

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Clean Diesel Funding Assistance, Regional Application for EPA Region 7



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Due February 14, 2020 at 2:00PM CST

RFA – Clean Diesel Funding Assistance, Regional Application for EPA Region 7

RFA Issue Date:	1/24/2020
RFA Questions Deadline:	2/5/2019
Application Submission Deadline:	2/14/2020 2:00pm CT
Expected Date for MEC Selection Notification:	2/18/2020

Funding Allocations:

Federal funding (maximum) allocated from **\$1,500,000.00**
EPA-OAR-OTAQ-20-02 (Region 7); per Application

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I. Project Overview

A. Background and Project Summary

The principal goal of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to select organizations that will become beneficiaries under our funding application to EPA's competitive grant opportunity. Metropolitan Energy Center (MEC) will work with selected organizations to complete its Application to EPA. Selection does not guarantee funding, since our funding depends on EPA's award selections later this spring.

To address diesel emissions and protect public health and air quality, EPA is authorized under Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) to offer funding assistance to accelerate the upgrade and turnover of legacy diesel fleet. Fiscal Year 2008 was the inaugural year of funding for DERA, and since then EPA has awarded over \$749 million on 790 grant projects and 420 rebate projects to reduce diesel emissions nationwide. The DERA program promotes an array of diesel emission strategies by working with manufacturers, fleet operators, air quality professionals, environmental and community organizations and state and local officials to address the varying priorities of different regions and sectors. DERA supports environmental justice by prioritizing emissions reductions in areas receiving disproportionate impacts from diesel fleets to provide an environment where all people enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards.

B. Funding Restrictions

Maximum funding request per Application in Region 7 is \$1,500,000. MEC will select beneficiary organization applications not to exceed this amount, to join our regional application to EPA.

Cost-sharing commitments by beneficiary fleets are required in line with EPA Cost Sharing Requirements (see attachment *FY2020 DERA National Grants Competition*, Section III B <https://www.epa.gov/cleandiesel/clean-diesel-national-grants>). If you elect to forgo some percentage (e.g., asking for 20% reimbursement instead of 25%), that improves the chances of your Application being funded, though it cannot guarantee that your Application will be successful.

The Application Narrative contains a budget table. Please include approximate budget necessary for vehicle replacement or repower, along with your planned cost sharing amounts.

Restrictions apply. You can't use DERA funding to enlarge your fleet or for fueling infrastructure, and there are specific rules on scrapping (photos and documents and invoices). Any income that comes from scrapping counts against the amount of funding you'd receive from EPA, and old units have to be scrapped within a specific time window once new vehicles are in service.

II. Program Goals and Benefits

Reducing emissions from diesel engines is one of the most important air quality challenges facing the country. Despite EPA's diesel engine and fuel standards for new engines, the nearly ten million legacy diesel engines already in use continue to emit large amounts of NOx and PM2.5, which contribute to serious public health problems, including asthma, lung cancer and various other cardiac and respiratory diseases. These problems result in thousands of premature deaths, millions of lost work-days, and numerous other negative health impacts every year.

Successful Applicants who complete a contract agreement will be considered a Beneficiary of the Grant. Beneficiaries will manage and expend funding to maximize these benefits, including commencing expenditures and activities as quickly as possible, consistent with prudent management. MEC's evaluation will be based in part on how the Application positively achieves each of the goals.

III. Administrative Information

A. Proprietary/Confidential Information

Any restrictions of the use of or inspection of material contained within the application shall be clearly stated in the application itself. Written requests by the Applicant for confidentiality shall be submitted to MEC in advance of the application submission deadline, along with the application material. The Applicant must state specifically what elements of the application are to be considered confidential/proprietary.

Confidential/Proprietary information must be readily identified, marked and separated/packaged from the rest of the application. Co-mingling of confidential/proprietary and other information is not acceptable. Neither an application in its entirety, nor application

price information will be considered confidential and proprietary. Any information that will be included in any resulting Agreement cannot be considered confidential.

B. Organizational Conflict of Interest – Requirements of this Application and Subsequent Agreement

Any business entity or person is prohibited from being awarded an Agreement, if the business entity or person has an “Organizational Conflict of Interest”—as described below—with regard to this solicitation and the resulting Agreement. Applicants should provide a brief written statement noting any conflict of interest within the “Organizational Conflict of Interest” section of the Application Form.

No person or business entity engaged by MEC to prepare the original grant application, or who has access prior to the solicitation to sensitive information related to this procurement process, including, but not limited to requirements, statements of work, or evaluation criteria, will be eligible to directly or indirectly submit or participate in the submission of an application for this grant solicitation. MEC considers such engagement or access to be an Organizational Conflict of Interest, which would cause such business entity or person to have an unfair competitive advantage.

If MEC determines that an Organizational Conflict of Interest exists, MEC has discretionary power to cancel the Agreement award. In the event the Awarded Applicant was aware of an Organizational Conflict of Interest prior to the award of the Agreement and did not disclose the conflict to the procuring agency, MEC may terminate the Agreement for default.

C. RFA Response Material Ownership

MEC has the right to retain Applicants’ original applications and other RFA response materials for its files. As such, MEC may retain or dispose of all copies as is lawfully deemed appropriate. MEC has the right to use any or all information/material presented in reply to the RFA, subject to limitations outlined in the section, Proprietary/Confidential Information. Applicant expressly agrees that MEC may use the materials for all lawful purposes, including the right to reproduce copies of the material submitted for purposes of evaluation, and to make the information available as required by law or regulation.

D. Binding Offer

An application submitted in response to this RFA shall constitute a binding offer. Acknowledgment of this condition shall be indicated by the signature on the Letter of Commitment by an officer of the Applicant legally authorized to execute contractual obligations and shall bind the applicant to the application. By submitting an Application, the Applicant affirms its acceptance of the terms and requirements of this RFA, including its attachments and appendices, without exception, deletion, or qualification - and does so without making its offer contingent. The Applicant further agrees to cooperate with MEC and expedite the contracting process upon notice of award.

Applications that do not contain a completed 2020 DERA Application and attached required documents will not be considered for funding under this Application.

E. Debarment and Suspension

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA the Applicant certifies that it, its principals, and proposed sub-contractors (if any):

- Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for disbarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal debarment or agency;
- Have not within a three-Year period preceding the Due Date of this Application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State or local) transaction or Agreement under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements or receiving stolen property;
- Are not presently under investigation for, indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in Paragraph IV.K.2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR); and
- Have not within a three-Year period preceding the Due Date of this Application had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated for cause or default.

If the Applicant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, an explanation must be provided as an attachment to the Application. This explanation is exempt from page limitations on the Application, if any apply. The inability of the Applicant to provide the certification will not necessarily result in disqualification of the Applicant. The explanation will be considered in connection with MEC's determination whether to select an Applicant.

F. Disclaimer: All statistical and fiscal information contained within this RFA, and any amendments and modifications thereto, reflect the best and most accurate information available to MEC at the time of RFA preparation. No inaccuracies in such data shall constitute a basis for legal recovery of damages or protests, either real or punitive, except to the extent that any such inaccuracy was a result of intentional misrepresentation by MEC.

G. Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)

Applicant is required to provide their FEIN in their Application.

H. DUNS Number

Applicant is required to provide their DUNS in their Application, or a pledge to obtain one prior to beginning work. Additionally, successful applicants are required to submit their DUNS prior to the Agreement, or purchase order issuance, or payment from MEC.

I. Incurred Costs

MEC is not liable for any cost incurred by the Applicant prior to issuance of a legally executed Agreement, purchase order or other authorized acquisition document.

J. Compliance with all Federal, State and Municipal Laws and Regulations

Successful Applicants (Beneficiary) shall comply with applicable Federal, State and local laws and regulations in the performance of all work under resulting Agreement. Beneficiary shall obtain all Federal, State and local permits, authorizations, and approvals of all work performed under the Agreement. This includes the governing grant agreement between MEC and EPA. See attached Terms and Conditions.

IV. Response Format & Application Requirements

A. General Instructions

Digital Applications in PDF and Excel formats must be sent to Jeff Windsor at Jeff@metroenergy.org. Download application materials at <https://metroenergy.org/clean-diesel-rfa/>. Application must include:

- Fleet Worksheet (Excel format)
- Fleet Narrative (including Project Budget)
- Letter of Commitment signed and dated by officer of the Applicant legally authorized to execute contractual obligations.
- Vendor quotes
- Letters of Support (optional) from community partners

V. Criteria for Evaluation

All applications will be reviewed by a Review Committee consisting of MEC staff and other members offering technical evaluations and assistance, as necessary. Applicants will be notified when and if additional information or documentation is required. All information required to complete the application for funding is provided in this RFA. Any additional information pertaining to submissions, including email and phone calls, will not be considered once the review process is under way.

When evaluating projects for funding, the Review Committee will consider the following criteria. The overall quality of the application, containing all required information in a clear and concise format, is a prevailing consideration throughout all categories. The potential maximum number of points is listed to the right for each category.

CATEGORY	Points
COMPLETE APPLICATION	20
PRIORITY SECTOR – GOODS MOVEMENT	5
BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY	10
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS	10
PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY	25
PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PROJECTED OUTCOMES	30
TOTAL	100

Applicants must include the following information about the proposed project:

1. Complete Application/Letter of Commitment:

The Application must be complete and included needed documents;

- Fleet Worksheet
- Narrative Application (including Project Budget)
- Letter of Commitment signed and dated by officer of the Applicant legally authorized to execute contractual obligations.

A complete submission binds the applicant to the application. By submitting an Application, Applicant affirms acceptance of the terms and conditions and requirements of this RFA, including its attachments and appendices, without exception, deletion, or qualification, and without making its offer contingent.

2. Priority Sector – Goods Movement:

Priority may be given to projects targeting or located at:

- ports (e.g. alongside navigable water with facilities for the loading and unloading of cargo from ships; places from which aircraft operate; places where foreign goods legally pass into and out of a country)
- rail yards (e.g. places at which trains originate or terminate, or at which they are distributed or combined)
- terminals (e.g. freight stations at the end of carrier lines, or that serve as junctions at any point with other lines, that have facilities for the handling of freight)
- distribution centers (e.g. facilities that perform consolidation, warehousing, packaging, and other functions linked with handling freight, often in proximity to major transport routes or terminals, and which generate large amounts of truck traffic)

3. Benefits to the Community:

Priority may be given to projects addressing needs of local communities, including those that have faced or are facing environmental justice concerns.

4. Community Engagement and Partnerships:

Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality of the applicant's plans to engage local communities with respect to the design and performance of the project. Evaluation will also judge how Applications leverage support from project partners for effective execution. Applicants will be evaluated on their approach to incorporating community input during project design and performance.

Community engagement and partnership efforts should include organizations representing a broad spectrum of the community; i.e. neighborhood, school, faith-based, city council, businesses, local government, and other organizations. Applications with letters of commitment that demonstrate strong, long-term involvement throughout the project from a variety of project partners may be evaluated more favorably than others.

5. Project Sustainability:

Priority may be given to projects where applicants can explain and demonstrate their ability to keep cutting emissions after EPA funding ends. Possible approaches: the project's inclusion in a broader-based environmental or air quality plan; the implementation of idle-reduction policies; plans for additional deployments of cleaner fuels and vehicles, or a documented commitment to continue to identify and address air quality issues in the affected community – all are possible approaches. Please briefly discuss ways in which you plan to enhance project sustainability.

VI. Pre-Bid Meeting and Questions

There will be no pre-application meeting for this RFA. The Informational Webinar recording, scheduled for January 28, can be accessed at <https://metroenergy.org/clean-diesel-rfa/>.

Applicants are encouraged to submit questions in writing to Jeff Windsor at Metropolitan Energy Center at Jeff@metroenergy.org by **February 5, 2020**. MEC will try to respond to all questions publicly via an FAQ on its website, <https://metroenergy.org/clean-diesel-rfa/>, by **February 7, 2020**. Emails should use the subject line: "Query for DERA 20 Application RFA".

VII. Application Submission

Applications must be received by **February 14, 2020**. MEC is not responsible for technical or transmittal issues when submitting a grant application. All applications with a MEC inbox timestamp of **2:00 PM CST** or after will automatically be disqualified from the current funding round with no exceptions. Only electronic applications will be accepted. Hard copy applications will not be accepted. Please e-mail your Application to Jeff@metroenergy.org subject: "**Clean Diesel Funding Assistance, Regional Application for EPA Region 7 <Organization/Company Name>**". MEC requests that all materials be included as attachments to one email, however if your documents are too large to send in one email, you may send multiple emails. If you must do this, please use the same email subject each time to assist with processing your materials efficiently.

Applicants will receive an e-mail response notification of the receipt of their application within two business days upon submission.

VIII. Selection Notification Determination

Additional information may be requested from applicants by MEC prior to application to EPA. MEC is under no obligation to select any Applications and reserves the right to deny Applications for any reason. Funding is limited. Applications meeting all the program's general policy guidelines may not necessarily be selected. MEC reserves the right to delay any decision due to budgetary constraints.

MEC reserves the right to vary from the evaluation criteria listed within this document during the bid solicitation period as necessary or appropriate. Any modifications to evaluation criteria will be posted to MEC's website. It is the responsibility of the applicant to check for these changes.

The Application selections are anticipated to be made in **mid-February 2020**, and applicants will be notified of the Review Committee's determinations via email.

MEC will work with selected Applicants to present a full proposal to EPA by February 26, 2020. EPA plans to select proposals for award by May 2020.

IX. Awarded Applicant Reporting and Payment Procedures

A. Project Impacts and Reporting; if MEC is selected by EPA

All funding is conditioned upon veracity of information provided within the application and will require accountability and reporting by the successful Applicant (Beneficiary). Such reporting will be in accordance with the procedures developed and prescribed by MEC. The following reporting requirements will be included in MEC's Agreement with the Beneficiary.

B. Annual Reporting for Vehicle Performance

Required reports will be submitted to MEC in draft form no later than the end of each quarterly period, or as otherwise specified in the Agreement. This information will be used to benchmark program effectiveness and to inform the public of project results via various strategies including press releases, case studies and on the MEC website. Quarterly reporting will also be used to document achievements through the project's work. Reporting criteria will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- a. A summary of quantifiable metrics.
- b. Project summary narrative: This should summarize the project achievements in no more than two paragraphs. Include, at minimum, the needs that the project addressed, what the goals were, whether or not those goals were achieved, and what audience the project served.
- c. Project constituent testimonials/quotes: This should include press release-worthy statements of the project's importance from participants and managers.

- d. Before and after photos. The project should allow for photos to communicate the work. Please include electronic files with the report immediately following the construction phase. If possible, try to get people in the photos – especially users of the funded vehicles.
- e. A summary of any communications to AND from the public associated with the project. For example, this could include press releases, advertising, or newsletters.

At any time, MEC may determine that additional application or reporting information is required and reserves the right to amend Agreement conditions without penalty.

C. Payments

The following payment procedures will be included in MEC's Agreement with the Awarded Applicant (Beneficiary):

Payments must be made in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Grant. MEC will pay Beneficiary the reasonable, allocable, and allowable costs for vehicle required documentation of the work defined in the Grant, as determined by MEC.

The Beneficiary will be compensated only for vehicles purchased by the Beneficiary and accepted by MEC pursuant to the terms of the Grant. Payment will also be contingent upon MEC's timely receipt and acceptance of the required reports described herein.

The Beneficiary will be reimbursed based on the submission of a Request for Payment and an Invoicing Report form provided by MEC providing a detailed account of the amount of costs, including receipts/invoices, incurred relating to line items per the project budget. MEC will withhold payment of the final ten percent (10%) of the total amount until the Beneficiary has submitted, and MEC has accepted, all required narrative and financial progress reports enumerated in the Grant and Agreement.

For more information, please contact:

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