

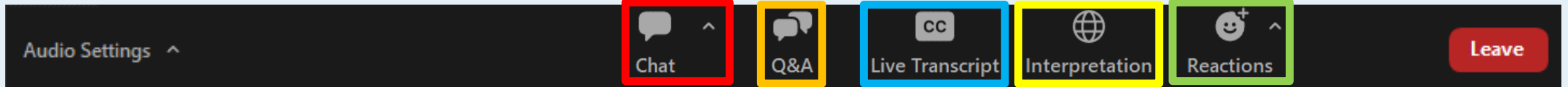


EPA CLEAN SCHOOL BUS

2023 CSB Grants Feedback & Next Steps
August 30, 2023 @ 1 PM ET

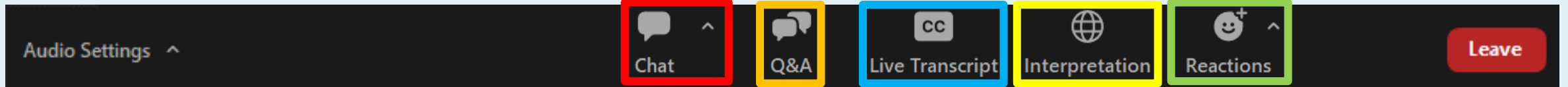
Office of Transportation and Air Quality
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Zoom Webinar Logistics



- **This presentation is being recorded.** The slides and recording will be posted to epa.gov/cleanschoolbus as soon as they are processed for posting.
- **All attendees are in listen-only mode.** Audio is available through your computer speakers or by phone. The presenter will ask you to come off mute if applicable.
- **Live transcription:** Live captioning is available by clicking the “Live Transcript” icon.
- **Live interpretation:** Live Spanish interpretation is available by clicking the “Interpretation” icon and selecting Spanish. Click “Mute Original Audio” to mute English audio when listening in Spanish.
- **Questions:** Use the Q&A feature to ask questions during the presentation. We will address as many as possible after the presentation. If we are unable to answer your question at this time, we will list all questions and answers in the Q&A document available on our website. You can also submit written questions to the EPA Clean School Bus Program helpline at cleanschoolbus@epa.gov.
- **Chat:** Chat is disabled, but the presenters might share links through the chat feature.
- **Reactions:** Reactions are enabled for you to interact with the presenter.

Logística de seminarios web en Zoom



- **Esta presentación es grabada.** Las diapositivas y la grabación se publicarán en epa.gov/cleanschoolbus tan pronto sean procesadas para su publicación.
- **Todos los asistentes se encuentran solo en modo escucha.** Hay audio disponible a través de los altoparlantes de su computadora o por teléfono. El presentador le pedirá que quite el silencio si corresponde.
- **Transcripción en vivo:** Hay subtítulos disponibles haciendo clic en el icono “Live Transcript” [Transcripción en vivo].
- **Interpretación en vivo:** Hay interpretación en español disponible haciendo clic en el icono “Interpreting” [Interpretación] y seleccionando el español. Haga clic en “Mute Original Audio” [Silenciar audio original] para silenciar el audio en inglés al escuchar en español.
- **Preguntas:** Use la función Q&A [preguntas y respuestas] para hacer preguntas durante la presentación. Abordaremos todas las que sea posible después de la presentación. Si no podemos contestar su pregunta en este momento, anotaremos todas las preguntas y respuestas en el documento Q&A correspondiente disponible en nuestro sitio web. Puede también enviar preguntas por escrito a la línea directa de ayuda del Programa de Autobuses Escolares Limpios de la EPA en cleanschoolbus@epa.gov.
- **Chat:** Se encuentra inhabilitado el chat, pero los presentadores podrían compartir enlaces a través de la función de chat.
- **Reacciones:** Las reacciones están habilitadas para que usted interactúe con el presentador.

Live Transcription / Transcripción simultánea



Live transcript is available

CC

Live Transcript

Live Spanish Interpretation / Interpretación simultánea



✓ Off

English

Spanish

Mute Original Audio



Interpretation

Agenda

Overview of the Clean School Bus (CSB) Program

2023 CSB Grant Program Overview

2023 CSB Grants Feedback

Stakeholder Suggestions

Next Steps and Resources

Overview of the Clean School Bus Program

Under **Title XI: Clean School Buses and Ferries**, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides **\$5 billion** over five years (FY22-26) for the replacement of existing school buses with zero-emission and clean school buses.

These new clean school bus replacements will produce either **zero or low tailpipe emissions** compared to their older diesel predecessors.

School bus upgrades funded under this program will result in **cleaner air on the bus, in bus loading areas, and in the communities in which they operate.**

The first funding opportunity was the **2022 Clean School Bus Rebate Program**. The second funding opportunity is the **2023 Clean School Bus Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**, which **closed on August 22, 2023**. The third funding opportunity will be the **2023 CSB Rebates**.



2023 CSB Grant Program Overview



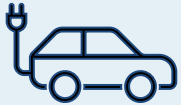
EPA anticipates awarding approximately **\$400 million** in CSB funding under this FY23 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). EPA may award more or less than \$400 million, subject to the quality of applications received.

This NOFO **includes two sub-programs**, one for school district and Tribal applicants (**School District Sub-Program: 15-50 buses**) and one for third-party applicants benefitting at least four school districts (**Third-Party Sub-Program: 25-100 buses**).

Eligible activities include the replacement of existing internal-combustion engine (ICE) school buses with **electric, propane, or compressed natural gas (CNG) school buses**, as well as the purchase and installation of **electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) infrastructure**.

EPA is prioritizing applications that will replace buses serving **high-need local education agencies, Tribal school districts funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs or those receiving basic support payments for students living on Tribal land, and rural areas**. EPA is committed to ensuring the CSB Program delivers on the **Justice40 Initiative to ensure that at least 40% of the benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities**.

Utility Engagement Pledge



A primary barrier school districts are facing is uncertainty around charging infrastructure deployment and how to engage with electric companies

- **Installation of charging infrastructure can undergo long lead times and requires close coordination with the local utility**



EPA is working with national electric utility company organizations to support school districts through a Utility Pledge that includes:

- **Facilitating Communication Between Electric Providers and School Districts**
- **Providing Technical Support and Assistance**
- **Increasing Funding and Deployment**



Additional information on the Utility Pledge and other technical assistance resources are available on: [epa.gov/cleanschoolbus-technical-assistance](https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus-technical-assistance)

Why do we collect feedback?

CSB Program Goals

Engage

- Engage stakeholders in program development

Evolve

- Evolve the programs based on successes and lessons learned

Promote

- Promote cost parity between bus technologies

Allow

- Allow school districts to apply for multiple funding opportunities

Maximize

- Maximize the number of zero emissions (ZE) and clean buses that get funded

Ensure

- Ensure a broad geographic distribution of awards

Where do we collect feedback?

CSB Helpline

Webinars

Stakeholder Meetings

Regional Staff

2023 CSB Grants Feedback

Application

Eligibility

Outreach

Support

Implementation



2023 CSB Grants Feedback – Application

- Grants.gov Application Process –
 - Some applicants found it tricky to navigate and understand what is needed to access the application (SAM.gov registration, UEI, login.gov account) and user roles within Grants.gov
- Project Narrative and Attachments –
 - Applicants liked being able to explain more about their projects (compared to rebates), attach letters of support, and include information about leveraged funds
- Application Page Limits –
 - 15-page limit made it difficult for Third-Party Sub-Program applicants to include detailed information about all school districts in their application
- Application Timing –
 - Some applicants expressed interest in rolling out grants and rebates at the same time
 - Fall might be a better time to open the application – school district contacts can be difficult to reach during summer break

2023 CSB Grants Feedback – Eligibility

- **Prioritization Criteria –**
 - Applicants appreciated the focus on environmental justice and disadvantaged communities, but expressed desire for this designation to also be tied to pollution burden
 - Self-certification was a helpful addition to the program
 - Removal of "Rural: 42" prioritization resulted in some rural communities losing priority status; however, many were still prioritized under high-need/low-income criterion
- **Bus Minimums/Maximums –**
 - Minimums made it challenging for many small and/or rural districts with smaller fleet sizes to apply for the grant, but maximums were great for large fleets to convert more of their buses
- **Infrastructure Costs –**
 - A flowchart or table could be helpful for applicants to determine what is eligible/ineligible
 - Eligible infrastructure would be a useful topic for a future webinar

2023 CSB Grants Feedback – Outreach

- Extensive Outreach –
 - Applicants liked the high number of webinars, events, emails, and phone calls to stakeholders
- Very Helpful Resources –
 - The NOFO, Application Narrative Template and Option Attachments, Q&A, Helpline Responses, Fleet Sheet, Priority School List, etc. were all helpful to applicants
 - Applicants enjoyed the variety of topics covered at webinars – school districts and bus dealers found them very helpful
- Barrier Reduction –
 - Applicants found the education and support from EPA and the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation (JOET) about how to transition to a cleaner fleet for first-time adopters of new technology useful



2023 CSB Grants Feedback – Support

- CSB Helpline –
 - Some responses didn't always directly address questions asked, and in some cases response time on questions was slow
 - Applicants gave positive feedback for region-specific contact information
 - Some applicants found it challenging to stay on top of updates made to the Q&A document – these would be helpful to call out specifically in newsletter updates
- JOET/Utility Pledge –
 - JOET and the utility pledge provided great resources to help applicants consider charging needs, workforce training needs, utility upgrades, etc., but guidance could be clearer on how the utility pledge can help connect applicants to their utilities
- More Guidance in Special Circumstances–
 - Some applicants experienced confusion due to specific circumstances (ex., eligibility of Regional Education Agencies and Supervisory Unions)

2023 CSB Grants Feedback – Implementation

- Grantee Selection –
 - Stakeholders appreciated the inclusion of project sustainability as an evaluation criterion and saw it as a good way to reward applicants with long-term EV adoption plans
 - Some applicants expressed concern that regional allocation amounts and high maximum bus numbers might result in only one application funded per region
- Funding Amount –
 - Applicants gave positive feedback for increased funding amounts and combined bus/infrastructure funding
 - Cases where funding doesn't cover the entire cost of buses and infrastructure can make it difficult to get school board budget approval
 - Some stakeholders expressed desire for more funding to be made available for propane and CNG projects
- Bus Performance –
 - JOET webinars and resources like route planning tools have been helpful for school districts to understand how buses can best fit their needs, but some districts still have uncertainties related to weather, route length, terrain, etc.

Stakeholder Suggestions



Upvote and comment on feedback similar to your own.
Type your full thought so we can follow-up if needed.
Speak slowly and clearly for the captioner/interpreter.

cleanschoolbus@epa.gov

epa.gov/cleanschoolbus

Important Dates

April 24, 2023	Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Opens
May – August, 2023	Various Webinars on CSB Grant Program <i>More information can be found on the www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus website under the ‘Webinars’ section.</i>
August 9, 2023	Final Date to Submit Questions
August 22, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. (ET)	NOFO Closes – Application Deadline <i>Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) no later than Tuesday, August 22, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) in order to be considered for funding</i>
November 2023 to January 2024	Anticipated Notification of Selection
February to March 2024	Anticipated Awards

2023 CSB Grant Program Application Evaluation Process



Step 1:

Threshold Criteria Review

Applicant must meet
threshold criteria to move
on to Step 2

- Application submitted by deadline via Grants.gov.
- Applicants in the School District Sub-Program must request a minimum of 15 school buses and can request up to a maximum of 50 school buses. Applicants in the Third-Party Sub-Program must request a minimum of 25 school buses and may request up to a maximum of 100 school buses.
- Third-Party Sub-Program applicants must serve at least four school district beneficiaries in a single application to be eligible.
- Applicants may only submit one application per region.
- Applications must meet requirements as defined in the NOFO to be considered eligible.

Step 2: Evaluation Criteria

Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative, following the content requirements set forth in the NOFO.

Evaluation Criteria

Project Summary and Approach

Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes and Performance Measures

Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities

Project Location - Non-Attainment or Maintenance Area

Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Project Sustainability

Workforce Development

Project Resilience to Climate Impacts

Leveraging of Additional External Funds

Budget

Leveraging Additional External Funds

To encourage federal funding to support the replacement of as many buses as possible, **points may be awarded to applicants that leverage or plan to leverage additional external funds** in order to support the proposed project activities.

- Examples of additional external funds include, but are not limited to:
 - public-private partnerships,
 - grants from other entities, or
 - the issuance of school bonds.
- Unlike CSB funds, **leveraged additional external funds are not restricted to the same set of eligible costs as CSB funding**. This means, for example, that these funds may be spent on costs such as utility-side charging infrastructure and installation.
- Funding amounts provided by EPA may change in the future and we encourage applicants to identify and use leveraged external funding.

Workforce Development

EPA is taking several steps in the Clean School Bus Program to support the creation of high-quality jobs and strong labor practices among school districts and OEMs.

- Applicants will be evaluated in part on **the extent to which their application demonstrates a plan to prepare their workforce for these new buses and infrastructure**.
- Like the rebate program, workforce development and training expenses are allowable uses of funds.

Note: Separately, EPA is also soliciting information from the bus manufacturers about their workforce practices and will be posting this on the CSB website.

Step 3:

Selection and Notification

Anticipated Timing for
Notification of Selection:
November 2023 - January
2024

- School District and Third-Party applications will be reviewed by separate panels.
- In making the final funding decisions, the EPA selection official may also consider geographic distribution, diversity of funds, number and size of awards, environmental benefits, applicability of different business models, and other Agency and programmatic priorities.
- Selectees will be notified by telephone, e-mail or postal mail by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

2023 CSB NOFO

- Selectees will be notified between November 2023 and January 2024.
- Anticipate awarding funds between February 2024 and March 2024

Future Funding Opportunities

- EPA encourages school districts to consider which competition structure (grants or rebates) best suits their needs.
- EPA anticipates opening a rebate program in fall 2023.

Resources

- [EPA's CSB Program website](#)
- The Joint Office of Energy and Transportation (cleanschoolbusTA@nrel.gov)
- The CSB helpline (cleanschoolbus@epa.gov)

Stay in Touch

- Learn more about the EPA Clean School Bus Program at epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/
 - Submit questions and feedback to cleanschoolbus@epa.gov
 - Don't miss any updates! To sign up for the listserv, please visit epa.gov/cleanschoolbus.
-



**EPA CLEAN
SCHOOL BUS**

cleanschoolbus@epa.gov

epa.gov/cleanschoolbus