 Physical Therapists, #7 Radiology Technicians, and #8 EMTs/Paramedics.

In the key stakeholder research, the cost of living and housing, coupled with low-wage jobs, are consistently rated as the most significant barriers to the recruitment and retention of local healthcare employees. This is supported by the demographics for San Luis Obispo County, which reflect great disparity in the socioeconomic indicators for residents. "SLO County consistently ranks in the top 10 most unaffordable small metro areas in the nation." (Source: Leslie, K., March 2022, San Luis Obispo Tribune). Housing is the primary factor in the high cost of living, with the average home price in 2022 of \$829,000 (previous source by Leslie, K.) and the average cost of rent of \$3,200/month (as of February 2023, Zillow Rental Manager). Unfortunately, 31% of residents in SLO County have an annual household income of less than \$50,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Many of these residents are living in areas of San Luis Obispo or northern Santa Barbara Counties with specific census tracts that are designated as "disadvantaged" or "low-income communities" and where a larger proportion of CenCal members are likely to reside such as: San Miguel/Lake Nacimiento, Paso Robles, Atascadero, portions of the City of San Luis Obispo, Morro Bay, Los Osos, Grover Beach/Oceano, Nipomo, and Santa Maria. (Source: California Climate Investments Priority Populations)

This data reinforces the need to develop programs to expose students to high quality healthcare career options, provide experiential learning opportunities, and ensure that employees receive wages that are adequate to meet the cost of living. Fortunately, there are local opportunities that meet these requirements. For example, even at the entry level, many of the non-degreed certificate programs for healthcare technology occupations (i.e., ultrasound, respiratory, vascular, X-ray, and radiology technicians), which are offered at the

local community colleges and technical schools, provide high quality local job opportunities with salaries ranging from \$70,000 to \$124,000/year, which is very good for positions that are often at the beginning of an individual's career pathway.

To meet the priority needs identified by CenCal Health, the Partnership, and its program partner, HCC, are committed to ensuring universal, equitable access to high quality healthcare to all residents and to building a healthcare workforce that reflects the diversity of the community. For the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program, HCC will work with the Partnership members and area K-12 and higher educational institutions to expand access to health career opportunities, high quality jobs, and health professions training that will increase the representation of Latinos and members of other disinvested area communities in San Luis Obispo's higher level, high impact, and well-paid professions. Interns will hear from health equity leaders about their strategies, challenges, and lessons learned. They will be trained in inclusive leadership, belonging, racial equity, cultural/linguistic competency, power building, and advocacy. Many of the paid internships focus on advancing health equity, racial justice, and diversity. Nationally, over 5,400 HCC alumni advance diversity and equity through their current healthcare positions and over 68% serve in underserved communities. We intend to replicate this success here in San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara counties.

During the 2025 pilot phase of this project, recruitment activities for the summer internships will ensure that more than 50% of program beneficiaries (of the 25 total interns) will be high school students, college students, and young adults who: 1) are CenCal Health members; 2) grew up or live in the targeted disadvantaged communities that have a larger proportion of CenCal members or are from other areas of the counties but have a commitment to serve the underserved; 3) have experienced economic hardship; 4) are the first in their families to go to college; and/or 5) are bilingual. Historically, over 80% of HCC interns have experienced economic hardships, more than 70% are first in their families to attend college, 60% are bilingual, and over 95% are from groups underrepresented in the health professions.

Internship placements will focus on health employers located in targeted geographical areas that serve a greater proportion of CenCal members, as well as employers serving in this grant's focus areas of primary and pediatric care, specialty care, and behavioral health. Community Health Centers of the Central Coast (CHCCC), an FQHC and large Medi-Cal provider in the central coast, is a member of the Partnership. We anticipate having paid internships available at CHCCC and other large Medi-Cal providers for the 2025 Program.

In addition, the high school Career Exploration Fairs will be located in three of the more disadvantaged geographical areas/communities that serve a greater proportion of CenCal members.

In later phases (2026 and beyond), the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program will continue to offer high school career exploration programs and summer internships for college students and recent graduates. In addition, it is likely to be expanded to include specific linked career pathways (high school to community college to university) for the most critically needed occupations locally such as: primary care providers, nursing, behavioral health professionals, and registered dental assistants.

For the provider recruitment portion of this grant application, we are requesting funding to implement two Provider Recruitment and Retention Studies and develop strategic action plans. One project will address the critical need for primary, specialty, and pediatric providers (Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, etc.) and the second will focus on behavioral health providers (Psychologists, Marriage and Family Therapists, Social Workers, Peer Counselors, etc.).

For each project, contracted healthcare consultants will research and compile extensive data and information to provide a greater understanding of the local landscape and needs; identify state and national best practices, innovative strategies, and potential funding opportunities; explore career

pathway development needs and opportunities; conduct key stakeholder interviews; and convene healthcare employers, education/training providers, and workforce development leaders to develop a customized strategic plan of action specific to the focus of each of the two projects. These two Provider Recruitment and Retention projects will address the local community needs by providing the Partnership with a clear understanding of the local landscape and a strategic plan of action (collaboratively developed by the community leaders), incorporating innovative strategies that can be implemented to increase the recruitment and retention success of local employers; training, education, and career pathways that can collaboratively be developed to meet the growing demand for these specific occupations; potential funding opportunities and/or innovative financial incentives that can be accessed locally; and significant system-wide solutions that require collective advocacy that should be explored (for example, affordable housing for healthcare employees, employee tax credits, etc.). The projects will also involve identification of potential public and private funding sources to support recommended strategies in alignment with statewide, regional, local health employer, hospital and CenCal Health workforce development initiatives.

2. Please provide an overview of your proposed timeline for utilizing Capacity Grant funds.

a. SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program:

- i. April 2025 to March 2026: \$62,400 to hire a Program Manager (Independent Contractor or part-time employee, averaging 20 hours/week at approximately \$50-60/hour without benefits) to oversee the design, launch, and implementation of the 2025 pilot version of the SLO Healthcare Career Pathways Program.
- ii. April to August 2025: \$108,000 for internship stipends and program costs at \$9,000/intern for 12 interns (50% of the 25 internships to be offered) in the pilot year of the program. The Partnership and HCC have already identified healthcare providers who are interested in providing one or more internships but did not have the resources or budget to cover the cost of the internship for this year. This grant will provide the funding to ensure that the organizations in the community that support the largest number of CenCal Health members can participate without having to cover the cost of the internships for the pilot program. HCC's experience shows that organizations recognize the value of the internship after the pilot year and many are able to budget to cover the costs in subsequent years. In addition, the Partnership and HCC will recruit over 80 diverse student applicants to ensure an effective match with the 25 internship sites. The pilot of the 10-week paid summer internship program will be held from June to August 2025.
- iii. April 2025 to March 2026: \$25,000 for a contracted grant writer to actively seek and apply for grants, corporate sponsorships, employer contributions, etc. to support long-term sustainability of the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program and for recruitment and retention programs.
- iv. June to November 2025: \$5,000 for materials, supplies, facilities, etc. to implement two Fall Career Exploration Fairs for high school students (\$2,500 per event).
- v. December 2025 to March 2026: \$2,500 for materials, supplies, facilities, etc. to implement the 2026 Winter Career Exploration Fair for high school students.
- vi. April 2025 to March 2026: \$5,000 for marketing, promotion, social media, advertising, and outreach for all Program activities.

b. Provider Recruitment & Retention Studies & Strategic Action Plan Development:

- i. June 2025 to January 2026: \$30,000 to hire a Healthcare Consultant (Independent Contractor) to conduct a comprehensive Physician Recruitment and Retention Study (primary, pediatric, and specialty care providers). The Consultant will: 1) Analyze local, state, and national data on the current and future needs for primary, pediatric, and specialty care providers; 2) Compile state and national best practices on physician recruitment and retention strategies; 3)

Conduct key informant interviews with regional experts and stakeholders to further understand current and future regional and institutional needs, the barriers to meeting these needs, current or planned strategies or solutions being implemented, and additional strategies that could be pursued; and 4) Work with the Recruitment & Retention Committee to convene key local stakeholders and implement a comprehensive, collaborative process to develop recommended recruitment and retention strategies for physicians; design and implement local career pathway programs leading to medical degrees; identify potential funding opportunities for employees (i.e., scholarships, loan repayment programs, etc.), individual healthcare organizations, or the Partnership; and explore other types of innovative strategies to address the critical shortage of physicians in San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara Counties.

- ii. June 2025 to January 2026: \$30,000 to hire a Healthcare Consultant (Independent Contractor) to conduct a comprehensive Behavioral Health Provider Recruitment and Retention Study. The Consultant will: 1) Analyze local, state, and national data on the current and future needs for behavioral health providers ; 2) Compile state and national best practices for recruitment and retention strategies for behavioral health providers; 3) Conduct key informant interviews with regional experts and stakeholders to further understand current and future regional and institutional needs, the barriers to meeting these needs, current or planned strategies or solutions being implemented, and additional strategies that could be pursued; and 4) Work with the Recruitment & Retention Committee to convene key local stakeholders and implement a comprehensive, collaborative process to develop recommended recruitment and retention strategies for behavioral health providers; design and implement local career pathway programs for behavioral health occupations; identify potential funding opportunities for employees (i.e., scholarships, loan repayment programs, etc.), individual healthcare organizations, or the Partnership; and explore other types of innovative strategies to address the critical shortage of behavioral health providers in San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara Counties.

3. Please describe how many new CenCal Health members you anticipate serving through these funds, including the members by key focus areas or CenCal needs areas whom you intend to serve.

The SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program will be serving the CenCal Health needs areas through the delivery of the two components of the Program being offered in 2025. Healthcare Career Exploration Fairs for high school students will be hosted in three geographical areas that are designated “disadvantaged” communities that are likely to have a large proportion of CenCal Health members. This program was successfully “piloted” on October 30, 2024, in partnership with the Family Care Network in San Luis Obispo. Over 70 high school students and young adults attended (along with some parents and chaperones), with at least 50% of attendees from disadvantaged communities or underrepresented backgrounds, or who had experienced economic hardship or involvement with the juvenile justice system. Seventeen Partnership member organizations, representing healthcare employers (physical, behavioral, and oral health), education and training providers, and workforce development, hosted tables and shared information on healthcare occupations, critical community needs, local education and training programs, and scholarship/tuition assistance/financial aid opportunities.

Currently, HCC is in the process of recruiting applicants for the summer 2025 internship program. These recruiting efforts are targeting candidates from area community colleges, Cal Poly, local health pathway programs, community-based organizations, and students from the region who are going to college outside of the area. HCC is also working with Community Health Centers of the Central Coast to recommend students from the communities they serve and distributing recruitment materials to larger medical practices serving Medi-Cal recipients,

the County Health Department, and behavioral health services. In addition, HCC can partner with CenCal Health to promote internships to its members and the families and friends of members.

In the near term, HCC will support CenCal Health members who are selected to complete an internship and the interns funded through the grant will work on projects during their internship that will be designed to improve the health of CenCal Health members. All interns in the Program can meet with CenCal Health during the summer to learn more about CenCal Health's strategies and how it is addressing members needs. In addition, all interns can work on a combined project to address an issue important to the health of CenCal Health members.

Over 71% of HCC interns are offered a job or extended internship through their HCC experience, so interns funded by this project could continue to work in roles and organizations that benefit CenCal Health members. Over the longer term, these interns will become part of a more robust, diverse pool of qualified candidates to provide services to CenCal Health members.

4. Please describe your organization's plan for sustainability of the services funded by the project after the Capacity Grant funds have been exhausted.

The SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program is a core strategic initiative of the Partnership and has the full support of its organizational members and key stakeholders. In particular, the membership includes:

- Major Healthcare Employers such as Dignity Health/Common Spirit, Adventist Health, County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department, Community Health Centers of the Central Coast, Compass Health, the County Behavioral Health Department, Transitions Mental Health Association/TMHA, Aspire Counseling Services, the County Oral Health Department, Tolosa Children's Dental Center.
- Education and Training Providers such as Cal Poly State University, A.T. Still University, Cuesta College, County Office of Education/SLO Partners, Health Career Connection.
- Workforce Development and Healthcare Consultants.

This commitment and active engagement by healthcare employers, education and training providers, and workforce development will provide a solid foundation to support long-term sustainability of the Partnership and the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program.

Currently, Partnership operations through December 2026 are supported by an ARPA grant through the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department (the lead agency), which funds a contracted Project Coordinator and a contracted Program Evaluator.

For the first-year pilot of the 2025 summer internship program, we anticipate that the intern stipends and program costs for at least 13 of the 25 internships will be covered by one of three funding sources: 1) Healthcare organizations that will host interns onsite at their locations and cover the cost of the internship; 2) HCC grant funding; or 3) Workforce Development Board grant funds for community college students (Cuesta College or Allan Hancock) who meet specific eligibility requirements.

To support program sustainability, HCC's experience from other regions indicates that once health employers, health plans, colleges and universities, area funders and students experience the value and impact of the program, they step up to expand opportunities, funding, and support for future cohorts. Disinvested students will also be more likely to engage and obtain quality jobs in local

communities. Students, key stakeholders, and our regional economy will all benefit from the program, which will enhance immediate success and foster long-term sustainability.

To support this program in 2026 and beyond, the Partnership and HCC anticipates that a larger proportion of the internships will be funded by the host organization after they have experienced the value of the Program and have created an annual budget allocation for one or more internships.

In addition, the Partnership's Funding & Advocacy Committee is identifying potential funding opportunities to support the long-term sustainability of this Partnership and the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program. The funding being requested for a contracted grant writer in this application will enable the Partnership to significantly accelerate the process of identifying and applying for various grants, soliciting corporate sponsorships or employer contributions, and obtaining other types of funding. This will provide a solid foundation to support the short and long-term success of the Partnership, the career pathway program, and recruitment and retention efforts.

The two Provider Recruitment and Retention Studies are one-time projects, with no additional funding requirements beyond the amount requested in this grant proposal. These two projects will provide the Partnership with the long-range plans that are required for the community to build programs and services to support the local recruitment and retention of physicians and behavioral health providers.

Section IV: Evaluation information - 20% of score

Please describe the desired outcomes which will be achieved through use of these funds, including their anticipated timelines. How will success be measured? Include specific measures of performance, including a description of the measure numerator, denominator, and the estimated rate of performance that will be achieved at the conclusion of the use of these grant funds. Be certain to include the number of new members served, in unique numbers and new patient encounters. Include applicant's current baseline rate of performance for each measure.

The SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program is being piloted in 2025. For comparison purposes, the outcome measures that will serve as the baseline rate of performance for each measure are those that have been achieved by our Program Manager, HCC, through their successful implementation since 1990 of the paid summer internship program in 13 regions nationally, including 4 in California. The HCC healthcare summer internship program has empowered their alumni to become leaders and professionals in healthcare, behavioral health, and public health. A significant percentage of interns who complete the program secure a job, increase their health career knowledge, build valuable skills, strengthen professional networks, and secure a graduate degree.

HCC's experience in other regions is that community college and 4-year college interns are often hired (71% of the time) or receive an extended internship in these types of roles, including into entry level positions such as health planning analyst, outreach specialist, health education associate, clinical research coordinator, quality assurance associate, or financial analyst. In other HCC regions, these roles pay an average starting salary of \$50,000- \$65,000 plus benefits with health employers.

The primary focus of the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program is to provide local high school and college students, particularly those from disadvantaged communities, with exposure, experience, and access to quality area healthcare jobs. Almost all healthcare professions that students can access through a 2- or 4-year college degree have quality entry level jobs and career trajectories with high upward mobility, earnings, and impact potential.

The Partnership's research from health employers indicates that there is current and future demand in high growth, high wage health professions such as primary care, nursing (LVN/RN/NP), behavioral health, radiologic technologists, and dental assisting. In the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program, students will gain access to and relationships with area health employers and have paid opportunities to demonstrate their qualifications, commitment, and potential for these jobs. They will have mentors that help strengthen their motivation and provide access to immediate and future opportunities. Internships may also be provided in health management, policy, technology, and population health.

We anticipate that participants in the pilot program of the SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program will increase their awareness of health career options, be exposed to high-quality healthcare jobs, and enhance their knowledge of health training pathways. Many participants will go on to earn a bachelor or graduate degree, which will help fill critical area workforce gaps and provide high career earning potential. Over 82% of HCC alumni complete a graduate degree in the health professions within 10 years of completing their HCC experience.

When introducing this program in a new region, the pilot year often produces slightly lower outcome results since the Program has not yet established itself with a strong presence and reputation in the community and with employers. After the pilot Program is completed in 2025 and subsequent cohorts of interns complete the Program every year thereafter, the Partnership anticipates that it will realize outcomes comparable to those achieved in other regions and will contribute significantly to CenCal Health's goals to support the development of a strong health workforce.

Description of Metric	Baseline: HCC's performance for the Summer Internship Program in 13 regions nationally including 4 in California			Pilot Program: "2025 SLO Healthcare Career Pathway Program"		
	Numerator	Denominator	Estimated rate of Performance	Numerator	Denominator	Estimated rate of Performance
College interns who secure a job or extended internship offer	3,834	5,400	71%	15	25	60%
College interns who increase their health career knowledge	5,292	5,400	98%	24	25	98%
College interns who build valuable professional skills	4,752	5,400	88%	22	25	88%
College interns who strengthen their health profession networks in the region	4,698	5,400	87%	21	25	84%
College interns who find a lasting mentor	2,862	5,400	53%	15	25	60%
College interns who secure a graduate degree *	4,428	5,400	82%	21	25	82%
College interns who serve underserved communities	3,672	5,400	68%	13	25	52%

*These outcomes will be measured by surveying participants after completion of the Program in August 2025. However, the metric, "college interns who secure a graduate degree," is determined through long-term follow up with alumni.

This project will increase local healthcare capacity and access to care by increasing the number of students, particularly those from disadvantaged communities, who choose healthcare careers

aligned with area workforce needs, obtain education/training, secure high quality local jobs, and access professional development opportunities to support career advancement.

Specific milestone objectives from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026 include:

- 1) Conducting three high school career exploration events for at least 200 students;
- 2) Implementing the 2025 summer internship program for 25 college students;
- 3) Hosting one pipeline mentorship event;
- 4) Writing grants and identifying funding sources to support long-term sustainability of the program; and...
- 5) Completing two Provider Recruitment and Retention Studies and corresponding strategic action plans to address the critical need for primary, pediatric, and specialty care providers (including Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, etc.) and behavioral health providers (including Psychologists, Marriage and Family Therapists, Social Workers, Peer Counselors, etc.).

Final scoring will include an additional 10% towards overall quality of proposal and intended impacts, including whether the application addresses a CenCal Health Provider Network identified need, as determined by the scoring committee.

Please submit this application, budget form, cash flow statement, audited financial statements, and the current operating budget to CapacityGrants@cencalhealth.org by February 1, 2025, (5:00 p.m. PST). Thank you for your application. CenCal Health will review the information provided and follow up with any additional questions.

Name:

Title:

Email:

Signature:

Date: