

Freight Efficiency Outreach Center Call for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions

- Q: *NCTCOG says that only a public sector or non-profit can apply. Can a public sector or non-profit be the recipients from NCTCOG, but then contract out with a private entity for major activities such as programming, administration, and operations?*
- A: Possibly. The NCTCOG-awarded subrecipient can enter into a contract with a private sector entity, but would need to follow certain procurement guidelines having to do with competition and minority business utilization (see www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/mw.htm and www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/procurement.htm). These requirements flow down through NCTCOG to the subrecipient. However, if the subrecipient were to sub-contract almost all of the funds, there may be concerns about why that arrangement was entered into, rather than the subrecipient administering directly. The subrecipient may also choose to subgrant (rather than subcontracting), but that likely cannot be done with a for-profit entity. Information from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the difference between subgrants (also known as subawards) and contracts is available at www.epa.gov/ogd/guide/subawards-appendix-b.pdf.
- Q: *Does NCTCOG have any local or State resources identified that may be sources of cost share?*
- A: NCTCOG does not have any of its own funds available to meet required cost share, nor is NCTCOG aware of specific sources that may be readily available. However, if potential applicants identify State or local sources in the NCTCOG area, they are certainly eligible sources of cost share. Any non-federal funds, including State, local, and private sector dollars, are eligible cost share items.
- Q: *The Guidelines indicate that the grant funding would be used for initial startup. However, it may be advantageous to more evenly spread the grant funding across a longer timeframe. Would this be allowed?*
- A: NCTCOG does anticipate that the grant funding would be “front-loaded” to help alleviate up-front capital project costs. However, there is no prohibition against spreading funds more evenly across the project schedule, if the applicant feels that such an arrangement is more suitable. Regardless of the schedule for use of grant funds, care should be taken to ensure that the required cost share, relative to the total grant funding requested, is provided within the project schedule.
- Q: *What is the timeframe for project completion and for providing cost share?*
- A: There are different timeframes affecting different grant requirements, as follows:
2 years: Deadline for Freight Efficiency Outreach Center to be open and operational
3 years: Budget period during which expenses can be reimbursed and cost share requirements fulfilled
5 years: Minimum amount of time that Freight Efficiency Outreach Center must remain open and operational.
- Q: *Can the subrecipient use financing for the Freight Efficiency Outreach Center customers as its required cost share?*

A: NCTCOG has determined that financing is not an eligible source of cost share. However, expenses associated with offering financing, such as staff time or administrative costs, may be counted toward cost share to the extent that it is expended during the three-year budget period, in relation to the Freight Efficiency Outreach Center itself.

Q: *NCTCOG has requested a formal lease Agreement for the site, but this is difficult to get if the grant hasn't been officially awarded to the subrecipient. Is there another option?*

A: NCTCOG does prefer a formal lease Agreement, but understands the difficulty in securing this prior to the grant being awarded. In lieu of this Agreement, a letter of intent may be submitted.

Q: *Why does the site location have to be identified in the proposal?*

A: NCTCOG perceives a lesser degree of risk with the project moving forward successfully if a site location has already been identified at the time of application. In addition, NCTCOG will not officially receive grant funds for this project from its grantor (EPA) until National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance is granted, but a site must be selected in order to submit for NEPA clearance. Therefore, a site must be identified in order for NCTCOG to proceed with pursuing NEPA clearance.

Q: *Does NCTCOG know of any truck stop locations that may be interested in having this outreach center located at their site?*

A: NCTCOG has not heard of specific interest from truck stops in regard to this funding opportunity. However, following is a brief list of locations that either have been interested in other emission-reducing technologies in the past, or that NCTCOG believes may be attractively located. This list is intended only as informative and is neither an endorsement nor recommendation of any particular site:

- Big D Truck Stop in Irving, off of Loop 12
- Love's Truck Stop at Interstate 45 and Wintergreen Road (across from the Union Pacific intermodal facility)
- Near-future truck stop near the intersection on State Highway 114 and Interstate 35W, near the Alliance Intermodal Facility
- Petro Truck Stop on Interstate 35 W north of Fort Worth, with existing IdleAir technology

Q: *NCTCOG has indicated that it will keep all emissions credits. What would these emissions credits be used for, and does that make them unavailable for trading/banking on the commercial market.*

A: NCTCOG has historically been interested in emissions credits for State Implementation Plan (SIP) purposes, which would include both nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compound (VOC) reductions. Once emissions reductions (aka credits) are documented in the SIP, they are retired and therefore cannot be used for banking/trading on the commercial market, or for any other purpose. Other emissions reductions, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), are also of interest to NCTCOG. However, as

stated in the Guidelines, if an applicant wishes to retain emissions credits the type of emissions and desired use should be explained in the application.

Q: *Does NCTCOG foresee any delays in its selection of a subrecipient, compared to the schedule published in the Guidelines?*

A: NCTCOG does not see any reason for a delay in its selection and award to a subrecipient. The timeframe for formal contracting will be contingent upon receipt of NEPA clearance from EPA.

Q: *If an applicant identifies a site with a letter of intent in the proposal, but something unforeseen happens prior to getting a legally binding lease agreement, is a change in location allowed?*

A: The site proposed in the application should be secured to the greatest degree possible, and should not be speculative. However, NCTCOG understands that industry conditions may change unexpectedly, so a change in location may be allowed provided that plans are in place to resolve the change expeditiously. The applicant should speak to the certainty of the site proposed in the application, and NCTCOG recommends also including any plans for “contingency” locations.

Q: *May an applicant submit a “draft” proposal early to have NCTCOG provide feedback?*

A: Yes, NCTCOG can review draft applications. Although staff cannot comment on the quality of the proposal, staff will review for missing information to ensure that the proposal is complete upon final submittal.