



## **Diesel Emission Reduction Grants (DERG) 2020 Responses to Questions: Updated 11/13/20**

### **Agency Contacts for this Program**

Contact for financial questions: Carolyn Watkins, Office of Environmental Education, 614-644-3768, [Carolyn.Watkins@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:Carolyn.Watkins@epa.ohio.gov)

Contact for technical questions: Alan Harness, Division of Air Pollution Control, 614-644-4838, [Alan.Harness@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:Alan.Harness@epa.ohio.gov)

Ohio EPA and the Ohio Department of Transportation are offering a grant application opportunity for the [Diesel Emission Reduction Grant](#) (DERG) program, with \$10 million in funding available for projects to replace or repower eligible diesel public transit buses in 38 Ohio priority counties. The 2020 Request for Proposals (grant application guidelines) was released on October 29, 2020, with an online application form to be submitted at [https://odot/formstack.com/forms/2020\\_derq](https://odot/formstack.com/forms/2020_derq). The deadline to submit applications is 5:00 p.m. on December 11, 2020.

Ohio EPA hosted a conference call for interested grant applicants on November 10, 2020. Answers to questions received on the call are presented below along with answers to questions Ohio EPA and ODOT staff are providing to email and telephone inquiries. Ohio EPA will continue to update this document throughout the application period.

### **Question 1: Can we use these grants to replace older CNG transit buses with new CNG buses?**

**Response:** No, the funds are limited to replacement of diesel buses.

### **Question 2: Can the grant cover the cost of chargers for electric transit buses?**

**Response:** Yes, the grant can include the cost of charging infrastructure for electric buses and fueling infrastructure for CNG buses. Applicants should be aware that grant applications are ranked and awarded based on the cost effectiveness of grant dollars awarded per ton of PM 2.5 and NOx emission reductions. Grant funds going toward charging or fueling infrastructure do not contribute directly to emission reductions and may make a grant application less cost effective and therefore rank it lower in the competition for funds.

**Question 3: Can we use UTP funds for the coming year as a match?**

**Response:** UTP funds are considered state funds and not federal funds and may be used as part of the required match even though they have not yet been awarded.

**Question 4: Some of the buses we want to replace are very old and the engine ID tag may be missing. Are they still eligible?**

**Response:** Yes, as long as you can provide the VIN number for the old bus. Contact [Alan.Harness@epa.com](mailto:Alan.Harness@epa.com) for assistance in deriving the engine model year of the bus from the VIN number.

**Question 5: What if delivery of the new buses is delayed and we don't know whether we will be receiving model year 2021, 2022 or even 2023 buses?**

**Response:** For purposes of estimating emissions, we are concerned with the engine model year rather than the chassis model year. Please enter into the fleet data spreadsheet the new engine model year you expect to receive based on the best information you have from the vendor. After a grant is awarded, we can approve an amendment to revise the model year if needed.

**Question 6: Would a model year 2015 transit bus be eligible for replacement?**

**Response:** Nothing in the FHWA's Interim Program Guidance under MAP-21 specifies a threshold model year, so yes. However, funded projects must have demonstrated emission reductions. Replacing relatively recent model year buses may not achieve as much emission reductions as replacing older buses, and thus may not rank as well in the competition for grant funds.

**Question 7: Would a smaller class 4 transit bus be eligible for replacement?**

**Response:** Yes, but replacing a bus this size will not have the same emission reduction benefits as replacing a standard full sized transit bus, so the grant application may not score as well compared to other applications received this cycle.

**Question 8: Can public school districts apply to replace school buses?**

**Response:** No, this cycle is limited to applications from public transit systems.

**General Reminders:**

Current (V20F-xxx) and pending (V21F-xxx) grants from Ohio EPA's VW Diesel Mitigation Trust Fund are classified as state dollars and eligible to use as part of the required match for DERG projects. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact [Carolyn.Watkins@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:Carolyn.Watkins@epa.ohio.gov) to be sure that proposed purchasing schedule will meet the requirements for both grants. Ohio EPA expects to announce the pending V21F awards before the end of November.

Ohio EPA and ODOT staff will compare the VIN numbers for buses proposed for replacement to the VIN numbers on previously awarded DERG, VW and AFV grants, to verify that the buses proposed for replacement were not replaced previously, and are not new buses still under requirements for operation in eligible counties for a five year period.

Please be sure to upload the fleet data spreadsheet as an excel file attachment to the Formstack application, rather than a .pdf

On the ***applicant certification statement***, please include the case numbers of still open/pending litigation cases in Ohio.

The ***engine certificate of conformity*** is issued by US EPA or the California Air Resources Board to the vehicle manufacturer certifying that a class of engines meets applicable emission requirements under the Clean Air Act. The vendor of the new buses you wish to purchase should be able to provide it to you. Contact [Alan.Harness@epa.com](mailto:Alan.Harness@epa.com) for assistance if needed.