**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**

**2024 Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles (CHDV) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**EPA-R-OAR-CHDV-24-06**

**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 in excess of the 15-page limit will not be reviewed.**

Supporting materials, such as project team biographies, partnership letters, EJSCREEN reports, 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 *Optional Attachments* form, as described in Section IV.B. 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, including the cover page, below. Accepted file types for the project narrative and attachments include .docx, .pdf, .xlsx, .xls, .jpeg, and .png.

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**

**2024 Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles (CHDV) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**EPA-R-OAR-CHDV-24-06**

* + - 1. **Cover Page:** 
         1. The cover page should include the following information:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Title** | *[Please write a short, descriptive project title, e.g., “Wayside School District Bus Replacement Project.” This title should match the short title listed on the SF-424]* | |
| **Applicant Information** | *[Please fill in the following information.]*  Applicant Name:  Address (Street, City, State, Zip):  UEI Number:  Point of Contact Name:  Point of Contact Office Phone Number:  Point of Contact Email Address: | |
| **Sub-Program** | *[Using the requirements outlined in Section III.C. of this NOFO, the applicant should indicate the sub-program under which they are applying.]*  \_\_\_School Bus Sub-Program  \_\_\_Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program | |
| **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, including U.S. territory  \_\_\_Public School District  \_\_\_Other Municipality  \_\_\_Nonprofit school transportation association  \_\_\_Indian Tribe or Intertribal Consortium | |
| **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. As noted in Section II.B. of the NOFO, while each application can request up to the full funding amount of $\_\_, the total amount of requested funding needs to be commensurate with the applicant’s proposed activities.*   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | EPA Funding Requested  **[A]** | Mandatory Cost Share  **[B]** | Voluntary Cost Share  **[C]** | Total Project Cost  **[A+B+C]** | Leveraged Costs  **[E]** | | **$** | $ | **$** | **$** | **$** | | |
| **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 in the applicant fleet description 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** | *[Please provide the proposed beginning date for the project.]*  Project Start Date: | *[Please provide the proposed end date for the project. The Project Period is expected to last approximately 2 to 3 years.]*  Project End Date: |
| **Short Project Description** | *[Briefly describe the project in one to three sentences. Include the number of vehicles being replaced, the new vehicle classes and fuel types, and the units of charging or fueling equipment being installed, if applicable. Example description: Replace 20 Class 7 diesel school buses with 20 Class 7 electric school buses and install 20 DC fast charging units.]* | |

1. The applicant should fill out the high-level summary table for the Sub-Program they are applying under (they may delete the table template for the other sub-program to save space). The applicant should add additional rows as needed. Note, specific vehicle data must be provided separately in the applicant fleet description within the CHDV Supplemental Application Template - EPA Form Number 5900-689, submitted as part of this application package, and should match the totals listed below.

**School Bus Sub-Program Summary Table:** For public school district applicants, only the first row will be completed. For state, other municipality, and nonprofit school transportation association applicants, please provide information for each school district that will be served by the new buses.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School District Name | NCES ID | # of School Buses Being Replaced | Charging Infrastructure [Y/N] and Type [EVSE Level 1, 2, 3, or Mix] |
| 1. |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |
| 6. |  |  |  |
| 7. |  |  |  |
| 8. |  |  |  |

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 NCES ID listed for each district is a unique ID. The applicant will need to know their NCES ID for the application process. If the applicant does not know their NCES ID, use the [NCES weblink](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/) to find their relevant ID. Some public-school districts do not have NCES IDs. If a public school district does not have an NCES ID, please confirm that the district is a “public school district” and provide a short explanation of why it does not have an NCES ID (for example, the district was reorganized into two districts within the last year and a new NCES ID has not been assigned yet).

**Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program Summary Table:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vehicle Type [Straight/Box Truck Step Van, Septic Truck or Bucket Truck, Refuse Hauler, Street Sweeper, Transit Bus, and Other Vocational Vehicle] | # of Vehicles Being Replaced | Fuel Type [Electric, Hydrogen Fuel Cell] | Infrastructure [Y/N] and Type [EVSE Level 1, 2, 3, or Mix; Hydrogen Refueling Infrastructure] |
| 1. |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |
| 6. |  |  |  |
| 7. |  |  |  |
| 8. |  |  |  |

* 1. **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** (20 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

**a. Overall Project** (10 possible points)

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 and should include details of every activity for which the applicant is seeking funding. This section should include details about how the activities, outputs, outcomes, and partnerships described throughout the application will meet the goals of the program.

**b. Applicant Fleet Description** (10 possible points)

Applicants must upload an .xls or .xlsx file of their applicant fleet description using the CHDV Supplemental Application Template (EPA Form Number 5900-689). The purpose of the applicant fleet description is to describe in detail the specific vehicles targeted for replacement as part of this proposed grant project. (Applicants should not provide information on their entire fleet; they only need to provide information on the vehicles being replaced as part of this proposed grant project.) Applicants must use the CHDV Supplemental Application Template - EPA Form Number 5900-689 provided in the Grants.gov application package. This template does NOT count towards the 15-page limit.

Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality, completeness, and detail of the information provided within the applicant fleet description. The information provided within the applicant fleet description should be consistent with the information presented in the rest of the project narrative.

**Section 2 – Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures** (20 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

1. **Expected Project Outputs and Outcomes** (10 possible points)

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outputs and outcomes of the project as defined in Section I.D. of the NOFO. Specific outputs and outcomes should be provided and may include short- and longer-term activities. 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 [XX] existing ICE school buses with ZE buses* | *Number of replaced ICE 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 of school children transported on ZE buses rather than diesel buses* |
| *Number and type of electric vehicle charging infrastructure installed* | *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 training hours provided to staff, bus drivers, mechanics, or other electric vehicle service providers* | *Improved workforce training programs for zero-emission vehicles and charging infrastructure, and increased worker confidence operating and maintaining ZE vehicles and EVSE* |
| *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.* | *Increased public awareness of CHDV project and results, and an increased understanding of the environmental or economic effectiveness of the implemented technology* |

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

1. **Performance Measures and Plan** (5 possible points)

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.D. of the NOFO and Section 2.a. of the workplan.

The applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful processes and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. It is expected that the description of performance measures will directly relate to the project outcomes and outputs (see Section I.D.). The description of the performance measures will directly relate to the project’s outcomes and outputs, including but not limited to:

* + - Overseeing subrecipients, and/or contractors and vendors;
    - Tracking and reporting project progress on expenditures and purchases; and
    - Tracking, measuring, and reporting accomplishments and proposed timelines/milestones.

The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

* + - * What are the measurable short term and longer term results the project will achieve?
      * How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?
      * What are the expected locations (counties) of the outputs and outcomes?

1. **Timeline and Milestones** (5 possible points)

The applicant should include a detailed timeline for the project including milestones for specific tasks, such as bidding, engagement with the utility or hydrogen refueling provider, procurement, installation, and reports, along with estimated dates for each milestone. The applicant should include scheduled time for quarterly and final report preparation in the project timeline.

**Section 3- Programmatic Capability and Past Performance** (15 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

Note: In evaluating applicants under the past performance factors in Section V.A. of the NOFO, the EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from the EPA’s files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, then the applicant should indicate this in the application and they 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.

**a. Past Performance** (5 possible points)

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

* Project title
* Assistance agreement number, if applicable
* Dates the project was initiated and closed
* Federal funding agency and assistance listing number (formerly known as the CFDA number), if applicable
* Brief description of the agreement – no more than two sentences

Include a discussion of whether, and if so how, the applicant was able to successfully complete and manage the listed agreements. Explain any delays or other irregularities.

**b. Reporting Requirements** (5 possible points)

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:

* Whether the applicant submitted acceptable progress and final reports under those agreements;
* The extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on its progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements; and
* If progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not.

1. **Staff Expertise** (5 possible points)

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. 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.B. of the NOFO. These optional attachments do not count towards the 15-page limit of the project narrative.

**Section 4- Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities** (20 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

To advance environmental justice through this program, applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which project benefits are taking place in and serve disadvantaged communities and the extent to which applicants or their project partners have participated in or will participate in meaningful community engagement.

For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, “disadvantaged communities” are defined as meeting **both** of the following criteria:

1. **Any county that includes at least one of the following:**

1. Any census tract that is included as disadvantaged in the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/) (CEJST) version 1.0; and/or
2. Any census block group that is at or above the 90th percentile for any of [EJScreen’s Supplemental Indexes](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/ej-and-supplemental-indexes-ejscreen#what-supplemental) when compared to the nation or state; and/or
3. Any geographic area within Tribal lands as included in [EJScreen](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen).

**AND**

**2. Any county that meets at least one of the following:**

1. Contains at least one designated nonattainment area or maintenance area for any of the following National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Data is sourced from [EPA’s Green Book of Nonattainment Areas for Criteria Pollutants](https://www.epa.gov/green-book):
   1. PM2.5 1997 Standard (Annual: 15 μg/m3, 24-hour: 65 μg/m3)
   2. PM2.5 2006 Standard (Annual: 15 μg/m3, 24-hour: 35 μg/m3)
   3. PM2.5 2012 Standard (Annual: 12 μg/m3, 24-hour: 35 μg/m3)
   4. Ozone (O3) 2008 Standard (8-hour: 0.075ppm)
   5. Ozone (O3) 2015 Standard (8-hour: 0.070ppm)
2. Contains at least one census tract where the modeled ambient diesel PM concentration from the [2019 Air Toxics Screening Assessment](https://www.epa.gov/AirToxScreen) is above the 80th percentile (0.38 μg/m3 for 2019) for census tracts nationwide. The 80th percentile is a programmatic cutoff designed to help evaluate those areas that are most likely to have higher concentrations of diesel PM in the year of analysis (i.e., the year for which data are available); this level was not chosen based on risk or other health-based criteria or thresholds. [AirToxScreen](https://www.epa.gov/AirToxScreen) is a screening tool and there are limitations and uncertainties associated with it; see: [AirToxScreen Limitations](https://www.epa.gov/AirToxScreen/airtoxscreen-limitations).

Counties that qualify in whole or in part as disadvantaged communities under one or more of the criteria listed above are identified on the EPA’s Disadvantaged Community County List, found on the [CHDV Webpage](https://www.epa.gov/clean-heavy-duty-vehicles-program/).1 This list also identifies whether counties qualify as extreme or severe nonattainment areas. For evaluation criteria 4.a. and 4.b., applicants should demonstrate the extent to which the project takes place in a disadvantaged community by providing the following information for each area that the project takes place in:

* NCES ID (if applicable)
* County
* City, State
* Zip Code
* Number of Vehicles
* % of Time Vehicle(s) Spend in Area
* Does the Area Contain a Disadvantaged Community (as defined above)?
* Does the Area Contain a Nonattainment Area (as defined above)? If so, does it contain a severe or extreme nonattainment area?
* Does the Area Contain a Maintenance Area (as defined above)?
* Does the Area Contain High Ambient diesel PM Based on AirToxScreen (as defined above)?

1 EPA has created the “disadvantaged community county list” as shorthand to implement the prioritized counties for this and similar mobile source benefits programs. As shown above, this list includes as the starting point or base map those communities identified as disadvantaged by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) as well as all Federally Recognized Tribes and Tribal entities, whether or not they have land (per [M-23-09](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CPO.pdf)). This funding program, like others in EPA, primarily funds the deployment of vehicles; these mobile sources and their resulting emissions (or avoided emissions) move and are not confined to small geographies like Census tracts or block groups. Consistent with [M-23-09](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CPO.pdf), EPA will identify disadvantaged communities via the CEJST, and prioritize using other program criteria (including tools and data) listed in Section I.C. This program utilizes county-level data which is available and aligns with the geographic reporting scale of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) areas of Nonattainment and Maintenance, as well as with the resolution available for mobile source emissions as tabulated in the National Emissions Inventory.

**Applicants are highly encouraged, but not required to provide this information using the table below.** If the applicant chooses to use the table, then the applicant should use a row for each project site, adding additional rows as needed. If a project site spans more than one county, then the applicant should add a new row for each unique county. The use of the template below is optional, and the EPA will not penalize or withhold a benefit from the applicant for providing the information in another format.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NCES ID (if applicable)** | **County** | **City, State** | **Zip Code** | **Number of Vehicles** | **% of Time Vehicles Spend in Area** | **Contains Disadvantaged Community? (Y/N)** | **Contains maintenance area? (Y/N)** | **Contains nonattainment area? (Y/N)**  **If yes, contains severe or extreme nonattainment area? (Y/N)** | **Air Toxics Concern: Contains high ambient diesel PM based on AirToxScreen? (Y/N)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Prioritized Counties Containing Disadvantaged Communities: Nonattainment Areas** (10 possible points)

Applicants should describe the extent to which projects are located in and serve counties are being prioritized in part based on their inclusion of disadvantaged communities as discussed above, and based in part on meeting the criterion that they contain ozone or PM2.5 nonattainment or maintenance areas. Applicants should also describe the extent to which projects are located in and serve severe or extreme nonattainment areas. The term “project location” as used in this NOFO refers to the area(s) where the vehicles being purchased will operate. Information for this part of the workplan can be provided either using the sample template shown above, or through a narrative description in terms of the factors listed in the above template. Note that a list of counties that meet these criteria can be found on the EPA [CHDV Program website.](https://www.epa.gov/clean-heavy-duty-vehicles-program/)

Projects that take place in and serve counties that contain severe or extreme nonattainment areas will receive more points than projects that do not. If projects will take place in and serve more than one county, applicants should describe the percentage of the project activity that will occur in counties containing nonattainment or maintenance areas. Partial points may be awarded under this criterion based on the percentage of time that the project takes place in one of these counties. If a single application includes vehicles operating in more than one project location, this section of the workplan 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 vehicle-specific information included in the applicant fleet description within the CHDV Supplemental Application Template (EPA Form Number 5900-689).

1. **Prioritized Counties Containing Disadvantaged Communities: Areas with Air Toxics Concerns** (5 possible points)

Applicants should describe the extent to which projects are located in and serve counties that meet the disadvantaged communities definition based on meeting the criterion that they contain areas with air toxics concerns. The term “project location” as used in this NOFO refers to the area(s) where the vehicles being purchased will operate. Information for this part of the workplan can be provided either using the sample template shown above, or through a narrative description in terms of the factors listed in the above template. Note that a list of counties that meet these criteria can be found on the [CHDV Program Website](https://www.epa.gov/clean-heavy-duty-vehicles-program/).

If projects will take place in and serve more than one county, applicants should describe the percentage of the project activity that will occur in counties containing areas with air toxics concerns. Partial points may be awarded under this criterion based on the percentage of time that the project takes place in one of these counties. If a single application includes vehicles operating in more than one project location, this section of the workplan 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 vehicle-specific information included in the applicant fleet description in the CHDV Supplemental Application Template - EPA Form Number 5900-689.

1. **Community Engagement** (5 possible points)

In addition to the information included under 3.a and 3.b 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 engagement means seeking out and facilitating the involvement of people potentially affected by the project; informing them about the project; educating them about the benefits of the project to the surrounding community; giving them an opportunity to participate in the project, contribute, and provide feedback and providing fair compensation for their contributions; and enabling them to influence decisions about future projects that may affect their environment and/or health. Meaningful engagement is a process, not a single event.

**Section 5 – Project Readiness** (10 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

Planning early for long-term infrastructure needs is important for project success. Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applicants based on the extent to which they demonstrate coordination and consultation with their utility (for electric vehicle replacements) or hydrogen refueling provider (for hydrogen fuel cell vehicle replacements), as well as the extent to which they demonstrate coordination and consultation with any staff or entities that would need to approve the purchase and replacement of vehicles and infrastructure under this project (e.g., a school board).

For electric vehicle replacements, this must 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. Applicants must use the *Utility Partnership Template* provided in the Grants.gov application package. Applicants may also, if relevant, discuss the coordination or connection of their project to other programs or larger initiatives focused on transitioning fleets to electric vehicles, such as the National Zero Emission Freight Corridor Strategy.

For hydrogen fuel cell vehicle replacements, this should include, but is not limited to, demonstration of awareness and/or communication with the applicants’ anticipated refueling provider.

For School Bus Sub-Program projects, this must include, but is not limited to, documentation verifying the school board’s awareness of the CHDV grant application. Applicants must use the *School Board Awareness Certification Template* provided in the Grants.gov application package.

For Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program projects, applicants may choose to, but are not required to, modify the *School Board Awareness Certification Template* provided in the Grants.gov application package to demonstrate support from any State or municipal office that will need to approve the purchase and replacement of vehicles and infrastructure under this application, if selected.

**Section 6 – Project Sustainability** (5 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applicants based on the extent to which the project results and benefits are sustainable and the ability of the applicant and project partners to promote and continue efforts to reduce emissions from vehicles after EPA funding for this project has ended. Applicants demonstrating existing initiatives or firm commitments (e.g., existing idle reduction policies, established public points of contact and community engagement processes, an official agreement between a district and its contractor that the bus will serve the district for a minimum of five years regardless of when the contract ends, etc.) will score higher than those with only tentative initiatives or soft commitments (e.g., commitments without target dates, commitments that rely on third-parties – such as private bus contractors and/or utilities or refueling providers – without evidence of an agreement including a commitment from the third-party, etc.).

Examples of efforts to ensure benefits of the proposed project are sustainable and efforts to reduce emissions from vehicles after EPA funding for this project has ended include, but are not limited to:

* A detailed plan for operating and maintaining the ZE vehicles purchased under this program.
* 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, complete an up-to-date mobile source equipment inventory, or adopt other strategies to promote and continue efforts to reduce diesel emissions.
* For school bus projects, a commitment that the new buses will serve the district(s) listed in the application for a minimum of five years.
* For school bus projects, stakeholder-based programs to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution near schools by maximizing bus ridership and minimizing idling from cars in pick-up/drop-off lines.
* Consideration of upstream emissions and commitments to use less carbon-intensive energy or hydrogen to charge or refuel vehicles purchased under this program. For example, using solar- or wind-powered on-site power generation systems that power the vehicles.
* Consideration of broader community electric charging and hydrogen fueling needs, for example, making charging or fueling infrastructure publicly accessible.
* Established, or commitments to establishing before the end of the project period, a clear point of contact posted on a public platform (e.g., newsletter, website) for community issues and complaints (specific to air quality, new replacement vehicles, or other topics relevant to environmental health) and a publicly documented policy or process to engage communities and get their input on operations and projects that impact air quality. The process could be recent (within a year) or upcoming (before the end of the project period) meetings and/or a policy or process to otherwise get input (e.g., a standing, citizens advisory committee).
* A publicly available plan finalized after 2019 to reduce heavy-duty vehicle emissions that includes specific PM2.5 and/or NOx emission targets, or a commitment to completing one before the end of the project period.

**Section 7 – Climate Resilience** (5 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

Applicants should identify specifically how the grant-funded technologies (vehicles, infrastructure, etc.) will be protected from extreme weather and other climate-related events. The EPA will evaluate applications based on the quality and extent to which the project assesses and implements adaptation considerations described below 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. Projects can demonstrate consideration of climate change adaptation through measures taken to anticipate, prepare for, and avoid adverse impacts of climate change on the fleet or operations targeted by the application. For example, applicants can assess project vulnerability to climate impacts and then discuss how such vulnerability would be incorporated into project planning, design, and oversight, in areas such as infrastructure, siting decisions, vehicle garaging, and operations planning. Measures taken to avoid damages could include ensuring fleets and equipment are protected from impacts such as flooding, sea level rise, wildfire, heat, drought, and storm damage.

**Section 8 – Job Quality and Workforce Development** (10 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

Section 132 of the CAA will generate jobs related to the operation, installation, and maintenance of human-operated vehicles and infrastructure. To ensure these workers can effectively carry out the activities in the statute, and in alignment with [Executive Order 14082](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/09/16/2022-20210/implementation-of-the-energy-and-infrastructure-provisions-of-the-inflation-reduction-act-of-2022): *Implementation of the Energy and Infrastructure Provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022*, the EPA is committed to supporting the creation of high-quality, family-sustaining jobs, as applicable to fulfill the goals of the statute. Applicants are encouraged to review the eight [[Good Jobs Principles](https://www.dol.gov/general/good-jobs/principles)](https://www.dol.gov/general/good-jobs/principles) and [Good Jobs Toolkit](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OPA/GoodJobs/Toolkit/Good-Jobs-Toolkit.pdf) developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and Department of Commerce when developing their application.

Accordingly, the EPA will evaluate applicants and/or their project partners (i.e., contractors and sub-awardees) on their plan to successfully deploy ZE vehicles by assessing the project’s impact on the existing workforce and creating a plan for developing the necessary skilled workforce that considers the training needs of workers, emphasizes student and worker safety, and incorporates worker voice into transition planning. This includes the workers responsible for driving, maintaining, and repairing the buses, in addition to supporting personnel like bus monitors or local first responders. If an applicant does not yet know all of their project partners (e.g., private bus fleets, infrastructure installers, etc.), they may include information about how the following components will be addressed in their bidding process and contractual agreements.

Note that workforce development is an eligible use of program funds, and applicants may request funding, in addition to and separate from the per-vehicle amounts listed in Table 2, to be used to support workforce training as well as safety planning and protocol development as part of their proposal.

Applications will be evaluated on the following:

* **Workforce impact assessment:** The quality and extent to which the applicant has or will comprehensively assess the impact of the project on the existing workforce to understand how workers and their job duties might be impacted by the project. This should involve plans or policies to prevent the replacement or displacement of current workers as a result of the project.
* **Training workers on new equipment/infrastructure:** The extent to which applicants and/or their project partners have a robust plan for developing the necessary skilled workforce to install, operate, and maintain the proposed equipment/infrastructure. This could involve partnerships with equipment manufacturers, utilization of Registered Apprenticeship Programs, Joint Labor-Management Training Programs, partnerships with community colleges or technical schools, and other high-quality training models. Applicants should include details such as the workers that will be impacted, skills they will focus on, the number of hours of training, training partners, and other pertinent details.
* **Worker safety:** Applicants’ and/or their project partners’ plan(s) to keep workers safe on this project, including how workers will be prepared to operate the vehicles and equipment safely. Examples of information applicants may provide includes but is not limited to how workers will be trained on high-voltage equipment and other topics related to the equipment/infrastructure; describing how safety protocols will be updated considering new equipment/infrastructure; and new personal protective equipment that will be needed.
* **Worker and labor engagement:** The extent to which the applicant or their project partner(s) will engage with workers and/or their representatives to incorporate worker voice and feedback into the project. Examples include demonstrating how workers and/or their representatives will be involved in developing and overseeing safety/health plans, training plans, and other key elements of project implementation.

**Applicants may attach any letters of commitment from applicable labor and workforce development organizations they plan to collaborate with as optional attachments (does not contribute to the workplan 15-page limit).**

**Section 9 – Funding Beyond the Mandatory Cost Share** (5 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

Applicants should describe any additional resources, beyond those required under the mandatory cost share, from non-federal funding sources, that they have secured or plan to secure in order to implement the project. Applicants should also describe how these resources will support the project activities proposed within this application and/or to help achieve the broader program goals of reducing fleet emissions and transitioning the fleet to ZE operations.

Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality of the coordination with described complementary programs or initiatives (including any expected resources) with respect to supporting the proposed project activities or broader program goals, as well as the likelihood the initiatives will materialize during grant performance. Applicants demonstrating confirmed initiatives (e.g., voluntary cost share listed on the applicant’s SF-424 and SF-424A, grants already awarded, etc.) will score higher than those with only prospective initiatives (e.g., grant applications under consideration but not awarded).

Applicants are encouraged to include a description of the anticipated additional resources within the applicable attached Partnership Agreements and/or letters of commitment.

As a reminder, **voluntary cost sharing** is when an applicant voluntarily proposes to legally commit to provide costs or contributions to support the project beyond what is required by the mandatory cost share. Voluntary cost share is subject to the same requirements as the mandatory cost share discussed above. A recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget. If the proposed voluntary cost share does not materialize during the performance period of the grant or cooperative agreement, the EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by [2 CFR Part 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-200). **Leveraged resources** or “**leveraging**” is when an applicant proposes to provide additional resources to support or complement the proposed project which are above and beyond the EPA grant funds that they are requesting. Unlike funding awarded as part of this funding opportunity or voluntary cost shares, these resources do not need to be spent on eligible or allowable costs under the program. Please see Section III.B. for more information on the difference between voluntary cost share and leveraged resources. If applicants propose to leverage funds, the EPA expects them to secure the leveraged resources described in their applications. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during the performance period of the grant or cooperative agreement, the EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action authorized under [2 CFR Part 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-200).

**Section 10 - Budget** (20 possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

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 non-federal mandatory cost share, as well as any voluntary cost share, if applicable. 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).”

**Mandatory Cost Share:** Applications that include projects with mandatory cost share requirements must demonstrate on the SF-424 *Application for Federal Assistance*, on the SF-424A *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*, and in the project narrative how the applicant will be able to meet these minimum mandatory cost share requirements if they are selected for an award. **If the proposed cost share is to be provided by a named project partner, a letter of commitment must be attached to the application as described in Section III.B. and Section IV.B. of the NOFO.**

**Voluntary Cost Sharing:** Applicants should be aware that voluntary cost sharing is not required under this NOFO. However, applicants may propose to provide voluntary cost share. The EPA will evaluate applicants’ voluntary cost share above under Section 9, “Funding Beyond the Mandatory Cost Share.”

Applicants who propose to use a voluntary cost share mustinclude the costs or contributions for the voluntary cost share in the project budget on the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget detail described later in this section. **If a proposed cost share is to be provided by a named project partner, a letter of commitment must be attached to the application as described in Section III.B. and Section IV.B. the NOFO.**

**Leveraged Funding:** Applicants should be aware that leveraging funds is not required under this NOFO. However, applicants may propose to provide leveraged funding. The EPA will evaluate applicants’ leveraged funding commitments above under Section 9, “Funding Beyond the Mandatory Cost Share.”

If applicants propose to leverage funds, the EPA expects them to secure the leveraged resources described in their applications. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during the performance period of the grant or cooperative agreement, the EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action authorized under [2 CFR Part 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-200). **Please note, these resources should only be described in the applicant’s project narrative and should not be included in the project budget on the SF-424 or SF-424A.**

**a. Budget Detail** (10 possible points)

This criterion will evaluate the quality and extent to which the proposed budget provides a detailed breakout by funding type included in the proper budget category for each activity requesting funds. Applicants should consult [the 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. Project narrative pages in excess of the page limitation as well as additional budget documents, excluding the SF-424 and SF-424A forms, will not be reviewed. See 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 providing a voluntary cost share, the budget detail must clearly specify the amount of federal funding and the cost share amount for each category. 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](#_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; or (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 U.S., it must be specifically identified. All proposed foreign travel must be approved by the 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 agreements; 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](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/section-200.1), “Equipment.” The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project. 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 services, 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. [The 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. The 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 the EPA will accept proposed sole source contracts for goods and services (e.g., consulting) that are widely available in the commercial market. Refer to [the 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.
* **Construction - Anticipated costs for hiring general contractors and other contractors performing activities described in the DBE Rule’s definition of Construction will be categorized as “Construction.”**  Note, EPA’s Small and Disadvantaged Business (DBE) rule at [40 CFR 33.103](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/section-33.103) provides definitions for construction, services, and equipment costs for the purpose of categorizing costs on the SF-424A budget form. Anticipated costs for hiring general contractors and other contractors performing activities described in the DBE Rule’s definition of *Construction* will be categorized as “Construction.”Other construction-related anticipated costs may be categorized under “Construction,” “Contractual,” or “Equipment,” depending on whether the cost falls under the DBE Rule’s definition of *Construction*, *Services*, or *Equipment*. For example, anticipated costs for pre-construction architectural and engineering *Services* as defined in the DBE Rule will be categorized as “Contractual.”
* **Other – List each item in sufficient detail for the 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 a specified amount of funding for truck owners to purchase cleaner trucks); 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 vehicles and equipment 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. The “Other” category 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 of funding 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 [the 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 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 & Itemized Cost** | **Quantity** | **Cost [per unit]** | **EPA Funding**2 | **Cost Share**3 | **Total Project Cost** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Personnel** | | | | | |
| Project Manager (PM) @ $40/hr x 10 hrs/wk x 102 wks | 1 | $40,800 | $40,800 | $0 | $40,800 |
| Project Staff (PS) @ $30/hr x 40 hrs/wk x 102 wks | 2 | $122,400 | $244,800 | $0 | $244,800 |
| **TOTAL PERSONNEL** | | | $285,600 | $0 | **$285,600** |
| **Fringe Benefits** | | | | | |
| Full-time Employees @ 20% of Salary and Wages x Total Personnel | 1 | $66,560 | $66,560 | $0 | $66,560 |
| **TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS** | | | $66,560 | $0 | **$66,560** |
| **Travel** | | | | | |
| Mileage for PM: 25 miles/wk @ $.17/mi x 52 wks | 1 | $221 | $221 | $0 | $221 |
| Mileage for PS: 50 mi/wk @ $.17/mi x 52 wks | 2 | $442 | $884 | $0 | $884 |
| **TOTAL TRAVEL** | | | $1,105 | $0 | **$1,105** |
| **Equipment** | | | | | |
| Class 7 Electric School Buses @75% EPA Cost Share | 10 | $335,000 | $2,500,000 | $850,000 | $3,350,000 |
| DC Fast Charger (DCFC, 25 kW) (480 V) | 10 | $35,000 | $300,000 | $50,000 | $350,000 |
| *Vehicles and Infrastructure* | | | $2,800,000 | $900,000 | $3,700,000 |
| Electrical service equipment upgrades (distribution lines, transformers, etc.) | 1 | $50,000 | $0 | $50,000 | $50,000 |
| EVSE installation (trenching, re-paving, conduit, etc., engineering review and drawings, permitting) | 1 | $30,000 | $0 | $30,000 | $30,000 |
| *Construction Work and Equipment Upgrades* | | | $0 | $80,000 | $80,000 |
| Electrical Panel Maintenance | 1 | $3,500 | $0 | $3,500 | $3,500 |
| Maintenance support package (if not included in warranty) | 1 | $4,000 | $0 | $4,000 | $4,000 |
| Fleet management software/telematics | 1 | $1,000 | $0 | $1,000 | $1,000 |
| *Maintenance and Training* | | | $0 | $8,500 | $8,500 |
| **TOTAL EQUIPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE** | | | $2,800,000 | $988,500 | **$3,788,500** |
| **Supplies** | | | | | |
| Outreach Materials and Supplies | 1 | $2,500 | $0 | $2,500 | $2,500 |
| **TOTAL SUPPLIES** | | | $0 | $2,500 | **$2,500** |
| **Contractual** | | | | | |
| EVSE software subscription (annual) | 1 | $300 | $0 | $300 | $300 |
| **TOTAL CONTRACTUAL** | | | $0 | $300 | **$300** |
| **Other** | | | | | |
| Driver and technician training | 1 | $5,000 | $5,000 | $0 | $5,000 |
| **TOTAL OTHER** | | | $5,000 | $0 | **$5,000** |
| **Indirect Charges** | | | | | |
| (Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate = 20%) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Federal Indirect Cost Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs | 1 | $14,280 | $14,280 | $0 | $14,280 |
| **TOTAL INDIRECT** | | | $14,280 | $0 | **$14,280** |
| **TOTAL FUNDING** | | | **$3,172,545** | **$991,300** |  |
| **TOTAL PROJECT COST**4 |  | | | | **$4,163,845** |
| **TOTAL ADDITIONAL NON-COST SHARE LEVERAGED FUNDS**5 |  | | | | |

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.

3 This column should *only* include cost share commitments; do *not* include leveraged funds in this column. Leveraged funds should only be listed in the last row of this table. As a reminder, applicants who propose a cost share **must also include the costs or contributions for the cost share in the project budget on the SF-424 and SF-424A**. As a reminder, voluntary cost share is subject to the same requirements as the mandatory cost share. The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget. See Section III.B. for more information about cost shares.

4 Total Project Cost must be included on the SF-424 in Section 18.g and SF-424A in: cell 5(g) under Section A – Budget Summary; and column (5), Row k under Section B – Budget Categories.

5 Non-cost share leveraged funds is when an applicant proposes to provide additional resources to support or complement the proposed project which are above and beyond the EPA grant funds that they are requesting and any cost share (mandatory or voluntary) they are providing. **These non-cost share leveraged resources should *not* be included in the project budget on the SF-424 or SF-424A.**

**Note on Management Fees**: When formulating budgets for applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant’s cognizant federal audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with the EPA. The term “management fees or similar charges” refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges cannot be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the workplan.

**b. Expenditure of Awarded Funds** (5 possible points)

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** (5 possible points)

The 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. The applicant should 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 above in Section 10.a.

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 provide a voluntary cost share/match or leveraged resources as described in Section III.B. of the NOFO and Section 10 above, the budget narrative must include a detailed description of how the applicant will obtain the voluntary cost share and leveraged resources and how the voluntary cost share funding and leveraged resources will be used. **Proposed voluntary cost share included in the budget detail must also be included on the SF-424 and SF-424A. Leveraged resources should not be included in the SF-424 or SF-424A**.

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.B. of the NOFO; this information does not count towards the project narrative 15-page limit):

**Applicant Fleet Description (mandatory):** Applicants must provide a detailed applicant fleet description which describes the specific vehicles to be replaced and purchased under the proposed project. Applicants must use the CHDV Supplemental Application Template - EPA Form Number 5900-689 provided in the Grants.gov application package. The purpose of the applicant fleet description is to describe in detail the specific vehicles targeted for emissions reductions as well as installation of charging or fueling equipment to be implemented under the proposed project. Information provided in the applicant fleet description will be used to help determine project eligibility and for evaluation purposes, as described in Section 1.b., above.

**Documentation of Partnership with Utility (mandatory, if applicable):** Applicants that are applying for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure must provide documentation demonstrating engagement with their utility. Applicants must use the *Utility Partnership Template* provided in the Grants.gov application package. Information provided in the Utility Partnership documentation will be used for evaluation purposes, as described in Section 5, above. This document is not binding, meaning that applicants do not need to complete a full utility analysis. If applicants requesting electric vehicles are unable to complete the cost estimate, scope of utility upgrades, and/or time estimate on the required *Utility Partnership Template* by the application deadline, but have been able to

complete the rest of the template, including all signatures, a partially completed form may be submitted with the intent to complete the form by award notification, if selected.

**Documentation of School Board Awareness (mandatory, if applicable):** Applicants applying under the School Bus Sub-Program must upload documentation to verify the school board’s awareness of the CHDV grant application. Applicants must use the *School Board Awareness Certification Template* provided in the Grants.gov application package. This documentation must be signed by an authorized representative. An authorized representative may include, for example, the Superintendent or their representative, who could sign the form after notifying an appropriate person at the Board of the application for the potential new bus project. It is imperative that the school board is aware of the application and involved in the process of transitioning to a cleaner fleet. This early communication is meant to provide notice; it is not binding. The EPA fully expects that rebate awardees and their appropriate school board will have additional communications as needed as part of the award acceptance process. For example, in some districts, the school board is required to authorize the purchase of the buses and associated infrastructure projects. School Board authorization or approval is not needed at the time of application and this documentation.

**Documentation of Third-Party Approval (mandatory, if applicable):** For all applications in which the applicant is not the direct beneficiary of the vehicles funded under the project (e.g., a nonprofit school transportation association applying on behalf of a school district), the applicant must submit documentation certifying that the beneficiary(s) being served are aware of and approve of the third party’s application. The documentation also certifies that both parties have discussed the number of buses for replacement, the fuel type of the new

buses, and which party will own the new buses as listed in the application. Applicants must use the *Documentation of Third-Party Approval Template* provided in the Grants.gov application package. Documentation must be signed by an authorized representative of the beneficiary. An authorized representative is any individual who has the consent of the applicable organization to sign on its behalf. Such applicants will only be considered for funding for beneficiaries that have signed the approval certification.

**Intertribal Consortium Documentation (mandatory for Tribes applying as part of an Intertribal Consortium)**: Intertribal consortia are eligible to receive assistance under this program only if the consortium demonstrates that all members of the consortium meet the eligibility requirements for the program and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance by submitting to the EPA documentation of (1) the existence of the partnership between Indian Tribal governments, and (2) authorization of the consortium by all its members to apply for and receive the assistance (see [40 CFR 35.504](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/section-35.504)).

**Cost Share Commitment Letter(s) (mandatory, if applicable)**: If a proposed cost share is to be provided by a named project partner, a letter of commitment must be attached to the application as described in Section III.B. In the letter, project partners who are providing in-kind or monetary assistance must demonstrate their specific commitment to meet the proposed cost share or leveraged funds. 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 the EPA. These letters should be referenced under Section 9, “Additional Funding Beyond the Mandatory Cost Share,” and Section 10, “Budget,” of the workplan.

**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 3.c, “Staff Expertise,” 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**: 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. Applicants should clearly indicate how these letters are related to specific evaluation criteria in the narrative. 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 the EPA; letters submitted directly to the EPA will not be reviewed.