EPA Clean School Bus Program

2023 Rebates

Toolkit for Policymakers

About this Toolkit

This toolkit has been created by the Alliance for Electric School Buses to **help policymakers educate constituents and stakeholders about EPA Clean School Bus Program funding opportunities**. On September 28, EPA opened $500 million in rebates to replace aging diesel buses with new, zero-tailpipe-pollution school buses. Applications have been extended and are now due February 14, 2024 at 4pm ET.

This toolkit includes:

- Key Facts About the Program
- Topline Messages
- Sample Social Media Posts
- Sample Email to School Districts

The Alliance for Electric School Buses (AESB) is a coalition of not-for-profit advocacy groups dedicated to transitioning the nation's nearly 500,000 mostly-diesel school buses to electric models that will clean up the air 20 million children breathe. We are committed to ensuring that this transition starts in the highest-need school districts in the most polluted areas and creates good careers for U.S. workers. The AESB works with policymakers, impacted communities, and fellow advocates to support the successful and equitable implementation of federal funding for electric school buses.

For any questions, please contact Carolina Chacon, AESB Coalition Manager, at carolina@chaconconsulting.com

About the EPA Clean School Bus Program

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 created the $5-billion, 5-year EPA Clean School Bus Program (CSBP) to replace aging diesel school buses with cleaner alternatives. Half of program funds, $2.5 billion, are set aside exclusively for zero-emission school buses, and $2.5 billion is available for electric, propane, or compressed natural gas buses. EPA aims to distribute $1 billion in funding each year through 2026 in the form of grants and rebates, both **delivered upfront**.

EPA launched the program in 2022 by offering $500 million in rebates. Due to overwhelming demand, particularly for electric school buses, EPA nearly doubled available funding to $900 million and awarded nearly 400 school districts. In the spring of 2023, EPA offered $400 million through a competitive grants round. Now, EPA is offering **$500 million** for its second rebate round.

Eligible applicants can apply now through February 14, 2024 at 4pm ET (deadline recently extended) to receive **up to $345,000 per electric school bus, with a maximum of 25 school buses**. Rebate applications are simple, quick, and online, with selection through a randomized **lottery**. Selected recipients will receive funding once submitting proof of their purchase order; bus and infrastructure must be purchased after receiving notification of an award. To apply, applicants must have an active SAM.GOV account. Awards will be **announced in April 2024** and projects must be completed by April 2026.

The information below is a summary of EPA's CSBP 2023 Rebates Program Guidelines.

Who Can Apply?

- Public school districts
    - Local or state governmental entities responsible for public bus service or purchase, lease, license or contract of bus service
    - Public charter school districts
- Tribal schools
    - Indian Tribe, Tribal organization or Tribally-controlled schools
- Third parties
    - Nonprofit pupil transportation associations
    - Eligible contractors, including bus dealers, manufacturers, bus service providers, and private school bus fleets

What Buses Are Eligible for Replacement?

2010 or older diesel school buses, which must be scrapped if selected for a rebate. If no 2010 or older diesel buses are available, the selected applicant can scrap older internal combustion engine buses or scrap, sell, or donate 2011 or newer internal combustion engine buses.

What Buses Are Eligible for Funding?

New electric school buses, model 2022 or newer. New propane and compressed natural gas buses, models 2022 or newer, are also eligible for funding.

Repowered electric school buses are not eligible for funding at this time.

Who Is Prioritized?

School districts that meet one or more of the following criteria receive more funding per bus and are guaranteed at least 60% of total available funds:

- Low-income, with 20% or more students in poverty

- Rural
- Tribal
- In a U.S. territory

EPA publishes a list of priority school districts for 2023. EPA also provides a list of school districts that can self-certify as low-income if they receive Title I funding and have over 35,000 students or more than 45 schools.

How Much Funding is Available?

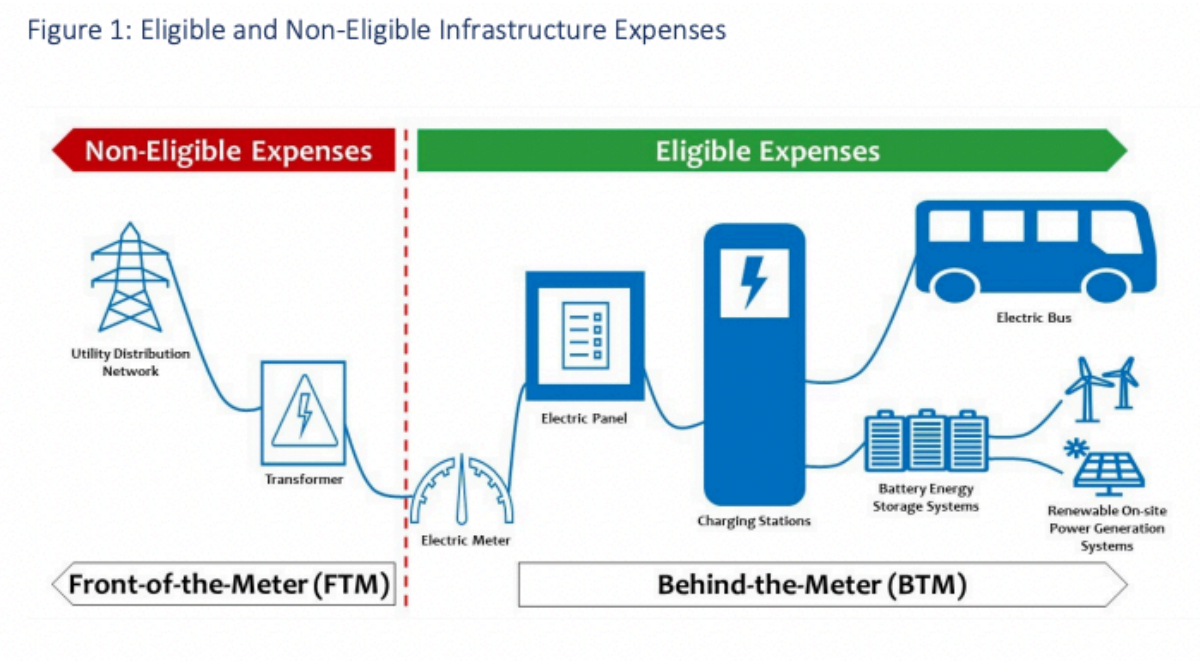
A total of $500 million is available for the 2023 rebates, with a limit of 25 school buses per application. Bus and EV charging infrastructure funds are combined to allow recipients additional flexibility to determine the split between funding for the bus itself and the supporting infrastructure. Propane and compressed natural gas buses are not eligible for infrastructure funding.

An additional $20,000 is available for ADA-compliant buses with wheelchair lifts or for shipping new buses to Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. territories.

Per Bus Funding	Electric Class 7+	Electric Class 3-6	CNG Class 7+	CNG Class 3-6	Propane Class 7+	Propane Class 3-6
Priority School District	**$345,000**	**$265,000**	$45,000	$30,000	$35,000	$30,000
Non-Priority School District	**$200,000**	**$145,000**	$30,000	$20,000	$25,000	$20,000

What Can Funding Cover?

Figure 1: Eligible and Non-Eligible Infrastructure Expenses



Each expense must be clearly identified by line-item in the application.

- Electric school bus
    - Including delivery and warranty costs
- Electric school bus charging equipment
    - Alternative Current Level 2 Chargers
    - Direct Current Fast Chargers
    - Bidirectional Chargers - V2G-enabled
- Charging equipment installation from the electrical meter to the charging station
    - Design and engineering
    - Trenching, wiring, and electrical upgrades
    - Labor and permitting
    - Telematics and charge management software
    - Battery energy storage systems or renewable power generation systems
- Workforce development
    - Training for drivers, mechanics, electricians and other essential staff
    - Consulting services

Clean School Bus funding cannot be combined with other federal funding, but can be paired with Inflation Reduction Act Tax Credits and other state, local, and private funding.

What Are the Application Requirements?

- Applicant submits an online form with details for diesel buses they'd like to replace and which fuel type will replace them, as well as supplemental forms
- Charging infrastructure electricians must be EVITP-certified

- Build America, Buy America requirements may apply to charging equipment
- Third party applicants must certify the school districts they are applying for are aware of and approve of the application
- All applicants must attest that school boards are aware of the application
- All applicants must attest that they have initiated infrastructure conversations with their local electric utility
- All applicants must attest to the importance of workforce planning

How Are Awards Selected?

Applications will be vetted for eligibility. Once deemed eligible, applications will be assigned a number through a random number generator for the lottery. Then applications will be selected in this order:

1. Highest numbered application from each state and territory, regardless of priority status
2. Priority school districts
3. Non-priority school districts
4. Priority school districts requesting exclusively electric school buses.
5. Non-priority school districts requesting exclusively electric school buses

What Happens After Selection?

Awards will be announced in April 2024. Selectees will have until April 2026 to complete their projects. Selectees are required to scrap 2010 or older diesel buses, or scrap, sell, or donate 2011 or newer internal combustion engine buses.

Applications not selected will remain on a waitlist, in random order. If a selectee drops out or is deemed ineligible in the first 90 days after initial selection, those funds may be awarded to applicants on the waitlist, or EPA may allocate the funds towards future funding rounds.

What's the Difference Between EPA Rebates and Grants?

Although rebates and grants have some similarities -- in both cases, funding is delivered upfront; eligibility and prioritization requirements also remain the same -- they have major differences and are targeted for different audiences.

Rebates

- Lottery - winners selected at random
- Funding limited to buses, chargers, charger installation, workforce training
- Simple, easy application
- 1-25 electric school buses
- Ideal for electric school bus pilot projects
- Great for small or rural fleets

Grants

- Competitive - applications scored and ranked
- Funding for buses, chargers, and a variety of staff and project implementation costs

- Complex application, 15 pages of project narrative plus multiple attachments
- 15 school bus minimum for school district applicants; 25 school bus minimum for third party applicants
- Ideal for adding more buses to an existing electric school bus fleet
- Great for larger fleets

What Can My Office Do?

We need help spreading the word about this funding opportunity!

Policymakers can help by:

1. **Sharing news of the program on social media.** Making stakeholders and community members aware of the program is important to ensure the program's success, as well as to highlight Congressional and administrative accomplishments.
2. **Sending information to school districts in your district or state.** Share key program details and encourage them to apply, directly or through a third party, before the February 14, 2024 deadline. Prioritize outreach to school districts waitlisted during the 2022 CSBP rebates.
3. **Hosting or joining events with electric school buses.** If possible, schedule an electric school bus tour or demonstration so that community members and stakeholders can see and experience this innovative technology firsthand. Contact manufacturers or dealers in your area to see what buses are available and arrange an event; the Alliance for Electric School Buses has a map of manufacturing locations.
    a. Contact Clean School Bus rebate winners from 2022 to see when their electric school bus will be delivered.
4. **Contacting electric utilities in your district or state.** Ask them if they plan to support school districts and school bus operators in applying for funding, or how they will help them implement the funding if selected.

Key Links

- EPA Clean School Bus Program
    - 2023 Rebates - OPEN NOW
        - Press Release
        - Fact Sheet
        - Priority School Districts
        - Upcoming Webinars
    - 2022 Rebates - CLOSED
        - Press Release
        - Winners
        - Waitlist
- Alliance for Electric School Buses
    - 2023 Rebates
        - Resource Directory
        - Blog: 5 Things to Know, 5 Things to Watch
    - Electric School Bus Resources
        - ESB FAQs

Topline Messages

- **$500 million is available for school districts to invest in electric school buses through simple, quick, and upfront rebates.**
    - EPA's Clean School Bus Program is accepting applications until February 14, 2024, and offers up to $345,000 per bus to fund the cost of an electric school bus, charging infrastructure, and training for workers.
    - Rebate applications are non-competitive and have a maximum of 25 school buses -- ideal for smaller fleets looking to invest in their first electric school buses.
    - Low-income, rural, and Tribal school districts receive priority for funding.
    - EPA will select an applicant from each state that applies through a random lottery. We can't miss this opportunity to bring funding to our communities.
- **The Clean School Bus Program is transforming how we transport our most precious cargo.**
    - Updating our aging infrastructure has been one of our country's pressing needs, and school buses are the largest form of public transportation in the United States.
    - Each day, 20 million children ride in nearly 500,000 school buses, most running on diesel. Diesel exhaust exposes children to dangerous pollution that can impact their health and wellbeing, school attendance, and even academic performance.
    - The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 created the Clean School Bus Program to ensure school districts can transition to buses that are clean, healthy, and better for our students and communities.
- **Electric school buses are the best choice for students, drivers, and the communities they drive through.**
    - Electric school buses produce zero tailpipe emissions, protecting students, drivers and communities from harmful air pollutants that can lead to asthma, cancer, and other heart and lung illnesses.
    - Studies show that diesel pollution can also impact students' academic performance and even school attendance. Children are particularly vulnerable to this pollution because their lungs and brains are still developing.
    - Electric school buses also generate fewer climate emissions than diesel and propane buses over their lifecycle. As the electric grid gets cleaner, with new renewable resources coming online, electric school buses will be powered by clean energy.
    - With fewer parts and an electric drivetrain, electric school buses can save school districts thousands of dollars in maintenance and fuel costs -- which can then be repurposed by schools for other expenditures.

- Students and drivers love electric school buses. Electric school buses are quiet, making it easier to hear students and other noises inside and outside the bus. They are smooth to drive and responsive, especially praised for their acceleration and regenerative braking. Drivers that get trained on electric school buses gain valuable skills with electric vehicles, and don't endanger their health breathing in toxic diesel fumes.

- **Popular demand for electric school buses is clear and overwhelming.**
    - During the inaugural 2022 Clean School Bus Rebates, EPA initially offered $500 million. After receiving nearly 2,000 applications requesting almost $4 billion for more than 12,000 school buses, EPA nearly doubled the funding amount to $965 million.
    - 90% of applications requested electric school buses. Requests for electric school buses came from every U.S. state.
    - Even after doubling funding, EPA awarded rebates to 400 applicants and placed another nearly 1,500 school districts on a waitlist, with 9,500 electric school buses in demand.
    - The 2023 Clean School Bus rebates are a perfect opportunity for school districts waitlisted in 2022, or for the thousands of other school districts interested in electric school buses.

- **The Clean School Bus Program is already delivering a clean ride for kids and cost savings for school districts across the country.**
    - Since the 2022 rebates, every state has been awarded at least one electric school bus, including 12 states that did not have any before: Louisiana, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Ohio, Nebraska, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Washington DC, Puerto Rico, Guam and American Samoa are also receiving their first electric school buses.
    - School districts are estimating they will save thousands of dollars each year on fueling and maintenance costs thanks to electric school buses.
    - That's on top of reduced environmental pollution and cleaner air electric school buses offer for students, drivers, and their communities.

- **With new federal funding, state support, and community demand, there's never been a better time to choose a #CleanRide4Kids.**

Sample Social Media

You can repost content from the EPA and add your own comments, or post your own.

Easy Links to Reshare

X/Twitter Posts

- EPA
- EPA
- Administrator Michael Regan
- Administrator Michael Regan
- Administrator Michael Regan
- EPA Office of Air and Radiation

Facebook Posts

- EPA

Instagram Posts

- EPA
- Administrator Michael Regan

Sample Content

- Applications are now open for the EPA Clean School Bus Program's 2023 Rebates! $500 million is available for school districts to switch to electric school buses, and every state has a chance at funding. We won't miss this opportunity to bring funding to [STATE]. https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-rebates

- In 2021, I was proud to vote for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which created the Clean School Bus Program. EPA just opened another $500 million for school districts to invest in electric school buses and provide our kids with a clean ride to school.

  My office is ready to work with school districts in [STATE] to apply!
  https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-rebates

- Did you know school buses are the #1 of public transportation in the country? The EPA Clean School Bus Program is upgrading our nation's school bus fleet to electric models that are cleaner for students, healthier for communities, and better for our environment.

  School districts and other eligible applicants can apply now through February 14, 2024. Learn more about this program:
  https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-program-rebates

Sample Email to School Districts

Hello,

On behalf of [OFFICE], I wanted to be sure you saw the good news: **$500 million is now available through the EPA Clean School Bus Program 2023 Rebates.** Public school districts can apply now through February 14, 2024 for funding to replace older diesel school buses with cleaner alternatives.

Rebates applications are simple, easy to fill out, and lottery-based, and awards are delivered upfront. Funding can be used towards the cost of the bus, charging infrastructure for electric school buses, and workforce training, up to 25 buses per applicant.

> Has your school district considered electric school buses? If you're looking at how to achieve cost savings in maintenance and fueling, test out the latest clean technology, or simply clean up your fleet, this could be your opportunity.
>
> *OR*
>
> We see from the EPA website that [SCHOOL DISTRICT] applied for rebate funding in 2022 and was waitlisted. We strongly encourage you to consider applying again.

School districts with more than 20% of students living in poverty, as well as rural and Tribal school districts, receive priority for funding; large Title I funded school districts may also be prioritized. EPA will award up to $345,000 for priority school districts and $200,000 for non-priority school districts, with flexibility on how much is used for bus or charging infrastructure.

For more information, please visit the Clean School Bus Program 2023 Rebates website or attend an upcoming informational webinar.

Our office would be glad to be a resource for you as you consider this funding opportunity. We are committed to helping school districts offer a clean ride to school for students, and to bringing federal funding to [STATE/DISTRICT]. Please let me know what questions you have and how we can help [SCHOOL DISTRICT] apply.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

Attach:

- Press Release
- Fact Sheet
- Priority School Districts
- Upcoming Webinars