

Lawn and Garden Equipment Replacement (LGER) Project Application Workshop

Stakeholder Questions and Air Resources Board (ARB) Responses

On November 5, 2009, ARB held a LGER Project Applicant Workshop to answer questions regarding the FY 2009-10 LGER Project Grant Proposal Solicitation (solicitation). This document provides ARB responses to stakeholder questions at the workshop and received via e-mail before 5 p.m. on November 4, 2009.

Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible to apply for LGER Project funds?

A: All air districts (districts) designated as non-attainment for the federal 8-hour ozone standard are eligible for LGER Project funds. For a list of eligible districts, please see Table 1 in the LGER Project Solicitation at:

<http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/aqip/solicitations.htm>.

Q: Are air districts with split designations (e.g. non-attainment and unclassified) of the federal 8-hour ozone standard eligible for the LGER Project solicitation?

A: Districts with split designations are eligible for the LGER Project if a portion of the district is designated as non-attainment. ARB assumes that areas designated as unclassified are low populated areas and most of the emission reductions will come from areas that are designated as non-attainment and have a higher population. For simplicity, ARB will not require districts with split designations to verify whether or not participants reside in the unclassified or non-attainment portion of their district.

Q: How can consumers take advantage of this project?

A: Consumers may contact their local air district for information on their lawn mower exchange programs.

Air District Duties and Requirements

Q: Can the proposed timeline in Table 1 of the draft LGER Project Implementation Manual be adjusted?

A: Yes. The timeline listed in Table 1 of the draft LGER Project Implementation Manual may be modified at ARB's sole discretion. The implementation manual can be found at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/aqip/solicitations.htm>.

Q: Is the LGER Project webpage intended to be a completely separate page from the event webpage? Are districts required to have a separate webpage on the LGER Program or may we use our own webpage?

A: No. Districts may use their own lawn mower exchange webpage. While developing the LGER Project, ARB staff included requirements that most districts already have met with past lawn mower exchange events for project simplicity.

Q: Is establishing a separate account for LGER Project funds required?

A: Section 4.8 in the draft LGER Project Implementation Manual contains a requirement for districts to establish a separate account for LGER Project funds. The purpose of this draft requirement is to ensure that the districts follow generally acceptable accounting procedures and that fiscal control and accounting procedures will be sufficient to permit tracing of grant funds and earned interest. However, ARB recognizes that each district has unique administrative procedures for fiscal tracking. ARB will work with the districts to determine the best method for tracking state funds and earned interest.

Q: If awarded LGER Project funds, can districts pass those funds to their primary lawn mower exchange program partner?

A: Districts may pass funds to their primary lawn mower exchange program subcontractor/implementing partner; however, districts are ultimately responsible for LGER project funds, reporting, and administrative requirements.

Q: Is an RFP required to select a subcontractor to help an air district implement the program or will the current arrangements be sufficient?

A: Districts must follow their own competitive solicitation process/guidelines when selecting a subcontractor.

Q: Would our current mail order first come, first serve lawn mower exchange system qualify as a "lawn mower exchange event"?

A: Yes. This system does qualify as an exchange event. The draft Implementation Manual for the LGER Project defines an exchange event as "an occasion where residential gas powered lawn mowers is exchanged for cordless zero-emission residential lawn mowers." This includes, but is not limited to, an event where consumers may meet at a specific location to exchange their lawn mower or participate in a mail order system where they receive their eligible mower via the mail once they have met the district's lawn mower exchange program requirements.

Q: What is the timeframe for reimbursement of “reserved” vouchers? What is considered a “reserved” voucher? How often can an air district submit invoices for “reserved” vouchers? What type of documentation will be required to show a voucher has been reserved?

A: The current timeline for reimbursement/disbursement request is approximately 4-6 weeks. A reserved/registered voucher is a voucher that has been requested via the telephone or internet during a district’s lawn mower exchange event. Districts may submit one or more invoices or disbursement requests up to the amount of documented voucher reservations. Districts may also use their own system for documenting the number of voucher requests and submit that information as justification for disbursements.

Administrative Funds

Q: Is the cost of subcontracting/hiring a metal recycler for lawn mower exchange events considered an administrative cost or a project cost?

A: The cost of subcontracting/hiring a metal recycler is an administrative cost. Districts who are awarded LGER Project funds may use up to ten percent of their grant for administrative costs while the remainder of the grant must be used towards the purchase of cordless zero-emission residential lawn mowers.

Q: Please clarify that air districts can request up to 10 percent of the total grant award as administration.

A: Districts may use up to 10 percent of the total grant award for administrative and outreach costs. Districts may request less than the maximum 10 percent in administrative and outreach costs to receive additional points as identified in the project budget scoring criteria of the solicitation.

Q: Could unused administrative funds be used to purchase additional cordless zero-emission residential lawn mowers?

A: Yes. Districts may use unused administrative funds to purchase and provide to consumers additional zero-emission residential lawn mowers.

Project Evaluation and Scoring

Q: Is the LGER Project still selecting only the top four scoring districts as Grantees?

A: No. Eligible districts who receive 50 or more points on their LGER Project application will be selected as Grantees.

Q: Is there an idea of how much money districts will receive if awarded funds?

A: No. Each eligible district who scores 50 or more points will receive the minimum \$10,000 during the first allocation. The remainder of the funds will be allocated to districts that requested more than the minimum award amount based on the district's score and lawn mower population. However, districts who request more than the minimum grant amount may not be awarded their desired amount.

Q: How will ARB determine how many points districts with split designations of the federal 8-hour ozone receive?

A: ARB will base federal 8-hour zone classification scores for districts with split designations on their non-attainment status only. For example, if a district designated as unclassified and serious, the district will receive 30 points for their non-attainment status (See Federal 8-hour Ozone Classification scoring criteria on page 6 of the LGER Project Solicitation).

Match Funding

Q: What is the difference between match funding and "Grandfathered match" funding?

A: Match funding refers to funds contributed by the districts to the LGER Project to pay for future additional eligible equipment. "Grandfathered match" refers to expended funds (that would have qualified for the LGER Project) from past lawn mower exchange events. When using regular match funding, districts may receive additional points for providing more than the minimum one to one match requirement. Match provided from past lawn mower exchange events, or "grandfathered in" match, may only be used to meet the minimum one to one match requirement and cannot be used as extra match to receive additional points.

Q: Funds used for match can ONLY be those that were used to pay for lawnmowers or is the entire program/event budget eligible?

A: Only funds used to pay for eligible cordless zero-emission residential lawn mowers would be considered match (See Section 4.6 of the Draft LGER Project Implementation Manual).

Q: Will ARB match administrative funds provided by the district?

A: No. ARB will only provide districts up to one dollar in LGER Project funding toward their local program for every dollar they spend on a cordless zero-emission residential electric lawn mower.

In-Kind Funds

Q: Are in-kind services required?

A: No. In-kind services (per definition in the draft LGER Implementation Manual) are not required for the LGER Project; however, in-kind services may be used to receive additional points on the project application.

Q: Will the current programs' associated costs, such as advertising and staff time qualify as in-kind services?

A: As defined in Section 5 of the draft LGER Implementation Manual, in-kind services means payments or contributions made in form of goods and services, rather than direct monetary contributions. Advertising, staff time, and other associated costs for a lawn mower exchange program may qualify as in-kind services if these costs are applied towards a future lawn mower exchange event.

Q: If a subcontractor is provided via in-kind services, is the hourly rate required in the application?

A: No. The hourly rate for a subcontractor provided as in-kind services are not required; however, ARB will require a reasonable estimate for value of the subcontractor for scoring purposes.