

ACT School Bus Fleet Deployment RFP Questions & Answers

**Please note that applicants are welcome to email any further questions to cleantransportation@masscec.com or sign up for our office hours [here](#)*

Eligible Expenses & Cost Share

1. What is classified as an eligible expense under the ACT School Bus Deployment RFP?
 - a. Allowed expenses are outlined on page 5 of the RFP and on page 4 of the sample Grant Agreement. MassCEC encourages applicants to email cleantransportation@masscec.com with questions on specific expenses.
2. Can grant funding be used to bring more power to a site and build out charging infrastructure?
 - a. MassCEC's ACT School Bus Fleet Deployment Program is intended to be a flexible funding program. These would be eligible expenses under the Program. Additionally, MassCEC will retain a Technical Consultant for the Program and expects the Consultant to coordinate with utilities. The Technical Consultant will also track changes in programs such as Make Ready and explore least-cost solutions.
3. Is a land purchase (for a bus depot) an eligible expense under this funding opportunity?
 - a. At this point in time, MassCEC will not permit funding to be used for land purchases. If this presents a major barrier to submitting an application for this program, please reach out to cleantransportation@masscec.com.
4. Is there a requirement for a project award to fund direct deployment activities versus deployment-support budget items such as staff salaries?
 - a. While there are no strict requirements or formal guidelines on funding allocation, MassCEC expects in most cases that at least a portion of funding will go toward direct deployment activity. The selection criteria for this funding opportunity includes goals associated with additional deployment including the maximization of GHG emissions and the efficiency of project benefits on a dollar-per-GHG basis. However, applicants are welcome to propose alternative budgets and are advised to justify the funding allocation clearly in the Budget Narrative.
5. Is engineering and architectural work an eligible expense under the ACT School Bus Deployment Program?
 - a. Yes, this would be considered an eligible use of grant funding.
6. What expenses can be considered a part of an applicant's cost share? If the school is working with a third-party school bus fleet provider, could the fleet provider's contribution to the project be considered cost share? Could direct costs (vehicles or infrastructure), or

third-party staff time dedicated to this project (working with consultants, site assessments) be considered in-kind to meet the school district's cost share requirement?

- a. Yes, project team contributions (e.g., fleet provider contributions) can count as cost share (both direct costs and labor) and should be listed in the proposed budget under funding sources and under direct labor and direct material/other costs as applicable. Please see page 5 of the RFP for general guidelines on cost share under "Allowed Expenses." For the eligibility of other specific costs and contributions, please reach out to cleantransportation@masscec.com.

Timeline

1. How will MassCEC evaluate proposals if the EPA's Clean School Bus rebates have not yet been awarded by the October 17th deployment proposal deadline?
 - a. If necessary, MassCEC will make a decision closer to the proposal deadline and will announce the decision via email and website.

Applicant Team Eligibility

1. Can a school district or third-party bus operator apply for project funding with their own implementation partner, or must they use MassCEC's selected Technical Consultant?
 - a. Yes, a school district or bus operator may apply for the project funding with their own implementation partner. While MassCEC expects the Technical Consultant to communicate and collaborate with any implementation project partners as part of their scope of work, it will not be a requirement to use MassCEC's Technical Consultant as the lead consultant.
2. Can you please clarify what type of organizations qualify as third-party school bus fleet operators? For example, does a third-party school bus fleet operator need to be a traditional owner and operator of vehicles or does an electrification program service provider qualify as an eligible partner to school districts in this program?
 - a. This program is not limited to only traditional 3rd party fleet owners and operators. An electrification program service provider qualifies as an eligible partner.
3. Can multiple school districts apply in partnership with the same third-party fleet operator?
 - a. Yes, school districts are eligible to apply in partnership with their third-party fleet operators regardless of whether the third-party fleet operator is partnering with other school districts on their applications.

Miscellaneous/Other

1. Where can we access the application documents in editable format?

- a. MassCEC can send a Word document version of the RFP upon request. Please email CleanTransportation@masscec.com if you would like to receive a Word document
2. Do applications require a formal site plan including stamped engineering drawings if the award is proposed to fund electrical infrastructure upgrades?
 - a. We expect that Attachment E, Proposed Site Plan, will provide as much detail as you are able to provide at this time. Engineering drawings are not expected but are welcome to be included if available.
3. Will this program only fund MA school districts who have been awarded under the EPA's Clean School Bus Rebate Program?
 - a. MassCEC will give preference to applicants on the Massachusetts EPA Clean School Bus priority list. Depending on the ACT School Bus application cohort, MassCEC anticipates that preference will be given to awarded EPA priority districts such that awarded districts can take full advantage of this funding and deploy successful projects.
4. How does MassCEC funding interact with the EPA funding – specifically the scrappage and use requirements? What are the expectations for how funding is passed between a school district and a 3rd-party operator?
 - a. If applicable, MassCEC expects the Technical Consultant to assist the school district and 3rd party fleet in meeting the EPA Clean School Bus requirements associated with the rebate award(s). MassCEC-funded buses will not have the same requirements as EPA funding. Please see page 6 of the RFP for Project Requirements.
 - b. The school district will ultimately be MassCEC's Grantee, and MassCEC expects the negotiation of funding transfer to occur between project team members (the school districts and 3rd party fleets, in this case).
5. Is priority given to a certain fleet ownership model (school district owned or third-party) over another in selecting school districts for grant funding?
 - a. MassCEC's goal will be to fund a diversity of projects with different operational models (including school district-owned fleets and 3rd-party-owned fleets). There will be no direct preference given to one over the other or direct guidance from MassCEC on which model to pursue for electric school buses. MassCEC anticipates that the program's Technical Consultant (who will provide technical support to school districts and fleets) may provide insight on different operational models for each school district.