**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**

**2023 Clean School Bus (CSB) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**EPA-OAR-OTAQ-23-06**

**Project Narrative Sample Format**

**Instructions:** The project narrative should substantially comply with the instructions, format, and content described below. It should also address the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. The project narrative, including the cover page, workplan, and budget table and detail, must not exceed a maximum of 15 single-spaced typewritten pages. Pages refer to one-side of a single-spaced typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10 and the application must be formatted for 8 ½” x 11" paper. **Pages in excess of the 15-page limit will not be reviewed.**

Supporting materials, such as project team biographies, partnership letters, and negotiated indirect cost rate agreements can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 15-page limit. Supporting materials should also be submitted using the *“Other Attachments”* form, as described in Section IV.A.3 above.

Applicants should ensure that their project narratives are written clearly using understandable terms. Doing so will help ensure that the evaluation team members understand the purpose, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. Applicants are not required, but are highly encouraged, to use the project narrative format below, including the cover page.

**PLEASE DELETE THIS INSTRUCTION PAGE FROM YOUR FINAL PROJECT NARRATIVE.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**

**2023 Clean School Bus (CSB) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**Project Narrative - EPA-OAR-OTAQ-23-06**

* + - 1. **Cover Page:**

The cover page should include the following information:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Title** |  | |
| **Applicant Information** | Applicant Name:  Address (Street, City, State, Zip):  UEI Number:  Office Phone and Fax Numbers:  Contact Name, Email address and Website (if applicable): | |
| **Entity Eligibility** | [*Using the criteria outlined under Section III.A of this NOFO, please indicate entity type below with an X to confirm eligibility.]*  \_\_\_State or local governmental entity that provide bus service, including a public school district  or charter school  \_\_\_Eligible contractor  \_\_\_Nonprofit school transportation association  \_\_\_Indian Tribe, Tribal organization, or Tribally-controlled school responsible for the purchase, lease, license, or contract for service of school buses or for providing school bus service for a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funded school | |
| **Budget Summary** | Use the definitions provided in section 10. Budget Detail to fill out this budget summary. The amounts listed in this summary should match the amounts listed in the budget table in section 10.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | EPA Funding Requested  **[A]** | Applicant Costs  **[B]** | External Leveraged Costs  **[C]** | Total Project Cost  **[A+B+C=D]** | | **$** | $ | **$** | **$** | | |
| **Project Location(s)** | *[Briefly describe the area(s) where the affected vehicles will operate. Primary project location (County, State, City, and Zip Code) should be included here. All locations listed on the fleet sheet should be included here as a summary]* | |
| **Poor Air Quality** | *[Briefly indicate which project location(s) are in areas designated as a maintenance or nonattainment area and the percentage of time vehicles will operate in the location(s).]* | |
| **Project Period** | Project Start Date: | Project End Date: |
|  | *[Provide proposed beginning and ending dates for the project.]* | |
| **Short Project Description** | *[Briefly describe your project in one to three sentences. Include the number of buses being replaced, the new bus(es) class(es) and fuel type(s), and charging equipment, if applicable. Example description: Replace 20 Class 7 diesel school buses with 20 Class 7 electric school buses and DC fast charging infrastructure.]* | |

1. Please complete the following table of information for all applicants and add additional rows as needed. Specific school bus vehicle data should be provided separately, in the fleet sheet attached to this application [excel]. For school district applicants, only the first row will be completed. For third-party applicants, please list all school-district beneficiary information. Please delete or add additional rows as needed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School District Name | NCES# | School Buses (#) | Fuel Type [ZE, CNG, Propane, Mix – define Fuel Type] | Charging Infrastructure [Y/N] and Type [EVSE Level 1, 2, 3, or Mix] |
| 1. |  |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |  |
| 6. |  |  |  |  |
| 7. |  |  |  |  |
| 8. |  |  |  |  |

1. **The following information is required ONLY for third-party applicants:**

If a third-party applicant (meaning an eligible contractor or nonprofit school transportation association) is applying, please provide the school district beneficiary contact information. Threshold criteria requires at least four school district beneficiaries in a single application. Note: this section is only applicable to third-party applicants. Please add additional rows as needed. If not applicable, use N/A.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School District Name | NCES # | Location  [City & State] | School POC  (Point of Contact) | Phone # | Email Address |
| 1. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. |  |  |  |  |  |

**(2) Workplan:**

Applicants must ensure that the workplan addresses the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. Applicants should use the section and subsection numbers and headings below which correspond with the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. The workplan should be written clearly using understandable terms.

**Section 1- Project Summary and Approach**

This section should contain a detailed project summary and description of the proposed activities to be undertaken, consistent with Section I.B (Program Goals and Objectives) of the NOFO. Details of every activity for which the applicant is seeking funding should be included, such as how the activities, outputs, outcomes, and partnerships described throughout the application fit together to meet the goals and objectives of the CSB program.

**Section 2 - Environmental Results—Outputs, Outcomes, and Performance Measures**

1. **Expected Project Outputs and Outcomes**

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the project as defined in Section I.C of the NOFO. Specific outputs and outcomes should be provided and may include short- and longer-term activities. Applicants should provide methodology for any emissions calculations. In addition to a narrative discussion of the outputs and outcomes, the applicant is encouraged to include a table such as the following:

Anticipated Outputs and Outcome Table [Example]\*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activities** | **Anticipated Outputs** | **Anticipated Outcomes** |
| *Replacement of X existing school buses with low and zero-emission (ZE) buses* | *Number of replaced school bus vehicles* | *Emissions reductions along school bus routes* *such as tons of pollution reduced annually and/or over the lifetime of the buses, and improved ambient air quality in communities in which the buses operate* |
| *Number of school districts that replaced one or more school bus vehicles* |
| *Number and type of electric vehicle charging infrastructure installed* |
| *Replacement of X diesel buses in communities through which buses drive every day* | *Number of school children transported on ZE or clean buses rather than diesel buses* | *Benefits to the communities affected by the project, including improvements to human health and the environment, the local economy, social conditions, and the welfare of residents in such communities* |
| *Training provided to staff, bus drivers, mechanics, or other electric vehicle service providers (include EVSE service providers)* | *Number of trainings provided to staff, bus drivers, mechanics, or other electric vehicle service providers (include EVSE service providers)* | *Improved workforce training programs for zero emission vehicles and charging infrastructure and changes in driver behavior, such as reducing idling operations of clean school buses or optimizing efficiency of EV powertrain operations* |
| *Community engagement activities to ensure meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project* | *Number and type of community engagement activities undertaken in affected communities to ensure meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project* | *Community engagement advancement and increased public awareness of CSB project and results, and an increased understanding of the environmental or economic effectiveness of the implemented technology* |

\*Please refer to Section I.C for additional examples of expected and potential outputs and outcomes.

1. **Performance Measures and Plan**

Applicants should describe the proposed performance measures, which will be the mechanism to track, measure, and report progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. Applicants should describe their plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated, as described in Section I.C of the NOFO and Section.3.a of the workplan.

1. **Timeline & Milestones**

The reasonableness of the proposed timeline including key milestones for specific tasks and the likelihood of completion of the project’s goals and objectives by project end date.

**Section 3- Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities**

1. **Prioritization for Disadvantaged Communities**

Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant school district meets one or more of the following criteria:

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law allows EPA to prioritize certain communities that will benefit from the CSB program. The CSB program statute enables the program to target communities with environmental justice concerns and support a broad geographic distribution of funds. Additionally, CSB has been identified as part of the Justice40 Initiative, which provides a goal that 40 percent of applicable federal benefits flow to disadvantaged communities. For the purposes of this funding opportunity “disadvantaged communities” must meet one or more of the following criteria:

* + - 1. High-need school districts and low-income areas limited to:

1. School districts listed in the [Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) School District Estimates for 2021](https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/2021/demo/saipe/2021-school-districts.html) as having 20% or more students living in poverty; and
2. Title I-funded school districts and charter school districts not listed in the SAIPE dataset. See the Prioritization Self-Certification Instructions, which can be found on the [CSB Grants webpage](https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-grants), for more information on this option.
3. Title I-funded large public-school districts, defined as districts with more than 35,000 students OR more than 45 public schools, that are in SAIPE but do not meet the 20% poverty threshold, may be eligible to self-certify the low-income prioritization status for part or all of their district. See the Prioritization Self-Certification Instructions, which can be found on the [CSB Grants webpage](https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-grants), for more information on this option.
4. School districts located in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
   * + 1. Rural school districts, meaning school districts identified with locale code “43-Rural: Remote” by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).
       2. Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded school districts
       3. School districts that receive basic support payments under section [7703(b)(1) of title 20](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:20%20section:7703%20edition:prelim)%20OR%20(granuleid:USC-prelim-title20-section7703)&f=treesort&num=0&edition=prelim) for children who reside on Indian land.

This program criteria for “disadvantaged communities” is drawn from the prioritization authorization described in the CSB statute. The methodology for calculating covered program benefits to disadvantaged communities may be updated in the future as additional funding opportunities are offered under the program and EPA receives input on previous funding opportunities.

School districts that qualify under one or more prioritizations above, except for 1.b and 1.c, are identified on EPA’s Prioritized School District List, found on the [CSB Grants Webpage](https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-grants). Please demonstrate prioritization status by completing the following table of information for all applicants, adding additional rows as needed. Applicants should read the Prioritization Self-Certification Instructions, which can be found on the [CSB Grants Webpage](https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-grants), to understand whether they are able to self-certify that a school district not listed on the Prioritized School District List as “low-income.” Third-party applicants will receive prioritization points based on the number of buses in the grant serving prioritized school districts. Applicants that self-certify will receive the same points under the prioritization evaluation criterion as those identified on the Prioritized School District List, and the same opportunity for a greater amount of funding per bus if the application is selected for funding.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| List Of School Districts on this Application NCES ID[[1]](#footnote-2) | District Name | Number of Buses Serving the District | Prioritization Status [Yes/No] on Prioritized District List | *(If Applicable) Category of Self-Certification, as described in the Prioritization Self-Certification Instructions [Category 1, Category 2A, Category 2B, or N/A]* |
| *Ex. 0123456* | *School District A* | *15* | *No* | *Category 1* |
| *Ex. 0123457* | *School District B* | *7* | *No* | *Category 2A* |
| *Ex. 0123458* | *School District C* | *20* | *Yes* | *N/A* |
| *Ex. 0123458* | *School District D* | *8* | *No* | *N/A* |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Community Engagement**

In addition to the information included under 3.a. above, applicants should describe the quality and extent to which the project addresses engagement with these affected communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance ofthe project. Meaningful involvement means people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency’s decision; community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

Partnership letter(s) may be included in the application as an attachment if applicable, which do not count toward the 15-page project narrative page limit; see Section IV.A of the NOFO. These partnership letters should describe the partner’s support for and/or involvement with the project.

**Section 4- Project Location – Nonattainment or Maintenance Area(s)**

Applicants should list whether projects are located in an Ozone or PM2.5 nonattainment or maintenance area. Areas are located in an Ozone or PM2.5 nonattainment or maintenance area if they are designated, as of the release date of this NOFO, as nonattainment areas or maintenance areas for the following National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Data is sourced from EPA’s Green Book of Nonattainment Areas for Criteria Pollutants (www.epa.gov/green-book):

a) PM2.5 1997 Standard (Annual: 15 µg/m3, 24-hour: 65 µg/m3)

b) PM2.5 2006 Standard (Annual: 15 µg/m3, 24-hour: 35 µg/m3)

c) PM2.5 2012 Standard (Annual: 12 µg/m3, 24-hour: 35 µg/m3)

d) Ozone (O3) 2008 Standard (8-hour: 0.075ppm)

e) Ozone (O3) 2015 Standard (8-hour: 0.070ppm)

Note, a list of counties that have been designated as non-attainment areas or maintenance areas for the above NAAQS can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-grants.

Partial points may be awarded under this criterion depending on the percentage of time and buses that operate in an Ozone or PM2.5 nonattainment or maintenance area.The term “project location” as used in this NOFO refers to the area(s) where the school buses being purchased will operate. If a single application includes vehicles operating in more than one project location, this section of the work plan should indicate where the vehicles operate and the amount (%) of time the vehicles typically operate in each area. Note: The project location(s) should align with the information included in the fleet sheet attachment for each vehicle.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | School District NCES ID | School District Name | County | State | City | Zip code | Number of Buses | % of Time Vehicles Spend in Area | Non-Attainment or Maintenance Area [*Yes/No*] |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Section 5- Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**

**a. Past Performance**

Submit a list of up to five federally-funded assistance agreements that the applicant is performing or has performed within the last three years. Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts. These assistance agreements should be awards directly to the applicant. For each of the agreements, include:

**Federally Funded Assistance Agreement**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Federal Agency |  |
| Project Title |  |
| Assistance Listing Number | *[Formally known as the CFDA number)* |
| Assistance Agreement Number |  |
| Brief Description | *[No more than two sentences]* |
| Discussion | *[Include a discussion of whether, and if so how, the applicant was able to successfully complete and manage the listed agreements.]* |

**b. Reporting Requirements**

For each of the assistance agreements listed, the applicant should describe their history of meeting the reporting requirements under the agreement(s). This should include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reporting Submission Quality | *[Discussion on whether the applicant submitted acceptable final reports under the agreement.]* |
| Timely Reporting on Progress | *[Extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on its progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under the agreement.]* |
| Reporting on Progress Barriers | *[If progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not.]* |

Note: In evaluating applicants under the past performance factors in Section V.A. of the NOFO, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these factors, which is half of the total points available for these sub-criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, a score of 0 for these factors may be received.

1. **Staff Expertise**

Include information on the applicant’s organization, including a description of the staff’s knowledge, expertise, qualifications, and resources and/or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the proposed project’s goals. In addition to the optional tables below, biographical sketches, including resumes or curriculum vitae for key staff, managers and any other key personnel can be included as an optional project team biography attachment, as listed in Section IV.A of the NOFO; the optional attachment does not count towards the 15-page limit of the project narrative.

*Staff Expertise [please add additional rows, as needed]*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Position Title* | *% FTE\** | *Resume Attached [Y/N]* | *Summary of knowledge, expertise, or qualifications to achieve project goals successfully [one to two sentences per staff member].* |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

*\*Full-time equivalent = Percentage (%) of full-time hours of the position title defined*

*Project Partner [please add additional rows, as needed]*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Organization* | *Summary of knowledge, expertise, or qualifications to achieve project goals successfully [one to two sentences per project partner].* |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Section 6- Project Sustainability**

Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applicants based on the extent to which the project results and benefits are sustainable and ability of the applicant and project partners to promote and continue efforts to reduce emissions from school buses after EPA funding for this project has ended.

For ZE projects, this may include, but is not limited to, demonstration of coordination and/or consultation with utilities on project feasibility including 1) charging needs; 2) upgrades needed; 3) costs; 4) rates for future service, and 5) timeframe for necessary upgrades. For applicants’ convenience, EPA has created a sample template to guide applicants in their discussion with utilities (“Utility Partnership Template”). Applicants are not required to complete this template, or provide the information indicated in the template, but may do so as additional demonstration of robust engagement with their utility.

For non-ZE projects, this may include, but is not limited to, whether the applicant and/or its project partners have existing policies or new commitments to, by the end of the project period, adopt idle-reduction policies, adopt contract specifications requiring the use of cleaner, more efficient vehicles and equipment, or adopt other strategies to promote and continue efforts to reduce diesel emissions.

**Section 7 – Workforce Development**

Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applicants based on the extent to which the application has demonstrated a plan to prepare the workforce for the project, such as conducting robust workforce planning to ensure current drivers, mechanics, electricians, and other essential personnel receive training to safely operate and maintain the new buses and infrastructure, as well as clarifying protections to ensure existing workers are not replaced or displaced because of new technologies.

**Section 8- Project Resilience to Climate Impacts**

Applicants should detail the quality and extent to which the project assesses and implements climate change adaptation considerations to help ensure that the project achieves its expected outcomes even as the climate changes. Adapting to climate change involves actions by individuals, businesses, governments, and others to build resilience and reduce vulnerability of human and natural systems to unavoidable climate impacts. Adaptation also reduces the long-term costs of responding to these impacts.

Applicants can demonstrate consideration of climate change adaptation through taking measures to anticipate, prepare for, and avoid adverse impacts of climate change. For example, assessing project vulnerability to local climate impacts when making siting decisions and operational plans. Measures taken to avoid damages could include ensuring fleets and equipment are protected from climate change impacts, such as flooding and sea level rise, and protecting infrastructure from storm damage.

**Section 9- Leveraging of Additional External Funds**

Applicants should list and describe any additional external funds they have leveraged or plan to leverage in order to support the proposed project activities, such as public-private partnerships, grants from other entities, or the issuance of school bonds. Applicants should also describe how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. For the purpose of this NOFO, these additional external funds will be considered “leveraged resources.” Unlike funding awarded as part of this funding opportunity, leveraged resources do not need to be spent on eligible or allowable costs as listed in Section III.D Project Requirements. Applicants will be evaluated based on the amount and type of additional external funds, how they will obtain the additional external funds, the likelihood the additional external funds will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the additional external funding commitment, and the role that the additional external funds will play in supporting the proposed project activities. Selected applicants are expected to abide by their proposed additional external funding commitments during grant performance. If the proposed additional external funds do not materialize during grant performance, EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action authorized under 2 CFR Part 200.

Note, applicants should **not** include additional external funds in the project budget on the SF-424 or SF-424A. They should, however, include these costs and contributions in the budget detail described in Section 10 of this project narrative template.

**Section 10- Budget**

This section of the project narrative is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A and must include a discussion of the applicant’s approach to ensuring proper management of grant/cooperative agreement funds, a detailed budget narrative, as well as the itemized budget table below. An applicant’s budget table and budget narrative must account for both federal funds and any leveraged additional external funds they have secured or plan to secure in order to support the proposed project activities. Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award. Additional guidance for developing the applicant’s budget is available in [RAIN-2019-G02, “Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02).”

**Additional external funds** will be evaluated under the Leveraging of Additional External Funds criterion. Applicants who propose to use additional external funds should **not** include these costs or contributions in the project budget on the SF-424, SF-424A. They should, however, include these additional external funds in the budget detail described later in this section. If the proposed additional external funding does not materialize during grant performance, EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action authorized under 2 CFR Part 200.

The budget detail described under this section must clearly specify the amount of federal funding and the additional external funds for each category of total project costs.

**a. Budget Detail**

Proposed budgets should provide a detailed breakout by funding type included in the proper budget category for each activity requesting funds. Applicants should consult [EPA’s Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-05/documents/applicant-budget-development-guidance.pdf).

Applicants should provide a detailed breakout by funding type included in the proper budget category for each activity requesting funds. Applicants should use the instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table below to complete the detailed budget section of the project narrative. The budget detail and the budget table should be included in the project narrative and count towards the maximum 15-page limit. Additional budget documents, excluding the SF-424 and SF-424A forms, or project narratives pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed, as listed in Section III.C of the NOFO. Applicants should include applicable rows of costs for each budget category in their budget table to accurately reflect the proposed project budget. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, installation or labor supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs (i.e., subawards, participant support costs), indirect costs, and total costs.

If the applicant has leveraged or plans to leverage additional external funding, the budget detail must clearly specify the amount of federal funding and the additional external funding for each category (see column labeled “Leveraged Costs”). If any eligible contractor, nonprofit student transportation association, Tribe, school district(s), and/or school districts’ school bus service provider(s) involved in the project intends to contribute funds to the project, the budget detail must clearly specify the amount of funding for each category (see column labeled “Applicant Costs”). For applicants proposing to implement a participant support cost or rebate program, the rebates are appropriately listed under the “Other” budget category as “Participant Support Costs.” See Appendix A for more information on participant support costs and [RAIN-2018-G05, “EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs.”](https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g05)

* **Personnel - List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period.** This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (paid employees of the applicant organization as reflected in payroll tax records). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as a cost-share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of contractors (including individual consultants), which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards or non-employee program participants (e.g., interns or volunteers), which are included in the “Other” category; or (3) effort that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization’s negotiated indirect cost rate.The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.
* **Fringe Benefits - Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included**. Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits may include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions and unemployment benefit plans. If the applicant’s fringe rate does not include the cost of leave, and the applicant intends to charge leave to the agreement, it must provide supplemental information describing its proposed method(s) for determining and equitably distributing these costs.
* **Travel - Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-state and out-of-state, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.** Travel may be: integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g., inspections); related to proposed project activities (e.g., attendance at meetings); or to a technical training or workshop that supports effective implementation of the project activities. Only include travel costs for employees in the travel category. Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of contractors (including consultants), which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards and non-employee program participants (e.g., trainees), which are included in the “Other” category. Further, travel does not include bus rentals for group trips, which would be covered under the contractual category. Finally, if the applicant intends to use any funds for travel outside the United States, it must be specifically identified. All proposed foreign travel must be approved by EPA’s Office of International and Tribal Affairs prior to being taken.
* **Equipment - Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.** Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts that are not included in the purchase price for the equipment. These types of proposed costs should be included in the “Other” category. Items with a unit cost of less than $5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.1, “Equipment.” The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project. Refer to Section VI.C of this NOFO for additional information regarding Build America, Buy America requirements for consideration when developing your budget for infrastructure equipment. If installation costs are included in the equipment costs, labor expenses shall be itemized with the detailed number of hours charged and the hourly wage. If the applicant has written procurement procedures that define a threshold for equipment costs that is lower than $5,000, then that threshold takes precedence.
* **Supplies - “Supplies” means all tangible personal property other than “equipment.”** The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g., laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the “Other” category.
* **Contractual - Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.** Contractual services (including consultant services) are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. [EPA’s Subaward Policy and supplemental Frequent Questions](https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients) has detailed guidance available for differentiating between contractors and subrecipients. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the “Other” category. EPA does not require applicants to identify specific contractors. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the anticipated scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known. Any proposed non-competed/sole-source contracts in excess of $3,500 must include a justification. Note that it is unlikely that EPA will accept proposed sole source contracts for goods and services (e.g., consulting) that are widely available in the commercial market. Refer to [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](https://www.epa.gov/grants/best-practice-guide-procuring-services-supplies-and-equipment-under-epa-assistance-agreements) for EPA’s policies on competitive procurements and encouraging the use of small and disadvantaged business enterprises.
* **Other - List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.** This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance; rental/lease of equipment or supplies; equipment service or maintenance contracts; printing or photocopying; participant support costs such as non-employee training stipends and travel, subsidies or rebates for purchases of pollution control equipment (such as truck owners to purchase cleaner trucks); costs associated with the delivery of new replacement buses; and subaward costs. Applicants should describe the items included in the “Other” category and include the estimated amount of participant support costs in a separate line item. Additional information about participant support costs is contained in [RAIN-2018-G05, “EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs.”](https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g05)

Subawards (e.g., subgrants) and participant support costs are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term “subaward” means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient even if the agreement is referred to as a contract. Rebates, subsidies, and similar one-time, lump-sum payments to program beneficiaries for purchase of eligible emission control technologies, such as the purchase of a new bus, are considered participant support costs. Please refer to Appendix A for detailed guidance on funding projects and partnerships and how to correctly categorize these costs in the workplan budget. “Other” does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work as a separate line item in the “Other” category, and a description of the types of activities to be supported. Refer to [EPA’s Subaward Policy and supplemental Frequent Questions](https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients) for additional guidance.

* **Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.** Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:
  + Personnel (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs)
  + Personnel and Fringe (Indirect Rate x Personnel & Fringe = Indirect Costs)
  + Total Direct Costs (Indirect Rate x Total direct costs = Indirect Costs)
  + Direct Costs, less distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment

(Indirect Rate x (total direct cost – distorting factors) = Indirect Costs)

Additional indirect cost guidance is available in [RAIN-2018-G02, “Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements.”](https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02)

**Example Budget Table (Required, part of the 15-page limit)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line Item** | **Quantity** | **Cost**  ***[per unit]*** | **EPA Funding[[2]](#footnote-3)** | **Applicant Cost [[3]](#footnote-4)** | **Leveraged Costs[[4]](#footnote-5)** | **Total Project Cost** |
| Project Manager ($40/hr, 10 hrs/wk, 102 weeks) | 1 | $40,800 | $40,800 | $0 | $0 | $40,800 |
| Project Staff ($25/hr, 40 hrs/wk, 102 weeks) | 1 | $102,000 | $102,000 | $0 | $0 | $102,000 |
| **TOTAL PERSONNEL** | | | $142,800 | $0 | $0 | **$142,800** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20% of Salary and Wages | 1 | $28,560 | $28,560 | $0 | $0 | $28,560 |
| **TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS** | | | $28,560 | $0 | $0 | **$28,560** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mileage for PM ($0.17/mi, 25 mi/wk, 52 weeks) | 1 | $221 | $221 | $0 | $0 | $221 |
| Mileage PS ($0.17/mi, 50 mi/wk, 52 weeks) | 1 | $442 | $442 | $0 | $0 | $442 |
| **TOTAL TRAVEL** | | | $663 | $0 | $0 | **$663** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Class 7 zero-emission/electric school bus | 10 | $350,000 | $2,800,000 | $350,000 | $350,000 | $3,500,000 |
| Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)/propane school bus | 5 | $100,000 | $400,000 | $100,000 | $0 | $500,000 |
| AC Level 2 charger (240 V) | 4 | $6,500 | $19,500 | $0 | $6,500 | $26,000 |
| DC fast charger (DCFC, 25 kW) (480 V) | 2 | $20,000 | $20,000 | $20,000 | $0 | $40,000 |
| *Vehicles and Infrastructure* | | | $3,239,500 | $470,000 | $356,500 | $4,066,000 |
| Electrical service equipment upgrades (distribution lines, transformers, etc.) | 1 | $50,000 | $0 | $50,000 | $0 | $50,000 |
| EVSE installation (trenching, re-paving, conduit, etc., engineering review and drawings, permitting) | 1 | $30,000 | $0 | $30,000 | $0 | $30,000 |
| *Construction Work and Equipment Upgrades* | | | $0 | $80,000 | $0 | $80,000 |
| Electrical panel maintenance | 1 | $3,000 | $0 | $3,000 | $0 | $3,000 |
| Maintenance support package (if not included in warranty) | 1 | $4,000 | $0 | $4,000 | $0 | $4,000 |
| Fleet management software/telematics | 1 | $1,000 | $0 | $0 | $1,000 | $1,000 |
| *Maintenance and Training* | | | $0 | $7,000 | $1,000 | $8,000 |
| **TOTAL EQUIPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE** | | | $3,239,500 | $557,000 | $357,500 | **$4,154,000** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials | 1 | $50 | $0 | $0 | $50 | $50 |
| **TOTAL SUPPLIES** | | | $0 | $0 | $50 | **$50** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| EVSE software subscription (annual | 1 | $300 | $0 | $0 | $300 | $300 |
| **TOTAL CONTRACTUAL** | | | $0 | $0 | $300 | **$300** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Driver and technician training | 1 | $5,000 | $5,000 | $0 | $0 | $5,000 |
| **TOTAL OTHER** | | | $5,000 | $0 | $0 | **$5,000** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate = 10% (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs) | 1 | $14,280 | $14,280 | $0 | $0 | $14,280 |
| **TOTAL INDIRECT** | | | $14,280 | $0 | $0 | **$14,280** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL FUNDING** | | | $3,430,803 | $557,000 | $357,850 | $4,345,653 |

**b. Expenditure of Awarded Funds**

Applicants should provide a detailed written description of the applicant’s approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

**c. Reasonableness of Costs**

EPA will evaluate the reasonableness of the applicant’s budget based on the applicant’s narrative description of the budget and detailed breakout of requested funding for each work component or task. Provide a detailed description of every itemized cost, including how every cost relates to the project narrative and specific emission reduction activities. Instructions for what to include in the Budget Detail are described in Section 10.a. above.

Applicants must itemize the cost categories as listed below and the SF-424A form: personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, contractional costs, other direct costs (subawards, participant support costs), indirect costs, and total costs. Round up to the nearest dollar and do not use any cents.

For applicants that have leveraged or plan to leverage additional external funding as described in Section III.B of the NOFO and Section 9 above, the budget narrative must include a detailed description of how the applicant will obtain the additional external funds and how the additional external funds will be used. Costs or contributions associated with additional external funds should **not** be included in the in the SF-424 or SF-424A forms.

Recipients may issue subawards, contracts, or participant support costs to implement projects. Please refer to Appendix Afor detailed guidance on these funding options and how to correctly categorize these costs in the workplan budget.

**Section 11 - Attachments (As listed in Section IV.A of the NOFO; this information does not count towards the project narrative 15-page limit):**

**Applicant Fleet Sheet** (Required)

Applicants must provide a detailed applicant fleet sheet which describes the specific vehicles to be implemented under the proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to use the sample format for the applicant fleet sheet found at: https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-grants. The applicant fleet sheet should be submitted as an attachment to the project narrative.

Applicants should describe, to the extent possible, the existing buses targeted for the proposed project, including but not limited to: the fleet owner; whether the fleet is publicly or privately owned; the project’s place of performance; the on highway weight class; vehicle identification number(s); vehicle make; vehicle model; vehicle model year; odometer reading; GVWR; engine serial number(s); engine make; engine model; engine model year; engine family name; engine fuel type; annual amount of fuel used; annual miles traveled; annual idling hours; and remaining life. Applicants should describe, to the extent possible, the new buses that will be purchased using 2023 CSB Grant funding, including: year of upgrade action; GVWR; vehicle identification number(s), upgrade cost per bus; new engine model year; new engine family name; new engine fuel type; new annual idling hours; new annual miles traveled; whether the new bus will be equipped with an auxiliary heater; if applicable, whether the new bus will be capable of bidirectional charging; if applicable, the estimated range and capacity of the bus’s battery; and, if applicable, the new annual fuel volume. If applicable, applicants should also describe, to the extent possible, the charging infrastructure that will be purchased using 2023 CSB Grant funding, including: the type of charger, the manufacturer, the model, the manufacture year, the maximum output power, the number of plugs, whether the charging equipment is capable of bidirectional charging; whether the bus and infrastructure will be used for V2G; the number of charging units; the equipment cost per unit; where the EV infrastructure will be located; who will own the EV charger; the installation cost of the infrastructure equipment; a description of the installation work; who will perform the installation; and the total cost of the equipment and installation. This information should be presented in a table format via the Applicant Fleet Sheet template.

**Documentation of Third-Party Approval:** (Required, if applicable) Third-party applicants must submit documentation, such as the Third-Party Approval Certification Template, that the school districts listed on the application are aware and approve of the third party’s application. Documentation should be signed by an authorized representative of the school district beneficiary. Third-party applicants will only be considered for funding for school district beneficiaries that have signed the approval certification. Third-party applicants that do not submit signed approval certifications for at least four school district beneficiaries will be ineligible for funding. School districts not supported by a Third-Party Approval Letter or other documentation will not count towards eligibility.

**Documentation of Partnership with Utility:** (Optional) Applicants that are applying for electric buses and charging infrastructure may provide documentation, such as the Utility Partnership Template, as additional demonstration of robust engagement with their utility.

**Self-Certification of Prioritization:** (Optional)Applicants that self-certify at least one school district not listed on the Prioritized District List as “low-income” may choose to submit optional documentation of their Title I funding, as described in the Prioritization Self-Certification Instructions, which can be found on the [CSB Grants Webpage](https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-grants). Applicants are not required to submit this documentation and applicants that do submit this documentation will not receive additional points for it.

**Leveraged Resources Commitment Letter(s)**: (Optional) If applicable, applicants may include, as attachments to the application, commitment letters from or signed by project partners who are providing additional external funding that the applicant has leveraged or plans to leverage in order to support proposed project activities. These letters should be submitted as part of the applicant’s application package. Please do not ask partners to submit letters directly to EPA. This should be referenced under Section 9 “Leveraging of Additional External Funds” of the project narrative.

**Project Team Biographies**: (Optional) Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for key staff, managers, and any other key personnel. If submitted, this should be referenced under Section 5. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance of the workplan.

**Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement**: (Optional) The applicant will be required to submit this agreement if their application is selected for funding.

**Partnership Letters**: (Optional) If applicable, letters of support that demonstrate strong, long-term involvement throughout the project from a variety of project partners are encouraged. Letters should specifically indicate how project partners and supporting organizations will participate in or directly assist in the design and performance of the project, or how obtaining support from project partners will allow the applicant to more effectively perform the project. Letters should be addressed to the applicant organization and included as attachments to the application. Please do not ask partners to submit letters directly to EPA.

1. Note: The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) ID numbers are assigned to schools and districts when they are initially reported to the U.S. Department of Education by the state education agency (SEA). The District ID listed for each district is a unique ID, used by both NCES and SAIPE. You will need to know your District ID for the application process. If you do not know your District ID, use <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/> to find out. There are several districts on this list that do not have District IDs. These districts have all been designated temporary alphanumeric District IDs (e.g., “BIE0001”), which applicants should use on their application if they choose to apply. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. EPA Funding amount must be included on the SF-424 in Section 18.a and SF-424A in: cell 5(e) under Section A – Budget Summary; and Column (1) under Section B – Budget Categories. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Applicant Costs include costs funded by any eligible contractor, nonprofit student transportation association, Tribe, school district(s), and/or school districts’ school bus service provider(s) (as applicable). These costs should **not** be included on the SF-424 or SF424A. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Leveraged Costs include costs funded by additional external funds that the applicant has leveraged or plans to leverage, as described above in Section 9. Leveraging of Additional External Funds. These costs should **not** be included on the SF-424 in Section 18.b-e and SF424A [↑](#footnote-ref-5)