

**NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**2023 HEAVY-DUTY ZERO EMISSION VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE
CALL FOR PARTNERS**

March 6, 2023

2023 HEAVY-DUTY ZERO-EMISSION VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE CALL FOR PARTNERS

INTRODUCTION

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), which hosts the [Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition \(DFWCC\)](#), wishes to advance the deployment of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) in the medium- and heavy-duty sectors by building publicly accessible fueling infrastructure that enables use of medium- and heavy-duty ZEVs. A variety of competitive federal funding opportunities for these types of projects are available to NCTCOG in its role as the metropolitan planning organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, including but not limited to the programs created through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act such as the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure for Alternative Fuel Corridors & Communities Grant Program (CFI Program), Port Infrastructure Development Program, and Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant Program. Several opportunities may also exist at the state level. While NCTCOG is an eligible applicant, staff believes that projects will likely be more successful if developed through a public-private partnership that includes key collaborators involved in building ZEV infrastructure.

Through this Call for Partners (CFP), NCTCOG seeks to establish public-private partnership(s) to develop medium- and heavy-duty ZEV infrastructure project proposals. Projects of interest include both hydrogen fueling and battery electric truck charging to enable ZEV freight transition. Resulting proposals would then be submitted to competitive grant programs to receive funding. A key program of interest is the CFI program. On February 15, 2023, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced intent to issue a funding opportunity under the CFI Program to distribute the first \$700 million in funding. NCTCOG wishes to compete in the “Corridors Program” category of this program.

Through this CFP, NCTCOG intends to select a Project Team to work with to develop a proposal for the CFI Corridor Program. NCTCOG may also identify Project Team(s) with whom to develop proposals for other programs administered by federal or state agencies that encompass medium- and heavy-duty ZEV infrastructure projects. NCTCOG also reserves the right to select multiple Project Team(s) to enable a pipeline of projects ready for a variety of funding opportunities. NCTCOG intends to work with Project Team(s) selected through this CFP to develop competitive grant proposals through the end of fiscal year 2024. NCTCOG may, at its discretion, issue additional calls for partners/projects for other specific grant opportunities if warranted.

Any questions regarding this solicitation should be directed in writing to cleancities@nctcoq.org. The deadline for submitting questions is Friday, March 17, 2023.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Ozone-forming nitrogen oxides (NO_x) emissions from heavy-duty diesel trucks and equipment activity in the 10-county Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) ozone nonattainment area are a major barrier to attaining federal ozone standards. Heavy-duty vehicles are estimated to emit over 42 tons of NO_x per day in the DFW region, which is approximately 18 percent of the entire NO_x emissions inventory for the region for 2020, and nearly half of the total on-road mobile emissions contribution. Notably, diesel vehicles account for approximately 41 of the 42 tons of NO_x emitted by the heavy-duty sector. Diesel vehicles also produce emissions of particulate matter and greenhouse gases and expose adjacent communities to diesel exhaust, which the Environmental Protection Agency classifies as “likely to be carcinogenic to humans” in the Integrated Risk

Information System¹.

As ZEV vehicles and equipment become commercially available in medium- and heavy-duty platforms, projects to advance ZEV deployments are important to regional ozone attainment efforts. Early deployments achieve both short-term benefits in terms of reduced emissions in and around the project sites, but also longer-term benefits by highlighting the feasibility and viability of the technology, which can inspire further adoption.

The need for publicly available infrastructure to support ZEV truck deployment is detailed in the recently completed [Interstate Highway 45 Corridor Zero Emission Vehicle Plan](#) (IH-45 ZEV Plan). Recommended locations along IH-45 for both hydrogen fueling, and battery electric truck charging are also detailed. NCTCOG desires to begin implementation of infrastructure consistent with the recommendations in this plan, with emphasis on the building sites located within the NCTCOG service area.

The purpose of this CFP is to establish public-private partnership(s) between NCTCOG and selected Project Team(s) to scope ZEV infrastructure project(s) and submit competitive grant proposal(s) to the CFI Corridor Program and other relevant federal or state funding opportunities through the end of fiscal year 2024. If the grant proposals are successful and are selected to receive grant funds, NCTCOG would then enter into subaward agreement(s) with the Lead Applicant. In a subaward arrangement, grant funds would be issued on a reimbursement basis after project costs are incurred. All subrecipients will also be responsible for adhering to federal and/or state terms and conditions associated with awarded funds. Private entities or other organizations not familiar with these types of requirements are encouraged to read 2 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) 200 closely to ensure understanding and awareness of federal requirements. Subrecipients will also be required to submit a federally required risk assessment before entering an agreement with NCTCOG.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

NCTCOG will coordinate with selected Project Team(s) to finalize specific project details, but respondents are expected to have some project concepts already under development. For the submittal to the CFI Corridor Program, proposed infrastructure projects must:

- Be designed to support medium- and heavy-duty ZEVs
- Include either electric charging and/or hydrogen refueling equipment
- Be publicly accessible
- Be located along a highway corridor that:
 - Is designated by FHWA as either corridor-ready or corridor-pending for the proposed fuel.
 - A map of FHWA-designated electric corridors is available at [https://hepgis.fhwa.dot.gov/fhwagis/ViewMap.aspx?map=Highway+Information|Electric+Vehicle+\(EV-Round+1,2,3,4,5+and+6\)#](https://hepgis.fhwa.dot.gov/fhwagis/ViewMap.aspx?map=Highway+Information|Electric+Vehicle+(EV-Round+1,2,3,4,5+and+6)#).
 - A map of FHWA-designated hydrogen corridors is available at [https://hepgis.fhwa.dot.gov/fhwagis/ViewMap.aspx?map=Highway+Information|Hydrogen+\(HY-Round+1,2,3,4,5+and+6\)#](https://hepgis.fhwa.dot.gov/fhwagis/ViewMap.aspx?map=Highway+Information|Hydrogen+(HY-Round+1,2,3,4,5+and+6)#).
 - Impacts the [NCTCOG region](#). Projects located within the 16-county NCTCOG area are strongly preferred.
- Meet FHWA standards for refueling/recharging stations as specified in the 2022 Request for Nominations posted at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/alternative_fuel_corridors/.

¹ <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/diesel-exhaust-and-cancer.html>

- Comply with project eligibility details listed at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cfi/>
- Support Corridor Program considerations listed at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cfi/>

REQUIRED APPLICATION ELEMENTS

Interested parties should submit information on specific candidate project(s) to a sufficient level of detail for NCTCOG to understand envisioned scope, deployment levels, roles, and responsibilities, with the understanding that some details and project elements may be refined and/or updated through collaboration with NCTCOG. The Project Team should include, but is not limited to, organizations that serve as many of the following roles as practicable and relevant. A single organization could serve more than one role. Hereafter, this collection of participants shall be referred to as the “Project Team.”

- Critical Team Members
 - Recharging/refueling station developer/provider
 - Fueling/charging site host location/property owner
 - Fuel provider
- Recommended Team Members
 - Original Equipment Manufacturer(s) (OEMs) who provide ZEV vehicles/equipment
 - Fleet end-user(s) of the ZEV vehicles/equipment
 - Applicable utility collaborator(s)

The completeness of the Project Team and likelihood of successful project implementation will be key factors in selecting successful responses.

Applicant Project Teams must identify a Lead Applicant to serve as primary point of contact with NCTCOG. The Lead applicant must submit:

- A signed Letter of Partnership, on letterhead, that includes a designated point of contact for the Project Team.
- A Partnership Commitment letter from entity named in the Project Team that commits to its role and responsibility in the project. All letters must be signed by individuals of decision-making authority within their organizations.
- A Partnership Proposal, limited to 15 pages, that includes the following content:
 - Description of each organization participating in the Project Team, including expertise in past ZEV infrastructure projects, and expected role and responsibilities in the proposed collaboration.
 - Key staff contact(s) for each organization, along with expected roles and responsibilities in the proposed collaboration.
 - Description of each team member’s experience receiving or managing federal or state grant funds either directly with a federal/state agency or as a subrecipient to another organization.
 - Description of any long-range organizational goals or plans regarding ZEV infrastructure.
 - Readiness of the Project Team to deploy ZEV infrastructure project(s) (for example, do team members need to enter into formal agreements among themselves for the proposed collaborations, are such agreements already in place, etc.).
 - Identification of any key partners necessary for project success not included in the submitting Project Team.
 - Additional partners may be added to the Project Team after selection through this CFP but may have to be selected through an open, competitive Request for Proposals in consultation with NCTCOG

- Description/estimate of non-federal match that the Project Team can provide (the Project Team will be expected to provide all required match; NCTCOG does not anticipate providing any matching funds). Also identify any non-cash resources that can be brought to the project. Note that NCTCOG only considers cash match as eligible; any non-cash items should be identified as other resources, not match.
 - The proportion of federal funding available is unknown. Based on other FHWA funding programs NCTCOG anticipates that federal funding would likely range from 50 to 80 percent of total project costs. Therefore, the Project Team would be expected to provide a minimum of 20 to 50 percent non-federal match.
- Description of any grant-writing resources or support that the Project Team can bring to the partnership.
- Description of the envisioned infrastructure project(s), including as much information as known regarding:
 - prospective site(s), fuel type(s) to be used, and any “anchor fleets” identified that would use the proposed infrastructure. If proposing multiple sites, address whether proposed sites are feasible individually or only if built as a “network.”
 - ideas about potential for including futureproofing or resilience elements, especially those described in the IH-45 plan.
 - anticipated project timelines.
 - discussion of key risks/pitfalls and proposed solutions.
 - ideas about how the project could incorporate disadvantaged businesses, workforce development or training initiatives, and community engagement.
 - to the extent known, estimate of total project costs.

Other attachments may include maps, charts, budget tables, or other information helpful in clarifying the envisioned project. These items do not count toward the 15-page limit.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection of the Project Team will be determined based on a qualitative evaluation of the responsiveness to content outlined in the preceding “Required Application Elements” section. Evaluation will assess:

- Completeness of the Project Team. That is, has the applicant team included an organization representing all critical perspectives in the proposal?
 - For example, a Project Team that includes a station developer but does not also include a site owner end-user(s), would be less complete than one that includes a station developer, site owner, fuel provider, and fleet end-user. Roles identified as “Critical Team Members” are higher priority than those listed as “Recommended Team Members” and will be assessed accordingly.
- Likelihood of project success based on the:
 - experience and readiness of the Project Team;
 - appropriate divisions of roles/responsibilities; and
 - maturity/detail of the project ideas being proposed, including budget estimates.
- Demonstrated availability of matching funds. NCTCOG expects a minimum non-federal match requirement of 20 to 50 percent total project cost will be required and will require all match to be provided by the Project Team. Applicants should detail both amounts and sources of matching funds.
- Extent of grant-writing or other resources available
- Degree to which the envisioned project is consistent with recommendations from the IH-45 ZEV Plan, including:
 - Proposed locations

- If located along IH-45:
 - Proximity to recommended locations or adequate explanation/justification of why an alternate location was selected and is suitable to meeting the FHWA-prescribed interval criteria along the corridor.
- NOTE: Proposed locations do not have to be located along IH-45, but if located along a different eligible corridor they should include:
 - Justification of how the proposed corridor serves the objectives described under “PURPOSE AND NEED”.
 - Description of how the proposed site was chosen and how it meets FHWA corridor standards.

NCTCOG is not obligated to fund a proposal from an applicant that has demonstrated marginal or unsatisfactory performance on previous grants or contracts with NCTCOG or other federal or state agencies. NCTCOG is not obligated to fund a proposal from an applicant based on a determination of the risks associated with the applicant, including the financial condition of the applicant and other risk factors as may be determined by NCTCOG.

Selection through this CFP is not a guarantee of funding, but simply indicates that the selected Project Team(s) will partner with NCTCOG on competitive grant proposal(s). Partnership in a proposal submitted by NCTCOG does not constitute a guarantee of grant funding or contract with NCTCOG/DFWCC for project implementation as funding is contingent on award by the grant funding agency. Selected proposals will be refined in conjunction with the Project Team(s) based on the details of the federal or state grant opportunities to which NCTCOG is submitting. Selected Project Teams would have an opportunity to re-confirm their commitment/participation prior to NCTCOG submitting any grant applications.

NCTCOG may, at its discretion, issue additional calls for partners/projects for other specific grant opportunities if warranted. NCTCOG also reserves the right to select multiple Project Team(s) to enable a pipeline of projects ready for a variety of funding opportunities.

SCHEDULE

The schedule is as follows:

Call for Partners Issued: Monday, March 6, 2023

Deadline for submitting questions: Friday, March 17, 2023

Applications due: Friday, April 7, 2023, by 5:00 pm Central Time

SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be received, “in-hand”, by 5:00 pm Central Time, Friday, April 7, 2023. Proposals should be addressed to Lori Clark, Program Manager, North Central Texas Council of Governments, 616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington, Texas 76011. An in-hand submittal may consist of either a hard-copy proposal or a flash drive delivered by the deadline. Applications received after that time will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant unopened; postmarked by the published deadline does not constitute an on-time application. Applications containing original signatures and notary seals should be labeled “Original.”

An electronic submittal should also be submitted to cleancities@nctcog.org. However, the electronic submittal is not sufficient to constitute an application on its own and will only be considered a courtesy/convenience copy.

- Formatting – Applications should be no more than 15 pages, single-spaced, in at least 11-

point font with 1-inch margins, printed double-sided, and include a footer containing applicant, page number, and total pages in the packet. (e.g., [Applicant] 1 of 15). Letters and other supplemental materials do not count against the 15-page limit.

- Content Criteria – The applicant should provide discussion responding to each of the content elements described under “Required Application Elements”.

Any questions regarding this solicitation should be directed in writing to cleancities@nctcog.org. The deadline for submitting questions is Friday, March 17, 2023.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000(d) to 2000(d)(1) and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations Part 26, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation issued pursuant to such Act, hereby notifies all potential partners that it will affirmatively assure that, in regard to any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit Call for Partners in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The NCTCOG Executive Board encourages the use of local firms. However, all Project Team applicants, regardless of firm locale, will be evaluated using the partner selection criteria contained in the Call for Partners.

Application information shall be a public record to the extent provided by the Texas Open Records Act and the Freedom of Information Act and shall be available to the public as provided therein. If an application contains information that the applicant considers proprietary and does not want disclosed to the public or used for any purpose other than the evaluation of the application, all such information must be indicated with the following suggested language:

The information contained on pages shall not be duplicated, used in whole or in part, for any purpose other than to evaluate the proposal; provided that if a contract is awarded to this office as a result of or in connection with the submission of such information, NCTCOG has the right to duplicate, use or disclose this information to the extent provided in the contract.

Entities that Boycott Israel (House Bill 89): If applicants are required to make a certification pursuant to Section 2271.002 of the Texas Government Code, applicants should include a certification statement that they do not and will not boycott Israel during the term of the project resulting from this solicitation. If the applicant does not make that certification, the applicant must indicate that in its response and state why the certification is not required.

NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of, by, and for local governments. NCTCOG was established to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG’s purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions.

BACKGROUND

Since 1974, NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. NCTCOG's Transportation Department is responsible for regional transportation planning for all modes of transportation. The Department provides technical support and staff assistance to the Regional Transportation Council and its technical committees, which comprise the MPO policy-making structure. In addition, the Department provides technical assistance to the local governments of North Central Texas in planning, programming, coordinating, and implementing transportation decisions.