Q: If our school district is located outside of the nonattainment area but frequently travels inside of the nonattainment area for extracurricular activities and field trips, can we qualify for funding?
A: Eligible entities must be primarily located in the nonattainment area. For applicants whose boundaries cross outside of the ozone nonattainment area, grant-funded activities must be placed on dedicated routes that fall within the nonattainment area.

Q: If we can show our Clean Fleet Policy is in the process of being adopted by the application deadline, can our application be considered for funding under the condition that we will only be reimbursed for expenses if the Clean Fleet Policy is adopted by the project implementation deadline?
A: Applications are only eligible if a copy of the adopted Clean Fleet Policy is submitted with the application by the March 13, 2015, application deadline. Applicants who anticipate not meeting this requirement should notify NCTCOG staff in advance.

Q: Is an engine pre-heater eligible as an idle reduction device?
A: Idle reduction devices must be verified by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use on school buses and must be listed on the EPA-verified technologies website at http://www.epa.gov/smartway/partners/technology.htm#tabs-4. “Pre-heaters” may be another term for fuel-operated heaters; if the pre-heater is of a make and model listed on this website, then yes, it is eligible.

Q: Are there any weight limits for buses?
A: No, there are no weight restrictions.

Q: Are there any mileage limits for buses?
A: There are no mileage limits for buses per CMAQ Guidance.

Q: What does NCTCOG mean by an “activity”?
A: An “activity” is a single eligible grant-funded action – for example, one bus replacement is one activity. An application requesting five bus replacements and two bus conversions would have seven activities.

Q: How will projects be selected?
A: This is a competitive grant program, and activities will be evaluated based primarily on cost per ton of nitrogen oxides (NOx) reduced. Each project activity will be ranked in order from lowest to highest cost per ton, and will be funded in order until funding is fully awarded.

Q: Is there a limit to the number of activities that can be requested?
A: No, there are no limits to how many activities an applicant can request.

Q: If our organization applies for multiple activities, will each activity be ranked individually or will our project be considered as a whole?
A: Staff rank each activity individually, and NCTCOG reserves the right to partially fund applications. Therefore, if an applicant submits activities for 20 buses, they could receive funding for 5 activities and not the other 15, depending upon the cost-effectiveness of the proposed activities.

Q: *Is there a certain dollar amount I should ask for?*
A: Grants will be awarded for up to 80 percent of the incremental cost of the project. There is no “target” dollar amount or cost per ton in this program, as the most competitive cost per ton values will be based upon applications received. It is important to note that cost per ton is based upon the amount of federal funding requested. Therefore, if two different activities cost the same amount and achieve the same cost per ton NOx, but one asks for a smaller percentage of federal funding, the activity with the smaller federal share would rank “higher” and be more likely to receive funding.

Q: *Are you allowed to buy any fuel type bus or does it have to be diesel?*
A: There are no fuel specifications.

Q: *The program says it will fund up to 80 percent of the incremental cost. For a bus replacement, isn’t this the same as 80 percent of the purchase price of the new bus?*
A: Any scrap value expected to be received for the old bus to be destroyed would be deducted from the purchase price of the new bus, and the 80 percent grant funding would be calculated based upon this difference. Since the scrap value is often minimal, the amount of grant funding would likely be close to 80 percent of the purchase price of the new bus.

Q: *What if an engine is not yet certified, but is scheduled to be certified by the end of 2014?*
A: Grant-funded vehicles and equipment must be procured through an open and competitive process that complies with federal procurement guidelines. Therefore, applicants are not asked to specify vehicle or engine make or model up front in the application. An engine certified later in the year could be purchased if it is available by the time the applicant initiates its procurement process.

Q: *What if an engine meets 2010 emissions standards but is not certified as a 2014 or newer engine?*
A: Because 2010 emissions standards were not necessarily in place immediately beginning with model year 2010 engines (as some manufacturers had earned “credits” based upon previous sale of engines meeting stricter standards than required), only brand new engines are eligible to be used in newly purchased buses, or as replacement engines in repower projects. It should be noted that applicants do not have to identify bus and engine make/model in the application. Accordingly, engines do not have to be certified by the application deadline but by the project implementation phase to be eligible for reimbursement.