

**AGENCY:** ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

**TITLE:** Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grants

**ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE:** Request for Applications (RFA)

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:** EPA-R-OAR-CHDV-24-06

**ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER:** 66.049

#### IMPORTANT DATES

Wednesday, April 24, 2024	Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Opens
Tuesday, April 30, 2024	Information Session
Monday, July 8, 2024	Final Date to Submit Questions
Thursday, July 25, 2024	NOFO Closes – Application Deadline
November 2024	Anticipated Notification of Selection
December 2024	Anticipated Awards

Application packages must be submitted electronically to the EPA through Grants.gov ([www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)) no later than **Thursday, July 25, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)** in order to be considered for funding.

Applicants are encouraged to review the Questions and Answers document posted at the [Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Program webpage](#) for further clarification of this NOFO.

**NOTE:** If the applicant intends to name a contractor (including an individual consultant or equipment vendor) or a subrecipient as a project partner or otherwise in the application, the EPA recommends that the applicant carefully reviews, and complies with, the directions contained in the “Contracts and Subawards” clause that can be accessed under [Section I.F.](#) of this NOFO and at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). Refer to [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) and [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#) and supplemental Frequent Questions for additional guidance.

**Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200.**

Applicants are not required to identify subrecipients and/or contractors (including consultants) in their grant application. However, if an applicant does so, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient or contractor (including consultants) in the application the EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements as described in Section

IV.d. of EPA's Solicitation Clauses. **Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering, or other firms assisting applicants with the application solely based on the firm's role in preparing the application or based on an assertion that the individual or firm has "unique qualifications."**

The EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subrecipients and/or named contractor(s) during the application evaluation process unless the applicant provides documentation that it has complied with the EPA's competitive procurement requirements.

For additional guidance, applicants should review [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#), [EPA's Subaward Policy](#), and [EPA's Subaward Policy Frequent Questions](#). The EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive procurement contracting requirements in [2 CFR Parts 200](#) and [1500](#) as well as the EPA's rule on Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in EPA Programs in [40 CFR Part 33](#). **The Agency does not accept justifications for sole source contracts for services or products available in the commercial marketplace such as consulting, data analysis, or project management.**

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## I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### A. Background and Summary

To address harmful emissions from non-zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles, Section 60101 of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (or IRA) created Section 132 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) (42 U.S.C. 7431) and provided \$1 billion to fund the replacement of non-zero-emission (non-ZE) Class 6 or Class 7 heavy-duty vehicles (as defined in [40 CFR 1037.801](#)) with zero-emission (ZE) vehicles.

This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible entities to incentivize and accelerate the replacement of existing non-ZE Class 6 and 7 heavy-duty vehicles with ZE vehicles. The EPA anticipates awarding up to **\$932 million** in funds under this Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles (CHDV) Grants NOFO, subject to the availability of funds, the quantity and quality of applications received, support for communities overburdened by air pollution, applicability of different business models, and other applicable considerations described in this document. This funding to support ZE vehicles will benefit communities across the United States (U.S.), especially communities that are disproportionately burdened by air pollution and marginalized by underinvestment. These replacement vehicles will ensure cleaner air for the communities in which they operate. The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from these vehicle replacements will also help address the outsized role of the transportation sector in fueling the climate crisis. [Fast Facts on Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions can be found here.](#)

This NOFO includes two sub-programs: the **School Bus Sub-Program** and the **Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program**. The School Bus Sub-Program is for applicants replacing school buses; the Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program is for applicants replacing non-school bus Class 6/7 vehicles. The EPA is providing two separate competitions under this single NOFO to meet the needs of diverse potential recipients and encourage participation in the CHDV Grants.

Applications will be accepted from **States, municipalities, Indian Tribes, and nonprofit school transportation associations**. See [Section III.A.](#) for more information about eligible entities.

The EPA anticipates awarding approximately 70 percent of the total funding to projects under a School Bus Sub-Program and approximately 30 percent of the total funding to projects under the Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program. In addition, the EPA anticipates awarding at least 15 grants across both sub-programs to eligible applicants from Tribes and territories under a Tribal/territory set-aside. The actual number of projects awarded under the set-aside may differ from the estimated amounts for many reasons including the number of meritorious applications received, and other factors identified in this document. As required by the Section 132 of the CAA, at least \$400 million of the total funding for this program will be used to fund projects serving one or more communities in areas designated as in nonattainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The EPA sets NAAQS for six common air pollutants, including particulate matter (PM), photochemical oxidants (including ozone), carbon

monoxide, sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, and lead. Nonattainment areas are areas of the country that do not meet these national air quality standards. Please visit the [EPA Criteria Air Pollutants webpage](#) for more information about the NAAQS.

This CHDV Grants NOFO is a competitive grant program. This grant competition will require an application that will be scored based on the criteria included in [Section V.A.](#) of this NOFO. Through these criteria, the EPA will prioritize funding for projects that serve disadvantaged communities through prioritizing certain counties (see [Section I.C.](#) for the description of the counties that will be prioritized – including based in part on whether they contain one of more “disadvantaged communities”- under this competition).<sup>1</sup> Further priority for funding will be given to projects that include climate resilience, project sustainability, and workforce development activities.

<sup>1</sup>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 (whitehouse.gov), EPA will identify disadvantaged communities via the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, 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.

To support development and implementation of the CHDV Grants Program, the EPA utilized a variety of tools to engage with stakeholders, receive feedback, and transparently share information. In addition, the EPA has engaged with stakeholders to inform the development of an education outreach plan that explains to potential grant applicants how to apply, describes eligible technologies and their benefits, and shares information on best practices and lessons learned regarding planning for and deploying ZE vehicles. The EPA has also used feedback from previous similar funding opportunities, such as the Clean School Bus and Diesel Emission Reduction Act programs, to shape the CHDV Grants Program.

The CHDV Program intends to encourage applications by educating prospective applicants and stakeholders about the CHDV Program and the benefits of ZE vehicles. The CHDV Program will support underserved populations through meaningful and intentional outreach to increase the number of prospective applicants who would most benefit from reduced emissions through the replacement of eligible vehicles in their communities. The EPA plans to continue to empower, engage, and support ZE vehicle stakeholders and recipients throughout program implementation by equipping them with the information and data needed to develop outreach plans, amplify key messages, and collaborate with the other members of the ZE vehicle community beyond the EPA.

More information can be found on the [Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Program](#) webpage.

## **B. Program Goals and Objectives**

Across the nation, over three million Class 6 and Class 7 vehicles are currently in use<sup>2</sup>, spanning a wide variety of vehicle types and vocations, including, but not limited to, school buses, refuse haulers, and utility and delivery trucks. The majority of these vehicles are non-ZE vehicles powered by internal combustion engines (ICE) that pre-date recent EPA emission standards. These vehicles emit harmful pollutants like nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>), fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), and greenhouse gases. Because these engines can operate for 30 years or more, these older, higher-emitting engines are still powering the vehicles that travel the nation's roads and highways every day. In the U.S., the transportation sector is one of the largest contributors to anthropogenic greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions.<sup>3</sup> Despite comprising only 10% of vehicles on U.S. roads, medium- and heavy-duty vehicles account for 23% of greenhouse gas emissions, 34% of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, and 22% of PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions<sup>4</sup> for the entire transportation sector.<sup>5</sup> These emissions disproportionately impact communities where these vehicles operate, leading to pollution that is associated with respiratory and cardiovascular disease, among other serious health problems. Children, older adults, those with preexisting cardiopulmonary disease, and those of lower socioeconomic status are particularly vulnerable and are at a higher risk for these health impacts.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Federal Highway Administration. (2021-06). [Linking FHWA and NHTSA Vehicle Types and Deciphering Various Truck Weight Data Methodology for Linking Vehicle Types](#). Accessed 2/22/2024.

<sup>3</sup> [Fast Facts: U.S. Transportation Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)

<sup>4</sup> [U.S. EPA National Emission Inventories](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Union of Concerned Scientists, Cars, Trucks, Buses and Air Pollution](#)

<sup>6</sup> [U.S. EPA: Learn About How Mobile Source Pollution Affects Your Health](#)

The IRA provides funding to replace in-use, non-ZE heavy-duty vehicles with new ZE vehicles. The objective of the CHDV Grants program is to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, especially in nonattainment areas and areas with environmental justice concerns, by encouraging the sustainable deployment of ZE heavy-duty vehicles. Vehicle replacements funded under this program will result in cleaner air and improved health for the communities in which they operate, the children and other passengers on the vehicles, and the drivers and maintenance staff who work closely on these vehicles.

#### School Bus and Vocational Vehicles Sub-Programs

There are two separate sub-programs under which applicants may apply to this NOFO:

- (1) The **School Bus Sub-Program**: for applicants replacing Class 6-7 school buses.

Subject to the availability of funds, the quantity and quality of applications received, and other factors identified in this document considerations, the EPA anticipates awarding approximately 70 percent of the total funding to projects replacing school buses under this sub-program, under which only applications seeking to replace school buses will be considered. School Bus Sub-Program applicants must request a minimum of 10 zero-emission school buses.

(2) The **Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program**: for applicants replacing non-school bus Class 6 and Class 7 vehicle types.

Subject to the availability of funds, the quantity and quality of applications received, and other factors identified in this document, the EPA anticipates awarding approximately 30 percent of the total funding to projects replacing non-school bus Class 6/7 heavy-duty vehicles under this sub-program, under which only applications seeking to replace non-school bus Class 6/7 heavy-duty vehicles will be considered. Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program applicants must request a minimum of three zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles.

These two sub-programs will allow the EPA to meet the diverse needs of potential applicants. Applicants may only submit one School Bus Sub-Program application in total. Similarly, applicants may only submit one Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program application in total. Tribal and territory applicants are not subject to vehicle minimums.

#### Eligible Activities

Eligible activities under these sub-programs include:

- The replacement of existing ICE school buses and other Class 6 and Class 7 vehicles with ZE school buses and heavy-duty vehicles;
- Purchasing, installing, operating, and maintaining infrastructure needed to charge, fuel, or maintain ZE vehicles; and
- Workforce development and training to support the maintenance, charging, fueling, and operation of ZE vehicles.

Applicants must propose to replace eligible vehicles with comparable, eligible ZE vehicles. Existing vehicles must be disposed of (i.e., scrapped, sold, or donated) according to program guidelines. Applicants may own the vehicles to be replaced, or applicants may work with fleet owners to carry out the project. See [Section III.D.](#) for specific information on eligible and ineligible vehicles, activities, and costs.

#### Program Priorities

To encourage the deployment of ZE vehicles and infrastructure in the communities that are most impacted by emissions from heavy-duty vehicles, the EPA will prioritize funding for projects that serve disadvantaged communities (prioritization method at county level described in [Section IV.C.2.](#), [Section 4](#) and under [Section V.A., Criterion 4](#) below).

To encourage the sustainable deployment of ZE vehicles and infrastructure, the EPA will also prioritize funding for projects which address climate resilience, project sustainability, and workforce development. Accordingly, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates how the project assesses and implements adaptation considerations to help ensure that the project achieves its expected outcomes even as the climate changes. In addition, applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the project results and benefits are sustainable, and on the



extent to which the applicant and project partners will promote and continue efforts to reduce emissions from vehicles after EPA funding for this project has ended. Applications will also be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates: 1) a plan to prepare the workforce for the project, 2) policies and protections to prevent existing workers from being replaced or displaced because of the new vehicles and infrastructure, and 3) activities to incorporate worker voice into the project. See [Sections IV.C.](#) and [V.A.](#) for additional details on evaluation criteria.

### **C. Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities**

The EPA is committed to accelerating [environmental justice \(EJ\)](#) in communities overburdened by air pollution through this program. This program is a covered program under the Justice40 Initiative set forth in [Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#). The goal of the [Justice40 Initiative](#) is to ensure that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. The EPA is committed to meeting the objectives of the Justice40 Initiative.

Specifically, this program is seeking to prioritize projects that take place in or near and serve communities overburdened by air pollution, including those in designated PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone nonattainment areas for the EPA's NAAQS, and with high concentrations of diesel particulate matter (PM).

The EPA will evaluate applications on their benefits to disadvantaged communities experiencing poor air quality and the quality and extent of community engagement efforts, as defined in [Section IV.C.2., Section 4](#) and under [Section V.A., Criterion 4](#) of this NOFO.

Additional details on the contents of applications, including specifics on what should be included in the project narrative, are included in [Section IV.C.](#)

### **D. Environmental Results and Strategic Plan Information**

Pursuant to Section 6.a. of EPA Order 5700.7A1, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," the EPA must link proposed assistance agreements with the Agency's Strategic Plan. The EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see [EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements](#)). Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the Strategic Plan goals listed below.

- 1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan:** The activities to be funded under this announcement support the EPA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 1, "Tackle the Climate Crisis;" Objective 1.1, "Reduce

Emissions that Cause Climate Change.” Under this objective, “the EPA will cut pollution that causes climate change and increase the adaptive capacity of Tribes, states, territories, and communities.” All applications must be for projects that support the goals and objectives above. For more information see [EPA’s FY 2022 – FY 2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#).

- 2. Outputs:** The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Selected applicants will report on project outputs in progress reports and the final project report.

Expected outputs from the projects to be funded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Number and type of vehicles replaced
- Number of fleets that replaced one or more vehicles
- Number and type of electric vehicle charging infrastructure installed
- Number and type of hydrogen fueling infrastructure installed
- Workforce development plan created
- Number of drivers, electricians, and/or mechanics trained in operating and maintaining ZE heavy-duty vehicles and associated infrastructure

Other potential outputs may include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging affected communities with respect to the design and performance of the project
- Establishment of a clear point of contact in a public platform for community input and concerns
- A publicly documented policy or process for community input on projects, like the one proposed, that impact air quality, including the process for receiving input, as well as the process for sharing how that input was taken into consideration in the final project decisions
- Documentation of a commitment to continue to identify and address air quality issues in the affected community
- The project’s inclusion in a broader environmental or air quality plan
- The implementation of contract specifications requiring the use of cleaner vehicles
- The number of hours of ICE idling reduced
- Number of trainings provided to staff, drivers, mechanics, or other electric and/or hydrogen fuel cell vehicle service providers
- Documentation of support such as, but not limited to, sharing information, working with interested fleets, and addressing specific geographic needs
- Dissemination of project/technology information via listservs, websites, journals, and outreach events

Progress reports and a final report will also be required outputs, as specified in [Section VI.B.](#), “Reporting Requirement,” of this NOFO.

- 3. Outcomes:** The term “outcome” means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected outcomes from the projects to be funded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Improved ambient air quality in communities in which the vehicles operate
- Reduction of emitted greenhouse gas and criteria pollutants from replaced vehicles
- Expansion of the nation’s charging and refueling infrastructure for ZE vehicles
- Number of drivers, school children, and/or other passengers riding ZE vehicles rather than non-ZE vehicles, and therefore exposed to fewer exhaust emissions on their school commutes and/or routes
- Workforce training programs established for ZE vehicles and infrastructure
- 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

Other potential outcomes may include, but are not limited to:

- Increased community engagement on air pollution reduction projects and the transition to ZE vehicles
- Improved community health, such as reduced asthma rates
- Changes in driver behavior, such as efficiency of electric vehicle powertrain operations
- An increased understanding of the environmental or economic effectiveness of the implemented technology
- Increased public awareness of the project and its results
- Widespread adoption of ZE heavy-duty vehicles
- Increased availability of domestic manufacturing and workforce capacity to support the production, operation, and maintenance of ZE vehicles, engines, and other key components (e.g., batteries)

## **E. Statutory Authority**

The statutory authority for this action is Section 60101 of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, codified as Section 132 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. 7432, which authorizes the EPA to offer grant funding assistance for projects to replace Class 6 and Class 7 non-ZE vehicles with ZE vehicles.

## F. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to Sections III, IV, V, and VI, and/or awards made under this solicitation, can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These provisions are important for applying to this solicitation and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If the applicant is unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please contact the EPA point of contact listed in [Section VII](#) of this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

## II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

### A. Amount of Funding Available

The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is up to \$932 million. Funding is dependent upon the number of meritorious applications received and other applicable considerations described in this document.

### B. Number and Amount of Awards

The EPA anticipates awarding a total of approximately 40 to 160 grants and/or cooperative agreements under this announcement, ranging from \$500,000 to \$60 million per award.

As described in [Section I.A.](#) and per the statute, the EPA intends to award a minimum of \$400M for projects serving nonattainment areas.

As described in [Section I.B.](#), the EPA intends to award approximately 70 percent of the total funding to projects replacing school buses under the School Bus Sub-Program and approximately 30 percent of the total funding to projects replacing non-school bus Class 6/7 heavy-duty vehicles under the Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program. Additional detail about the number and amount of awards under each sub-program are provided below.

The EPA also anticipates awarding approximately the following amounts in each of the EPA's ten Regions, as listed in Table 1 below, to ensure geographic diversity of projects, subject to the availability of funds, the quantity and quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations described in this document.

Table 1. Total Anticipated Funding by Region

Region	Total Anticipated Funding per Region
1	\$ 50,000,000
2	\$ 92,000,000
3	\$ 83,000,000
4	\$ 90,000,000
5	\$ 100,000,000

6	\$ 117,000,000
7	\$ 64,000,000
8	\$ 67,000,000
9	\$ 218,000,000
10	\$ 51,000,000

Allocation is based on the percentage of the population that is living in PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone nonattainment areas that are attributable to the region, and the percentage of the total NO<sub>x</sub> and diesel PM emissions from mobile sources that are attributable to the region.

The actual award amounts and number of projects awarded under each of the sub-programs and in each Region may differ from the estimated amounts for many reasons, including the number of meritorious applications received and other applicable considerations described in this document. In addition, the EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number and amount of awards under each sub-program and in each Region, or to change the ratio of assistance agreements it awards among the sub-programs and Regions.

### **C. Funding Set-Asides**

#### Tribal and Territory Set-Aside

Subject to the availability of funds, the quantity and quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations, the EPA anticipates awarding at least 15 awards to eligible applicants from Tribes and territories.

The actual award amounts and number of projects awarded under this set-aside may differ from the estimated amounts for many reasons including the number of meritorious applications received, and other applicable considerations described in this document. In addition, the EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number and amount of awards under this set-aside.

Please note, grants awarded under this set-aside may also be considered and counted when determining award amounts and the number of projects awarded across sub-programs, Regional funding levels, and nonattainment funding as described above in [Section II.B.](#)

### **D. Partial Funding**

In appropriate circumstances, the EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If the EPA decides to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, thereby maintaining the integrity of the competition and selection process.

## **E. Additional Awards**

The EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this solicitation, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions. In addition, the EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this announcement or to make fewer awards than anticipated.

## **F. Period of Performance**

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation will be up to 24 months, however, initial project periods of up to 36 months will be allowed where justified by the activities, timeline, and milestones detailed in the workplan. The estimated project start date for awards is January 2025.

## **G. Funding Type**

It is anticipated that grants and cooperative agreements will be funded under this solicitation.

Successful applicant(s) will be issued a grant or cooperative agreement as appropriate. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. The EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the recipient's performance of the project. The EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. The anticipated substantial federal involvement for cooperative agreements under the CHDV Grants Program includes close monitoring of the recipient's performance, collaboration during the performance of the scope of work in accordance with [2 CFR §200.317](#) and [2 CFR §200.318](#), as appropriate, review of proposed procurements, reviewing qualifications of key personnel, and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. The EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

## **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

### **A. Eligible Entities**

Consistent with Assistance Listing No. 66.049 and [EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements \(EPA Order §5700.5A1\)](#), competition under this solicitation is available to:

1. States, including U.S. territories;
2. Municipalities, including public school districts;
3. Indian Tribes; and

#### 4. Nonprofit school transportation associations.

The term “Municipality” is defined as “a city, town, borough, county, parish, district, or other public body created by or pursuant to State law.” 42 U.S.C. §7602(f). This definition includes the governmental bodies (such as school districts) that make up municipal governments.

The term “Indian Tribe” means any Indian Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native Village, which is Federally recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians, as defined in section 302(r) of the Clean Air Act. The EPA has determined that based on the exclusion of Alaskan Native Corporations (ANCs) from this definition that ANCs are not eligible for direct grants from the EPA under this program. ANCs may, however, receive subawards from eligible CHDV grantees.

Intertribal consortia may be eligible applicants under [Section III.A.3](#) if they meet the following conditions. For the purposes of this NOFO, “intertribal consortium” is defined as a partnership between two or more eligible Tribal agencies as defined above, that is authorized by the governing bodies of those Tribes to apply for and receive assistance under this program. 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.

For entities applying as nonprofit school transportation associations, consistent with the definition of nonprofit organization at [2 CFR §200.1](#), the term nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purpose in the public interest and is not organized primarily for profit; and uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Note that [2 CFR §200.1](#) specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of nonprofit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status, such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or Tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that lobby are not eligible for EPA funding as provided in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C. 1611.

For-profit organizations are not eligible entities for this funding opportunity. Additionally, nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

## B. Cost Sharing

Applicants are subject to a mandatory cost share as described below under [Section III.B.1](#). The mandatory cost share for territory applicants (the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) and Tribal applicants will be waived, but territory and Tribal applicants are still subject to the combined vehicle and infrastructure per-vehicle cost caps described below under [Section III.B.1](#).

Applicants may choose to also commit to a voluntary cost share and/or leveraged resources, as described below under [Sections III.B.2](#) and [III.B.3](#). The EPA will award evaluation points for voluntary cost share and leveraged funding commitments, as described in [Section V.A](#). Any form of cost share, mandatory or voluntary, must be included in the budget detail portion of the project narrative, and the applicant must describe in the application how and when the applicant will obtain the cost share and how the cost share funding will be used.

Mandatory cost share and voluntary cost share contributions must be for eligible costs. Applicants may use their own funds or other sources for cost share if the standards of [2 CFR Part 200](#), as applicable, are met. **If the source of an applicant's proposed cost share is a named project partner, the applicant must provide a letter of commitment from the named project partner.** Note that even if a project partner provides a letter of commitment, it is the recipient who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the cost share is met.

### 1. Mandatory Cost Share

Projects are subject to the mandatory cost share and cap requirements on total project costs shown below in Table 2. In-kind administrative costs may count towards the applicant cost share, if it meets the requirements of [2 CFR 200.306](#). Non-federal funding may be used as the applicant's mandatory cost share.

Applicants *must* include the costs or contributions for cost share in the project budget on the SF-424 and SF-424A. The following applies to mandatory cost share:

- Cost share is subject to the applicable provisions of [2 CFR § 200.306](#), *Cost sharing or matching*.
- Cost share may only be met with eligible and allowable costs.
- For this program, the recipient may not use other sources of federal funds, including pass-through federal funds, to meet either the mandatory or voluntary cost share.

The recipient is legally obligated to meet any cost share that is included in the approved project budget. If the 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](#).

Specifically, the mandatory cost share funds must be indicated in at least one of the following blocks in Section 18, *Estimated Funding*, on the SF-424: b. Applicant; c. State; d. Local; or e.



Other. The mandatory cost shared funds must also be indicated on the SF-424A in Section A Column (f), Section B columns (2), (3) and/or (4), and Section C.

The EPA will fund the EPA cost share percentage of the new vehicle, up to the per-vehicle funding cap, as shown in the table below. The applicant is responsible for providing or securing the remaining costs. Note, the applicant cost share is waived for territory and Tribal applicants, but territory and Tribal applicants are still subject to the per-vehicle cost caps as shown in the table below. Per-vehicle caps include combined vehicle and infrastructure costs. Recipients have flexibility to determine the split between funding for the vehicle itself and the supporting infrastructure (see example below table). Note, the EPA will also cover project implementation costs, as defined in [Section III.D.5](#) of this NOFO. Project implementation costs are not included in or subject to the per-vehicle caps listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Mandatory Cost Share and Caps Per-Vehicle

Vehicle Type	Battery-Electric Vehicles (BEVs)		Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles	
	EPA Cost Share Percentage of New Vehicle Price	Per-Vehicle Funding Cap (Vehicle + Infrastructure)	EPA Cost Share Percentage of New Vehicle Price	Per-Vehicle Funding Cap (Vehicle + Infrastructure)
School Bus	75%	\$280,000*	N/A	N/A
Straight/Box Truck	65%	\$190,000	80%	\$400,000
Step Van		\$160,000		\$340,000
Septic Truck or Bucket Truck		\$330,000		\$670,000
Other Vocational Vehicle		\$355,000		\$720,000
Refuse Hauler	50%	\$260,000	70%	\$600,000
Street Sweeper		\$315,000		\$720,000
Transit Bus	33%	\$265,000	60%	\$780,000

\*ADA-compliant school buses are eligible for an additional \$20,000 per-vehicle funding cap (i.e., a total per-vehicle funding cap of \$300,000).

Funding Example: An applicant seeking to replace 15 refuse haulers with battery-electric refuse haulers may request funding up to \$3,900,000 (\$260,000 per refuse hauler x 15 refuse haulers) to purchase the new battery-electric refuse haulers and associated infrastructure. The EPA will fund up to, but not more than, 50% of the cost of the new refuse hauler. There is no similar cost share for infrastructure, but infrastructure costs are included in the per-vehicle funding cap. The applicant may also request funding, beyond the \$3,900,000, for project implementation costs, as defined in [Section III.D.5.](#) of this NOFO.

## **2. Voluntary Cost Sharing/Matching Funds**

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. The EPA will evaluate applicants' voluntary cost share as described in [Section V.A.](#) **Applicants who propose to use a voluntary cost share *must* include the costs or contributions for the voluntary cost share in the project budget on the SF-424 and SF-424A.**

The 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.](#)

## **3. Leveraged Resources**

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. The EPA will evaluate applicants' leveraged funding commitments as described in [Section V.A.](#) Examples of leveraged resources include, but are not limited to, public-private partnerships, grants from other entities, incentive vouchers, or the issuance of school bonds. Unlike funding awarded as part of this funding opportunity, these resources do not need to be spent on eligible or allowable costs under the program.

**Additionally, 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.**

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.](#)

## **C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria**

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in [Sections III.A., B., and C.](#), to be considered eligible. If necessary, the EPA may contact applicants to clarify threshold eligibility questions prior to making an eligibility determination. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration due to the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in [Section IV.](#) or else they will be rejected. However, as expressed in [Section IV.C.](#) with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the 15-page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application, as well as a readable file type (e.g., .docx, .pdf, .xlsx, .xls, .jpeg, or .png).
2. All applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in [Section IV.A.](#) of this announcement on or before the application submission deadline published in [Section IV.B.](#) of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in [Section IV.B.](#) of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely and properly submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in [Section IV.B.](#), which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to [cleanhdvehicles@epa.gov](mailto:cleanhdvehicles@epa.gov) prior to the deadline.

The EPA will only consider accepting applications outside of Grants.gov from applicants that are able to demonstrate that they are unable to submit through Grants.gov due to Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in [Section IV.](#)). Failure of an applicant to submit prior to the application submission deadline date because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of Grants.gov. **NOTE: Registering in SAM.gov or Grants.gov can take a month or more. Applicants are advised to begin their registration process early so it does not interfere with drafting the application near the deadline.**

3. Applications must support Goal 1, “Tackle the Climate Crisis;” Objective 1.1, “Reduce Emissions that Cause Climate Change” of the EPA’s Strategic Plan described in [Section I.D.](#)
4. Applicants seeking to replace school buses must apply under the School Bus Sub-Program and cannot include non-school bus vehicles on their School Bus Sub-Program application. Applicants seeking to replace other, non-school bus eligible Class 6/7 vehicles must apply under the Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program. If an applicant seeks to

replace both school buses and non-school bus eligible Class 6/7 vehicles, they must submit two separate applications, one under each Sub-Program.

5. School Bus Sub-Program applicants must request a minimum of 10 zero-emission school buses. Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program applicants must request a minimum of three zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles. Tribal and territory applicants are not subject to vehicle minimums.
6. Applicants must indicate which sub-program they are applying to in the project narrative. Note, the project narrative template in [Section IV.C.](#) includes a space for this in the cover page table. If sub-program is not indicated, the EPA will determine the application's sub-program categorization by the vehicle type requested.
7. Applicants may only submit one School Bus Sub-Program application in total. Similarly, applicants may only submit one Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program application in total. If an applicant submits more applications than what is listed for unique projects, the EPA will contact the applicant to determine which application(s) to withdraw. If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, the EPA will review the last version submitted and will disregard prior versions.
8. Applicants must identify one EPA Region for their application, based on the proposed project's location. The term "project location" as used in this NOFO refers to the area(s) where the affected vehicles or engines operate. A [map showing the boundaries of the EPA Regions](#) can be found on the EPA website. The applicant should use this map to determine which Region the project will be located in. For long-distance fleets, the applicant must decide which Region best covers the geographic project location and provide justification as to why that Region was selected – whether it is the Region where the fleet is based, the Region where the fleet operates the majority of the time, or other factors that would justify an award in that region. For applicants that do not identify an EPA Region, the EPA will contact the applicant to clarify what Region to consider the application in.
9. **Ineligible Activities, Vehicles, and Costs:** If an application includes any ineligible tasks or activities as defined in [Section III.D.](#) below, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

#### **D. Eligible Activities, Vehicles, and Costs**

Activities, vehicles, and costs must meet the following requirements to be eligible for funding.

1. **Eligible Activities:** The principal purpose of this NOFO is to provide funding to eligible recipients for the replacement of eligible existing internal combustion engines (ICE) vehicles with eligible ZE vehicles. Eligible costs include:

- a. The replacement of eligible existing ICE Class 6 and Class 7 vehicles, as described below, with eligible ZE vehicles, as described below;
  - b. Purchasing, installing, operating, and maintaining infrastructure needed to charge, fuel, or maintain the new ZE vehicles; and
  - c. Workforce development and training to support the maintenance, charging, fueling, and operation of ZE vehicles.
- 2. Eligible Existing Vehicles:** To be eligible for funding, all existing vehicles to be replaced must meet the criteria defined below. Please note, participating fleet owners will have to attest that existing vehicles meet the criteria below in a signed eligibility and scrappage statement. The signed eligibility and scrappage statement is not required at the time of application, but will be required as part of the reporting requirements during the project period. All existing vehicles to be replaced must:
- a. Be a Class 6 or Class 7 heavy-duty vehicle with Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) between 19,501 lbs to 33,000 lbs.
  - b. Be fully operational at the time of application submission. An operational vehicle should be able to start, move, and have all necessary parts to be operational.
  - c. Meet the following model year requirements:
    - i. Be an engine model year (EMY) 2010 or older diesel-powered vehicle that will be scrapped per the instructions under “Fleet Expansion” later in this section ([Section III.D.6.k.](#)); or
    - ii. If a participating fleet does not possess an eligible EMY 2010 or older diesel-powered vehicle, then the existing vehicle to be replaced must:
      - a) Be a EMY 2010 or older non-diesel ICE-powered vehicle that will be scrapped per the instructions under “Fleet Expansion” later in this section; or
      - b) Be a EMY 2011 or newer diesel or non-diesel ICE-powered vehicle that will be scrapped per the instructions under “Fleet Expansion” later in this section, sold, donated; or
      - c) For fleets that move older vehicles to “reduced service,” if a EMY 2011 or newer diesel or non-diesel ICE-powered vehicle is being replaced, that vehicle may be retained and moved to reduced service and an older, reduced-service EMY 2010 or older vehicle of the same type may be scrapped in its place (or, if no model year 2010 or older vehicles are available, a reduced-service EMY 2011 or newer vehicle may be scrapped, sold, or donated) per the instructions under “Fleet Expansion” later in this section. The EMY 2011 or newer vehicle must meet the relevant usage requirements described below, but the older reduced-service vehicle being scrapped does not. Under this scenario, a detailed scrappage plan must be submitted and requires prior EPA approval.
  - d. Additional **School Bus Sub-Program** existing vehicle requirements: All existing vehicles to be replaced through the School Bus Sub-Program must:
    - i. Be a Class 6 or Class 7 school bus. A “school bus” is defined as a passenger motor vehicle designed to carry a driver and more than 10 passengers, that the Secretary of Transportation decides is likely to be used significantly to transport



- f. Not be manufactured or retrofitted with, or otherwise have installed, a power unit or other technology that creates air pollution within the vehicle, such as an unvented diesel passenger heater.
  - i. Externally vented, fuel-operated passenger heaters are allowed; however, data<sup>7</sup> shows that the emissions from auxiliary heaters are still harmful. The EPA strongly encourages applicants to consider alternative cold weather mitigation strategies (e.g., insulation of cabin and/or batteries, electric heat pumps, cabin, and battery preconditioning)<sup>8</sup> until other viable alternatives become available.

<sup>7</sup> Karjalainen et al. [Atmosphere](#). 2021,12, 1105.

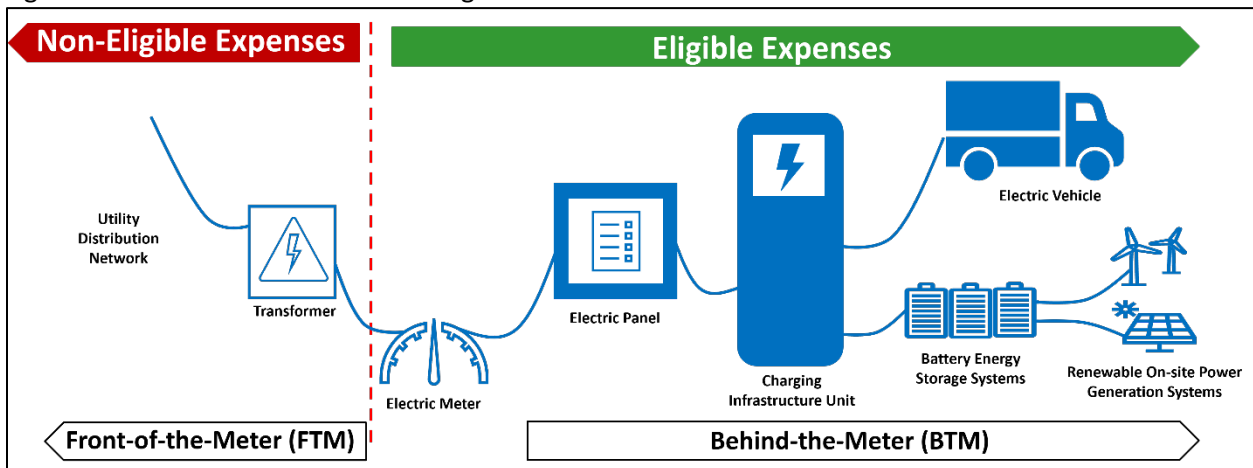
<sup>8</sup> [Cold Weather Considerations for Electric School Buses](#)

- g. Be certified to conform with all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS). Per the Clean Air Act, before entering commerce, all vehicles must receive an EPA certificate of conformity and/or a California Air Resources Board (CARB) Executive Order to applicable emissions standards. Vehicles funded under the CHDV Program must be certified to conform with all applicable FMVSS for the funded fuel type of the new vehicle after the final stage of manufacturing. All requirements for new replacement buses may be verified upon audit throughout the project period.
  - h. Be maintained, operated, insured, registered, and charged/fueled according to manufacturer recommendations and state requirements.
  - i. Not be purchased or otherwise subsidized with other federal grant funds. The total of funds from the CHDV grant and other eligible external funds allocated for the vehicle replacements cannot exceed the cost of the new vehicles. Vehicles funded under this program may be eligible for applicable IRA credits, namely, the Commercial Clean Vehicle Credit provides up to \$40,000 for qualified commercial clean vehicles and the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Refueling Property Credit provides up to \$100,000 for qualified charging and refueling infrastructure. Please see the [Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\) website](#) for more information.
  - j. Additional **Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program** replacement vehicle requirements:
    - i. The replacement vehicle must be similar in form and function to the vehicle being replaced. The cost of optional components or “add-ons” that significantly increase the cost of the vehicle may not be eligible for funding under the grant.
4. **Eligible Infrastructure:** Applications may also request funding for eligible charging or fueling infrastructure and installations. Applicants should review the Build, America Buy America requirements for infrastructure in [Section VI.C.](#) of this NOFO. Eligible project costs include the following:
- a. Electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) infrastructure for the new electric vehicles. Eligible infrastructure is limited to installations and upgrades behind the electric meter (See Figure 1 below). This can include, but is not limited to, charging equipment (such as alternating current (AC) Level 2 charging equipment, direct-current (DC) fast charging equipment, or vehicle-to-grid (V2G) enabled equipment);

design and engineering; installation costs such as trenching, wiring and electrical upgrades, labor, and permitting; and related intelligent equipment and software designed to monitor vehicle and infrastructure performance (such as telematics or charge management software). Funding under this NOFO cannot be used for: utility-owned power distribution; transformers located on the utility side of the meter and their installation; electricity; operation and maintenance to utility systems; or non-renewable (i.e., non-wind and non-solar) stationary on-site power generation systems (e.g., generators) and their installation.

- i. Note: All AC Level 2 charging infrastructure purchased under this program must be [EPA ENERGY STAR certified](#) at the time of purchase. The EPA strongly recommends that all other charging infrastructure funded under this program be listed by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL). The EPA also strongly encourages recipients to consider long-term fleet electrical needs when installing charging equipment. Installing additional electrical capacity on the customer side of the meter to support future charging needs (e.g., purchasing and running additional electrical conduit during trenching and wiring upgrades) is an allowable use of funds.
- ii. All electricians installing, operating, or maintaining EVSE are required to be certified from the [Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program](#) (EVITP), or another program approved by the EPA in consultation with the Department of Labor and Department of Transportation. For projects requiring more than one electrician, at least one electrician must meet the requirements above. Recipients should request and maintain proof of EVITP certification from their electricians for purposes of project audits.

Figure 1. Electric Infrastructure Funding Restrictions



- b. Fueling infrastructure for new hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, including, but not limited to, storage tanks, liquid and gaseous pumps and vaporizers, compressors, heat exchangers, chillers, piping and pipelines within the relevant facility, and high-pressure dispensers (including hose, nozzles, and meters) needed to fuel the new hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles funded under the project.



- c. Battery energy storage systems (BESS) associated with new electric vehicles funded in the program, as well as solar- or wind-powered on-site power generation systems that power the vehicles. To be eligible, these systems must be on the customer's side of the electrical meter.
5. **Eligible Costs:** Applicants are encouraged to review [RAIN-2019-G02, "Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance"](#) for further guidance on determining if a cost is eligible. Applicants may request EPA funding for the following costs:
- a. **Vehicle Costs:** Eligible project costs include the cost of the replacement vehicle subject to the cost share and cap limitations listed in [Section III.B.1.](#) and the limitations under "Eligible Replacement Vehicles," above.
  - b. **Infrastructure Costs:** Eligible project costs include EVSE infrastructure for the new electric vehicles and fueling infrastructure for new hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, subject to the cost cap limitations listed in [Section III.B.1.](#) and the limitations under "Eligible Infrastructure," above.
  - c. **Project Implementation Costs:** Costs directly related to the implementation, management, and oversight of the project, including recipient and subrecipient personnel and benefits, eligible equipment, contractual services, consulting on vehicle deployments, travel, supplies, subgrants and rebates to project partners, and indirect costs. These costs are not included in or subject to the per-vehicle funding cost share and caps listed in [Section III.B.1.](#)
  - d. **Delivery Costs:** Eligible project costs include costs associated with delivering the new replacement vehicle to the project location. Applicants are encouraged to work with their EPA Regional Office to identify any potential approaches for maximizing efficiencies of scale when shipping vehicles (e.g., coordinating with other recipients to ship buses at the same time) and are encouraged to take delivery costs into account in their procurement process.
  - e. **Performance-Monitoring Software & Equipment:** Eligible project costs include intelligent equipment and software designed to monitor vehicle and infrastructure performance (such as telematics or charge management software).
  - f. **Workforce Training and Warranty Costs:** Eligible project costs include driver/mechanic training related to the maintenance and operation of new technologies, and vehicle warranties. Eligible costs also include training to certify licensed electricians to install EVSE, such as certification through the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP). All of these project costs must be clearly identified with line-item expenses included in [Section 10](#) of the submitted application.
6. **Ineligible Costs.** No funds awarded under this NOFO shall be used for ineligible vehicles, technologies, or activities as described in this section. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding. Applicants are encouraged to review [RAIN-](#)

[2019-G02, “Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance”](#) for further guidance on determining if a cost is eligible.

- a. **Federal Matching Funds:** Funding under this NOFO cannot be included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federally financed grant, as required under [2 CFR §200.306\(b\)\(5\)](#) and [2 §CFR 200.403\(f\)](#). This includes funds received under the EPA’s Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) State Grants Program and federal Supplemental Environmental Project funds.
- b. **Federal Financed Grants:** Applications cannot include any costs that are included as a cost of any other federally financed grant, as required under [2 CFR §200.403\(f\)](#). If these costs are included in an application, the activities associated with these costs will not be reviewed or selected for funding.
- c. **Stacking Funds:** Vehicles and infrastructure purchased with CHDV funding may not be purchased or otherwise subsidized with other federal grant funds. This restriction does not limit the application of IRS-disbursed tax credits, such as the Commercial Clean Vehicle Credit or the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Refueling Property Credit, on CHDV-funded ZE vehicles and associated infrastructure. The total of funds from the CHDV Grant Program and other eligible external funds allocated for the vehicle replacements cannot exceed the cost of the new vehicles.
- d. **Infrastructure Work in Front of the Electric Meter:** EPA funds must not be used for any infrastructure costs associated with work in front of the electric meter (see Figure 1 above). For example, EPA funds may not be used for utility-owned power distribution; transformers located on the utility side of the meter and their installation; electricity; operation and maintenance of utility systems.
- e. **Non-Renewable On-Site Power Generation Systems:** Funding under this NOFO may not be used for non-renewable (i.e., non-wind and non-solar) energy- or biodiesel-fueled stationary on-site power generation systems (e.g., generators) and their installation.
- f. **Demonstration or Commercialization:** Funding under this NOFO cannot fund research and development, technology demonstration, commercialization, certification, or verification.
- g. **Expenses Incurred Prior to the Project Period:** Funding under this NOFO cannot be used to cover expenses incurred prior to the project period set forth in any assistance agreement funded under this NOFO, except for eligible pre-award costs as defined in [2 CFR §200.458](#) and as authorized by [2 CFR §200.309](#) and [2 CFR §1500.8](#).
- h. **Emissions Testing:** Funding under this NOFO cannot be used for emissions testing and/or air monitoring activities (including the acquisition cost of emissions testing equipment).
- i. **Leasing:** Funding under this NOFO cannot be used to lease vehicles or equipment. If financing is necessary, the purchase should be financed with a conventional purchase loan.
- j. **Engine Replacements/Repowers:** Funding under this NOFO is only for newly manufactured, complete vehicles and cannot be used for repowers.

- i. Vehicles which have been converted to a battery-electric drivetrain after the first retail sale are not eligible for funding.
  - ii. The conversion of a vehicle to a battery-electric drivetrain is not an eligible cost or activity.
- k. Fleet Expansion/Disposition Requirements:** Funding under this NOFO cannot be used for the purchase of vehicles to expand a fleet. The vehicle being replaced must be scrapped, sold, or donated by the end of the project period. Note, disposition options may be limited by the engine model year of the existing vehicle (see [Section III.D.2.c.](#), above). Participating fleet owners must attest to the appropriate disposal in a signed eligibility and scrappage statement, as described in [Section VI.B.](#)

Note, if scrapped, the vehicle being replaced should be permanently disabled within the grant period of performance by:

- a) Cutting a three-inch-by-three-inch hole in the engine block (the part of the engine containing the cylinders) and cutting or crushing one chassis rail between the axles is the preferred scrapping method. Other acceptable scrapping methods may be considered and will require prior EPA approval. Recipients seeking approval for alternative scrapping methods must submit an alternative scrapping plan to the EPA project officer detailing how the method will destroy and/or disable the engine and must, if approved, comply with the evidence requirements listed below, including digital photos.
- b) Disabling the chassis should be completed by cutting through the frame/frame rails on each side at a point located between the front and rear axles. Other acceptable scrapping methods may be considered and will require prior written approval from the EPA project officer. Vehicle components that are not part of the engine or chassis may be salvaged from the unit being replaced (e.g., plow blades, shovels, seats, tires, etc.). If disabled engines, disabled vehicles, or parts are to be sold, program income requirements apply.

#### **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

##### **A. How to Register to Apply for Grants under this Competition**

**Note: The registration process can take a month or more. We advise you to start the process as soon as possible so that it does not overlap or interfere with finalizing your application.**

Applicants should visit [How to Register to Apply for Grants](#) for additional information. All EPA grant applications must be submitted online, except in limited circumstances. Organizations must be registered in two government systems to apply for EPA grants:

1. The System for Award Management (SAM.gov) registers organizations to conduct business with the U.S. Government, which includes federal grants.
2. Grants.gov is the official system for managing all federal grant applications.

These two systems share information. Together, they provide access to everything needed to identify federal grant opportunities and to complete the online application process.

Note that individuals can access both systems through a single user account set up in Login.gov. Creating a Login.gov account is easy. If you do not have a Login.gov account, you will be prompted to create one when you register with SAM.gov or Grants.gov. [Learn more about Login.gov.](#)

If you have done business with the federal government previously, you can and should check your entity status using your government issued Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to determine if your registration is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active. Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current e-Business (EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality. If the point of contact has changed, you may need to contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your SAM.gov account: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm ET.

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates your organization’s legal business name and address. Please review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document for additional details.

Follow these steps to register to apply for EPA grants. **Start the registration process early.** The process can take a month or more. Errors or inconsistencies in registration in the two systems can prolong the process. Applicants are encouraged to start the registration process **before you begin your application.**

### **Step 1. Register Your Organization in SAM.gov**

Organizations must register with SAM.gov to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), which is a 12-character alphanumeric identifier assigned to each unique organization. There is no fee for registering with SAM.gov and registration must be renewed annually.

Registration in SAM.gov requires providing assertions, representations and certifications, and other information so that the federal government can verify the existence and uniqueness of the organization. Follow these steps to get started:

1. Go to the [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) page. Review the “Before You Get Started” section and download the Entity Registration Checklist to help prepare.
2. Click the “Get Started” button when you are ready. You may be prompted to accept the usage terms and sign in through Login.gov. If necessary, click the “Get Started” button again after you sign in.

3. You will be prompted to choose what you want to do. Most grant applicants will select the option to “Register for Financial Assistance Awards Only.”
4. Select the appropriate option and click the Next button.
5. Proceed through the registration process by answering the questions and providing the necessary information.

Organizations will need to designate an E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC). The EBiz POC is likely to be your organization’s chief financial officer or authorizing official. There can be only one EBiz POC for each unique organization. The EBiz POC will:

- Manage the SAM.gov account and login.
- Set up the Grants.gov profile for the organization (see Step 2 below).
- Oversee all activities for the organization within Grants.gov.
- Assign all roles in Grants.gov for individuals from the organization who will be involved in applying for grants, including the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), Expanded AOR roles, Workspace Manager, and Custom roles (see Step 3 below).

Note that the EBiz POC does not submit grant proposals for the organization. Proposals are submitted by the Authorized Organization Representative in Grants.gov. After the information submitted through the registration process is authenticated, the EBiz POC will receive an email from SAM.gov indicating that the registration is active.

Contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your SAM.gov account, to resolve technical issues or chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm ET.

Once your SAM.gov account is active, you must register in Grants.gov. Grants.gov will electronically receive your organization information, such as EBiz POC email address and UEI.

## **Step 2. Create a User Account and Applicant Profile in Grants.gov**

After obtaining a UEI, an organization must create an applicant profile in Grants.gov.

The EBiz POC will set up the applicant profile in 2 steps:

1. Create a user account in Grants.gov with the same email address used by the EBiz POC in SAM.gov. The email address is used to match the EBiz POC from SAM.gov to Grants.gov.
2. Create the applicant profile in Grants.gov using the UEI obtained from SAM.gov.

Grants.gov registration is FREE. If you have never applied for a federal grant before, please review the [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](#) instructions. As part of the Grants.gov registration process, the EBiz point of contact is the only person that can affiliate and assign applicant roles to members of an organization. In addition, at least one person must be assigned as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only person(s) with the AOR role can submit applications in Grants.gov. Please review the [Intro to Grants.gov-Understanding User Roles](#) and [Learning Workspace – User Roles and Workspace Actions](#) for details on this

important process. Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

Contact [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) to resolve technical issues with Grants.gov. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. The Grants.gov Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

### **Step 3. Create Individual Grants.gov Accounts for Organization Members**

There is no fee for registering with Grants.gov. Each member of the organization who will participate in the online grant application process needs to register an individual account on Grants.gov.

1. Go to the [Grants.gov registration](#) page.
2. Complete the form, which includes specifying a username and password. This username and password is used to create the Grants.gov account. You will be prompted to link the Grants.gov account to your Login.gov account.
3. Associate your individual account with the organization's UEI. You will also enter the organization's Profile Name and your Job Title.

The organization's EBiz POC can delegate administrative roles to other Grants.gov users associated with the UEI, as necessary. Learn more about [managing roles in Grants.gov](#)

### **Step 4. Learn How to Use Workspace in Grants.gov**

Workspace is the application in Grants.gov that an organization's grant team uses when applying for federal grants. Workspace is a role-based tool, in which the user's assigned role controls permissions to perform specific actions, such as accessing and editing application forms. As noted in Step 3 above, the EBiz POC has the initial responsibility to assign roles to individuals.

The core roles include:

- Expanded AOR: has the most privileges.
- Standard AOR: allows user to submit the final application and perform other actions.
- Workspace Manager: the minimum role required to create a workspace and begin work on an application.

Custom roles can also be created. Becoming familiar with Grants.gov Workspace roles and understanding the process will help applicants be better prepared to submit applications. The videos [on this page](#) are just two of many Grants.gov training resources to help applicants get started.

If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined in [Exceptions to the Grants.gov Submission Requirement](#) website. Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods.

## **B. Application Process**

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to [Grants.gov](#) and click the “Search Grants” tab. Search the opportunity number associated with this opportunity – EPA-R-OAR-CHDV-24-06. Once the opportunity has been selected, click the red “Apply” button at the top of the view grant opportunity page.

The electronic submission of your application to this funding opportunity must be made by an official representative of your organization who has been registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and is authorized by your organization to sign applications for federal financial assistance. If the submit button is grayed out, it may be because you do not have the appropriate role to submit in your organization. Contact your organization’s EBiz point of contact or contact [Grants.gov](#) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application, specifically on the SF-424. Additionally, the UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. Please note that successful submission of your application through Grants.gov does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award. Any application submitted after the application’s time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and not be considered.

### **Technical Issues with Submission**

If applicants experience technical issues during the submission of an application that they are unable to resolve, follow these procedures **before** the application deadline date:

- a. Contact Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
- b. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
- c. Send an email with “EPA-R-OAR-CHDV-24-06” in the subject line to [cleanhdvehicles@epa.gov](mailto:cleanhdvehicles@epa.gov) **before** the application deadline time and date. The email **must** include the following:
  - i. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
  - ii. Description of the issue
  - iii. The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, the EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and will **not** be considered.

Please note that successful submission through Grants.gov or email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

The EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of Grants.gov on a case-by-case basis. The EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through Grants.gov due to [Grants.gov](#) or relevant [SAM.gov](#) system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit prior to the application submission deadline date because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is **not** an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of Grants.gov.

### **Application Materials**

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement.

#### **Mandatory Documents:**

- Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*. Please note that the organizational Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) must be included on the SF-424. Applicants are advised to begin the SAM.gov registration process early so they have an active UEI prior to beginning this step. Otherwise, progress can be delayed on other parts of the application. See [Section IV.A.](#) for information on SAM.gov registration.
- Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*
- EPA Form 4700-4, *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report*
- EPA Form 5700-54, *Key Contacts Form*
- Project Narrative Attachment Form, *Project Narrative* – Prepared as described in [Section IV.C.](#) below. Format: PDF or Word.  
Filename: Project Narrative\_*ApplicantName*.pdf or .docx.
- Use the “*Other Attachments*” form on Grants.gov for the following mandatory documents:
  - Applicant Fleet Description (Use the CHDV Supplemental Application Template - EPA Form Number 5900-689). Format: Excel.  
Filename: Fleet Description\_*ApplicantName*.xlsx.
  - *If applicable*: Documentation of Partnership with Utility. Format: PDF or Word.  
Filename: Utility Partnership\_*ApplicantName*.pdf or .docx.
  - *If applicable*: Documentation of School Board Awareness. Format: PDF or Word.  
Filename: School Board Awareness\_*ApplicantName*.pdf or .docx.
  - *If applicable*: Documentation of Third-Party Approval. Format: PDF or Word.  
Filename: Third Party Approval\_*ApplicantName*.pdf or .docx.



- *If applicable*: Intertribal Consortium documentation that meets requirements of [40 CFR 35.504](#) (mandatory only for Tribes applying as part of an Intertribal Consortium, as described in [Section III.A.](#)) Format: PDF or Word.  
Filename: Intertribal Consortium Doc\_*ApplicantName*.pdf or .docx.
- *If applicable*: Cost Share Commitment Letters, as described in [Section III.B.](#)  
Format: PDF or Word.  
Filename: *EntityName*\_Cost Share LOC\_*ApplicantName*.pdf or .docx.

#### Optional Attachment Documents

Use the “*Other Attachments*” form identified under the Mandatory Documents tab to submit the following, as applicable:

- Project Team Biographies. Format: PDF or Word. Example filename: *LastName\_Bio\_ApplicantName*.pdf or .docx.
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. Format: PDF or Word. Filename: *Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate\_ApplicantName*.pdf or.docx.
- Partnership Letter(s). Format: PDF or Word. Filename: *EntityName\_PL\_ApplicantName*.pdf or .docx.

Accepted file types for application documents include .docx, .pdf, .xlsx, .xls, .jpeg, and .png. When saving application files, please ensure that the following characters are **not** included in the file names: ~ “ # % & \* : < > ? / \ { | }. Including these characters can cause problems with application files. Please try to name files in a way that concisely indicates their contents.

Applications submitted through [Grants.gov](#) will be time and date stamped electronically. If you wish to confirm receipt of your application from the EPA (not from [Grants.gov](#)), please contact the agency contact in [Section VII.](#) within 30 days of the close of this solicitation.

Your organization’s authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete application electronically to the EPA through [Grants.gov](#) no later than **Thursday, July 25, 2024, 11:59 PM ET.**

### **C. Project Narrative Instructions, Format, and Content**

**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, EJSSCREEN 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.

**(1) Cover Page:**

- a. The cover page should include the following information:

<b>Project Title</b>	<i>[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]</i>				
<b>Applicant Information</b>	<i>[Please fill in the following information.]</i> Applicant Name: Address (Street, City, State, Zip): UEI Number: Point of Contact Name: Point of Contact Office Phone Number: Point of Contact Email Address:				
<b>Sub-Program</b>	<i>[Using the requirements outlined in <a href="#">Section III.C.</a> of this NOFO, the applicant should indicate the sub-program under which they are applying.]</i> <input type="checkbox"/> School Bus Sub-Program <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational Vehicles Sub-Program				
<b>Entity Eligibility</b>	<i>[Using the criteria outlined under <a href="#">Section III.A.</a> of this NOFO, please indicate entity type below with an X to confirm eligibility.]</i> <input type="checkbox"/> State, including U.S. territory <input type="checkbox"/> Public School District <input type="checkbox"/> Other Municipality <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit school transportation association <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Tribe or Intertribal Consortium				
<b>Budget Summary</b>	<i>Use the definitions provided in <a href="#">Section 10.</a> Budget Detail to fill out this budget summary. The amounts listed in this summary should match the amounts listed in the budget table in <a href="#">Section 10.</a> As noted in <a href="#">Section II.B.</a> of the NOFO the total amount of requested funding needs to be commensurate with the applicant's proposed activities.</i>				
	EPA Funding Requested <b>[A]</b>	Mandatory Cost Share <b>[B]</b>	Voluntary Cost Share <b>[C]</b>	Total Project Cost <b>[A+B+C]</b>	Leveraged Costs <b>[E]</b>

	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Project Location(s)</b>	<i>[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.]</i>				
<b>Poor Air Quality</b>	<i>[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).]</i>				
<b>Project Period</b>	<i>[Please provide the proposed beginning date for the project.]</i> Project Start Date:		<i>[Please provide the proposed end date for the project. The Project Period is expected to last approximately 2 to 3 years.]</i> Project End Date:		
<b>Short Project Description</b>	<i>[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.]</i>				

- b. 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](#) 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.			

**(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** (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)

**a. 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)\***

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Anticipated Outputs</b>	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b>
<i>Replacement of [XX] existing ICE school buses with ZE buses</i>	<i>Number of replaced ICE school bus vehicles</i>	<i>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</i>
	<i>Number of school districts that replaced one or more school bus vehicles</i>	<i>Number of school children transported on ZE buses rather than diesel buses</i>
	<i>Number and type of electric vehicle charging infrastructure installed</i>	<i>Benefits to the communities affected by the project, including improvements to human health</i>

Activities	Anticipated Outputs	Anticipated Outcomes
		<i>and the environment, the local economy, social conditions, and the welfare of residents in such communities</i>
<i>Training provided to staff, bus drivers, mechanics, or other electric vehicle service providers (include EVSE service providers)</i>	<i>Number of training hours provided to staff, bus drivers, mechanics, or other electric vehicle service providers</i>	<i>Improved workforce training programs for zero-emission vehicles and charging infrastructure, and increased worker confidence operating and maintaining ZE vehicles and EVSE</i>
<i>Community engagement activities to ensure meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project</i>	<i>Number and type of community engagement activities undertaken in affected communities.</i>	<i>Increased public awareness of CHDV project and results, and an increased understanding of the environmental or economic effectiveness of the implemented technology</i>

\* Please refer to [Section I.D.](#) for additional examples of expected and potential outputs and outcomes.

**b. 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?

**c. 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.

**c. 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, the counties that will be prioritized are those counties meeting **both** of the following criteria:

1. **Any county that includes at least one of the following:**
  - A. Any census tract that is identified as disadvantaged in the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST) version 1.0; and/or
  - B. Any census block group that is at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for any of [EJScreen’s Supplemental Indexes](#) when compared to the nation or state; and/or
  - C. Any geographic area within Tribal lands as included in [EJScreen](#).

**AND**



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

- A. 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](#):
- PM<sub>2.5</sub> 1997 Standard (Annual: 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, 24-hour: 65 µg/m<sup>3</sup>)
  - PM<sub>2.5</sub> 2006 Standard (Annual: 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, 24-hour: 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup>)
  - PM<sub>2.5</sub> 2012 Standard (Annual: 12 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, 24-hour: 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup>)
  - Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) 2008 Standard (8-hour: 0.075ppm)
  - Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) 2015 Standard (8-hour: 0.070ppm)
- B. Contains at least one census tract where the modeled ambient diesel PM concentration from the [2019 Air Toxics Screening Assessment](#) is above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile (0.38 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for 2019) for census tracts nationwide. The 80<sup>th</sup> 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](#) is a screening tool and there are limitations and uncertainties associated with it; see: [AirToxScreen Limitations](#).

Counties that qualify in whole or in part under one or more of the criteria listed above are identified on the EPA's CHDV Disadvantaged Community County List, found on the [CHDV Webpage](#).<sup>9</sup> 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)?

<sup>9</sup> 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](#)). 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](#), 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)

**a. 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 PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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](#).

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 in the CHDV Supplemental Application Template - EPA Form Number 5900-689.

**b. 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 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 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 EPA [CHDV Program Website](#).

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).

**c. 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 of the 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 PM<sub>2.5</sub> and/or NO<sub>x</sub> 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: 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 and Good Jobs Toolkit](#) 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](#). **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](#).

**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.”](#)

**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 must include 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](#). **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](#).

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](#) for more information on participant support costs and [RAIN-2018-G05, "EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs."](#)

- **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](#), “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](#) 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](#) 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](#) 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.”](#)

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](#) 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.”](#)

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

Line Item & Itemized Cost	Quantity	Cost [per unit]	EPA Funding <sup>10</sup>	Cost Share <sup>11</sup>	Total Project Cost
<b>Personnel</b>					
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
<b>TOTAL PERSONNEL</b>			\$285,600	\$0	<b>\$285,600</b>
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>					
Full-time Employees @ 20% of Salary and Wages x Total Personnel	1	\$66,560	\$66,560	\$0	\$66,560
<b>TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS</b>			\$66,560	\$0	<b>\$66,560</b>
<b>Travel</b>					
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
<b>TOTAL TRAVEL</b>			\$1,105	\$0	<b>\$1,105</b>
<b>Equipment</b>					
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
<i>Vehicles and Infrastructure</i>			\$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

Line Item & Itemized Cost	Quantity	Cost [per unit]	EPA Funding <sup>10</sup>	Cost Share <sup>11</sup>	Total Project Cost
<i>Construction Work and Equipment Upgrades</i>			\$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
<i>Maintenance and Training</i>			\$0	\$8,500	\$8,500
<b>TOTAL EQUIPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE</b>			\$2,800,000	\$988,500	<b>\$3,788,500</b>
<b>Supplies</b>					
Outreach Materials and Supplies	1	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,500	\$2,500
<b>TOTAL SUPPLIES</b>			\$0	\$2,500	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Contractual</b>					
EVSE software subscription (annual)	1	\$300	\$0	\$300	\$300
<b>TOTAL CONTRACTUAL</b>			\$0	\$300	<b>\$300</b>
<b>Other</b>					
Driver and technician training	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL OTHER</b>			\$5,000	\$0	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>Indirect Charges</b>					
(Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate = 20%)					
Federal Indirect Cost Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs	1	\$14,280	\$14,280	\$0	\$14,280
<b>TOTAL INDIRECT</b>			\$14,280	\$0	<b>\$14,280</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>			<b>\$3,172,545</b>	<b>\$991,300</b>	
<b><u>TOTAL PROJECT COST</u><sup>12</sup></b>					<b>\$4,163,845</b>
<b>TOTAL ADDITIONAL NON-COST SHARE LEVERAGED FUNDS<sup>13</sup></b>					

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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, contractual 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 A](#) for 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](#)).

**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.

#### D. Releasing Copies of Applications

In concert with the EPA’s commitment to conducting business in an open and transparent manner, copies of applications submitted under this NOFO may be made publicly available on the CHDV website or other public website for a period of time after the selections are announced. Additionally, applications submitted under this NOFO may be released in part or in whole in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. The EPA recommends that applications not include trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is confidential or privileged, or sensitive information that, if disclosed, would invade another individual’s personal privacy (e.g., an individual’s salary, personal email addresses, etc.). However, if such information is included, it will be treated in accordance with [40 CFR §2.203](#). Review the EPA clause IV.a., Confidential Business Information, under [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

The applicant should clearly indicate which portion(s) of the application they are claiming as confidential, privileged, or sensitive information, or state ‘n/a’ or ‘not applicable’ if the application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information. As provided at [40 CFR §2.203\(b\)](#), if no claim of confidential treatment accompanies the information when it is received by the EPA, it may be made available to the public by the EPA without further notice to the submitter.

#### V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

Only eligible entities whose application(s) meet the threshold criteria in [Section III.C.](#) of this NOFO will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative, following the content requirements set forth in [Section IV](#).** Each application will be rated using a point system. Applications will be evaluated based on a total of 130 possible points.

##### A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>1. <u>Project Summary and Approach:</u></b>	
<b>a. Overall Project (10 Points)</b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applications based on the extent and quality of the applicant’s project summary and overall approach. Specifically, the EPA will evaluate the cohesiveness of the applicant’s project approach	<b>20</b>

Criteria	Points
<p>described throughout the application and how the overall strategy fits together to meet the goals and objectives of the CHDV program as described in <a href="#">Section I.D.</a></p> <p><b>b. Applicant Fleet Description (10 Points)</b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applications based on the degree to which detailed information is provided within the applicant fleet description in CHDV Supplemental Application Template - EPA Form Number 5900-689, including how consistent the information provided within the applicant fleet description is with the information presented in the project narrative.</p>	
<p><b>2. Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes and Performance</b>  <b>Measures:</b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate:</p> <p><b>a. Expected Project Outputs and Outcomes (10 points)</b> The extent and quality to which the applicant identifies and proposes outputs and outcomes, as described in <a href="#">Section I.D.2.</a> and <a href="#">3.</a></p> <p><b>b. Performance Measures and Plan (5 points)</b> The quality of the proposed performance measures and effectiveness of the applicant’s plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in <a href="#">Section I.D.</a> of this announcement.</p> <p><b>c. Timeline and Milestones (5 points)</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>
<p><b>3. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:</b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applicants based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:</p> <p><b>a. Past Performance (5 points)</b> Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in <a href="#">Section IV.C.</a> of the announcement.</p> <p><b>b. Reporting Requirements (5 points)</b> History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in <a href="#">Section IV.C.</a> of the announcement, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not.</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>

Criteria	Points
<p><b>c. Staff Expertise (5 points)</b> Organizational experience, including staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under items a. and b. of this criterion, the EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, the applicant should indicate this in the application, and they will receive a neutral score for sub-criteria a. and b. A neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points. If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, they may receive a score of 0 for these sub-criteria.</p>	
<p><b>4. Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities:</b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applications based on the extent to which:</p> <p><b>a. Prioritized Counties Containing Disadvantaged Communities: Nonattainment Areas (10 points)</b> Projects are located in and serve counties that meet the criteria, including:</p> <p>(1) at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) any census tract that is identified as disadvantaged in the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) version 1.0; and/or</li> <li>(B) any census block group that is at or above the 90th percentile for any of EJScreen’s Supplemental Indexes when compared to the nation or state; and/or</li> <li>(C) any geographic area within Tribal lands as included in EJScreen;</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <p>(2) containing ozone or PM<sub>2.5</sub> <u>nonattainment or maintenance areas</u>, as described in <a href="#">Section IV.C.2, Section 4.</a> Projects that take place in and serve counties that contain severe or extreme nonattainment areas will receive more points than projects that do not. Partial points may be awarded for this criterion depending on how much of the project occurs in the priority areas.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>

Criteria	Points
<p><b>b. Prioritized Counties Containing Disadvantaged Communities: Areas with Air Toxics Concerns (5 points)</b> Projects are located in and serve counties that meet the criteria, including:</p> <p>(1) at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) any census tract that is identified as disadvantaged in the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) version 1.0; and/or</li> <li>(B) any census block group that is at or above the 90th percentile for any of EJScreen’s Supplemental Indexes when compared to the nation or state; and/or</li> <li>(C) any geographic area within Tribal lands as included in EJScreen;</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <p>(2) of containing areas with <u>air toxics concerns</u>, as described in <a href="#">Section IV.C.2, Section 4</a>. Partial points may be awarded for this criterion depending on how much of the project occurs in the priority areas.</p> <p><b>c. <u>Community Engagement</u> (5 points)</b> The extent to which the project addresses engagement with these affected communities and/or populations (see a., above), especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project.</p>	
<p><b>5. <u>Project Readiness</u>:</b> 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).</p>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>6. <u>Project Sustainability</u>:</b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applications based on the extent to which the project results and benefits are sustainable and can be continued after project completion.</p>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>7. <u>Climate Resilience</u>:</b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applications based on the quality and extent to which the project assesses and implements climate change adaptation measures to help protect grant-funded investments from climate impacts, including extreme weather events, wildfire, heat, and drought, and ensure that the project achieves its expected outcomes even as the climate changes.</p>	<b>5</b>

Criteria	Points
<p><b>8. <u>Job Quality and Workforce Development:</u></b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate the application on the quality and extent to which the project will develop a workforce impact assessment, prepare their workforce to operate and maintain the vehicles and infrastructure, prioritize worker safety, and incorporate worker engagement into project implementation.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>
<p><b>9. <u>Funding Beyond the Mandatory Cost Share:</u></b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applications based on any additional resources, beyond those required under the mandatory cost share, from non-federal funding sources, that the applicant has secured or plans to secure in order to implement the project.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><b>10. <u>Budget:</u></b> Under this criterion, the EPA will evaluate applicants based on the extent and quality to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. <u>Budget Detail (10 points)</u></b> The proposed budget provides a detailed breakout by funding type in the proper budget category for each activity the applicant is requesting funding.</li> <li><b>b. <u>Expenditure of Awarded Funds (5 points)</u></b> The applicant’s approach, procedures, and controls will ensure that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner; and</li> <li><b>c. <u>Reasonableness of Costs (5 points)</u></b> The proposed costs are reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>20</b></p>

**B. Review and Selection Process**

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in [Section III.C.](#) of this NOFO and the technical factors listed in [Section III.D.](#) of this NOFO. Only those applications which meet all the threshold and technical factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by an EPA review panel. Each eligible application will be given a numerical score and rank ordered by the review panel. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the EPA selection official based on these reviews and rankings.

Final funding decisions will be made by the EPA selection official for each sub-program based on the rankings, the statutory requirement to award \$400 million to nonattainment projects, the geographic distribution and Tribal and territories set-aside as described in [Section II.C.](#), and other factors as described below in [Section V.C.](#)

**C. Other Factors**

In making the final funding decisions, the EPA selection official may also consider the number and size of awards, the quantity and quality of applications received, environmental benefits, support for communities with air quality and other challenges, the diversity of business models, and other Agency and programmatic priorities. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA award official.

#### **D. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates**

The EPA anticipates it will announce selection decisions in November 2024 and tentatively plans to issue awards by December 2024.

### **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

#### **A. Award Notices**

The EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic mail by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application, or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA Regional Grants Management Offices or the EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of the EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., workplan), which must be approved by the EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

#### **B. Reporting Requirement**

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. Quarterly reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities for the next 6 months, and a summary of expenditures are required. The final report shall be submitted to the EPA within 120 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final report must include a summary of the project or activity, benefits achieved, and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final report shall discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational, or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of quarterly reports will be established by the EPA after the grants are awarded. Award recipients may be provided with

additional information and guidance on reporting performance measures and project progress after award.

Additionally, applicants will be required to submit a combined eligibility and scrappage statement. A sample combined eligibility scrappage statement will be available at the [Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles webpage](#). The eligibility and scrappage statement will include the list below. Additional guidance will be provided in a Scrappage Guidance Document that will be available at the [Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles webpage](#):

- Vehicle owner’s name and address;
- Vehicle make, vehicle model, engine model year (EMY), vehicle identification number (VIN), odometer reading or usage meter reading, engine make, engine model, engine model year, engine horsepower, engine ID or serial number, as applicable;
- Name, address, and signature of dismantler or new vehicle owner;
- Date engine and/or vehicle/equipment was scrapped, sold, or donated;
- Statement attesting to disposition of vehicle/engine as defined above;
- Signature of applicant and bus owner, if different;
- For scrapped vehicles, digital photos or video that document the following:
  - Side profile of the vehicle, prior to disabling;
  - VIN tag;
  - Engine label (showing serial number, engine family number, and engine model year);
  - Engine block, prior to hole;
  - Engine block, after hole;
  - Cut frame rails or other cut structural components, as applicable;
  - Images of each pieces of new/replacement equipment, engine, or vehicle (front and side); and
  - Others, as needed.

### **C. Buy America Requirements**

Certain projects under this competition are subject to the Buy America Sourcing requirements under the Build America, Buy America (BABA) provisions of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\)](#) (P.L. 117-58, §§70911-70917) when using funds for the purchase of goods, products, and materials on any form of construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. The Buy America preference requirement applies to all of the iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used for the infrastructure project under an award for identified the [EPA’s financial assistance funding programs](#).

These sourcing requirements require that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in Federally funded infrastructure projects must be produced in the United States. The recipient must implement these requirements in its procurements, and this



article must flow down to all subawards and contracts at any tier. For legal definitions and sourcing requirements, the recipient must consult the [EPA's Build America, Buy America website](#).

Please consider this information when preparing budget information. EPA has and will continue to provide further guidance on which projects are subject to BABA provisions and will work with grantees to support implementation as necessary.

When supported by rationale provided in IJA §70914, the recipient may submit a waiver to the EPA. The recipient should request guidance on the submission instructions of an EPA waiver request from the EPA Project Officer. A list of approved EPA waivers is available on the [Build America, Buy America website](#).

In addition to BABA requirements, all procurements under grants may be subject to the domestic preference provisions of [2 CFR §200.322](#).

See "Build America, Buy America" clause in the [EPA's Solicitation Clauses](#).

#### **D. Prevailing Wage Requirements**

As required by Section 314 of the Clean Air Act, grants for construction activities will be subject to prevailing wage requirements as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor under the Davis-Bacon Related Acts (42 USC §7614) authority. The EPA will provide terms and conditions on Davis-Bacon compliance requirements in agreements that fund *Construction* as that term is defined in [40 CFR 33.103](#).

#### **E. Job Quality in the Clean School Bus Market**

The clean school bus market is growing rapidly in response to demand for cleaner vehicles. It is important to the EPA that workers manufacturing clean school buses for school districts across the country have high-quality jobs with family-sustaining wages and benefits, safe working conditions, and the free and fair choice to join a union. To promote transparency in the clean school bus industry, the EPA surveyed manufacturers about their job quality and workforce development practices and published the responses on the Clean School Bus website under "[Bus Manufacturer Job Quality and Workforce Development Practices](#)." Applicants are encouraged to refer to the webpage when selecting buses to purchase. Responses to this questionnaire are added to the page on a rolling basis, and EPA will engage manufacturers on updating their responses to address any developments since their initial responses.

### **VII. CONTACT INFORMATION**

For further information, applicants should email written questions to [cleanhdvehicles@epa.gov](mailto:cleanhdvehicles@epa.gov). The EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants

regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about any of the language or provisions in the announcement through the email listed above. Those questions and answers will be compiled in a Questions and Answers document which will be posted to the EPA program website and updated regularly. The deadline for submitting questions via email is Monday July 8, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. (ET). The final posting of the Questions and Answers document will be Friday, July 19, 2024.

Please note, information regarding this NOFO obtained from sources other than the Agency Contact may not be accurate.

## **APPENDIX A – Further Information Regarding Contracts, Subawards, and Participant Support Costs**

### **I. Background**

The Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) includes a separate row for “contractual” costs and “other” costs. As noted in [Section 10](#) under Section IV.C., the “other” cost category on the SF-424A should be used to cover both subawards and participant support costs. Depending on the project, these costs may be applicable to a CHDV application. This appendix helps clarify these differences. Additional information about participant support costs is contained in [RAIN-2018-G05, “EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs.”](#)

If a recipient intends to fund the proposed project’s technologies (i.e., vehicles, engines, and/or equipment) that they do not directly own, such as vehicle fleets, the recipient may have the option to: (1) issue a contract; (2) make a subaward to an eligible entity; or (3) provide participant support costs to a program beneficiary. For options (2) and (3), the recipient may be able to fund technology and installation costs, but only subawards can be used to fund direct and indirect costs. If the grant recipient only intends to fund equipment and installation costs, the recipient may choose to provide participant support costs to a program beneficiary rather than a subaward.

### **II. Contracts**

As described in [2 CFR §200.331](#), a contract is for the purpose of obtaining goods and services for the recipient’s own use and creates a procurement relationship with the contractor. Characteristics indicative of a procurement relationship between the recipient and a contractor are when the contractor:

- Provides the goods and services within normal business operations;
- Provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers;
- Normally operates in a competitive environment;
- Provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operation of the federal program; and
- Is not subject to compliance requirements of the federal program as a result of the agreement, though similar requirements may apply for other reasons.

Grant recipients that enter into procurement contracts, must comply with the applicable procurement provisions in [2 CFR §200.317](#) through [200.327](#).

As noted on pages 1-2 of this NOFO, if the applicant intends to name a contractor (including an individual consultant or equipment vendor) or a subrecipient as a project partner or otherwise in their application, the EPA recommends that they carefully review, and comply with, the directions contained in the “Contracts and Subawards” clause that can be accessed under [Section I.F.](#) of this NOFO and at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). The applicant should refer to [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance](#)

[Agreements](#) and [EPA's Subaward Policy](#) and supplemental Frequent Questions for additional guidance. Applicants must demonstrate that named contractors (including individual consultants and equipment vendors) were selected in compliance with the competitive requirements of the Procurement Standards in [2 CFR Part 200](#) as interpreted in the EPA guidance and/or that named subrecipients meet the eligibility requirements in the EPA's Subaward Policy for the EPA to consider their qualifications and role in the proposed project.

### **III. Subawards**

See [Grants Policy Issuance 16-01: EPA Subaward Policy for EPA Assistance Agreement Recipients](#). Under [2 CFR §200.1](#), subrecipient means a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a grantee to carry out part of a federal program but does not include program beneficiaries receiving participant support costs; see [Section IV](#) of this appendix below. Grant recipients may make subawards to subrecipients to carry out a portion of the grant project; in such case, the grant recipient is also known as a "pass-through entity." Subawards establish a financial assistance relationship under which the subrecipient's employees and contractors implement programs and projects to accomplish the goals and objectives of the grant. It is important to bear in mind that subrecipients are subject to the same federal requirements as the pass-through entity.

Under this competition, a non-federal entity is eligible to receive a subaward even if it is not eligible to receive a grant from the EPA directly. While there may be some situations in which a subaward to an individual may be appropriate, those situations are rare.

Subrecipients only receive reimbursement for their actual direct or approved indirect costs and do not "profit" from the transaction. For-profit entities participating in grant activities are typically contractors rather than subrecipients.

The EPA's Award Official must approve subawards to for-profit entities and individuals on the basis of either a precise description of the subaward in the EPA approved budget and project narrative, or on a transaction-by-transaction basis.

The applicant's project narrative and budget narrative should include detailed descriptions of any proposed subawards and include cost estimates for subawards as line items under the "Other" budget category in the SF-424A; see [Section 10](#) in Section IV.C. Should a recipient decide to make a subaward that was not described in the approved project narrative and budget, the recipient must obtain prior written approval from the EPA's Award Official for the subaward.

If a recipient chooses to pass funds from its grant to other entities through subawards, the recipient must comply with applicable subaward provisions of [2 CFR Part 200](#), the EPA Subaward Policy, and EPA's National Term and Condition for Subawards. Note that under [2 CFR](#)

[§200.331](#) through [200.333](#), there are extensive requirements for subrecipient monitoring and management that apply to pass-through entities.

Many of the federal administrative grant regulations in [2 CFR Part 200](#) and [2 CFR Part 1500](#), as well as the grant terms and conditions in the assistance agreement, “flow down” to subrecipients receiving a subaward. Such requirements need to be identified in the written subaward agreement between the recipient and the subrecipient. Additionally, if a subrecipient intends to procure goods or services using CHDV program funds, the subrecipient must comply with the applicable federal procurement standards in [2 CFR Part 200](#), [2 CFR Part 1500](#), and [40 CFR Part 33](#) as these requirements also “flow down” to subrecipients.

There is no requirement for recipients to compete subawards under this NOFO; however, pass-through entities may choose to select subrecipients competitively provided this practice is consistent with applicable statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of their CHDV program grant.

Recipients may use the subaward template contained in Appendix D of the EPA’s Subaward Policy to assist them in complying with the “subaward content” requirements; however, the EPA does not mandate the use of this template.

#### **IV. Participant Support Costs**

Recipients may provide participant support costs (PSCs) to program beneficiaries to enable beneficiaries to participate in the recipient’s program or project. PSCs include rebates, subsidies, stipends, or other payments to program beneficiaries by a grantee, subrecipient, or contractor. For example, PSCs might be used for the purchase of eligible vehicles and equipment. Program beneficiaries, rather than the grant recipient, would own the new technology.

PSCs differ from subawards in that the beneficiary is participating in the grant recipient’s project or program instead of implementing their own project or program. Program beneficiaries may include but are not limited to individual vehicle owner/operators, private or public fleet owners, or residents in the applicable area; however, program beneficiaries are not employees, contractors or subrecipients of the grant recipient.

Recipients may also use PSCs to make purchases on behalf of program beneficiaries. In some situations, this approach allows grant recipients to achieve economies of scale and/or take advantage of existing purchase contracts. Competitive procurement requirements apply to the grant recipient when the recipient takes this approach.

The federal administrative grant regulations in [2 CFR Part 200](#) and [2 CFR Part 1500](#), as well as the grant terms and conditions in the recipient’s grant agreement, generally do not “flow down” to program beneficiaries receiving PSCs except that costs must be reasonable and incurred within the grant project period. Requirements for compliance with civil rights laws and

ensuring that program beneficiaries are eligible to receive federal financial assistance are applicable as explained in [EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs](#). In addition, program beneficiaries must abide by requirements to ensure that the funds are used only for authorized purposes.

If a grant recipient, subrecipient, or contractor is issuing PSCs, it must have a written agreement in place. The written agreement should not be structured as a subaward agreement and should not refer to program beneficiaries as subrecipients consistent with [2 CFR §200.1](#), “Subrecipient.” In addition, the written agreement should not include language requiring the program beneficiary to comply with the federal grant regulations at [2 CFR Part 200](#), [2 CFR Part 1500](#), or the terms and conditions found in the award between the EPA and the recipient, other than requiring that the costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable. The written agreement should also include the following:

- A description of the activities and amounts that will be supported by the PSCs;
- The program and/or statutory requirements that the program beneficiary must abide by in order to ensure that the funds are used only for authorized purposes;
- Specify which party will have title to the technologies (e.g., vehicles, engines, and/or equipment), if any, purchased with PSCs;
- Source documentation requirements to ensure proper accounting of the PSCs; and
- Any reporting that must be submitted by the program beneficiary.

The EPA’s Award Official must approve PSCs on the basis of either a precise description of the PSCs in the EPA approved budget and work plan, or on a transaction-by-transaction basis. The applicant’s project narrative and budget narrative should include detailed descriptions of any proposed PSCs and include cost estimates for PSCs as line items under the “Other” budget category. Should a recipient decide to issue PSCs that were not described in the approved work plan and budget, the recipient must obtain prior written approval from the EPA’s Award Official. Moreover, after a grant is awarded, should a recipient decide to modify the amount approved (upwards or downwards) for PSCs, prior written approval from the EPA’s Award Official is also required.

When creating budgets, applicants/recipients must exclude PSCs from Modified Total Direct Costs for calculation of indirect costs as required by [2 CFR §200.1](#), “Modified Total Direct Costs.”

**Resources:**

[RAIN-2018-G05, “EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs.”](#)

[Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#)

[Grants Policy Issuance 16-01: EPA Subaward Policy for EPA Assistance Agreement Recipients](#), with attachments, includes:

- EPA Subaward Policy
- Appendix A: Distinctions Between Subrecipients and Contractors
- Appendix B: National Term and Condition for Subawards
- Appendix C: Model Programmatic Subaward Reporting Requirement
- Appendix D: Subaward Agreement Template

## **APPENDIX B – Application Submission Checklist**

The application package ***must*** include all of the following materials. Applicants may use this optional checklist to ensure that all required materials have been included in the application package. The applicant should not submit this checklist with their application.

- *SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance*
- *SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*
- *EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants Requesting Federal Assistance*
- *EPA Form 5700-54, Key Contacts Form*
- Application Narrative Attachment Form (not to exceed 15 pages)
  - Cover Page
  - Workplan
    - 1. Project Summary and Approach
    - 2. Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures
    - 3. Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities
    - 4. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance
    - 5. Project Readiness
    - 6. Project Sustainability
    - 7. Workforce Development
    - 8. Project Resilience to Climate Impacts
    - 9. Funding Beyond the Mandatory Cost Share
    - 10. Budget

Use the “Other Attachments” form on Grants.gov for the following mandatory documents:

- Applicant Fleet Description (Use CHDV Supplemental Application Template - EPA Form Number 5900-689)
- *Utility Partnership Template*, if applicable
- *School Board Awareness Template*, if applicable
- *Third-Party Approval Template*, if applicable
- Intertribal Consortium Documentation, if applicable
- Cost Share Commitment Letters, if applicable

The application package **may** include any of the following materials. Use the “Other Attachments” form in Grants.gov to attach and submit the following documents, as applicable:

- Project Team Biographies
- Resumes
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Partnership Letters