

Grant Application for Air Quality Clean School Bus Grant Program 2023–2025 (round 2): Frequently Asked Questions

What are eligible costs associated with charging infrastructure installation?

Infrastructure funding may be used for:

- charging unit and charging cable
- mount and/or pedestal
- power distribution to the pedestal
- electrical panels and their installation
- upgrades to
 - existing electrical panels or electrical service
 - transformers and their installation
 - wiring/conduit and its installation
 - stationary energy storage systems that power the equipment (e.g., batteries) and their installation
 - on-site power generation systems that power the equipment (e.g., solar and wind power generation equipment) and their installation

Are telematics and cameras on school buses eligible equipment?

The applicant must submit price quotes for each replacement zero-emission school bus and equivalent fossil-fueled bus. If cameras and telematics are included on both quotes, we will accept the quotes to determine the award amount.

What fossil-fueled bus should an applicant use to determine the cost difference between fossil-fueled bus and zero-emission bus?

The applicant must submit price quotes for each replacement zero-emission school bus and equivalent fossil-fueled bus. The fossil-fueled bus quote should reflect the fuel type the applicant would be purchasing if not able to purchase a zero-emission bus.

Do districts have to release ownership of fossil-fueled buses being scrapped?

The grant recipient must provide to Ecology documentation of the permanent destruction of the school bus. The documentation must include:

- Completed and signed certificate of destruction (form provided by Ecology)
- Verification photos of the permanent destruction, which includes:
 - Cutting a minimum 3 inch by 3-inch hole in the engine block
 - Disabling the chassis by cutting the vehicle's frame rails in half

An alternative destruction plan may be approved by the Ecology project manager on a case-by-case basis.

If a school district boundary overlaps with a single (or more) census tract(s) scoring 9 or 10 on the EHD map, the application will score 100 points for the overburdened category?

Yes, a school district's boundaries that overlap a census tract with an overall rank of 9 or 10 on the EHD map will score 100 points.

I understand infrastructure funds can be awarded up to \$75,000 per bus. If a district scraps and replaces two buses, are they eligible for up to \$150,000 for infrastructure?

Yes, depending on the applicant district FRPL percentage or rural school district status, school districts are eligible for \$50,000-\$75,000 per bus. Refer to Table 1: Funding levels on page 13 of the grant guidelines. For example, if a school district with FRPL percentage of 70% were to replace five eligible school buses with zero-emission buses, they would be eligible for up to \$375,000 for infrastructure.

Our district was awarded under the first round of AQCESB-2325. For round 2, is it stacking the funding to cover more than the replacement cost or only up to 100% of the replacement cost? Is there a place to get more information about the opportunity? The opportunities posted in the grants portal do not have the award number, so it's not clear which one to refer to.

AQZEWSOT-2425 (round 2) allows school districts to apply for funding for up to 10 EV buses. You may choose to stack funding for only the new buses awarded in AQCESB-2325 (round 1), or stack funding for round 1 buses plus scrap and replace additional buses. See page 11 of round 2 guidelines.

For stacking funding on round 1 buses, we cannot cover more than the replacement cost (100% of the replacement cost).

What do I do to apply for the grant stacking grant AQZEWSOT-2425 (round 2)?

Read the [Washington State Clean Diesel Program: Ecology's Zero Emission School Bus Grant Program 2023-2025 Grants Announcement and Grant Guidelines](https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2402014.html).¹ Follow the [Air Quality Zero Emission School Bus Grant Program Application Instructions](https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2402016.html).² These are listed on Ecology's web page and in the EAGL application form. In the required fleet list spreadsheet, make a note for round 1 buses that you are requesting additional funding (stacking). For any additional buses requested in the fleet list, note that they are new buses for scrap and replacement (not eligible for stacking).

¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2402014.html>

² <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2402016.html>

We have already purchased the two buses and we received a \$250,000 rebate for each bus. However, the remaining cost not covered by the rebate is \$324,000. We are replacing two of our old diesel buses (2006 or older) with the new electric buses. Can we use this grant in conjunction with the EPA rebate to offset the costs?

Ecology cannot provide funding for completed projects. If the school district intends to purchase two more electric buses, the Zero Emissions Grant funding opportunity is compatible with combining state grant funds with EPA grant funds (stacking) under a new project. The school district must be awarded an Ecology grant and execute an Ecology grant agreement **before** buying new EV school buses. Project costs incurred before the start date of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.

For the total cost and eligible cost in the round 2 grant application, should we calculate it based on the uncovered cost portion for the 9 buses from Ecology round 1 and EPA rebate for buses and charging infrastructure?

Yes. In the required fleet list spreadsheet provided in the application, make a note which buses are Ecology round 1 buses that you are requesting additional funding (stacking) and which ones are EPA-funded buses requesting stacking. Before we execute a grant agreement, we will develop a budget spreadsheet for your review. We will also likely request documentation of EPA funding to make sure Ecology does not pay more than the total project costs.

Can a type A gas bus be scrapped for a large electric bus under this grant

Yes. An eligible project is the scrap and replacement of fossil fueled school buses with new zero emission school buses. School buses being scrapped must be powered by fossil fuels such as diesel, gasoline, propane autogas, or natural gas.

The bus scrapped and the new zero emission bus purchased do not have to be the same type. For example, applicants who want to buy a new type A zero emission bus may scrap a fossil fuel powered type C or type D bus (and vice versa).

If an applicant is selected for an award, what documentation does Ecology require to initiate the reimbursement payment to the awardee?

- Invoice for the new bus(s). Invoices for the charging infrastructure.
- Bus Reimbursement only: Certificate of Destruction for the scrapped bus including required documentation as described by the certificate of destruction.
- Bus Reimbursement only: Demonstrate the ability to charge or fuel the new zero emission school bus before receiving reimbursement for the bus. Photo of the new or temporary charging station including Climate Commitment Act (CCA) branding material required by the Governor's directive 24-01.
- Bus Reimbursement only: Digital photographs of CCA branding materials placed on the new zero emission buses as required by the Governor's directive 24-01.

Typically, how long after the documents have been submitted does the payment arrive in the awardee's bank account, or is it a check that is issued and mailed out?

- The grant recipient must have a [statewide vendor number](#) (SWV#).³ The reimbursement is handled as specified by the SWV# setup. I think all school districts have a SWV#.
- Ecology will pay the recipient within 30 days after receipt of a properly completed recipient reimbursement request.

Q&A from Washington Association of Pupil Transportation conference sessions on June 25, 2024

EPA funding opportunities only allow for costs between the electrical meter and the charger. Does Ecology's grant opportunity have similar restrictions?

No. As long as the electrical upgrades or costs support the charging of the electric bus purchased with grant funding, costs are eligible. See the first question in this FAQ document for details about eligible costs.

When does the Cultural Resource Review take place?

The required Cultural Resource Review must take place after grant agreements are signed and before any ground-breaking activity.

Can Ecology funds be used to stack with awarded federal EPA grants?

Yes, funding from this opportunity can be used to stack with awarded EPA grants or rebates. This funding opportunity, AQZEWS DOT-2425 (round 2), allows school districts to apply for funding for up to 10 EV buses. You may choose to stack funding for buses with existing funding (EPA or Ecology funding) and/or scrap and replace additional buses. The total number of buses cannot exceed 10. See page 11 of round 2 guidelines.

For stacking funding projects, we cannot cover more than the replacement cost (100% of the replacement cost).

³ <https://ofm.wa.gov/it-systems/accounting-systems/statewide-vendorpayee-services>