

# 2021 CMAQ Program

## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### 1. What is the purpose of the Ohio Statewide Urban Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program?

In November 2012, the Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announced the creation of an Ohio Statewide Urban Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program. The intent of the program is to more quickly advance eligible projects that improve air quality, reduce congestion, and eliminate delay/improve safety, in addition to utilizing statewide CMAQ funding in the year funds are allocated.

### 2. What is the CMAQ Program?

The CMAQ program was established by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, and continues under the current federal transportation bill *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act* with an emphasis area on addressing PM2.5. The CMAQ Program provides a flexible funding source for transportation projects and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Funding is available to reduce congestion and improve air quality for areas that do not meet (nonattainment areas) the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter, and for areas that were out of compliance but have now met (maintenance areas) the NAAQS.

Generally, projects eligible under the CMAQ program prior to enactment of the FAST Act remain eligible. All CMAQ projects must demonstrate three primary elements of eligibility: 1.) transportation identity as described within the programmatic parameters in the CMAQ Final Program Guidance Section VII – Project Eligibility Provisions – D. Eligible Projects and Programs; 2.) emissions reduction; and 3.) location in or benefitting a nonattainment or maintenance area.

### 3. What is the Ohio Statewide Urban Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Committee (OSUCC)?

In January 2013, the Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC) Executive Directors established OSUCC, charging them with the task of developing protocols for managing the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Program. The CMAQ Program provides approximately \$60 plus million annually; although this amount may vary for each application round, to Ohio's eight largest Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) with populations larger than 200,000.

### 4. What MPOs sit on OSUCC?

The OSUCC consists of representatives from the following agencies:

- Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS)
- Eastgate Regional Council of Governments (Eastgate)
- Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC)
- Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)
- Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)
- Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI)
- Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS)
- Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG)

**5. What types of projects are eligible?**

Non-capacity adding projects that can demonstrate an emissions reduction are generally eligible. For a complete listing of eligible projects, please visit the following link to review FHWA's Final CMAQ Program Guidance: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/cmaq/index.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/index.cfm), specifically Section VII – Project Eligibility Provisions – D. Eligible Projects and Programs.

**6. What types of project are not eligible?**

Projects which add new capacity for single-occupancy vehicles are not eligible. Maintenance projects are not eligible.

**7. Can any entity submit a project for CMAQ funding consideration?**

Applicants are limited to qualified government entities that are members of one of the large MPOs located within the metropolitan planning area. Projects located within the boundaries of a non-member jurisdiction are not eligible for Federal CMAQ funds unless the member jurisdiction applying for funds would be the owner or maintainer of the facility being constructed.

**8. Does an applicant submit projects directly to OSUCC since there are eight MPOs and when is the solicitation process?**

The solicitation process for projects will consist of two parts.

- First, each of the eight large MPO will solicit projects from their area. Each MPO shall conduct this part in whatever manner that best meets their local circumstances.
- Second, each MPO will then provide the OSUCC the application form for each project from their area, including the MPO ranking, and the project scoring table.

Following this solicitation the OSUCC will review the scoring provided by the MPO's. OSUCC may adjust project scores to ensure the scoring criterion was applied uniformly across all of the projects. This will lead to a listing of projects ranked by score.

**9. What is the schedule of activities for each CMAQ funding round?**

- May of each year: Identify total amount by year of CMAQ funding to be available for new projects.
- May – August: Each MPO solicits projects or otherwise identifies projects to be submitted to the OSUCC.
- Early September: Projects submitted to OSUCC.
- Early September – November: OSUCC review of projects and project scoring.
- November: OSUCC identifies the recommended program of projects for funding.
- December: Executive Directors approve projects for funding. All projects will follow the individual MPO public involvement policies in accordance with the standard STIP/TIP public involvement processes.

**10. Where can an applicant obtain a CMAQ application form?**

Each MPO solicit projects from their respective area. Applicants should contact the respective MPO for their area.