

## CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CMAQ) FUNDS

### WHAT IS CMAQ?

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program provides federal funds for transportation projects designed to improve air quality and mitigate congestion. The CMAQ program is dedicated to improving air quality by funding transportation projects and programs that reduce air emissions from mobile sources in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas (areas that fail to meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards for carbon monoxide, ozone, and particulate matter). CMAQ funds may also be used to fund projects that reduce congestion as long as those projects achieve reductions in air emissions.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CMAQ FUNDING?

CMAQ funds can only be spent in areas that have been formally designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as nonattainment areas or maintenance areas for air quality health standards. Areas in nonattainment of the 8-hour ozone standard that are participating in an ozone Early Action Compact are not eligible for CMAQ funds because their “nonattainment status” has been deferred during participation in the Early Action Compact.

Three Tennessee ozone nonattainment counties are not eligible for CMAQ funds because of their participation in an Early Action Compact: Hawkins, Sullivan and Meigs. Hamilton County is also involved in an ozone Early Action Compact; however, CMAQ funds may be used in Hamilton County because the county is nonattainment for the PM2.5 standard. In a similar situation, Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson counties involved in the Nashville Early Action Compact qualify for CMAQ funds because of their maintenance status for the 1-hour ozone standard.

#### **The following counties are eligible for CMAQ funds:**

Anderson	Roane (partial county)	Davidson
Blount	Sevier	Rutherford
Cocke (partial county)	Hamilton	Sumner
Jefferson (partial county)	Montgomery	Williamson
Knox	Shelby	Wilson
Loudon		

### WHAT PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR CMAQ FUNDING?

The 2005 transportation bill (SAFETEA-LU) placed a renewed focus on advancing cost-effective transportation projects that improve air quality. Specifically, the bill highlighted diesel engine retrofits as a priority for CMAQ expenditures due to the cost-effective emissions reduction benefits that can be achieved through many retrofit technologies. The SAFETEA-LU also establishes priority funding consideration for cost-effective congestion mitigation activities that improve air quality.

CMAQ funds may be used for a variety of transportation-related emission reduction measures and programs that can demonstrate air quality benefits, including:

- Diesel engine retrofit control equipment

- Congestion relief and traffic flow improvement programs that reduce emissions (project cannot add capacity)
- Transit and public transportation programs
- Travel demand management strategies, e.g., employer-based transportation management plans and programs to permit flexible work schedules
- Programs to provide all forms of high-occupancy, shared-ride services, e.g., carpooling and vanpooling programs
- Vehicle inspection and maintenance programs
- Alternative fuel vehicles and refueling infrastructure
- Programs to control extended idling of vehicles
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs
- Programs to improve the efficiency of freight/intermodal operations
- Public education and outreach activities
- Public-private partnerships

Projects that are **not** eligible for CMAQ funding include:

- Light-duty vehicle scrappage programs
- Projects that add new capacity for SOVs
- Routine maintenance and rehabilitation projects
- Administrative costs of the CMAQ program
- Projects that do not meet the specific eligibility requirements of titles 23 and 49 U.S.C.
- Stand-alone projects to purchase fuel

## **HOW ARE CMAQ PROJECTS FUNDED?**

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement funds are appropriated annually by Congress and allocated to state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) according to a federal formula. In turn, TDOT allocates a portion of these federal CMAQ funds to local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) or Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs). Some CMAQ funding is retained by TDOT to administer state-level CMAQ projects.

The CMAQ program operates on a reimbursable basis, so funds are not provided until work is completed. CMAQ will reimburse up to 80 percent of eligible project costs for those projects approved for funding. In some cases, such as ride share programs, CMAQ will reimburse up to 100 percent of project costs.

## **HOW DO I APPLY?**

Towns, cities and local county governments within the CMAQ-eligible counties may propose projects for CMAQ funding. All CMAQ projects must come from a transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). All projects must conform to established CMAQ guidance.

Entities desiring to implement a project with local CMAQ funds must apply for funding through the local MPO or TPO. The MPO or TPO will solicit and select projects for local funding using approved project selection criteria. TDOT will solicit and select state-administered projects through a separate project selection process. Both local and

state-level projects selected for funding must be included in the local Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and must be authorized by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) before funds may be spent.

For more information, visit [www.tdot.state.tn.us/cmaq/default.htm](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/cmaq/default.htm)