**GFO-22-612**

**Electric School Bus Bi-Directional Infrastructure**

Questions and Answers

May 30, 2023

The most up to date solicitation documents (including the solicitation manual) are available at the solicitation webpage: [GFO-22-612 Webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2023-04/gfo-22-612-electric-school-bus-bi-directional-infrastructure).

The following answers are based on California Energy Commission (CEC) staff’s interpretation of the questions received. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to review the Solicitation Manual and to determine whether their proposed project is eligible for funding by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements within the solicitation. The CEC cannot give definitive advice as to whether a particular project is eligible for funding because not all proposal details are known.

**Unless indicated otherwise, all section numbers identified are from the solicitation manual (for example, “Section II.B” refers to Section II.B of the solicitation manual).** The solicitation manual is Attachment 00 found on the webpage linked above.

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| **#** | **Question** | **CEC Response** |
|  | **Eligibility** | **Applicants and Partners** |
| 1 | If a transit agency is serving regional public schools with their electric buses, will they qualify? The school buses and chargers the applicant submits will solely be used for school bus transportation, not for transit. | Based on the information provided, transit agencies serving regional public schools with electric buses may be eligible project partners; however, the solicitation requires that each project must contain a minimum of 3 Bi-Directional-Capable Electric school buses at each project location. Please see Section II.B., Table 1: Minimum Technical Requirements.  |
| 2 | What does it mean to have a business presence in California? | All corporations, limited liability companies (LLCs), limited partnerships (LPs) and limited liability partnerships (LLPs) that conduct intrastate business in California are required to be registered and in good standing with the California Secretary of State prior to its project being recommended for approval at a CEC Business Meeting. If an applicant isn't already registered, they can do so at the Secretary of State Office’s website: <https://bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov/forms/business>. |
| 3 | If a school bus fleet is under contract with a school district, is the fleet considered a school district, or does the location and partner need to be the school district rather than the fleet? | No, a fleet under contract with a school district is not considered a school district for this solicitation. All applicants must have at least one school district partner, as is now specified in Addendum 1.However, Section II.B.1. Eligible Projects has also been changed in Addendum 1 to state that “All projects must deploy and demonstrate EV charging infrastructure with capabilities for bi-directional power flow at two or more locations that support school districts in California.” |
| 4 | Do school districts need to be in a utility service area that currently supports vehicle-to-grid (V2G), or can these projects be deployed in advance of utility support? | Projects that partner with school districts not in a utility area that currently supports V2G are eligible to apply; however, the project application must demonstrate the degree to which the project team will work with electrical utility providers to ensure sufficient local grid capacity to support bi-directional charging and electric school buses, coordinate with electric utility providers to ensure timely interconnection of bi-directional chargers, and bi-directional chargers will be used for grid export or simply for local load reductions. Please see Section IV.E. Evaluation Criteria for Project Implementation criterion.  |
|  | **Eligibility**  | **Costs** |
| 5 | Can these grant funds be stacked with other incentive programs like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agencies’ (U.S. EPA) Clean School Bus funding? | Yes, stacking funds from other non-CEC programs is allowed. However, applicants must document that grant funds received through this solicitation are paying for actual costs that are not being reimbursed by any other funding source. Please also note other sources of CEC funding may not be claimed as match share.  |
| 6 | Is there any limitation on the sharing of revenue created by discharging? | No, there are not limitations on the sharing of revenue. However, revenue streams and considerations may be evaluated in the evaluation criteria, depending on the scope of the project. Please review the evaluation criteria in Section IV.E for more detail. |
| 7 | Do eligible costs include software costs like planning software or design software? | Planning or design software costs may be allowable as long as the software’s use ties directly to the Scope of Work for the project. |
|  | **Eligibility**  | **Equipment** |
| 8 | Is there any possibility for CHAdeMO chargers to be considered for this solicitation? | No. The bi-directional charging systems installed during this project must meet all Minimum Technical Requirements listed in Section II.B.3., which includes the use of the CCS-1 connector. However, chargers that use both CCS-1 and CHAdeMO may be allowable. |
| 9 | What specific communications protocol is required for bi-directional power transfer? Can you specify what specific method of communications for bi-directional power transfer CEC is proposing, or is this solicitation technology neutral regarding communication methods? | As described in Section II.B., Table 1: Minimum Technical Requirements, all chargers must be hardware ready for ISO 15118-20. A detailed definition is below.  A charger is hardware ready for ISO 15118-20 if it supports all of the following:1. Powerline carrier based high-level communication as specified in ISO 15118-3.
2. Secure management and storage of keys and certificates, including sufficient processing capabilities.
3. Transport Layer Security version 1.3.
4. Remotely receiving updates to activate or enable ISO 15118-20 use cases.

Projects may use other communication protocols in the near term to enable bi-directional charging (for example, ISO 15118-2 with modifications). Applicants will be scored based on the degree to which applications: “Explain how the project will build upon ISO 15118 hardware ready chargers and implement ISO 15118-20 software for bi-directional charging, smart charging, Plug and Charge, and/or other use cases.” Please see Section IV.E. Evaluation Criteria for Project Implementation criterion.  |
|  | **Eligibility**  | **Projects** |
| 10 | A subcontractor who is contracted with several school districts in California is planning a large V2G capable EVSE deployment at their primary bus yard. Could they apply, and would they need a second location even though the first location is large? | Two locations are required for this solicitation, regardless of the size of the locations. |
| 11 | Can the project qualify by being located at two sites within one school district or must the two locations be a different school district. | Yes. Please refer to Section II.B.1 Eligible Projects for an example of two locations within the same school district. |
| 12 | Must all projects be located on school district property, or can the charging infrastructure be located at sites owned by school bus contractors? | Section II.B.1 Eligible Projects has been changed in Addendum 1 to state that “All projects must deploy and demonstrate EV charging infrastructure with capabilities for bi-directional power flow at two or more locations that support school districts in California.”  |
|  | **Evaluation** |  |
| 13 | How does CEC evaluate the plan and design of the project? Would microgrid management software score well? | Please review the evaluation criteria in Section IV.E. The applicant should describe the benefit of the software to the project in relation to the evaluation criteria. |
| 14 | What are the technical criteria for project readiness? | Please review the evaluation criteria in Section IV.E.b. for Project Readiness. |
|  | **Match** |  |
| 15 | Is the 10% match required as an upfront fee before being awarded? Can the 10% cost share be contributed by the applicant only once they have been awarded? | No, the 10% match requirement is not an upfront fee. Match is funding, in addition to the CEC award amount, that is being provided by the applicant to support the project. It should be documented in the budget documents, application form, and letters of support. Please review Section II. D. for more information on match. |
| 16 | What type of documentation would be eligible to demonstrate voluntary work for the equivalent amount of money? | Applicant in-kind match share can be in the form of volunteer labor, real property, existing equipment, existing supplies, services provided by a third-party or subrecipient, and other expendable property. The value of in-kind match is based on the fair market value of the goods and services provided at the time it is claimed as match. In-kind match share must be included in the approved agreement budget and supported with appropriate documentation. Cost allocations must be reasonable and allocable to the proposed project. More information on Direct Labor Budget Considerations can be found on the ECAMS Budget Category Guidance at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources/ecams-resources>. |
|  | **Mechanics** |  |
| 18 | When will the presentation be posted? | The presentation was posted on April 25, 2023, and can be found at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2023-04/pre-application-workshop-gfo-22-612-electric-school-bus-bi> .  |
| 19 | Is there a list of installers that school districts can contact and coordinate with? | The participant list for this workshop is located at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2023-04/pre-application-workshop-gfo-22-612-electric-school-bus-bi> .The Empower Innovation platform, available at [www.empowerinnovation.net](http://www.empowerinnovation.net), provides opportunities for networking and finding project partners.The EnergIIZE infrastructure program also provides resources for infrastructure installers and vendors, available at <https://energiize.org/partners?section=vendor.vendor-types.preferred>.  |
| 20 | Are there any additional fees that the applicant must contribute before being awarded? | There are no application fees. |