



North Central Texas Clean School Bus Program 2012 Call for Projects

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the deadline for submitting applications?

A: Applications must be received at the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) offices by 5 pm Central Time on March 16, 2012.

Q: Are only public entities eligible for funding?

A: No. Public as well as private schools, school districts, and school bus operators are eligible for funding under this Call for Projects.

Q: Is adoption of the Clean Fleet Vehicle Policy model ordinance required to be eligible for funding?

A: Adoption is only required for public entities. These organizations must have this policy adopted by the deadline of the Call for Projects and be in compliance with all policy requirements, including annual reporting. Private entities are exempt from this requirement; however, staff encourages these organizations to adopt a policy similar to the Clean Fleet Vehicle Policy that focuses on best practices related to fleet procurement, maintenance, and operations. If your entity is interested in adopting the Clean Fleet Vehicle Policy, please visit www.nctcog.org/fleetpolicy. You may also contact Jenny Danieau at jdanieau@nctcog.org or 817-608-2342 for more information.

Q: What counties are eligible for funding?

A: This Call is open to entities that operate in the 16-county NCTCOG service area. This includes the counties of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, Tarrant, and Wise. However, an emphasis will be placed on entities that operate primarily within the nine-county ozone nonattainment area which is comprised of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, and Tarrant Counties.

Q: What types of retrofit technologies are eligible for funding?

A: Retrofit technologies must be verified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and must achieve a reduction of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) emissions of 25 percent or greater. A list of retrofit technologies that meet these requirements are listed in the North Central Texas (NCT) Clean School Bus Program 2012 Call for Projects *Guidelines*.

Q: What types of idle reduction technologies are eligible for funding?

A: Idle reduction technologies must be verified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for school bus applications and must achieve a reduction of NO_x emissions. A list of idle reduction technologies that meet these requirements are listed in the *Guidelines*.

Q: Is converting a vehicle from a diesel engine to an alternatively fueled engine eligible for funding under this call?

A: Yes. NCTCOG is fuel and technology neutral and may fund repower projects so long as there is a NO_x emissions reduction of 25 percent or greater. If this project is an engine overhaul, please provide documentation in the uploaded *.zip file verifying that the technology is EPA or CARB certified.

Q: Will retrofits that reduce only particulate matter (PM) be eligible for funding?

A: No. NO_x emissions are the primary focus of this call. However, PM emissions reductions may be taken into consideration as a secondary focus in the selection process.

Q: For school bus replacement or engine repower activities, how are the old vehicles/engines to be disposed?

A. All vehicles and engines being replaced must be rendered permanently inoperable. This includes draining and disposing of all fluids according to jurisdiction disposal requirements, drilling a three-inch hole in the engine block, cutting the frame of the chassis in a wedge 75 percent deep (for vehicle replacement only), and recycling salvageable materials. Documentation of disposition, including before and after photographs, is required for reimbursement. A salvage certificate may also be required if applicable.

Q. How does the grant process work?

A. Grant payments are made on a reimbursement basis. Once the project has been completed, awardees' must submit a Request for Reimbursement to NCTCOG along with documentation showing project completion. Necessary forms will be provided on the NCT Clean School Bus website.

Q. How long do I have to keep a funded school bus operating in the region?

A. For replacement, repower, or retrofit projects, there is a required minimum Activity Life of five years; for idle reduction projects, the minimum Activity Life is three years. The Activity Life is based on either: 1) the number of years a school bus or school bus engine being replaced would still be able to operate were it not to be replaced; and 2) the number of years committed to operating and reporting on the funded project. A funded school bus must continue to operate in the region in the applicant's fleet for the approved Activity Life which is specified in the application.

Q. When can purchases be made for awarded projects?

A. Purchases may only be made **after** receiving a Notice to Proceed from NCTCOG. Any purchases or orders placed prior to receiving a Notice to Proceed will not be eligible for reimbursement under this grant funding program.

Q. May funding received through the NCT Clean School Bus Program be combined with Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) funding?

A. No. NCTCOG requires that all State Implementation Plan (SIP) eligible credits for projects funded through this call be surrendered to NCTCOG, which leaves no additional SIP credits remaining to apply for TERP.

Q. May funding received through the NCT Clean School Bus Program be combined with other grant funds?

A. Possibly, depending on whether the other grant funding is federal and whether the other funding agency requires surrender of any SIP credits. Funding awarded through this Call cannot be combined with other federal funding. In addition, NCTCOG will require surrender of all SIP credits netted from funded projects.

Q. Is there a local match requirement?

A. Yes. The required local match is dependent on the project type (see table below). The local match cannot be from federal funds. More details can be found in the *Guidelines* document.

Project Type	Funding Threshold
Replacement	25% or 50% Depending on Engine Emissions Levels
Repower	75%
NO _x Retrofit	100%
On-Board Idle Reduction	95%

Q. Can a replacement project qualify for the 50 percent funding level if the engine is compliant with the 2010 emissions standards using engine credits?

A. No, in order to qualify for the 50 percent funding level the engine has to be fully certified **without using engine credits**. Note: to qualify for up 50 percent of the incremental funding, the Family

Emission Limits (FELs), indicated on the EPA engine emission control label for a specific engine family, must not exceed these specified emission levels: particulate matter (PM) at 0.01 grams per brake horsepower hour (g/bhp-hr), nonmethane hydrocarbons (NMHC) at 0.14 g/bhp-hr, and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) at 0.2 g/bhp-hr.

Q. What is considered “incremental cost” for replacement projects?

A. Incremental cost for replacement projects refers to the total out of pocket cost. Out of pocket cost is considered to be the total cost of new bus, including tax, title, and registration costs, minus any other grants, income from salvage of the old bus, and/or other ineligible fees such as from BuyBoard).

Q. What is a Fleet Turnover Schedule and what needs to be submitted?

A. A Fleet Turnover Schedule is a document or policy statement that describes the length of time a school bus normally operates in the fleet before it is replaced with a newer bus. It can be in many forms, such as a budget plan, operating plan, standard procedures, or retirement schedule. Please see example Fleet Turnover Schedules at www.nctcog.org/CleanSchoolBus. Submit the Fleet Turnover Schedule in any format with the other required supplemental materials required for a complete application.

Q. My computer cannot create a compressed (*.zip) file, and I am not authorized to purchase the software. Is there another way to submit supplemental materials?

A. Yes. If you cannot create a compressed (*.zip) file, or if you are experiencing problems uploading a file to the online application, e-mail the document(s) to cleanschoolbus@nctcog.org.

Q. Is there an option to submit a hard copy of the application instead of submitting online?

A. Yes. If you cannot access the online application, contact NCTCOG staff at CleanSchoolBus@nctcog.org or 817-704-2508 and request a hard copy of the application materials. You can then submit the application by mail or hand delivery. For delivery location, please see the *Guidelines* document.