

Federal Grants for School Transportation

Notes for Grant Panel
CASTO Leadership Forum 2008
Robin Leeds

Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA grants)

- \$49 million for 2008—30% to states, 70% to individual projects
 - Funds distributed through EPA regional offices
 - 2008 applications closed; look for RFPs in spring 2009
 - Can be used for retrofits, alternative fuels, idle reduction, 25% of early replacement buses
- Smartway Clean Diesel Finance programs—new program
 - Provides funds for low cost loans, favorable lease terms, discounted prices, etc.
 - No school bus projects for 08; \$3.4 million grant program for low-cost loans for small truck companies announced in Sept.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ funds)

- Annual allocation to states, multi-million dollar program
- State DOT administered, usually through MPOs
- Projects need 20% match; must be part of state transportation plan or SIP.
- Used in nonattainment and maintenance areas
- Can be used for alt fuel vehicles, idle reduction, diesel retrofits, expanded bus systems to mitigate traffic congestion, new clean diesel vehicles—must show air quality improvement
- Can be used for contractor buses in private-public partnerships

Special Enforcement Projects (SEP funds)

- Special Enforcement Projects—result of violation of air quality standards, usually by large business
- Penalty agreement often includes money for school bus emission reduction in region of violation

Voluntary Public School Choice Competitive Grants

- Administered by US Department of Education
- Supports efforts to establish or expand intradistrict, interdistrict, and open enrollment public school choice programs.
- Projects are required to use a portion of the grant funds to provide transportation services, or the cost of transportation, to and from the public schools, including charter schools, which the students choose to attend under the program.
- Funding can be used for making tuition transfer payments, capacity-enhancing activities that enable high-demand schools to accommodate transfer requests, information campaigns, or other reasonable costs.
- All projects must include transportation.
- State Education Agencies (SEAs), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), or other public, for-profit or nonprofit organizations can apply