

4205 N. Lincoln Blvd. | OKC

AIR QUALITY

SMALL GRANT PROGRAM

OPENS: SEPTEMBER 27

CLOSES: NOVEMBER 1



2019

acog

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APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Application Deadline: 5pm (CST), Friday, November 1, 2019

INTRODUCTION

ACOG's Air Quality Small Grant Program (formerly known as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Small Grant Program) will fund small transportation infrastructure projects and congestion relief efforts that strive towards the betterment of regional air quality. 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 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, Encompass 2040 adopted in 2016, includes a series of goals and strategies to guide transportation planning efforts into the future. Of those strategies, ACOG's Air Quality Small Grant Program has 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 in meeting and maintaining 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 Air Quality 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
2. Funding congestion relief efforts

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

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

First and foremost, applicants should ensure their project 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](#)
- [Buy America](#)

All projects must satisfy the basic eligibility requirements under Titles 23 and 49 of the United States Code and to complete National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. Projects must follow a similar NEPA documentation process as with STP projects.

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 project 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 Air Quality Small Grant Program until all entities' projects have been considered. The initial threshold of 56 percent may be exceeded if there are not sufficient projects ready for obligation by other entities. ACOG reserves the right to negotiate grant awards.

There are two categories eligible for funding through ACOG's Air Quality 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 federal guidance specifies that fundable bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including support facilities such as bicycle racks, must not be exclusively recreational but rather 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 funding, transit-related projects must demonstrate the ability to increase transit capacity and/or transit ridership and illustrate the potential to reduce congestion.

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 funding is limited to projects that explicitly aim to reduce SOV trips and related emissions.

Applicants are not limited to types of projects 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 as needed.

Ineligible Projects and Programs

Federal 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. The Air Quality 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 Hannah Nolen at 405.234.2264 or CMAQ@acogok.org, with questions regarding project eligibility.

PROJECT BRANDING

All funded projects will be required to use the current 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 upon award of project.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for the Air Quality 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 (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 applications.

Because 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 SELECTION CRITERIA

A committee consisting of representatives from the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, and/or 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 (see page 6).

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

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

All applications **must** be submitted no later than 5pm CST on Friday, November 1, 2019. Applications, including supplemental documents such as resolutions, letters of support, project budget and work plans, must be completed and submitted online through ACOG's eTRACKER website:

<https://etracker.acogok.org/secure/login>. Instructions for creating an eTRACKER account and completing the application can be found in the eTRACKER Guidebook: <http://www.acogok.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/eTRACKER-Guidebook.pdf>

Date	Action
Friday, September 27, 2019	Application cycle opens
Friday, November 1	Applications due to ACOG by 5:00pm (CST)
Thursday, November 14	ACOG staff present project recommendations to APTAC and ITTC
Thursday, November 21	ACOG staff present project recommendations to ITPC and ACOG Board of Directors
Thursday, November 21	ACOG Board of Directors approves project selection

If you have questions regarding the Air Quality Small Grant Program, please contact CMAQ@acogok.org.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Application Deadline: 5:00pm (CST), Friday, November 1, 2019

Category	Maximum Points
Pollutant reduction	10
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

1. **Pollutant reduction (10 points maximum)**

Project must demonstrate the potential to reduce ozone-forming pollutants. Primary pollutants of concerns include Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC). Please provide a detailed description of how the proposed project is expected to play a role in reducing ozone-forming pollutants.

How will the project contribute to a reduction in ozone-forming emissions? (10 points)

2. **Cost effectiveness (10 points maximum)**

Cost effectiveness is a measure of the project's ability to reduce emissions per dollar invested. Funds can be used on a variety of project types. Certain project types are expected to be more cost effective and will therefore be more competitive.

How cost effective in terms of pollutant removal is the proposed project? (10 points)

10 pts	Bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, Intelligent transportation system (ITS) projects, traffic management and control devices, new transit facilities
7 pts	Transit equipment, transit operating assistance, traveler information services, traffic signalization projects, transit management systems
5 pts	Traffic calming measures, eligible projects not currently addressed in the grant manual

Note: If the project falls in two or more of the categories listed above, the points must be averaged together to get a final score.

3. **Transportation impact (15 points maximum)**

Will the project improve the transportation system?

- a. Projects that aim to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips by encouraging travel by other modes – walking, bicycles, or public transit – will be most competitive.

Will the project promote multimodal options? (5 points)

5 pts	Project promotes multimodal options and aims to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips
0 pts	Project does not promote multimodal options

- b. Enhanced connectivity improves the ability to get from place to place. For example, projects that extend a current bike path or projects that improve access to public transit will be more competitive.

Will the project enhance connectivity by addressing a network limitation? (5 points for bicycle/pedestrian/transit projects)

5 pts	Project addresses a gap in the existing bicycle, pedestrian, or transit facilities by creating a new connection from one existing network to another
4 pts	Project contributes to the eventual desired network by connecting an existing segment to a proposed segment
3 pts	Project expands an existing network in a new direction where no segment is existing and none is currently proposed
2 pts	Project does not connect to an existing segment but connects two segments proposed in a published plan at any level
0 pts	Project connects a proposed segment in a new direction where none is existing and none is currently proposed

- b. Projects should focus on easing regional congestion and/or decreasing single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips, therefore reducing transportation-related emissions and improving air quality. More points will be awarded if the project addresses a corridor that experiences moderate to severe a.m. or p.m. peak hour congestion.

Will the project reduce congestion? (5 points for vehicular associated projects)

5 pts	Project will reduce congestion, reduce volume, and/or improve travel time in a congested corridor
3 pts	Project will reduce congestion, reduce volume, and/or improve travel time in general
0 pts	Project is not expected to reduce congestion

- c. Projects that address an identified safety issue will be more competitive.

Will the project improve vehicular, pedestrian, or bicycle safety? (5 points)

5 pts	Project improves safety
0 pts	Project does not improve safety

4. Community involvement (5 points maximum)

Community support and partnership strengthens the project application.

Does the project have the support of the community? (5 points)

5 pts	Applicant included 3 or more letters of support from community partners in promotion of the project
3 pts	Applicant included 1 or 2 letters of support from community partners in promotion of the project
0 pts	No letters of support included

5. **Consistent planning (10 points maximum)**

Projects that have been identified through a previous planning effort will be more competitive. The project should address an issue identified in one of the following types of plans:

Regional Plans (produced by ACOG):

- Bicycle Master Plan
- Pedestrian Master Plan
- Congestion Management Process (CMP)

Local Plans:

- Comprehensive plans
- Bicycle/pedestrian plans
- ITS plans

Note: Projects must be included in or be consistent with ACOG's long-range transportation plan, Encompass 2040, to receive funding.

Is the project consistent with regional and/or local comprehensive land use and transportation plans? (10 points)

10 pts	Project is consistent with a published regional transportation plan
8 pts	Project is consistent with a published local transportation or trails plan
5 pts	Project is consistent with a published local comprehensive plan
3 pts	Project is consistent with unpublished general ideas of the community's future direction
0 pts	Not addressed

6. **Community benefit (5 points maximum)**

Applicant must be able to demonstrate how the community will benefit from this project be it through increased safety, reduced congestion and travel time, and/or greater connectivity.

Does the project plan include a clear demonstration of need and indicate how the community will benefit from the project? (5 points)

5 pts	Applicant clearly demonstrates a need for the project and examines how the community will benefit
3 pts	Applicant briefly addresses in a limited capacity how the community will benefit
0 pts	Applicant does not address how the community will benefit from the project

7. Vulnerable populations (10 points maximum)

Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to ozone pollution. Projects will be most competitive if they are located near large concentrations of these populations, such as schools. Minority and low-income status also influence susceptibility to the effects of ozone pollution.

To aid in identifying areas with potential air quality related vulnerable populations, ACOG's Air Quality Small Grant Program is utilizing the EPA's EJSCREEN. EJSCREEN is a screening-level environment justice (EJ) tool that combines demographic indicators with environmental factors, such as ozone, to create an EJ index. More information is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>.

Please use the EJ Index Ozone map, available at <http://arcg.is/1jOD19>, to answer the following question.

Does the project address the air quality near populations particularly vulnerable to poor air quality? (10 points)

10 pts	Project is located in an EJ Index Ozone area of the 80 th percentile or higher or the project is within ¼ mile of a school
5 pts	Project is located in an EJ Index Ozone area between the 50 th and 80 th percentile or the project is within ½ mile of a school
0 pts	Project is located in a 50 th percentile or lower EJ Index Ozone area and is not expected to impact vulnerable populations

8. Funding (15 points maximum)

Funds are based on reimbursement and require a minimum 20 percent match of local funds. How well is the applicant financially prepared to secure local matching funds and implement the project?

- a. Project applications that can show a larger proportion of other sources of dedicated funding for the project will be the most competitive.

The extent to which applicants show proof of commitment to provide funding above the minimum 20 percent matching requirement. (5 points)

5 pts	Local match is 30 percent or higher
3 pts	Local match is between 21 percent and 29 percent
0 pts	Local match is 20 percent

- b. Project applications that include a detailed and realistic cost estimate will prove project readiness and be more competitive.

Does the project plan include a detailed and realistic cost estimate? (5 points)

5 pts	Application includes a detailed, itemized cost estimate, showing a good faith effort to consider all elements of the project
3 pts	Application includes a summary estimate with no details
0 pts	Application does not include a cost estimate

- c. Projects must include a maintenance plan that demonstrates applicant ownership and sustainable long-term care.

Does the project include a clear plan for future maintenance costs? (5 points)

5 pts	Application includes details on existing maintenance standards and how the sponsor would fund future maintenance
3 pts	Application seems to discount level of maintenance necessary and/or failed to get letters of support from entity claimed to be responsible for future maintenance
0 pts	No maintenance plan is included

9. **Project readiness (10 points maximum)**

All projects and programs have one year upon execution of a grant award contract to be completed in full. The applicant must include a detailed timeline and clear work plan for implementation of the project.

- a. Projects have one year upon execution of grant award contract to be completed in full, therefore a detailed and realistic timeline is essential to the success of the project.

Is the project schedule detailed and realistic? (5 points)

5 pts	Project schedule is detailed and realistic
3 pts	Project schedule is detailed but ambitious
0 pts	Project schedule lacks sufficient detail and underestimates how long infrastructure projects take

- b. Project application must include a description of the tasks and activities to be completed as part of the project. This shows the readiness of the project and how the project will be implemented.

Has the project been conceptually designed and includes a clear and adequate project description? (5 points)

5 pts	Application includes clear and adequate project descriptions
3 pts	Application includes abbreviated and/or preliminary descriptions
0 pts	Application does not include project descriptions

10. **Evaluation metrics (10 points maximum)**

ACOG is required to collect data metrics to evaluate how successful the project was after implementation. The applicant is expected to gather data for evaluation such as daily usage figures and estimated vehicle trips removed.

Does the applicant include a plan for gathering meaningful evaluation metrics for the project? (10 points)

10 pts	Applicant includes detailed plans for gathering evaluation metrics
5 pts	Applicant includes generalized plan for gathering evaluation metrics
0 pts	No plan for gathering evaluation metrics included

