

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Application Deadline: 5:00pm (CST), Friday, August 17, 2018

INTRODUCTION

In 2014 the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG), acting as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Central Oklahoma, launched a one-year pilot grant program to fund small active transportation infrastructure and public education programs for the betterment of regional air quality. ACOG staff have evaluated the 2014 pilot program and have restructured the program to more closely align with current local and federal transportation priorities. The 2018 ACOG Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Small Grant Program will fund small transportation infrastructure projects and congestion relief efforts. Air quality related public education programs are no longer eligible under this program.

A minimum of \$200,000 in grant awards will be made available to eligible applicants through a competitive grant process. Applicants are required to provide a minimum of 20 percent in matching local funds, and grant awards will be conferred as reimbursement. A variety of projects and programs are eligible, but all serve to address long-term reduction in transportation-related emissions that contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone.

Summer months, particularly May through September, see conditions conducive to a chemical reaction that creates ground-level ozone pollution. Transportation is a significant source of precursors such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx), the gasses that react to form ozone. Referred to as mobile source emissions, these precursors are emitted through vehicle exhaust and fuel evaporation, reacting to sunlight in windless conditions to create tropospheric ozone pollution.

Research continues to demonstrate the effects of ozone pollution on all populations, but children, the elderly and anyone with respiratory illnesses such as asthma are particularly vulnerable. Any reduction of ozone-forming emissions translates to increased quality of life for everyone in Central Oklahoma.

Every five years, the MPO completes a long-range, metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) that projects Central Oklahoma's growth over a three-decade period and identifies necessary changes to the region's transportation network. The most recent plan, adopted in 2016, includes a series of goals and strategies to guide transportation planning efforts into the future. Of those strategies, the CMAQ Small Grants have been developed to address the following:

1. The promotion of alternative modes of transportation
2. Investment in projects that enhance the efficiency of the existing transportation system
3. Provision of efficient connections within and between modes and facilities
4. Encourage procedures that preserve traffic operations

The implementation of these strategies is made possible by the use of funds through the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program. Because these funds are intended to assist transportation projects and programs meet and maintain the requirements of the Clean Air Act, CMAQ funds are ideal in addressing improvements to Central Oklahoma's air quality and offer unique flexibility in their application.

The goal of the CMAQ Small Grant Program is to improve regional air quality by reducing reliance on the single-occupancy vehicle trip. This program will accomplish that goal through two approaches:

1. Funding small active transportation and transit infrastructure projects across Central Oklahoma
2. Funding congestion relief efforts

All projects and programs have one year upon execution of a grant award contract to be completed in full.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

First and foremost, applicants should ensure their project or program meets the minimum eligibility laid out in the following resources published by the Federal Highway Administration:

- [Interim Program Guidance Under MAP-21](#)

- [Revised Interim Guidance on CMAQ Operating Assistance under MAP-21](#)
- [CMAQ Essentials](#)
- [CMAQ Fact Sheet – FAST Act](#)

Because ACOG is permitted to further limit project and program eligibility to reflect funding limitations and regional priorities, there are additional eligibility requirements beyond those provided through CMAQ.

Applications for any projects or programs are encouraged to be a minimum of \$20,000 but applications will be considered on a case by case basis. Additionally, no single entity can receive more than 56 percent of the total available funding for the CMAQ Small Grant Program. ACOG reserves the right to negotiate grant awards.

There are two categories eligible for funding through the CMAQ Small Grant Program: small infrastructure projects and congestion relief efforts. While similar, both have unique and specific requirements intended to address regional air quality. In evaluation and scoring, both categories will be treated equally.

Small Infrastructure Projects

Infrastructure projects must be defined as low-cost additions or improvements. Infrastructure projects **require** inclusion of a maintenance plan to demonstrate applicant ownership and sustainable long-term care of funded projects.

Eligible small infrastructure projects include:

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

- Bicycle racks
- Bicycle shelters
- Bicycle lockers
- Bicycle public service/repair stations
- Bicycle signage
- Pedestrian signage
- Pedestrian lighting
- Bicycle/pedestrian pavement markings

Note that CMAQ guidance specifies that fundable bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including support facilities such as bicycle racks, must not be exclusively recreational but serve to reduce vehicle trips.

Transit Improvements

- New transit facilities – lines, stations, stops, terminals, or transfer facilities – associated with new or enhanced public transit
- Transit equipment – advanced signal and communications systems
- Operating assistance for new transit service or expanding existing transit service

To be considered eligible for CMAQ funding, transit-related projects must demonstrate the ability to increase transit capacity and/or transit ridership, and illustrate a potential congestion reduction.

Congestion Reduction and Traffic Flow Improvements

Projects in this category should focus on easing regional congestion and/or decreasing single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips, therefore reducing transportation-related emissions and improving air quality. Equipment and infrastructure projects **require** inclusion of a maintenance plan to demonstrate applicant ownership and sustainable long-term care of funded projects.

Eligible projects include:

Traffic Flow Improvements

- Traffic management and control services
- Traffic signalization projects, including synchronization
- Intelligent transportation system (ITS) projects

Travel Demand Management

- Traveler information services
- Traffic calming measures
- Transit management systems

Note that eligibility for CMAQ funding is limited to projects that explicitly aim to reduce SOV trips and related emissions.

Applicants are not limited to types of projects or programs listed here. We encourage innovation and customization to achieve the best results in reducing transportation emissions and meeting the needs of your community. ACOG staff can work with prospective applicants to develop projects or programs as needed.

Ineligible Projects and Programs

CMAQ guidance provides some specification on ineligible projects and programs. Although a broad scope is eligible the program's limited funds and administrative needs require additional ineligibility. CMAQ Small Grant Program will not fund the following:

- Use of funds as salaries or stipends
- Use of funds to defray administrative costs
- Use of funds as a sub-grant program
- Use of funds to add new capacity for single occupancy vehicles
- Use of funds to model or monitor emissions or networks
- Use of funds for planning documents such as master plans, environmental analyses and comprehensive plans
- Use of funds to subsidize transit fare
- Use of funds for routine maintenance and rehabilitation projects including road repavement and repair
- Use of funds to purchase conventional or alternative fuel
- Use of funds for residential, commercial or industrial energy efficiency
- Use of funds for the purchase of street furniture such as waste receptacles, benches, or tables

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact ACOG staff with questions regarding project or program eligibility.

PROJECT AND PROGRAM BRANDING

All funded projects and programs will be required to use the ACOG logo. This includes any and all collateral, digital assets, advertising, et cetera. Additionally, small infrastructure projects are **required** to address how the branding will be applied to infrastructure.

This cost can be covered by the grant award but should be included as a line item within the proposed budget. Logos and brand standards will be furnished by ACOG.

In addition, project sponsors are required to issue a press release to local newspaper upon award of project.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for CMAQ Small Grant Program is limited. Eligible applicants within the OCARTS boundaries are:

1. Local governments (towns, cities, and counties)
2. Transit agencies
3. Public school districts, public schools or public universities (with support from local municipality)
4. Tribal governments

All applicants must be located within the Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) boundaries. To learn more about the OCARTS boundaries and review a regional map, please see [Appendix I](#).

Although organizations such as neighborhood associations, non-profits, private schools and private universities are not eligible as applicants, these organizations are encouraged to collaborate with their local governments on project or program applications.

Because CMAQ funds are based on reimbursement and require a minimum 20 percent match of local funds, such collaborations can benefit all parties involved. In-kind match is not allowed. All applicants are encouraged to secure partnerships to demonstrate community buy-in and benefit.

PROJECT AND PROGRAM SELECTION CRITERIA

A committee composed of representatives from the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, and other partner non-profits will receive, evaluate and score all grants.

Committee members will review each application and score based on a 100-point system:

Category	Maximum Points
Pollutant reduction	10
Project cost effectiveness	10
Transportation impact	15
Community involvement	5
Consistent planning	10
Community benefit	5
Vulnerable populations	10
Funding	15
Project readiness	10
Evaluation metrics	10
Total Points Available	100

APPLICATON REQUIREMENTS

Additionally, all applications must be completed in full, including the addition of any required paperwork, to be considered. Any materials submitted with an application will not be returned.

The following items are to be submitted with each project application:

1. Adopted resolution (with original signatures or a certified copy)
2. Preliminary cost estimate/project budget (must be no older than 6 months prior to the date of the resolution)
3. Project location map showing street names, project limits, and north arrow
4. Signed letter(s) of support specific to the proposed CMAQ Small Grant project for all involved partner entities and organizations
5. Signed maintenance plan
6. Detailed plan on applying program branding to infrastructure (cost must be included in the overall proposed budget)

All applications **must** be submitted no later than 5:00PM CST on Friday, August 17, 2018. Applications, including supplemental documents such as resolutions, letters of support, project or program budget and work plans, must be completed and submitted online: [LINK FORTHCOMING](#)

Date	Action
Friday, July 20, 2018	Workshop; Application Cycle Opens
Friday, August 17	Applications Due to ACOG by 5:00pm (CST)
Thursday, September 13	ACOG staff present project recommendations to APTAC and ITTC
Thursday, September 27	ACOG staff present project recommendations to ITPC and ACOG Board of Directors
Thursday, September 27	ACOG Board of Directors approves project selection

If you have questions regarding the CMAQ Small Grant Program, please contact Jennifer Sebesta at jsebesta@acogok.org or Hannah Nolen at hnolen@acogok.org.