

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

## OVERVIEW SECTION

**AGENCY:** ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)  
**TITLE:** “CLEAN SCHOOL BUS USA ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS”  
**ACTION:** REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS – Initial Announcement  
**RFA NO:** OAR-CCD-05-13

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) No.:** 66.036

**DATES:** The closing date and time for receipt of Applications is July 22, 2005, 5:00 Eastern Time. All applications, however transmitted, must be received in the Program Office by the closing date and time to receive consideration.

To allow for efficient management of the competitive process, EPA requests that eligible organizations submit an informal notice of “Intent to Apply” by June 24, 2005. Submission of an **Intent to Apply** is optional; it is a process management tool that will allow EPA to better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted applications.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from school districts, including federally recognized Indian tribes which operate schools, for retrofit and/or replacement projects that reduce pollution from school buses through the use of EPA verified or certified and/or California Air Resources Board verified pollution reduction technologies. There is a 5% cost-share required for these projects.

**FUNDING/AWARDS:** The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity shall not exceed \$7.5 million. The amount of funding associated with an individual award may be up to \$725,000, with an anticipated average value of \$200,000 - \$300,000. Approximately 20-30 awards will be made.

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## **Section I – Funding Opportunity Description**

### **A. Background.**

Diesel exhaust has health implications for everyone. EPA is working aggressively to reduce pollution from new heavy-duty diesel engines, by requiring them to meet tougher emission standards in the future. The current standards took effect in 2004. An even more stringent set of standards will take effect in 2007. At that time, new heavy-duty vehicles will be up to 95 percent cleaner than those engines manufactured before 2004. However, diesel engines are durable and long-lasting. It will take a long time for new vehicles to replace the heavy-duty buses currently on the road.

Children are especially sensitive to air pollution because their respiratory systems are still developing and they have a faster breathing rate. More than 24 million children ride a bus to and from school everyday, spending roughly 3 billion hours on school buses each year. Recent studies suggest that children's school bus commutes potentially expose children to significantly higher concentrations of pollutants than what is measured in the community's outdoor air. Statistics show that school buses are the safest way to transport children. EPA wants to ensure that they are also the cleanest way to transport children.

The Clean School Bus USA program is designed to reduce children's exposure to diesel exhaust from school buses. There are about 440,000 school buses on the road today, of which 400,000 are diesel. Older technology buses produce as much as six times the pollution as a new school bus. About one-third of these buses were manufactured before 1990. These buses are the heaviest polluters and should be replaced. The remaining two-thirds of the school buses were manufactured between 1990 and 2003. These buses can be made much cleaner by retrofitting them with devices designed to reduce pollution and switching to cleaner fuels.

EPA's Clean School Bus USA initiative has three primary goals: 1) reduce school bus idling; 2) retrofit existing buses with devices and/or cleaner fuels that reduce pollution, and 3) replace the oldest buses with new, cleaner buses. By providing assistance funding for successful approaches to reducing pollution from school buses, EPA is making available an important tool for school districts across the country to implement clean school bus projects.

Replacement, retrofit and/or cleaner fuels projects for school bus fleets will all be considered for this grant competition.

For examples of clean school bus projects, see EPA's Clean School Bus USA web site's Demonstration Projects page: ([http://www.epa.gov/otaq/schoolbus/demo\\_projects.htm](http://www.epa.gov/otaq/schoolbus/demo_projects.htm))

## B. Scope of Work.

EPA is soliciting grant applications to assist school districts in their efforts to reduce pollution from diesel-powered school buses through the use of EPA –verified<sup>1</sup> or certified, or California Air Resources Board (CARB) -verified, pollution reduction technology.

Applicants are advised that retrofit and/or replacement technologies must be verified or certified technologies through EPA’s verification program or another EPA certification program or CARB verified. A list of EPA verified technologies is available at:

<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/retrofit/retroverifiedlist.htm>. CARB listed technologies may be found at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/diesel/verdev/verdev.htm>.

Applicants may propose to establish a sub-grant program to multiple school districts and fleets. The applicant must indicate a process by which they will award sub-grants to other school districts. EPA suggests that the evaluation criteria for this sub-grant process be modeled on this RFA’s evaluation criteria. Note that letters of support are strongly suggested from possible sub-grantees.

Applications will be accepted from school districts that propose to establish sub-contracts with the commercial school bus company(ies) providing their student transportation service to retrofit or replace buses owned by the commercial company(ies). Neither participation in such a sub-contract program nor award by EPA and acceptance by the school district of program funds is intended to establish any property rights or affect any liability with respect to any equipment purchased or modified under the program.

### **Retrofit, Replacement and Cleaner Fuels Options**

This federal assistance funding program is for school districts to help modernize diesel fleets to lower diesel emissions. Strategies to be considered under this program include the retrofit or replacement of existing buses and switching to cleaner fuels:

**1. Retrofit:** After-treatment emissions control technology options include diesel particulate filters, diesel oxidation catalysts, closed crankcase systems and ECM reprograms, among others. It should be noted that diesel particulate filters need to be used in conjunction with ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel. In addition, filters may not be appropriate for all duty cycles and vehicles; datalogging of some vehicles by vendors must take place in order to assure that filters are an appropriate application for the particular fleet. The purpose of the datalogging is to determine which technology will work; the applicant should provide information about plans for datalogging if filters are the chosen technology. Datalogging is routinely provided by vendors and should not be included in the project budget. EPA will provide up to 100 percent of the costs for these retrofit technologies.

**2. Engine upgrades for cleaner emissions:** Some engines may be able to be upgraded to newer

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<sup>1</sup> EPA’s verification process evaluates retrofit technologies under a range of conditions and quantifies the percent reduction in emissions that the technology achieves. The verification process also identifies engine operating criteria and conditions that must exist for these technologies to achieve the verified reductions. A list of verified or certified technologies is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/retrofit/retroverifiedlist.htm>

certified configurations or even verified cleaner versions using manufacturer recommended upgrades or kits to certified or verified configurations. These upgrades may include the addition of newer, cleaner technologies, re-calibrations, and/or other parts to reduce the emissions from the engines. Preference will be given to engine upgrades that include combined verified improvements which will further reduce emissions, e.g., through the addition of verified retrofit technologies such as a diesel particulate filter, diesel oxidation catalyst or crankcase emission control. If engine upgrades are proposed, then it is advised that the applicant provide background information that suggests that applicant has investigated applicability of upgrading a particular engine. EPA will provide up to 50 percent of the cost of an engine repower or upgrade, including the addition of verified after-treatment devices. Preference will be given to applications requesting a lower percentage.

**3. Cleaner fuels:** These include ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, biodiesel, compressed natural gas, propane and emulsions verified by EPA or listed by CARB. EPA will pay for the cost differential between the cleaner fuel and standard diesel fuel.

**4. Replacement:** Both buses and engines can be replaced under this program. For both bus replacement and engine replacement, the application must show plans to scrap the old engines. Evidence of scrappage must be provided to EPA in the final report. "Scrapped" is defined as a permanently disabled engine, no longer suitable for use in a vehicle, such as a hole drilled in the block. The school district may retain possession of the scrapped engine and/or chassis. Applicants may propose an alternative to scrappage, such as remanufacturing an engine to meet newer standards for emissions. EPA will consider such requests on a limited case-by-case basis.

**a. Bus Replacement:** EPA is encouraging the replacement of the oldest buses in the nation, especially those pre-dating 1977 (the newest year of manufacture to be considered for replacement is 1992). EPA will pay a range of the percentage of the cost of a new cleaner emissions bus, with the top of the range between 30 and 45 percent. Preference will be given to applications requesting a lower percentage.

**b. Engine Replacement:** Older engines may be replaced with newer engines under this program. Preference will be given to engine replacements that include verified improvements which will further reduce emissions, e.g., through the addition of verified retrofit technologies such as a diesel particulate filter, diesel oxidation catalyst or crankcase emission control. Applicants should provide information in their application to show the feasibility of an engine replacement strategy, as engine and vehicle design differences may make some engine replacements difficult. As noted in the above paragraph, the replaced engines must be scrapped. EPA will pay for up to 50 percent of an engine replacement. Preference will be given to applications requesting a lower percentage.

NOTE: It is not EPA's intention to fund replacement projects that would have occurred through the normal attrition of vehicles and equipment or to provide funds for expanding a fleet. Therefore, applicants must provide documentation in their applications that the replacement activity would not have occurred without the financial assistance provided by the agency.

### C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs.

1. **Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan.** This project support progress towards EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 1: Clean Air and Global Climate Change; Objectives 1.1 (Healthier Outdoor Air). The following Sub-Objectives also apply: 1.1.1 (More People Breathing Cleaner Air) and 1.1.2 (Reduce Risk from Toxic Air Pollutants). This project meets Goal 1, its first Objective, and two Sub-Objectives by retrofitting or replacing older, polluting school buses, and/or using cleaner fuels with those bus fleets, which will reduce particulate matter, ozone, and diesel exhaust -- a probable human carcinogen (sub-objective 1.1). Diesel engines in school buses emit particulate matter, and precursors to secondarily formed particulate matter and ozone as well as emitting other air toxics. Exposure to diesel exhaust and associated pollutants can cause lung damage, trigger respiratory problems, exacerbate asthma and existing allergies, and has been linked to heart disease and premature death. Long-term exposure to ambient particulate matter is thought to increase the risk of lung cancer.

2. **Outcomes.** Through this project EPA anticipates reducing particulate matter pollution from a range of 20 – 90% per vehicle, depending on the technology pathways chosen voluntarily by school districts under this program. The program would also result in significant reductions in nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, and air toxics as well. Reductions in pollution emissions are intermediate outcomes to measure progress toward contributing to end outcomes of improved ambient air quality and reduced mortality and morbidity from air pollution.

3. **Outputs.** The anticipated output for this project is:

- ~ Approximately 4,000 buses retrofitted, replaced and/or using cleaner fuels
- ~ Approximately 500,000 children riding cleaner buses each day
- ~ Approximately 60 new idling reduction policies in place or existing policies renewed

### D. Supplementary Information.

The statutory authority for this action is the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005, Public Law 108-447, enacted December 8, 2004 which authorizes EPA to establish a cost-shared grant program for the necessary upgrades of diesel school buses.

### Section II – Award Information

#### A. What is the amount of funding available?

The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity shall not exceed \$7.5 million. The amount of funding associated with an individual award may be up to \$725,000, with an anticipated average value of \$200,000 - \$300,000. Approximately 20-30 awards will be made.

#### B. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates awarding up to 30 cooperative agreements, subject to availability of funds and the quality of applications submitted. Applications evaluated, but not selected for this funding, may be retained for consideration for possible future award within six months of the original selection decision.

Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for this project will be:

1. monitoring closely the successful applicant(s) performance;
2. collaborating during the performance of the scope of work;
3. in accordance with 40 C.F.R. 31.36 (g), review of proposed procurements;
4. approving proposed changes to work plan and/or budget;
5. approving qualifications of key personnel;
6. reviewing and commenting on reports prepared under the assistance agreement.

EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the recipients and the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipients. Recipients will be given a template by the EPA Project Officer for both quarterly and final reports.

#### **C. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?**

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation is October, 2005 through October, 2007.

#### **D. Can funding be used to acquire services or fund partnerships?**

Yes, provided that grantees comply with the procedures for procurement and sub-award or sub-grants contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as applicable.

Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost, price and value analyses to the extent required by these regulations as well as any regulations covered by state or local procurement requirements. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their application. Moreover, the fact that a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in the application EPA approves does not relieve it of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements as well as any regulations covered by state or local procurement requirements.

Sub-grants or sub-awards may be used to fund partnerships with non-profit organizations and governmental entities, or to provide financial assistance for retrofitting commercial school bus fleet operators. Successful applicants cannot use sub-grants or sub-awards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products to carry out its cooperative agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the sub-grantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and sub-recipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of [OMB Circular A-133](#), and the definitions of “sub-award” at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or “sub-grant” at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable.

Please note that EPA will not be a party to these transactions.

### **E. Can projects be partially funded?**

EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of the proposed project. If EPA decides to partially fund the proposal/application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and the evaluation/selection process.

## **Section III. Eligibility Information.**

### **A. Eligible Entities.**

Applications will be accepted from U.S. public school districts, including federally recognized tribal organizations that operate schools. Groups of school districts, such as School District Councils and BOCES (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services) are eligible.

School districts are defined generally as a local or tribal governmental entity with authority to operate public primary, middle, and secondary schools or to contract for public school services. School districts have powers similar to that of a county or city, including taxation and eminent domain. School districts are usually governed by a school board or board of trustees, with day-to-day operations carried out by a superintendent, who functions as the district's chief executive.

Councils or cooperatives of school districts which have been formed under state law, and which generally hold the same legal status as its member districts, are formed to consolidate many educational services, including procurement of goods and services. Councils or cooperatives may submit a single application on behalf of their member districts if a single award would more efficiently carry out the purposes of the grant and must identify which eligible school districts will be the recipients of subgrants under the award, if any. Subgrants must be consistent with the definition of that term in 40 CFR 31.3 and the provisions of 40 CFR 31.37(b).

*All school districts are eligible to apply, whether they own school bus fleets or contracts for transportation services with a privately owned fleet. A publicly owned fleet is NOT a requirement for eligibility. Owners of privately owned fleets cannot are not eligible to receive grants under this authority but can receive subgrants from a school district.*

### **B. Cost-Sharing or Matching.**

All applicants must contribute a minimum of 5 percent of the total project cost. The cost-share may be provided in the form of cash or an "in-kind" contribution. An in-kind contribution is the reasonable value of property and services which benefit the project. Applications which do not meet this minimum cost share requirement will not be considered further.

Matching funds must comply with 40 CFR 31.24.

### **C. Threshold Evaluation Criteria.**

Applications must meet requirements for eligibility, per *Section III.A.*, cost-share per *Section III.B.*



and deadlines per *Section IV.C.* or they will not be considered for award.

**Section IV – Application and Submission Information.**

**A. How to Obtain Application Package.**

Applicants may download individual grant application forms, or electronically request a paper application package and an accompanying computer CD of information related to applicants/grant recipients roles and responsibilities from EPA’s Grants and Debarment website by visiting: [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how\\_to\\_apply.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm).

Please note that only the one-page Standard Form 424 needs to be included in the initial application, along with the work narrative, budget, and the Fleet Information Table. If your application is selected, the entire grants package will need to be completed at that time.

**B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

1.Applications must contain the following:

- a. Signed Standard Form 424 (one page)
- b. Fleet Information Table (see below)
- c. Narrative Work Plan following the **required** outline below (10 pages maximum)
- d. Budget Detail & Narrative

2. In addition, optional materials such as letters of support from potential sub-awardees or partners and/or a copy of the district’s idling reduction policy, should be included if applicable.

**Fleet Information Table**

For each bus in the fleet, include the identification number, the chassis manufacturer, bus type (A, B, C or D), chassis model year, engine manufacturer, engine model number and year, annual vehicle miles traveled and/or annual hours of operation, annual fuel usage and retrofit or replacement option selected. See Table A below for a suggested format for this information.

**Table A.**

| # | Bus ID # | Bus Chassis Mfr. | Bus Type (A,B,C,D) | Chassis Model Year | Engine Mfr. | Engine Model # and Year | Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled | Fuel Usage (Gal/Yr) | Retrofit or Replacement Option |
|---|----------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
|   |          |                  |                    |                    |             |                         |                               |                     |                                |
|   |          |                  |                    |                    |             |                         |                               |                     |                                |
|   |          |                  |                    |                    |             |                         |                               |                     |                                |

**Narrative Work Plan Required Outline**

The narrative, a maximum of 10 pages in length, not including the Fleet Information Table, budget and optional materials per *Section IV.B.2*, should follow the outline below. Narrative pages

exceeding the maximum length of 10 pages will not be considered. Refer to the criteria below in *Section IV., Selection Criteria*, for more information on how to write your application and how EPA will evaluate the applications.

**1. Describe the school bus fleet in general and its history:** Beyond the Fleet Information Table, the following information must be provided, or if not provided, a reasonable explanation should be included: number of buses in the targeted fleet(s), the number of students riding the fleet, the number of students in the entire district, the fleet replacement rate, the type of retrofit technology that may be used, and the number of buses or engines that may be retrofitted or replaced. Also indicate what entity owns the buses, operates the buses, and maintains the buses, and any other general information about the fleet and its history. Bus and engine replacement projects should provide supporting documentation in the application that the replacement activity would not have occurred without the financial assistance provided by the Agency.

**2. Project Description and Implementation Plan:**

A. Describe the project in detail: the technology(ies) and/or fuels to be used, the vehicles to be retrofitted or replaced, partnerships involved, and a timeline for the project. Include information that shows that the chosen strategy has been researched and will be successful/suitable in the specified application. The timeline needs to include plans for bid, ordering and installation phases, as well as any other events that impact the overall application.

B. Discuss how your chosen diesel pollution reduction strategy contributes to EPA's goal of most beneficial and effective diesel emissions cleanup. EPA is promoting technologies and strategies that most effectively reduce pollution from the existing fleet of school buses, especially the oldest and most polluting. Make an argument for how the strategy chosen for this project will contribute to EPA's goal of employing the most beneficial clean up strategies in diesel pollution reduction. Also discuss what outputs and outcomes you plan to attain with your project (it is not necessary to calculate PM reductions).

C. Discuss the sustainability, likelihood for success and partner support of your project. Information should be presented about how the results of this project will carry on into the future: how skilled staff will be trained; how effective implementation strategies will be identified and replicated; and, how results will be shared. If appropriate, information should be provided about any existing school bus retrofit projects including the number and type of vehicles, type of technology, funding level, partners involved, and challenges overcome. Partner Support: The district should include letters of support from any participating partners, fleets (public or private) or school districts. These letters could include information on any matching funds or in-kind resources that partners will provide. Applications which cover more than one district or fleet are encouraged.

D. Discuss the other policies that the district follows which demonstrate a commitment to pollution reduction, especially idling reduction. Examples of other policies include anti-idling/idling reduction policies for school buses and other vehicles on school property, indoor air quality improvements such as *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools*, energy efficiency measures, or other pollution reduction/education programs. A copy of the district's written policy(ies) is preferred.

E. Any other information to help the Selection Panel better understand your proposed work plan.

### **3. Budget**

Prepare a budget narrative. Indicate the amount of funding being requested from EPA and provide the total cost of project (identify other funding sources including any in-kind resources). Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used as well as how any matching contributions – both financial and in-kind services – will be used. Provide a budget for the following categories:

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Contractual Costs
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Other
- Total Direct Costs
- Total Indirect Costs: must include documentation of accepted indirect rate
- Total Cost
- Match

### **C. Submission Dates and Times**

APPLICATION PACKAGES must be submitted **electronically by the deadline**. Email the application package to [CSB\\_RFA@epa.gov](mailto:CSB_RFA@epa.gov). The email must be received no later than 5 p.m. ET, **July 22, 2005**.

Note: Applicants that do not have access to email should contact Cheryl Dale at 734-214-4780 in advance of the deadline to receive a waiver of the requirement to send the application electronically and the mailing address. Applications sent by mail must be received by the deadline date of 5 p.m. ET, July 22, 2005. Applications not received by the deadline will not be considered for funding.

Applicants will receive electronic notification from EPA that the application has been received (unless the applicant has sought a waiver from electronic submission, in which case the EPA notification will be mailed). If the applicant does not receive EPA notification of receipt, the applicant should contact Cheryl Dale via email or phone by 5 p.m. ET, August 8, 2005 to make sure that the package was received. If no such communication is made by 5 p.m., August 8, 2005, the applicant will not be able to claim that a package was sent before the deadline. If the applicant has proof that EPA received the application before July 22, 5 p.m. ET (an outgoing email or delivery receipt) and makes contact with EPA by 5 p.m., August 8, 2005, the application will be considered timely.

Applications must be submitted electronically in Microsoft Word, Word Perfect, or PDF format to [CSB\\_RFA@epa.gov](mailto:CSB_RFA@epa.gov). The Fleet Information Table may be submitted in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet or other tabular form. EPA appreciates your attention to the requirement for electronic

submittals. Electronic submittals facilitate the review process and also aid in the Agency’s mission to limit use of paper.

**Confidential Business Information.** In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all of a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claims as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant other wise required by 40 CFR 2.204 ( c)(2) prior to disclosure.

**Intent to Apply:** An informal notice of “Intent to Apply” simply states in the form of email (preferred), mail or fax that a school district intends to submit a application to be received by the deadline. In order to efficiently manage the selection process, please send an informal “Intent to Apply” by June 24, 2005 to:

Email: [CSB\\_RFA@epa.gov](mailto:CSB_RFA@epa.gov)  
 FAX: 734-214-4053  
 Mail: Attn: Cheryl Dale (Mail Code AAIO), US EPA, National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory, Certification and Compliance Division, 2000 Traverwood Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48105.

Please provide name of the school district(s), its mailing address, point of contact, phone and fax numbers, email address and project title. Submitting an “Intent to Apply” does not commit a school district to submit a final application. The “Intent to Apply” is an optional submission; those districts not submitting an “Intent to Apply” are still eligible and may still apply by the deadline.

**Section V – Application Review Information.**

**A. Evaluation Criteria.**

Each eligible application, which has met the requirements of Sections III and IV, will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Each application will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

A. Evaluation Factors (Total – 100 points)

| Criterion  | Maximum Points per Criterion |
|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Fleet:</b> Extent to which the proposal adequately describes the fleet and its history, and includes a Fleet Information Table, per <i>Section IV.B.</i>            | 10                           |
| <b>Project Description and Implementation Plan:</b> Extent to which the application ably and thoroughly addresses each of the areas identified in <i>Section II.A.</i> | 30                           |
| <b>Clean Up Effectiveness:</b> Extent to which the project employs a highly effective diesel emissions reduction strategy, per <i>Section II.B.</i>                    | 10                           |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Sustainability, Likelihood of Success and Partner Support:</b> Extent to which the project appears sustainable, likely to succeed and has evidence of support of partners. The extent to which the application covers more than one district or fleet.  | 15 |
| <b>Performance Measurement:</b> Extent to which an adequate plan is presented for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the expected environmental outputs/outcomes identified in <i>Section I</i> .  | 10 |
| <b>Policy Support:</b> Extent to which the school district’s current policies which support pollution reduction efforts, especially idling reduction, are presented (per <i>Section IV.B.3</i> ).  | 10 |
| <b>Budget Reasonableness/Presentation and Financial Contribution:</b> The extent to which the budget for the project is reasonable and includes all required categories, including the matching contribution per <i>Section IV.B.3</i> (5 points). The extent to which the applicant contributes to the project, especially for engine and bus replacements (10 points). | 15 |

**B. Other Factors.**

In addition to the above merit criteria, EPA, in evaluating applications, will also consider the following other factors in selecting applications for award:

1. Geographic Dispersion: EPA will attempt to distribute funds throughout the United States.
2. Air Quality: EPA is interested in knowing if the school buses operate within an area that has poor air quality. Poor air quality areas can consist of areas designated (or at risk of future designation) by EPA to be in non-attainment or maintenance for a criteria pollutant.
3. Environmental Justice: EPA seeks to improve the health of communities that are considered low-income, suffer from high rate of asthma, or receive a disproportionate amount of pollution from diesel vehicles.
4. Technology Diversity: EPA is interested in some diversity in the various emissions control technologies employed in the projects.

**C. Review and Selection Process.**

Each application will be evaluated by an EPA Regional and Headquarters staff team chosen for their experience with a full range of transportation air quality matters. The Evaluation Teams will base their evaluations solely on the selection criteria disclosed in this notice (*See Section V(A), Evaluation Criteria*). Once the Evaluation Teams have completed their evaluations, no fewer than the top four applications from each Region will be submitted to a National Selection Panel which will be responsible for applying other factors, per *Section V(B)*. The highest numerically-ranked proposal(s) (subject to the quality of proposals, availability of funds, and consideration of *Section V(B), Other Factors*) will be recommended for award to the EPA Grants Award Official(s).

The Office of Transportation and Air Quality expects to complete the Evaluation/Selection process and make recommendations to EPA’s grants office by late summer, 2005. All applicants will be

notified promptly, after final selections, regarding their application's status.

At the time of notification, selectees will be invited to submit a completed and signed full federal grant application package. The complete grants application package can be downloaded at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/index.htm>.

## **Section VI – Award Administration Information.**

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

Following final selections, all applicants will be notified regarding their application's status.

1. EPA anticipates notification to *successful* applicant(s) will be made via telephone, electronic or postal mail by September 30, 2005. This notification, which advises that the applicant's proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin performance. The award notice signed by the EPA grants officer is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. At a minimum, this process can take up to 90 days from the date of selection.
2. EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail within 15 days after final selection of successful applicants. In either event, the notification will be sent to the signer of the application.
3. EPA will notify applicants which do not meet the threshold eligibility criteria (per *Section III.C.*) within 15 days of EPA's decision on application eligibility.

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.**

1. A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable\\_epa\\_regulations\\_and\\_description.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm).
  - a. Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs may be applicable to awards, resulting from this announcement. Applicants *selected* for funding may be required to provide a copy of their proposal to their [State Point of Contact](#) (SPOC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the Initial Proposal and not all states require such a review.
  - b. All applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for a Federal grant or cooperative agreement. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at: <http://www.dnb.com>.

### **C. Reporting Requirement.**

The recipient agrees to submit quarterly progress reports to the EPA Project Officer within thirty days after each reporting period. These reports shall cover work status, work progress, difficulties encountered, a statement of activity anticipated during the subsequent reporting period. A discussion of expenditures along with a comparison of the percentage of the project completed to the project schedule and an explanation of significant discrepancies shall be included in the report. The report shall also include any changes of key personnel concerned with the project.

The recipient also agrees to submit a detailed final report. The final report should include: a summary of the project, specifications of technologies and fuel used, detailed description of the demonstration fleet, summary of emissions reductions achieved, cost analyses, problems, successes, and lessons learned.

### **D. Disputes.**

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) located on the web at:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>.

Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the Agency contact identified in Section VII of this solicitation.

### **Section VII - Agency Contact.**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cheryl Dale (Mail Code AAIO), US EPA, National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory, Certification and Compliance Division, 2000 Traverwood Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48105. Phone (734)214-4780; Fax (734)214-4053; or email [CSB\\_RFA@epa.gov](mailto:CSB_RFA@epa.gov).

Questions or comments must be communicated in writing via regular U.S. mail, facsimile, or electronic mail to the contact person indicated in the section entitled "For Further Information Contact" below. Responses will be posted on EPA's Office of Air and Radiation Grants/Funding page ([http://www.epa.gov/air/grants\\_funding.html](http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html)). Questions can be emailed to [CSB\\_RFA@epa.gov](mailto:CSB_RFA@epa.gov), faxed to (734)214-4053, or mailed to the "Further Information Contact" listed below.

### **Section VIII – Other Information.**

**Right to Reject all Proposals.** EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and make no award as a result of this announcement. The EPA Grant Award Officer is the only official that can bind the Agency to the expenditure of funds for selected projects resulting from this announcement.