

Grant Application for Air Quality in Overburdened Communities Grant: Frequently Asked Questions

Why such a short period of performance?

The grant project period is currently through June 30, 2025. This is the end of the Washington state budget biennium in which the funding for this grant program was allotted. We expect to extend the project period for up to two years, although this is dependent upon Ecology receiving approval to extend the time to spend the funds. We will know about the extension in late spring after the legislative session and will work with grantees to amend grant agreements to extend the project period, if needed. Proposed projects need to be accomplished in the period of performance. If the project period is extended, Ecology will work with grantees to amend the proposed scope of work, if needed. Proposed changes to the scope of the project must not affect the original scoring of the application.

How many applications and projects can an organization submit?

Applicants may submit up to two applications. Applicants must submit separate applications for each overburdened community (project area). Each application may include multiple eligible activities. The online application platform (called EAGL) only allows one application per organization. To request a second application, contact AQcommunitygrants@ecy.wa.gov. Requesting a second application can take 3-5 business days.

Are collaborative applications allowed?

Collaborative applications are encouraged, but only one organization can apply on behalf of the partnership. That organization will be responsible for all grant deliverables and requirements. Applicants can only be the lead applicant for two overburdened communities, although applicants may participate in projects for additional applications.

Can a grant application include both project types?

Yes, there are two types of eligible projects:

- **Planning and community engagement** to develop projects that will reduce criteria air pollution, and
- **Implementation** for projects that have already completed a community engagement process.

Applicants may propose projects in either of the eligible project types or propose a project that contains elements of both eligible project types. The project type is not a scored element of the grant application.

Is zero emission transportation an eligible project?

The following zero emission transportation projects are **only eligible for planning and design projects**. Any funds remaining after project planning and design are complete and all related deliverables have been submitted to Ecology may be used for implementation, pending Ecology approval.

- Grid capacity and modernization
- Public charging that can serve fleet needs or public needs for medium and heavy-duty vehicles
- Programs for zero-emission transportation technical training (including career technical education programs, certification programs, vocational training, and degree programs)
- Charging infrastructure site-scoping, construction feasibility and analysis (includes planning and design) for zero-emission vehicles and equipment
- Utility upgrades to support vehicle to grid (V2G) capabilities and plans to support electric vehicle (EV) driver's ability to charge vehicles during power outages
- Battery storage for EV chargers

Zero emission transportation projects not listed in the bullets above are eligible for **both** planning and design **and** implementation projects as long as they will reduce air pollution in an overburdened community and meet other grant requirements. This may include electric vehicle purchases. Insurance and operating costs associated with the EVs are not eligible under this grant program and will not be reimbursed.

We initially did not intend to include this type of emissions reduction project as eligible under the program because there is a lot of funding available for zero emission transportation efforts. We heard during our community engagement that this was an important project of interest, so we changed our approach. This approach helps ensure funds are used on the highest priority projects identified by communities to reduce sources of criteria air pollution

Can you tell us who else is applying so we can try and coordinate?

We cannot share applicant information while applications are open. We received a suggestion to create an opt-in list for organizations interested in partnering on applications. We appreciate this suggestion, but because of the time it would take to develop, we don't think it would be useful for this application cycle. We appreciate this innovative idea and, if this program receives addition funding in the future, we will consider how we can best support coordination across applicants.

Is education and outreach an eligible activity?

Education efforts that are part of outreach and engagement will be eligible so long as they support the primary goals of the grant, which are to engage communities in the design of the air pollution emission reduction projects and implement air pollution reduction projects to improve air quality.

Do projects have to be within the boundaries of the identified overburdened communities?¹

Grant funds can be used for projects that reduce criteria air pollution in one of the identified overburdened communities. However, airsheds are dynamic, and pollution sources may be outside the map boundaries of communities. Because of this, it is okay for projects to occur outside of community boundaries as long as they reduce air pollution within at least one of the identified communities.

Is \$700,000 the maximum amount I can apply for?

Applicants may apply for more than \$700,000 in their application if their expected project costs are over \$700,000. However, Ecology intends to award up to \$700,000 per application. If funds available exceed the requested funds, Ecology may offer more than \$700,000 per application. If requested funds exceed funds available, Ecology may offer less than \$700,000 per application.

Are projects that reduce sources of precursors to criteria air pollutants eligible?

Ammonia, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) are precursors to criteria air pollutants including ozone, Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and secondary PM_{2.5}. Projects addressing sources of precursors to criteria air pollution **are not eligible**. Projects addressing criteria air pollutants that also address precursors are eligible. For example, combustion is a major source of precursors, and is already eligible because it reduces criteria air pollutants directly. Additionally, sulfur dioxide (SO₂) is also a precursor to secondary PM_{2.5}, but it is already designated as a criteria air pollutant, so projects addressing reductions of SO₂ emissions are eligible.

¹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c10bdbfc69984a9d85346be1a23f6338>