

2018 Targeted Air Shed Grant Program
EPA-OAR-OAQPS-18-08
Questions and Answers
As of December 21, 2018

Question 1 (10/17/18):

Are the areas in the chart listed on page 4 of the targeted airshed request for applications (RFA) the only eligible entities, or are these just areas where an eligible entity must be located? Please clarify because the program website mentions “local, state and/or tribal air pollution control agencies,” as eligible entities.

Answer 1 (10/17/18):

The entities eligible to submit applications are included in *Section III. Eligible Information A. Eligible Entities* on page 10 of the RFA, which includes the following:

“Entities eligible to submit applications under this announcement are those air pollution control agencies, as defined by Section 302(b) of the CAA, that: (a) have responsibilities for the prevention and control of air pollution for one or more nonattainment areas identified in Section I.A. of this announcement, and (b) have an active air program grant under Section 103 or 105 of the CAA to carry out those responsibilities.”

The reference to Section I.A. is to the areas listed in the three tables on page 3. The definition of “air pollution control agencies” from Section 302(b) of the CAA is:

- 1) A single State agency designated by the Governor of that State as the official State air pollution control agency for purposes of this chapter.
- 2) An agency established by two or more States and having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the prevention and control of air pollution.
- 3) A city, county, or other local government health authority, or, in the case of any city, county, or other local government in which there is an agency other than the health authority charged with responsibility for enforcing ordinances or laws relating to the prevention and control of air pollution, such other agency.
- 4) An agency of two or more municipalities located in the same State or in different States and having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the prevention and control of air pollution.
- 5) An agency of an Indian tribe

These eligible air pollution control agencies may submit the total maximum number of applications for the given area identified on page 4 of the RFA. For example, the lead air pollution control agency overseeing Fairbanks, Alaska, may submit up to two different applications, while the air pollution control agency overseeing the Los Angeles-South Coast Air Basin may submit up to four different applications. Additional threshold eligibility information is available in Section III.C., beginning on page 11 of the RFA.

Question 2 (10/23/18):

Regarding the Targeted Air Shed solicitation manual, can you please confirm what is meant by ‘demonstration of zero emission vehicles and engines?’ Does this mean that a pre-commercial truck (a truck which will not be commercially available on dealer lots for a couple years) is eligible for funding?

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

- Documented improved ambient air quality;
- Contributions towards compliance with SIP or TIP and/or NAAQS;
- Community engagement and partnership;
- An increased understanding of the environmental or economic effectiveness of the implemented technology;
- Increased public awareness of project and results;
- Widespread adoption of the implemented technology;
- **Demonstration** and deployment of zero and near-zero emission vehicles and engines; and/or

Answer 2 (10/23/18):

The FY18 Targeted Airshed RFA does allow applications to include proposed funding for the demonstration of pre-commercially available vehicles, including trucks.

Question 3 (10/26/18):

Is there a standard “Project Narrative” form that applicants need to complete and submit, or can the Project Narrative be in any format, as long as it adheres to the guidelines?

Answer 3 (10/26/18):

There is not a standard format for the Project Narrative, but it should follow the instructions under Section IV.C.2., which begins on page 14 of the RFA. The “Project Narrative Attachment Form” in Grants.gov is the mechanism for applicants to upload their Project Narrative, in accordance with Section IV.C.2. (pages 14 – 20) and the Grants.gov application instructions in Appendix A (pages 26 – 28).

Question 4 (11/7/18):

What is the estimated award date for grants awarded under this RFA?

Answer 4:

As listed on page 1 of the RFA, EPA anticipates awarding the assistance agreements in May 2019.

Question 5 (11/7/18):

The project period stated on page 9 of the RFA says the project periods can be up to 5 years from the project start date of May 2019. Does that mean that projects can be completed (e.g., vehicles deployed) as late as May 2024?

Answer 5:

The project should be completed by the end of the project period, which is dependent on the award date. As listed on page 9 of the RFA, Section II.D, the project period may be up to five years from the project start date. Thus, if EPA funds are awarded May 1, 2019, the project should be completed by April 30, 2024.

Question 6 (11/8/18):

What is required of the notice of intent to apply that is due on November 16, 2018 (page 1 of RFA)?

Answer:

The notice of intent is informal and optional. It can be a short email to Deborah Elmore (elmore.deborah@epa.gov) specifying that your agency intends to apply and how many applications the applicable agency intends to submit. As noted on page 1 of the RFA, submitting a notice of intent to apply will allow EPA to better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted applications.

Question 7 (12/13/18):

Would electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure for medium- and heavy- duty trucks be an eligible project expense?

Answer:

EV charging infrastructure for medium- and heavy- duty trucks could be an eligible project as long as it meets the description from Section I.B. Scope of Work in the RFA. Specifically, from pages 4-5: "The goal of the Targeted Airshed Program is to implement programs, projects, and approaches that: demonstrate documentable reductions of ozone and/or PM_{2.5} concentrations in the designated areas; demonstrate documentable reductions in precursor emissions of ozone, which include nitrogen oxides (NO_x), carbon monoxide (CO) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and/or direct or precursor emissions of PM_{2.5}, which include sulfur dioxide (SO₂), NO_x, VOCs, and ammonia; and are replicable elsewhere. Proposed activities must be for emission reduction activities deemed necessary to assist with compliance with the NAAQS for these pollutants, and that demonstrate the potential for inclusion in the affected jurisdiction's SIP or TIP submission to EPA intended to meet those standards."

If public EV charging infrastructure is not readily available and the only means to charge the vehicles would be to locate the charging infrastructure at the host site, then yes this would be an allowable project expense.

Question 8.a. (12/17/18):

With regard to this sentence on page 4, "The maximum amount of requested federal funding per application shall not exceed **\$5,000,000 per application,**" can an area use its two allotted applications by submitting two applications each in the amount of \$5,000,000 for the same project?

Answer:

Two of the same projects located in the same nonattainment area are not allowed, as specified in the RFA on page 4 (emphasis added in bold text): "For each nonattainment area, eligible applicants (see Section III.A) can submit no more than the total number of applications listed in the table directly below for each nonattainment area **so long as each application is different and separately submitted.**" However, two of the same projects located in two different nonattainment areas would be allowed.

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Question 8.b. (follow-up to 8.a., 12/20/18):

Does that mean the eligible applicant located in an area with two allotted applications and intending to submit a project which calls for the installation of the same pollution reducing devices requiring a total of \$10,000,000 submitting two applications thusly: one in the amount of \$5,000,000 for the first phase of the project involving the installation of one set of devices, and one in the amount of \$4,500,000 involving the installation of other set of devices – thus making the applications different and separately submitted?

Answer 8.b.:

As the RFA lists, “so long as each application is different and separately submitted,” two different applications would be allowed, and they should be substantively different. Please note that EPA may not be able to fund all the applications it receives, as listed on page 1 of the RFA: “EPA anticipates awarding a total of approximately **8-12** assistance agreements from this announcement, subject to availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations (see Section II. Award Information).” In order for both applications to be selected for funding, both applications would have to score high based on the evaluation criteria in Section V. of the RFA and be substantively different projects.

Generally, EPA cannot provide multiple grants for the same activity. Depending on how much overlap there is in the projects (e.g., the funding categories of the two applications are paying for the same activities), then EPA would likely be precluded from selecting both applications even if they both scored well. This is why this statement is included under the threshold eligibility on page 12: “Proposed activities can complement but cannot replicate activities already being funded with an existing CAA Section 103 or 105 grant or Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grant being carried out in the applicant’s nonattainment area.” Finally, all applications selected for funding under this RFA are expected to have a similar start date, as noted on page 9 with projects having an expected start date of May 2019. EPA would not select two applications under this RFA where one grant will not begin until activities under another grant are completed.

Question 9 (12/21/18):

Does “Buy American” apply to targeted airshed grants?

Answer 9:

No, there are no “Buy American” requirements for targeted airshed grants.