

**Frequently Asked Questions: Driving a Cleaner Illinois  
Round 3 Funding**

Question	Answer
<b>School Bus</b>	
Are you planning specific outreach and/or info sessions or webinars for school districts that show interest?	As always, the Illinois EPA is prepared to address questions that may arise. The Illinois EPA will update this FAQ with questions that may arise, such that all interested parties may have information relative to the proposal.
To whom can school officials and other interested parties address their questions?	Questions are best addressed to the email <a href="mailto:EPA.vwgrants@illinois.gov">EPA.vwgrants@illinois.gov</a> .
Is the FAQ from Round 1 still relevant?	The Round 1 FAQ remains posted as it may address questions that could arise in this third funding round. However, this Round 3 Funding FAQ has been prepared and will be updated periodically to address questions received during and relative to this third funding round.
Will retrofits be included or considered in the round of funding?	No, as set forth in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), this funding round is solely for the replacement of diesel buses with new all-electric buses.
Will buses converted with brand new electric Powertrain be considered during this round of funding?	No
Are a school district's gasoline-powered 14-passenger activity vans or buses used only for extra-curricular activity transportation eligible for funding?	No, the school buses to be replaced with new all-electric school buses must be engine model year 2009 and older diesel-powered Class 4-8 school buses. A "school bus" is defined in the Trust Agreement as a Class 4-8 bus sold or introduced into interstate commerce for purposes that include carrying students to and from school or related events, and may be Type A-D.
Does the bus being replaced have to be an engine model year 2009 or older?	Yes, the VW Trust Agreement requires that eligible school buses to be replaced must be 2009 engine model year or older.
If a school district is awarded a grant for a school bus, would they receive an additional award of 75% of the amount of the charging equipment?	Charging infrastructure may be included as an eligible cost for an all-electric school bus project. The applicant will need to submit an Infrastructure Form, a cost quote, and provide the requested information on the forms and in the project management plan related to the charging equipment. The charging equipment is eligible for the same funding grant award percentage as the new school buses. However, if new charging infrastructure is included with the purchase of new all-electric school buses or if existing charging is available and adequate to support the new buses, then charging infrastructure will not be funded as part of the project.

<p>Once awarded a grant, are the grantees allowed to lease the new all-electric school bus to an entity that operates in Priority Area 1 or 2?</p>	<p>No, the applicant must be the owner and operator of the existing diesel school buses and the proposed new all-electric school buses. Each existing bus to be replaced must currently be in service and each proposed new all-electric school bus must be placed in service and operated for five years from the in-service date. The new bus(es) must be tied to a school identified in the application, along with the percentage of minority and low-income enrollment at that school. The existing diesel bus must be owned/operated by the school, school district, or commercial bus provider.</p>
<p>Once the grant agreements have been signed, how long after this date to Purchase Orders need to be placed? And when must the vehicle be delivered?</p>	<p>The project management plan required in the application requests that the applicant provide estimated dates for entering into a contract for the buses/charging equipment and for taking delivery of the new buses. It is understood that the applicant does not control the manufacturer’s production scheduling, but with prior electric school bus projects, the new buses are typically delivered about 12-18 months after the orders are placed. The timelines of various project phases, including anticipated placement of the purchase order and delivery of the buses, is included in the grant agreement with the selected grantee.</p>
<p>If a school district is awarded grant funds, is the district obligated to purchase an electric bus, or do they have the option to forgo the grant award if budget constraints, even with assistance of the grant, would not make a purchase viable?</p>	<p>The selected applicant signs the Notice of State Award (NOSA) transmitted through the Grantee Portal formally accepting the offered grant award. The Agency would expect nonperformance under a grant to be a rare occurrence due to unforeseen circumstances. In the event a grantee does not commence or otherwise complete the project per the terms of the grant agreement, the grantee is responsible for any and all costs incurred for any new all-electric school buses and/or necessary charging equipment not accepted from the manufacturer and/or placed into service per the terms of the agreement.</p>
<p>According to the Round 3 NOFO, “If infrastructure comes with the purchase of the new all-electric school bus, and it is adequate to support the proposed project, the applicant will not receive funding for infrastructure.” Can you please provide an example of this type of situation?</p>	<p>Examples of when the Agency would not fund charging infrastructure include when adequate charging equipment is provided at no additional cost by the bus manufacturer or other entity with the purchase of one or more new all-electric school buses; when the applicant already has charging infrastructure in place for prior electric school buses or other electric vehicles implemented in the fleet and the existing charging infrastructure is adequate for the proposed new all-electric school bus(es); or other instances when the applicant has made arrangements for adequate charging of its proposed new all-electric school buses and Agency-funded charging infrastructure is not needed.</p>
<p>If a school district does not own any buses (they lease) would they be allowed to purchase older diesel buses to scrap (same number as funded by the grant), in order to qualify for the grant?</p>	<p>No, the applicant must be the owner and operator of the existing diesel school buses and the proposed new all-electric school buses. There are certifications and requested information in the</p>

	application regarding the applicant’s actual operation of the existing diesel bus(es).
If a school district has a contract with a commercial school bus provider, but the buses currently serving the district are no older than model year 2012 (and VW grant requires that the existing buses to scrap must be model year 2009 and older), can the school bus company select a MY 2009 bus serving another school district in the same priority area to scrap, and then the new all-electric school bus will serve the district requesting the new bus?	Yes, this is permissible. In this instance, the applicant must be the contracted bus company that owns and operates both the existing bus(es) to be scrapped and the proposed new all-electric school bus(es). The existing bus(es) must have been in operation at least 80% of its operational hours each year in 2017, 2018, and 2019 in the eligible priority area and the proposed new bus(es) must serve the school identified in the application and also operate at least 80% of its operational hours in the same eligible priority area as the scrapped bus(es) for five years from the in-service date.
If a school district has a contract with a commercial school bus provider, but the contract is up for renewal every few years and there is a possibility that a different contractor will be providing the bus service, how does this grant work for school districts that would like to have electric school buses serve their districts but utilize short-term contracts with private bus companies?	As stated in the NOFO, the new all-electric school bus(es) must be tied to a school in a school district in the application and serve that school for five years from the in-service date.
If a private school bus company serves several different school districts and the buses are parked at a central terminal, would the company be able to submit multiple applications, one application for each served school district?	Yes, a private school bus company may submit a separate individual application package per school district for one or more of the school districts it serves. However, as stated in the NOFO, each all-electric school bus must be tied to a specific school and serve that school for a minimum of five years from the in-service date.
If a private school bus company is willing to take on a larger percentage of the cost-share, would a school district served by the company be able to receive more than one bus per location before all other successful applicants receive funding?	Applicants may not provide more than the minimum cost-share. In addition, successful applicants will only receive funding for more than one all-electric school bus if there is funding left over after all other successful applicants have been awarded funding for one all-electric school bus.
Which specific pages of the Uniform Budget Template and lines/boxes need to be completed for electric school bus and related charging equipment applications?	For this NOFO, the following Uniform Budget Template pages/sections need to be completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 1: Complete the top, with some of the information available on the first page of the NOFO, Fiscal Year is FY 2022, and enter the total eligible grant award amount for both the electric school bus(es) and requested charging equipment in “State of Illinois Grant Requested” (Total Revenue) and in Line 4 “Equipment,” and repeat this amount in Line 16 “Total Direct Costs” and Line 18 “Total Costs State Grant Funds.”</li> <li>• Page 2: Complete top and check box in Section A.5 as no reimbursement of indirect costs is being requested.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 3: Complete top and Fiscal Year is FY 2022; Under “Revenues,” enter the total required cost-share amount for the bus(es) and any charging equipment in “b) Cash” and in “Total Non-State Funds.” In Line 4 “Equipment,” Line 16, and Line 18, repeat the total applicant cost-share.</li> <li>• Page 4</li> <li>• Page 9: Itemize each school bus in the application, along with any requested charging equipment, in both sections (top section is for the “State Total” or grant amount of each item and bottom section is for the “Non-State Total” or required cost-share amount per item). Also provide a brief narrative describing the equipment, grant request, and overall eligible cost amounts, along with the cost-share or match amounts.</li> <li>• Page 22: In Line 4 “Equipment,” enter the total “State” amount (eligible grant amount) and the “Non-State” amount (applicant required cost-share). Enter the amounts for the “State Request” and “Non-State Amount” under each respective column and enter the Total Project Cost.</li> </ul> <p>The pages not addressed above do not need to be included in the application package.</p>
<p>On the Uniform Grant Application form “1. Type of Submission,” are we to check the Pre-application box if we are new to this grant program, or the Application box? Also, do we need to prequalify before we submit the grant?</p>	<p>Applicants are to check the box for “Application” as this is an application submittal. As for any “prequalification” steps prior to submitting an application, see Section D.3 in the NOFO which requires applicants to be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM).</p>
<p>In the application for the grant, do you need to see the “text boxes” in the pdf document for the forms, or can we fill it out using text boxes and remove the borders so it is unseen?</p>	<p>Text boxes around the information you enter are not required as long as the application is readable.</p>
<p>When filling out the provided PDF application, is it permissible to use Adobe Acrobat's Prepare Form tool to automatically generate fillable text fields and checkboxes that correspond directly with the application to facilitate data entry and generation of a clear and legible response?</p>	<p>As long as the forms are accurate, complete and readable, you may use any program needed.</p>

<p>In the NOFO, Section D.2 calls for an Overall Project Cost Estimate (Item 6) and a Cost Estimate for Infrastructure (if applicable) (Item 7). If there are applicable infrastructure costs captured in Item 7, is the Overall Cost Estimate inclusive or exclusive of those infrastructure costs?</p>	<p>The Overall Project Cost Estimate should include any infrastructure costs (if infrastructure is requested) along with the costs of the requested all-electric school buses in the application.</p>
<p>In the Uniform Grant Budget Template, pages 6 to 21 do not have the functionality to allow for adding line items to arrive at State and Non-State totals. Is it therefore the intention that the cost estimates called for in Section D.2, Item 6 and Item 7, should be used to provide line item level of detail and associated narrative? If that is the case, what information should be entered on the lines available on pages 6 to 21 of the Uniform Grant Budget Template? Is permissible to recreate the tables for pages 6-21 in Word or Excel (and submit as PDF)?</p>	<p>Please see <a href="#">“Round 3 GATA Budget Template with highlights.pdf”</a> link under Webinars &amp; Frequently Asked Questions on our Driving a Cleaner Illinois site. The pages and items/fields to be completed are highlighted. From pages 6 to 21, the only page that needs to be completed is page 9 “Equipment.” Under “Item,” if all the all-electric school buses in the application are the same make, model, model year, and cost, then use one line in both the “State Total” section (eligible amounts covered by the grant) and the “Non-State Total” (required cost-share eligible amounts covered by the applicant), consistent with the funding and cost-share percentages described in the NOFO. If not all of the buses are the same make, model, model year, and cost, then a separate line item will need to be included for each type of bus that differs from the others listed. For both the State Total and Non-State Total sections, insert the quantity, State or Non-State cost per item, and State or Non-State overall equipment cost of all the buses in that line. Likewise, include the manufacturer and model of any requested infrastructure in both sections and insert quantity, cost per item, and overall infrastructure equipment cost for both the State Total and Non-State Total accordingly, with overall Total Equipment cost inserted in the last row. The GATA Uniform Grant Budget Template PDF file is posted under Webinars &amp; Frequently Asked Questions on our site.</p>
<p>Are ineligible costs to be included in the Uniform Grant Budget Template - specifically Section B and the cost element breakout tables pages 6-21.</p>	<p>Ineligible costs are to be identified in the project budget in the Project Management Plan, separated from eligible costs, as stated in Section B.3 of the NOFO. With regards to the forms and as stated in the corresponding instructions, the cost figures associated with the new all-electric school buses and any requested infrastructure should only include eligible costs. In addition, vendor cost quotes that may be included with the application should indicate which items on the quote are ineligible costs (if any). Only include eligible costs in the Uniform Grant Budget Template pages that need to be completed.</p>

<p>How would you like the minority and low-income students served presented in the application? Do we only count a student who meets both conditions at the school?</p>	<p>Section 1.10 in the “New All-Electric School Bus Application Form” requests the “Percentage of Minority/Low Income Enrollment.” The corresponding instructions in Section 1.10 state that applicants must identify the percentage of minority and low-income enrollment for the previous academic school year at the school the proposed school bus will serve. Furthermore, “applicants must provide a single percentage that encompasses both minority and low-income students.” Applicants are not to provide separate percentages and students should not be counted twice. For example, if 55% of the student population at the school are both minority and low-income, then insert 55%.</p>
<p>The engine model year of the diesel buses is 2004 but the engine plates are unreadable. What should applicants do if the engine serial number is illegible?</p>	<p>If the engine serial number on the engine plate is illegible, insert “illegible” or similar in Section 2.9 on the “New All-Electric School Bus Application Form.”</p>