

**Frequently Asked Questions: Driving a Cleaner Illinois  
Round 5 Funding – All-Electric School Buses**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
What does “Where each replacement bus must be from the engine Model Year in which the project occurs (or later) or one engine model year prior” mean in Section D of the NOFO?	This is a Volkswagen Trust requirement. For example, if the order for the new electric school bus is placed in the first half of calendar year 2024, this would fall in the manufacturers’ “engine model year” 2024. In applying the requirement to this scenario, the new electric motors in the new bus must be engine model year 2024 or later or they could be from engine model year 2023 (one engine model year prior to when the order was placed). Often, the designated vehicle model year and the engine model year are the same year.
Does the eligibility of school buses in the NOFO include a 14-passenger electric Multi-Functional School Activity Bus (MFSAB) for after school activities?	No. The new all-electric school bus, as well as the older diesel school bus the new bus is replacing, must be a Class 4-8 school bus and of the same class used to provide daily transportation of students to-and-from school.
If our school district does not have an engine model year 2009 and older school bus, does that disqualify us for grant consideration?	The Volkswagen Trust Agreement requires that the older existing diesel school bus to be replaced with the new all-electric school bus must be engine model year 2009 or older.
Is there a specific timeframe in which the buses are to be delivered and the infrastructure installed?	The applicant is to complete the Project Management Plan Form as part of its overall application. The dates inserted for the various project milestones will be used as the <b>estimated</b> completion dates for these tasks in the grant agreement. Overall, under normal circumstances, it is anticipated that the project should be completed within 12-18 months after the execution of the grant agreement.
Does the new charging station for the electric school buses need to be publicly accessible or can it be a private station for use by the school district or bus company only?	A charging station funded under this NOFO can be a private station located on private property used exclusively to charge the new school buses.
Section D of the NOFO has this eligibility requirement: “Where each replacement bus will operate within the school district at least 80% of its annual operating hours for at least five years from its in-service date.” However, for school bus contractors, current Illinois law allows for districts to enter into a contract with a school bus contractor for 3 years, with an additional 2 years by mutual agreement of the parties. Does this five-year requirement also apply to school bus contractors?	Yes

<p>In Section G of the NOFO, it says “Date and timestamp of an application will be the final determination of award if needed.” Does this mean that after other selection criteria have been considered, if there are still more applicants than remaining funds, then earlier applications will be prioritized?</p>	<p>Section G discusses how the applications will be evaluated and prioritized for funding (if the applicant has not received previous grant/rebate funding for school buses since 2019). In addition, all eligible applications are ranked by cost-effectiveness and then by the environmental justice component (see NOFO for more specific information). The “date and timestamp” of an application is only used as a final tiebreaker in which the cost-effectiveness calculation and the environmental justice percentage of minority and low-income students at the identified school do not differentiate between one application and another in a case that only one of the applications can be funded.</p>
<p>In the NOFO, there does not seem to be any detailed requirements related to the charging equipment that this funding opportunity will cover. Indeed, almost all the language of the NOFO is aimed towards requirements for the school buses. Are there any additional documents which outline specific requirements for eligible charging equipment under this program?</p>	<p>There are no additional requirements beyond what is stated in the NOFO regarding the charging infrastructure. However, as stated in Sections E and F, a percentage of the eligible costs of infrastructure, up to a maximum \$20,000 award per location, can be included in the application if the charging equipment is necessary to support the project (e.g., is necessary as charging is not already available or any existing charging is not adequate to support the addition of the proposed new electric school buses). The request for charging infrastructure funding, if needed, is to be limited to support the charging needs of the proposed bus(es) under this NOFO.</p>
<p>Are the funds from the Driving a Cleaner Illinois program stackable with other programs?</p>	<p>With regards to Volkswagen grant funding, which are private funds, our Notice of Funding Opportunities state “Applicants may use other funding (federal, state, or other) as part or all of their mandatory cost share, provided such other funding source does not place a restriction on this.” With government grant funding sources, such as Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ), the use of other government funds to provide mandatory cost shares is prohibited.</p>