

March 19, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Transportation Directors

FROM: Jameson Hamilton, Environmental Engineer II
Emissions and Control Strategies Unit
Georgia Environmental Protection Division

SUBJECT: 2023 DERA Funding Application for School Bus Early Replacement Projects

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (Georgia EPD) is pleased to announce available funding in the amount of \$636,968 for 2023 early school bus replacement projects. This funding was issued to Georgia EPD for the purposes of reducing diesel emissions through the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) State Clean Diesel Grant by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Georgia EPD is issuing a Request for Applications (RFA) to school systems in Georgia for the purpose of reducing school bus diesel emissions. The emissions will be reduced by the early replacement of older, higher emitting school buses with newer model-year buses with lower emissions. School systems that choose to replace older school buses can dramatically reduce emissions and create a healthier environment for school children, bus drivers, mechanics, teachers, and communities where the buses operate.

If a 2010 engine model year (EMY) or newer bus is replaced, the 2010 EMY or newer bus may be retained by selling the bus within Georgia provided the 2010 EMY or newer bus replaces a pre-2009 EMY bus, and the pre-2009 EMY bus is scrapped. The retained bus must be sold, and the pre-2009 replacement bus must be located within Georgia. It is preferred that the scrapped unit currently operates within the same project location(s) as the 2010 EMY or newer vehicle currently operates, however alternative scenarios will be considered. The option to sell a bus is only allowed if the nitrogen oxides (NOx) emission reduction benefits are retained or improved compared to the original application. A detailed scrappage plan must be submitted and approved by the Division prior to the sale. If the bus is sold, program income requirements apply. Project applicants are required to match a minimum of 85.5% of the project cost.

The project application is enclosed. The application period will start March 19, 2024, and the deadline for submitting applications is 4:30 p.m. on April 18, 2024. The application includes instructions on how to submit your proposal.

If requests for funding exceed available funds, the following selection preferences will apply:

- First priority will be given to public school systems whose fleets are based in counties that have been designated as a maintenance for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). The counties included are Bartow, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, Gwinnett, and Henry.
- Second priority will be given to public school systems whose fleets are based in counties that have been designated as maintenance for the 2008 Ozone NAAQS and attainment for the 2015 Ozone NAAQS. These counties are Cherokee, Coweta, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Newton, Paulding, and Rockdale.
- Third priority will be given to public school systems whose fleets are based in counties that have not been designated as nonattainment or maintenance for the 2008 or 2015 Ozone NAAQS.
- Within each priority, applications will be ranked according to the cost-effectiveness of the project (cost per ton of emission reduced over the lifetime of the project).

Please note that school buses purchased for the early replacement of existing school buses must remain in the fleet for a minimum of four years.

For those school systems interested in applying for the DERA School Bus Early Replacement RFA, please complete the enclosed application and submit it to Jameson Hamilton via e-mail or mail to the address below.

Mailing and Street Address: Georgia Environmental Protection Division
Planning and Support Program
Attn: Jameson Hamilton
4244 International Parkway, Suite 120
Atlanta, GA 30354

E-Mail Address: jameson.hamilton@dnr.ga.gov
Phone: 470-524-0516

The applications are due by 4:30 p.m. on April 18, 2024. **If you do not receive an email confirmation, after submitting your application, please contact Jameson Hamilton to confirm.**

Once the RFA closes, Georgia EPD staff will review each application to ensure eligibility as stipulated in the grant criteria. Recommendations for issuing sub-grants will be made to the EPD Director based on the top-ranked projects and available funding.

If you have any questions related to the grant criteria, the information contained in the cover letter, or the application, please contact Jameson Hamilton. Note that Mr. Hamilton will share the questions and answers with all eligible school systems so that every potential applicant will have access to the same information. Georgia EPD staff will not be able to make comments or answer questions related to the potential scoring or viability of a project while the RFA is open.

This RFA does not commit the Georgia EPD to enter into an agreement, to any cost incurred in the preparation of the response to this request or in subsequent exclusive negotiations, to procure or to contract for the project. In addition, Georgia EPD reserves the right to award projects for less than the requested amount.

Georgia EPD thanks you for your time and consideration, and we look forward to receiving your application.