

Connecticut Clean School Bus Supplemental Funds

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Request for Applications

December 19, 2024

I. Introduction

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has developed a grant application by which Applicants participating in the Connecticut Green Bank's (CGB) **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS DEPLOYMENT (RFP)** (see RFP at [this link](#)) issued on December 6, 2024, may request DEEP grant funds for electric school bus projects. DEEP is issuing this Request for Applications (RFA) and initiating a process to provide upon demonstration of need, and within available resources, a grant award to successful Applicants selected as part of the CGB's RFP. Applications for both the DEEP grant supplemental funds and CGB low-interest financing support will be evaluated in tandem.

II. Goals of the Program

DEEP has been working on school bus electrification as part of a broader strategy to reduce harmful diesel emissions that can negatively impact air quality and public health. To support this transition, DEEP has identified securing federal funding from the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a top priority, and has supported statewide efforts by school districts, student transportation providers and other stakeholders to secure federal funding to deploy electric school buses (ESBs). Under EPA's [Clean School Bus program](#) (EPA's CSB), EPA has awarded \$ 52.1 million in Connecticut. These funds, in the form of both grants and rebates of various levels for both school districts and school bus transportation providers across the state, are intended to support the deployment of 181 ESBs and ESB charging infrastructure. This effort will also help advance Connecticut's 2030 environmental justice (EJ) community deployment requirement, as required by the Connecticut Clean Air Act.¹

To assist in meeting the statutory requirements under the Connecticut Clean Air Act, DEEP has been authorized \$20 million in bond funding under Public Act 22-118², to support a supplemental grant program for municipalities, school districts, and school bus operators to support the purchase or lease of ESBs. Of the \$20 million authorized, \$6 million has been allotted by the Bond Commission. This RFA is specific to the deployment of that \$6 million in bond funding. DEEP intends to utilize this funding to prioritize projects participating in EPA CSB and EPA's Clean Heavy Duty Vehicle Program (EPA's CHDVP) to ensure that all

¹ See CGS Sec. 22a-201d (b) ("On and after January 1, 2030, one hundred per cent of the school buses that provide transportation for school districts entirely within an environmental justice community as of July 1, 2022, or in an area that encompasses at least one environmental justice community as of July 1, 2022, shall be zero-emission school buses."); *see also id.* ("(a) As used in this section, . . . (3) "environmental justice community" has the same meaning as provided in subsection (a) of section 22a-20a").

² See [AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023, CONCERNING PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE, SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AND OTHER ITEMS TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE](#), section 314(d)(1) at p.453.

awarded federal funding is fully utilized in Connecticut and that the selected projects are fully implemented.

III. Eligible Applicants and Technologies

Eligible applicants as outlined in Public Act 22-118 include: municipalities, school districts and school bus operators requesting funding to maximize federal funding for the purchase or lease of zero-emission school buses and electric vehicle charging or fueling infrastructure.

DEEP is seeking grant applications that incorporate eligible technologies including ESBs and associated ESB electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) consistent with the eligibility requirements outlined in section IV Eligible Technologies of the CGB RFP [Request-For-Proposals-For-Electric-School-Bus-Deployment.pdf](#) and consistent with the statutory requirements of DEEP's bond authorization under Public Act 22-118.

IV. Requirements for Submitting Applications for Supplemental Grant Awards

As part of their response to the Connecticut Green Bank RFP, interested Applicants for DEEP's Supplemental Grant Awards shall complete:

1. The Connecticut Clean School Bus Grant Application (Form) available at [December 12 2024 Clean School Bus Matching Grant Application Masterpdf.pdf](#) (also included as Exhibit C in the Connecticut Green Bank's RFP) and the
2. Associated School Bus Fleet Inventory Form (Excel spreadsheet) available at this link. [CT Clean School Bus](#)

Each Applicant must submit these Forms as part of the Proposer's response to the CGB's RFP. Applicants shall also supply a copy of the two Forms to DEEP as detailed in the Form submission instructions (see Part V of the Form). Submission of a complete Clean School Bus Supplemental Grant Application along with the School Bus Inventory Spreadsheet will enable DEEP staff to conduct a timely review of applications submitted.

V. Evaluation Criteria

DEEP proposes to evaluate applications based on the following proposed evaluation criteria:

1. Only Applications that are complete and submitted by **January 7, 2025**, will be considered for funding.
2. A demonstration that the proposed project maximizes EPA's CSB or EPA's CHDVP or other federal funding for electric vehicles.
3. DEEP is prioritizing projects that can demonstrate readiness for implementation, readiness includes factors such as existing federal funding, infrastructure planning with Connecticut utilities, advanced site planning, and procurement schedules for buses.
4. The demonstrated ability of a proposal to achieve DEEP policy goals listed above and including but not limited to: emission reductions as quantified by the EPA Diesel Emission Quantifier (DEQ), project location in EPA priority districts, Low-

Income/Disadvantaged Communities (LIDAC) (Justice 40) or State of Connecticut Environmental Justice communities, including distressed municipalities, as defined by CGS section 22a-20a(a).

5. The costs/benefit analysis of a proposal, including but not limited to; the cost per vehicle, cost per EVSE installation, cost per ton of air pollution reduced (i.e., oxides of nitrogen, fine particulate matter, and greenhouse gases) and age of replaced vehicles.

VI. Agency Reservation of Rights

DEEP reserves the right to accept or reject any applications, or to require additional information needed to review and evaluate submissions. DEEP also reserves the right to issue partial awards or otherwise adjust award levels to leverage the use of available federal funding under EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, EPA's ESB and EPA's CHDVP or other federal funding.

VII. Timeline

DEEP will be utilizing the timeline outlined in the CGB's RFP: All deadlines are at 4pm on the days listed below.

- CGB RFP Posting: December 6, 2024
- Proposer Questions Due to CGB on both CGB's RFP and DEEP's Notice: December 20, 2024, by noon
- Responses to Questions from CGB Posted RFP and DEEP's Notice: December 23, 2024
- Submissions Due: January 7, 2025
- Review and Approval: TBD

DEEP will review and evaluate applications received through this RFA, and the CGB's RFP issued on December 6, 2024. DEEP will be evaluating applications according to the criteria outlined in section IV and will make decisions on the funding awards for the \$6 million in available bond funding. Submission of a complete Clean School Bus Supplemental Grant Application along with the School Bus Inventory Spreadsheet will enable DEEP staff to conduct a timely review of applications submitted.

Final Selection Process and Awards

Upon completing its evaluation of applications, DEEP will submit the rankings of all proposals to the Commissioner. The final selection of a successful application is at the discretion of the Commissioner. Any proposer selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the Agency. Such negotiations may, but will not automatically, result in a contract. All unsuccessful proposers will be notified by e-mail or U.S. mail, at DEEP's discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process. DEEP reserves the right to decline to award contracts for activities in which the Commissioner considers there are not adequate respondents.

These project awards are reimbursement grants that are funded through contracts, which may include approval by the Office of the Attorney General. This means that payment for the project awarded activity will occur according to the terms of the state contract after the grant project has been completed and final outputs have been submitted and approved by DEEP. Proof that payments have been made for project expenses such as invoices and canceled checks, must be submitted before reimbursement will occur. **Reimbursement can only be issued for eligible cost incurred during the grant period – no reimbursements will be issued for expenditures made before receipt of an executed contract or after the contract has expired.**

VIII. Contact Information

Questions regarding this Request for Applications should be submitted to DEEP.mobilesources@ct.gov. Please include the subject line “Connecticut Clean School Bus Supplemental Grant”. More information can also be found at [CT Clean School Bus](#).

IX. Confidentiality and Freedom of Information Act

Proposers supplying information to DEEP shall be aware that DEEP is a public state agency and is subject to the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) C.G.S. § 1-200 et seq. any information provided to it may become the subject of a FOIA access request. Proposers are generally advised not to include in their applications any confidential information, all information submitted should be publicly accessible.

X. Terms and Conditions

1. By submitting an application in response to this RFA, an applicant implicitly agrees to comply with the following terms and conditions:
2. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. The State is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate in its hiring, employment, or business practices. The State is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities.
3. Preparation Expenses. Neither the State nor the Agency shall assume any liability for expenses incurred by a proposer in preparing, submitting, or clarifying any application submitted in response to this RFA.
4. Exclusion of Taxes. The Agency is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the federal government and the State. Proposers are liable for any other applicable taxes.
5. This RFA is not An Offer. Neither this RFA nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of the State or the Agency or confer any rights on any proposer unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. A sample contract/PSA can be found at this link [PERSONAL SERVICE AGREEMENT](#) and includes the State’s pertinent Standard Terms and Conditions for entering into a contract with the State.

6. Awards will be issued with successful applicants upon the execution of a contract. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the applicant and DEEP and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. The State shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the proposer or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful proposer is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the Agency and, if required, by the Attorney General's Office.
7. Contract Compliance, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and R.C.S.A. § 46a-68j-21 thru 43, inclusive. Connecticut statutes and regulations impose certain obligations on State agencies (as well as contractors and subcontractors doing business with the State) to ensure that State agencies do not enter into contracts with organizations or businesses that discriminate against protected class persons.
8. Consulting Agreements, C.G.S. § 4a-81. Pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 4a-81 the successful contracting party shall certify that it has not entered into any consulting agreements in connection with this Contract, except for the agreements listed below. "Consulting agreement" means any written or oral agreement to retain the services, for a fee, of a consultant for the purposes of (A) providing counsel to a contractor, vendor, consultant or other entity seeking to conduct, or conducting, business with the State, (B) contacting, whether in writing or orally, any executive, judicial, or administrative office of the State, including any department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority, official or employee for the purpose of solicitation, dispute resolution, introduction, requests for information, or (C) any other similar activity related to such contracts. "Consulting agreement" does not include any agreements entered into with a consultant who is registered under the provisions of chapter 10 of the Connecticut General Statutes as of the date such contract is executed in accordance with the provisions of section 4a-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Such representation shall be sworn as true to the best knowledge and belief of the person signing the resulting contract and shall be subject to the penalties of false statement.
9. Campaign Contribution Restriction, C.G.S. § 9-612. For all State contracts, defined in section 9-612 of the Connecticut General Statutes as having a value in a calendar year of \$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts having a value of \$100,000 or more, the authorized signatory to the resulting contract must represent that they have received the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice advising state contractors of state campaign contribution and solicitation prohibitions, and will inform its principals of the contents of the notice, as set forth in "Notice to Executive Branch State Contractors and Prospective State Contractors of Campaign Contribution and Solicitation Limitations." Such notice is available at https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/data/forms/ContrForms/seec_form_11_notice_only.pdf
10. Gifts, C.G.S. § 4-252. Pursuant to section 4-252 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Acting Governor Susan Bysiewicz's Executive Order No. 21-2, the Contractor, for itself and on behalf of all of its principals or key personnel who submitted a bid or proposal, represents:
 - i. That no gifts were made by (A) the Contractor, (B) any principals and key personnel of the Contractor, who participate substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, or (C) any agent of the Contractor or

principals and key personnel, who participates substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, to (i) any public official or State employee of the State agency or quasi- public agency soliciting bids or proposals for State contracts, who participates substantially in the preparation of bid solicitations or requests for proposals for State contracts or the negotiation or award of State contracts, or (ii) any public official or State employee of any other State agency, who has supervisory or appointing authority over such State agency or quasi-public agency;

- ii. That no such principals and key personnel of the Contractor, or agent of the Contractor or of such principals and key personnel, knows of any action by the Contractor to circumvent such prohibition on gifts by providing for any other principals and key personnel, official, employee or agent of the Contractor to provide a gift to any such public official or State employee; and
- iii. That the Contractor is submitting bids or proposals without fraud or collusion with any person.

11. Iran Energy Investment Certification C.G.S. § 4-252(a). Pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-252(a), the successful contracting party shall certify the following: (a) that it has not made a direct investment of twenty million dollars or more in the energy sector of Iran on or after October 1, 2013, as described in Section 202 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010, and has not increased or renewed such investment on or after said date. (b) If the Contractor makes a good faith effort to determine whether it has made an investment described in subsection (a) of this section it shall not be subject to the penalties of false statement pursuant to section 4-252a of the Connecticut General Statutes. A "good faith effort" for purposes of this subsection includes a determination that the Contractor is not on the list of persons who engage in certain investment activities in Iran created by the Department of General Services of the State of California pursuant to Division 2, Chapter 2.7 of the California Public Contract Code. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impair the ability of the State agency or quasi-public agency to pursue a breach of contract action for any violation of the provisions of the resulting contract, such applicant or vendor shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked vendor or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

12. Access to Data for State Auditors. The Contractor shall provide to OPM access to any data, as defined in C.G.S. § 4e-1, concerning the resulting contract that are in the possession or control of the Contractor upon demand and shall provide the data to OPM in a format prescribed by OPM [or DEEP] and the State Auditors of Public Accounts at no additional cost.

13. The State will require the Contractor and any sub-contractors to carry insurance. A successful awardee agrees to submit sub-contractor's proof of professional liability insurance or Comprehensive General Liability Insurance (CGL) to insure against damages and costs resulting from, but not limited to, negligent acts, errors, and omissions in the performance of any engagement agreement resulting from this award.

13. Any applicant that does not agree to the representations required under this section shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked proposer or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer that is committed to complying with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please contact us at (860) 418-5910 or deep.accommodations@ct.gov if you: have a disability and need a communication aid or service; have limited proficiency in English and may need information in another language; or if you wish to file an ADA or Title VI discrimination complaint. Any person needing a hearing accommodation may call the State of Connecticut relay number - 711. Requests for accommodations must be made at least two weeks prior to any agency hearing, program, or event.