



Amalgamated Transit Union

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Office of the International President

March 14, 2024

Via Email

Re: Low or No Emission and Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Programs

Dear ATU Transit Agencies:

I am writing regarding the Low or No Emission and Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Programs on behalf of more than 195,000 members of the Amalgamated Transit Union. For the 2024 award cycle, these programs make available a combined \$1.5 billion to upgrade bus fleets, improve bus facilities and support workforce development. Most of the funds are specifically dedicated to helping transit agencies transition their fleets to zero-emission buses and infrastructure.

Recognizing that training is essential to the successful and safe operation of zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure, [Congress statutorily requires](#) that 5% of the total federal award for zero-emission project components must be spent on workforce development activities. Affirming this goal, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) offers [priority consideration to applications that can demonstrate](#) both the consultation with workforce representatives on the development of the Zero Emission Fleet Transition Plan (ZETP) and the use of registered-apprenticeship programs or labor-management partnerships.

This is a huge opportunity to ensure that ATU members receive comprehensive training on zero-emission technology. [Zero-emission training beyond that provided by the general vendor has been shown](#) to improve the performance of operators and the maintenance workforce and help reduce labor shortages. This can include additional instruction time, enhanced training materials, and the development of in-house training capabilities. Some ATU agencies have already used these funds to support registered apprenticeship programs.

To that end, ATU looks forward to supporting your applications to win these awards for our systems. The remainder of this letter discusses the 5% requirement in detail as well as ways to secure a letter of support from ATU locals for your application.

Requirement that 5% of the Total Federal Award is Used for Workforce Development

Applications for projects [related to zero-emission vehicles and related infrastructure](#) must use 5% of the total federal request for zero-emission project components for workforce development training activities. This requirement applies to facilities built to accommodate zero-emission fleets.

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The ATU has encouraged the FTA to approve only applications that have in place credible training plans and use all or a substantial portion of the available 5% for training activities.

The funds must be spent in accordance with the [workforce development section of the Zero Emission Fleet Transition Plan \(ZETP\)](#). The ZETP is a mandatory planning document submitted with the application. This section addresses the impact of the transition to zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure on the current workforce, identifies training needs and the plan for retraining the existing workforce.

The funds for workforce development are additional to the total federal award. For that reason, the FTA advises that applicants use a specific method for calculating the workforce development line item:

- Add the Federal request for **all** zero-emission line items (not exclusive to vehicles and chargers)
- Divide this total by 0.95 (round to the nearest dollar)
- Multiply this total by 0.05 (round to the nearest dollar)

For more information, please review the following FTA resources:

- “How do I determine the amount of funding required for workforce development?” at [Low-No and Buses and Bus Facilities FAQs | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#).
- [Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program and Low- or No Emission Program Webinar \(PowerPoint Presentation\)](#) (February 2024)
- [FY2024 Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program and Low or No Emission Program Webinar Presentation \(Recording\)](#) (February 2024)

Personal Protective Equipment is an Eligible Zero-Emission Project Component

Please include requests for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) among your zero-emission project components. This equipment is needed to safely service and operate zero-emission vehicles and equipment. In a survey of agencies with experience in zero-emission technology, the FTA found that these agencies [recommended including more PPE and tooling in their procurements](#). While applicants should consult with the OEM on the specific PPE recommended for their equipment, typical items include arc-flash suits, rubber insulating gloves, EH-rated safety shoes and insulated electrical rescue hooks. [Each worker must have their own PPE](#) to ensure availability, reliability and proper size and fit.

Priority Preference for Applications Demonstrating Collaboration with Workforce

In addition to the 5% requirement, applicants can receive priority consideration by demonstrating that they have:

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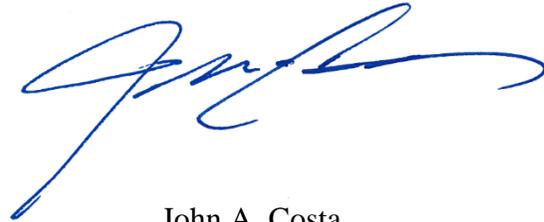
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1. Consulted with workforce representatives on all aspects of the ZETP's workforce development section;
2. Included steps to provide or connect workers to supportive services; and
3. Identified the use of either a registered-apprenticeship program or a labor-management partnership in the ZETP.

Priority consideration can improve an application's chances for selection. ATU locals can provide a letter of support that, among other things, attests to this collaboration. ATU International has let our locals know that you may be reaching out to both make this request and discuss the workforce development training activities described in your application. Additionally, if your agency would like to explore ways to create a joint labor-management program for workforce development or a registered apprenticeship program, please contact my office at officeofthepresident@atu.org.

We look forward to working with you and your staff on this historic opportunity to win workforce development funds to ensure that zero-emission buses and infrastructure are operated safely and reliably.

Yours truly,



John A. Costa
International President

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c: Veronica Vanterpool, Acting Administrator, Federal Transit Administration
Paul Skoutelas, President and CEO, American Public Transportation Association
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