

## **Concept Phase Q&A Written Staff Responses**

*Updated: September 1, 2023*

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## Introduction

On August 10, 2023 and August 29, 2023, California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff held two Question & Answer (Q&A) sessions on the Concept Phase of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 Planning and Capacity Building (Planning), Clean Mobility in Schools (CMIS), and Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) Request for Applications (RFA). The full RFA can be found here: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/planning-cmis-step-fy-22-23>.

The questions and answers in this document include both questions received via email before the Q&A sessions and questions asked during the Q&A sessions. To minimize repetition, similar questions have been combined and answered together.

The following written responses serve as an update to and take precedence over verbal responses provided during the Q&A sessions. This document includes references to the RFA and associated appendices. Language in the RFA and appendices takes precedence over any additional language provided in this Q&A document, except for clarifications provided in the RFA Errors & Clarifications section. Use the following links to reference the relevant RFA and appendices.

- Planning/CMIS/STEP flyer: [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-08/FY22-23\\_CMIS-STEP-RFA\\_flyer.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-08/FY22-23_CMIS-STEP-RFA_flyer.pdf)
- CMIS/STEP RFA: [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23\\_CMIS-STEP-RFA.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23_CMIS-STEP-RFA.pdf)
- Planning RFA: [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23\\_Planning-RFA.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23_Planning-RFA.pdf)
- CMIS/STEP RFA Appendix A: [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23\\_CMIS-STEP-RFA\\_APPENDIX-A\\_Form.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23_CMIS-STEP-RFA_APPENDIX-A_Form.pdf)
- Planning RFA Appendix A: [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23\\_Planning-RFA\\_APPENDIX-A\\_Form.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23_Planning-RFA_APPENDIX-A_Form.pdf)
- CMIS/STEP RFA Appendix B: [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23\\_CMIS-STEP-RFA\\_APPENDIX-B\\_Sample.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23_CMIS-STEP-RFA_APPENDIX-B_Sample.pdf)
- Planning RFA Appendix B: [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23\\_Planning-RFA\\_APPENDIX-B\\_Sample.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23_Planning-RFA_APPENDIX-B_Sample.pdf)
- Planning/CMIS/STEP RFA Appendix B, Attachment III: [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23\\_Planning-CMIS-STEP-RFA\\_APPENDIX-B\\_ATTACHMENT-III.xlsx](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/FY22-23_Planning-CMIS-STEP-RFA_APPENDIX-B_ATTACHMENT-III.xlsx)
- Planning/CMIS/STEP Application Guidance: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/Application%20Guidance.pdf>

CARB will not answer questions regarding this RFA outside of the Q&A sessions.

## Technical Assistance

The Institute for Local Government, in collaboration with People for Mobility Justice and Fehr & Peers, are the technical assistance providers available to support potential Applicants. In the Concept Phase, they will focus on helping Applicants identify the funding program that best suits their needs, ensure that all eligibility requirements have been met, and develop a basic Project Community map. Applicants must sign up for technical assistance with the following link to receive technical assistance: <https://www.ca-ilg.org/cleanmobilityta>.

## RFA Errors and Clarifications

The definition for local government on page 10 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 9 and 10 of the Planning RFA says, "A local public entity as defined in Section 900.4 of the California Government Code, which includes any local California county, city, district, public authority, public agency, and any other political subdivision or public corporation in the State but does not include the State (e.g., school districts, special districts, local education agencies, councils of governments, air districts, transit agencies, and joint powers authorities)." This should read, "A local public entity as defined in Section 900.4 of the California Government Code, which includes any local California county, city, district, public authority, public agency, and any other political subdivision or public corporation in the State (**e.g., school districts, special districts, local education agencies, councils of governments, air districts, transit agencies, and joint powers authorities**) but does not include the State."

Page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA says, "Each CMIS and STEP application must include at least two projects from the categories listed in Tables 4 and 5." This should read, "Each CMIS and STEP application must include at least two **distinct project types** from the **Example Project Types** listed in Tables 4 and 5."

Page 9 of the Planning RFA says, "Indirect costs shall NOT exceed one percent of the total CARB Grant Funds awarded." This should read, "Indirect costs shall NOT exceed **fifteen** percent of the total CARB Grant Funds awarded." Similarly, page 19 of the Planning RFA includes as an ineligible cost, "Indirect costs in excess of one percent of the total awarded funds." For the Planning RFA, this should read, "Indirect costs in excess of **fifteen** percent of the total awarded funds."

Page 26 of the Planning RFA says, "If all requirements are met (i.e., CARB staff answer "Yes" or "N/A" [not applicable] to each question in Table 8), the application will be scored using the scoring criteria in Table 9." This should read, "If all requirements are met (i.e., CARB staff answer "Yes" or "N/A" [not applicable] to each question in Table **6**), the application will be scored using the scoring criteria in Table **7**."

In the Full Phase Eligibility Requirements Table 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA (page 40), one of the requirements says, "For any shared mobility projects, does the average

minimum occupancy per vehicle meet the requirements outlined in Table 6 above?" This should read, "For any shared mobility projects, does the average minimum occupancy per vehicle meet the requirements outlined in **Table 7** above?" This same error is in Appendix B, the Full Phase application template, which includes the same table.

## **Process**

### ***Q&A Session #1***

1. Questions: How do I go about requesting the Clean Transportation and Planning Funding? & How do I request an application for the Concept Phase?

Answer: Submitting a Concept Phase application is the first step to requesting clean transportation and planning funding through CARB's Planning, CMIS, and STEP programs. Appendix A, which is located on the RFA webpage, is the Concept Phase application. Complete Appendix A for either CMIS/STEP or Planning, following all instructions in the appendix, and send it to [step@arb.ca.gov](mailto:step@arb.ca.gov) before the Concept Phase application deadline. A flyer was prepared and posted on the website to help interested parties assess their eligibility for this RFA and understand how to apply.

2. Question (Q&A #1): Will CARB make public the list and contacts of attendees to its webinars, with a goal of fostering strong coalitions and collaborations among respondents?

Answer: Yes, the list of all attendees will be posted after the meeting.

3. Question (Q&A #1): I filled out the preliminary form for the grant programs and submitted but could use some guidance on the next steps.

Answer: If you have filled out and submitted the Technical Assistance (TA) sign-up form then you have taken the first step towards obtaining TA provider assistance. The TA providers use the TA sign-up forms submitted to identify who has requested assistance. The TA providers will reach out to requesters to set up a time to talk about the Concept Phase. Please refer to the Planning/CMIS/STEP flyer for some suggestions for next steps that include reviewing program requirements, identifying projects and partners, and then submitting a Concept Phase application. You may also reference the Planning/CMIS/STEP Application Guidance.

4. Question: Can anyone seek technical assistance or does it have to be a Lead Applicant?

Answer: Anyone who has filled out and submitted a TA sign-up form can receive technical assistance.

5. Question: Is there a standard schedule for STEP? Can we count on the fact that if we can't get in during this solicitation, it may be offered again in 2 years?

Answer: STEP does not have a continuous appropriation from the Legislature, so CARB cannot confirm that future solicitations will be offered or set a standard schedule for future solicitations at this time. Applicants are encouraged to submit a Concept Phase application during the current RFA if they are interested in STEP funding. CARB is currently undergoing a public process to discuss the FY 2023-24 Clean Transportation Incentives Funding Plan, which includes an allocation for clean mobility programs, and per page 6 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, the current RFA "includes the option for CARB to award new Grant Agreements or Grant Agreement amendments from future Fiscal Year funding, depending on the availability of funding and upon CARB's sole discretion."

### **Q&A Session #2**

6. Questions:

- a. Do you mind sharing the list of webinar attendees from the most recent STEP / CMIS Webinar?
- b. I had a quick question which was whether or not there is a list of the Q&As that have been compiled for questions in your previous STEP grant info sessions?

Answer: The list of attendees and past questions and answers can be found here: [Planning, CMIS, and STEP Concept Phase Q&A Session #1 | California Air Resources Board](#).

7. Question: Do you know where I could find the application process since I know the planning stage will need its applicants to turn the application in by September 8th?

Answer: Per page 32 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 24 of the Planning RFA, to submit a Concept Phase application, "Lead Applicants must send an email to [step@arb.ca.gov](mailto:step@arb.ca.gov) with the signed and complete Concept Phase application and Project Community map." The Planning/CMIS/STEP flyer also has information on the steps to apply.

8. Question: I found this through a forwarded email and was wondering if we could be on this list for contact for grants.

Answer: To receive future public communication about Planning, CMIS, and STEP, sign up for CARB's email list here: [California Air Resources Board \(govdelivery.com\)](#). Select Clean and Sustainable Mobility Options under Clean Transportation Incentives to receive updates on Planning, CMIS, and STEP.

9. Question: My question is related to how the concept could change from the concept paper to the full phase application and how it is going to be judged. Because there might be changes that happen from the time we have put together a concept paper and to the time that the full application is submitted.

Answer: CARB understands that changes might be made between the Concept and Full Phases. Per page B-6 of the CMIS/STEP RFA Appendix B and page B-5 of the Planning RFA Appendix B, Applicants must “confirm whether the responses submitted in the Concept Phase application are still accurate. If they need to be updated, describe any updates that have been made. This section will be used to confirm that any updates to the Concept Phase application still meet eligibility requirements and score at least 70% according to the Concept Phase eligibility requirements and scoring criteria.”

10. Question: I only have info on the CMIS/STEP RFA. Can you provide the link for the Planning RFA or show me where it is?

Answer: The Planning RFA can be found on the same webpage as the CMIS/STEP RFA: [Planning, CMIS, and STEP FY 2022-23 | California Air Resources Board](#).

11. Question: My question is about the map. Can we still contact the technical assistance providers to provide that assistance? I thought it said you couldn't.

Answer: The deadline to be guaranteed assistance was 11:59 pm (Pacific Time) on August 11, 2023. However, Applicants may still fill out the assistance sign-up form to request technical assistance. The technical assistance providers will reach out and let you know whether they have the capacity to support your application.

## **Eligible Applicants and Partnership Structure**

### ***Q&A Session #1***

12. Question: We were looking at the CMIS and STEP solicitation and we couldn't find any details regarding charter school eligibility. Is there another resource we should review to figure out if they are eligible under this grant program?

Answer: The School definition on page 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA has a link to the CA Dept of Education's website that describes how a school is determined to be public and private. This funding opportunity is for any California Public School. If the Charter school falls under this definition, then the Charter school is eligible as a Lead or Sub applicant.

13. Question:

- a. Are transit agencies considered units of local government, eligible to apply for STEP funding?
- b. Just want to confirm that transit agencies are eligible? The definition of local government is a little confusing because the examples seem like they are part of the State.

Answer: Transit agencies may be considered to be local governments for the purposes of the Planning and CMIS/STEP RFAs. See the RFA Errors & Clarifications section above for more information.

14. Question: Could funding from this opportunity be used to contract with a turnkey mobility operator to implement a microtransit service?

Answer: Per page 14 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, private companies such as private mobility providers may be eligible Sub-applicants, provided all requirements are met.

15. Question: Could a 501(c)3 multi-unit property development company be eligible to submit an application for EV charging and carshare?

Answer: Community-based organizations that meet both the definition of a community-based organization, as shown on page 9 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 8 of the Planning RFA, and the definition of a nonprofit organization, as shown on page 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 10 of the Planning RFA, may be eligible Lead Applicants. Nonprofit organizations that are not community-based organizations may be eligible as Sub-applicants, per page 14 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 13 of the Planning RFA.

16. Question: One of the questions that I had was the relation between schools and the city applying for school-related programming and education. It sounds like it's ok if the city is the Lead Applicant?

Answer: Cities may be Lead Applicants on projects that also involve schools. Per page 16 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "If the application includes school-related projects as a portion of the full proposal, then the public school or local education agency must at least be a Sub-applicant. Private schools are not eligible Applicants."

## **Q&A Session #2**

17. Question: What is considered a partnership entity for school districts that are applying for this grant?

Answer: Page 14 of the CMIS/STEP RFA says, "Sub-applicants may include public, private, or nonprofit organizations," and lists example organization types. Consider the roles that Sub-applicants and Community Partners will play in the project, per the Terms and Definitions and Eligible Applicants sections of the CMIS/STEP RFA. CARB cannot provide specific guidance on partnerships to potential Applicants.

18. Question: Could a lead applicant submit for a project that has already received a grant award in the past?

Answer: Without additional detail about the project specifics (including funding source, funding program and grant agreement requirements), it is not possible to give a definitive answer. Please note, however, that on page 14 of the CMIS/STEP RFA: "Clean Mobility in Schools grantees selected from the Fiscal Year 2018-19 solicitation are not eligible to be Lead Applicants." See also page 35 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 27 of the Planning RFA for scoring criteria that relate to whether Project Communities have received funding from specific State programs. CARB does not specify any limitations for projects that have been funded by non-State (e.g., local or federal) sources of funding in the past. However, each application will be reviewed on its merits and whether it satisfies the solicitation requirements.

19. Questions:

- a. We are technically an LLC, not a 501c3. We do, however, have a fiscal sponsor. I'm wondering if we are eligible to be the lead applicant, or if that would have to be the County agency? I saw that sub applicants can have a fiscal sponsor, but I wanted to clarify about this for lead applicants.
- b. Our center belongs to the philanthropic side of the university and is an NGO. Can we be the lead or we should be a co-lead? I've seen the in the notice that education institutes are co-applicants, but does us being situated in this format help us or let us be on the lead side?

Answer: Per page 13 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 12 of the Planning RFA, eligible Lead Applicants are community-based organizations, tribal governments, local governments, and public schools and "to qualify as a Lead Applicant, a community-based organization must meet all of the requirements outlined in the definition of a nonprofit organization," which includes being incorporated as a 501(c)3. The full definition of a



nonprofit organization is on page 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 10 of the Planning RFA. Community-based organizations must also meet the definition of a community-based organization on page 9 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 8 of the Planning RFA.

20. Questions:

- a. If we are eligible to be the lead agency as a CBO, we would need to have an additional community partner. Is that correct?
- b. We are interested in submitting an application for the Concept Phase and were hoping to get some clarification on the requirements. We are looking to be the lead applicant on this grant, and we wanted to verify if having a sub-applicant was required or if we are able to pursue this as a single entity. If we must have a sub-applicant, to what extent would their involvement have to be? Can we simply submit a letter of support from them, or do they have to be directly involved in the implementation process of it? Our project is a transit needs assessment, as opposed to a capital project, so we wanted to know if the evaluation criteria would be applied in the same manner to us.

Answer: Per page 16 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 14 of the Planning RFA, "If the Lead Applicant is a local government, then at least one of the Sub-applicants must be a community-based organization. If the Lead Applicant is a community-based organization, then at least one of the Sub-applicants must be a local government or a tribal government. If the Lead Applicant is a tribal government, then specific Sub-applicants are not required." Per the Sub-applicant definition on page 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 10 of the Planning RFA, a Sub-applicant is "An entity that enters into a partnership with the Lead Applicant for the purpose of applying for a CARB grant and that is responsible for implementing a project or project elements funded through CARB." And per page 14 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 13 of the Planning RFA, "Sub-applicants must have written agreements with the Lead Applicant in place for their work on the project at the time of project implementation and must comply with CARB's Grant Agreement terms alongside the Lead Applicant." These requirements are the same for both CMIS/STEP and Planning projects.

21. Question: We have a community partner in mind. They are a resident group that works on environmental justice issues. They don't have formal 501c3 status. Will that be ok?

Answer: The Community Partner definition is on page 9 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 8 of the Planning RFA. It is "A community group, community

resident, student, parent, school staff, health-based organization, faith-based organization, small business, or other entity in the Project Community that, while not responsible for implementing funded projects, serves as a key stakeholder and representative of the Project Community during both development of the application and implementation of funded projects.”

22. Question: Can a city be a lead applicant for the CMIS grant and include an educational agency or school as a sub-applicant?

Answer: Per page 16 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, “CMIS projects must include a public school or local education agency as an Applicant. If the application only includes CMIS projects, then the public school or local education agency must be the Lead Applicant. If the application includes school-related projects as a portion of the full proposal, then the public school or local education agency must at least be a Sub-applicant.”

23. Question: Is the full partnership structure required for Concept Phase Application? Can we explain that sub-applicants and community partners are being identified in the concept phase but have the partnership structure ready for the full phase application?

Answer: Per page 32 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 24 of the Planning RFA, “All Concept Phase application responses will be considered draft. Lead Applicants will be required to describe any updates from the Concept Phase in the Full Phase application.” However, at minimum Concept Phase applications must meet all eligibility requirements in Table 9 of the CMIS/STEP RFA or Table 6 of the Planning RFA to be scored and be eligible to be invited to the Full Phase.

24. Questions:

- a. What are the main differences between a sub-applicant versus community partner? Can community partners be added in a proposal budget? Or only sub-applicants?
- b. Please provide clarification between a sub-applicant and community partners and what roles does each entail.

Answer: Per page 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 10 of the Planning RFA, a Sub-applicant is, “An entity that enters into a partnership with the Lead Applicant for the purpose of applying for a CARB grant and that is responsible for implementing a project or project elements funded through CARB. Sub-applicants will enter written agreements with the Lead Applicant if their application is selected for funding.” Per page 9 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 8 of the Planning RFA, a Community

Partner is, "A community group, community resident, student, parent, school staff, health-based organization, faith-based organization, small business, or other entity in the Project Community that, while not responsible for implementing funded projects, serves as a key stakeholder and representative of the Project Community during both development of the application and implementation of funded projects." Per page 14 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 13 of the Planning RFA, "While not directly responsible for implementing components within the project, Community Partners should have a formal agreement, such as a contract or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), with the Lead Applicant or a Sub-applicant. If appropriate compensation is offered, it must comply with applicable laws." Refer to the Planning, CMIS, and STEP Application Guidance for more recommendations on Community Partner compensation.

25. Questions:

- a. Is a CBO social enterprise, who has a fiscal sponsor, eligible to be the lead applicant for the Planning Grant? I saw that sub applicants can have a fiscal sponsor, but I wanted to clarify if this was allowed for lead applicants.
- b. We're an organization that is both a (c)3 and a (c)4. We're a community-based organization but our (c)3 work is done through a fiscal sponsor. And so I'm just confirming that that makes us only eligible as a subcontractor, because as a lead we'd need to have 501(c)3 incorporation as an organization? The delineations between fiscal sponsorship can sometimes be really blurry so I just wanted to ask in order to get a hundred percent answer.

Answer: All Lead Applicants must meet all requirements to serve as a Lead Applicant, as specified on page 12 of the Planning RFA. Per page 12 of the Planning RFA, "Should their application be selected for funding, the Lead Applicant will enter into a Grant Agreement with CARB's selected PCB Administrator and assume responsibility and accountability for the use and expenditure of received CARB Grant Funds."

26. Question: Are community groups who do not have 501c3 status eligible to be the community partner? Or does the community partner need to have 501c3 status or a fiscal sponsor?

Answer: CARB has no restrictions on what types of entities may serve as Community Partners as long as they are able to perform the roles of Community Partner as outlined in the RFAs.

27. Question: Can the sub-applicant also be a community partner?

Answer: CARB has no limitation on if entities can serve as both Sub-applicants and Community Partners, but the entities identified as Sub-applicants or Community Partners must meet the eligibility requirements and be able to serve in those roles as defined in the Terms and Definitions sections of each RFA.

28. Question: Do we need to have a Sub-applicant be a mobility operator if we're applying for a microtransit service?

Answer: See page 26 of the CMIS/STEP RFA for a full list of Concept Phase eligibility requirements and page 31 of the CMIS/STEP RFA for a full list of Full Phase eligibility requirements. Beyond those requirements, CARB does not specify what partners must be a part of an application and what partners may be identified post-award.

29. Question: Is there any verification you need from Sub-applicants or community partners to say that they're on board besides just writing them in the application? Usually there's a letter of commitment. I just didn't see that and want to make sure this is as pared down as it appears.

Answer: Letters of commitment and support are required in the Full Phase application (Appendix B) but not in the Concept Phase application (Appendix A). Refer to Appendix A for a full list of application requirements in the Concept Phase.

30. Questions:

- a. In the scoring criteria, if we have an NGO and a city or a county are we going to get up to 100%? But for 2 NGOs or 2 counties or cities, does that count the same?
- b. On page 26 in Table 6, there is the applicant and partnership structure section where you say, if the lead applicant is a local government, is one of the sub-applicants a community-based organization and if the lead applicant is a community-based organization, is one of the sub-applicants a local government or tribal government. And then in the rubric that we discussed previously, you're giving 2 points if a lead applicant is a tribal government or at least 2 community-based organizations are applicants. So, can you just elaborate more on that?

Answer: Page 26 of the Planning RFA includes the Concept Phase eligibility requirements for applicants and the partnership structure. Per page 26, "If all requirements are met... the application will be scored."

Page 27 of the Planning RFA includes the Concept Phase scoring criteria. To receive two points in the Applicants and Partnership Structure section the application must meet one of the following criteria: "Lead Applicant is a tribal government or at least two community-based organizations are Applicants." If the "Lead Applicant is not a tribal government or only one community-based organization is an Applicant," no points will be awarded to the application for this scoring criterion. Per page 28 of the Planning RFA, "Applications that meet the eligibility requirements and score 70 percent or higher (25.2 points out of 36 points) will be invited to submit a Full Phase application."

31. Question: Could local governments include a joint powers authority that is composed of county governments and local transportation agencies? Would that be eligible as a lead applicant?

Answer: Joint powers authorities may be considered to be local governments for the purposes of the Planning and CMIS/STEP RFAs. See the RFA Errors & Clarifications section above for more information.

## **Eligible Projects and Costs**

### ***Q&A Session #1***

32. Questions:

- a. Is a microtransit project eligible under this grant? Would it fall within "active transportation infrastructure; and workforce development, planning, and capacity building activities that support clean transportation and transportation equity"?
- b. Can EV charging infrastructure for public use be included as project scope without EV fleets/vehicles in the project scope?
- c. We are in the process of trying to figure out how to electrify our fleet of vehicles, and we are seeking funding for developing a Fleet Vehicle Electrification Plan. Would this funding opportunity be applicable to a project like this? If not, are you able to help point me in the right direction?
- d. Are you willing to seriously consider a factory-manufactured, crane-installed multi-mode transit stack (with variations, and mass-customized for the physical environment and potential demand), using advanced structural geometries and construction materials to provide more performance, for much less cost and far shorter lead times, as a highly attractive and cost-effective solution to clean mobility and transportation equity issues? Additional detail was provided on the transit stack.

- e. I want to create EV hubs for kids and parents who need transportation to and from schools/colleges. The project would include 4-5 EV cars/vans to start, 1 or 2 electric charging stations, a structure with solar panels, a digital community membership platform, 3-4 licensed and insured professional drivers, and other features/costs that the emailer described.
- f. Can an applicant request funding for youth bike safety education as part of a STEP proposal? This project would be more community-focused than school-focused.
- g. Would any of your grants meet our need for a sidewalk infill project on Highway 1 in a disadvantaged community that is 47% Latino? This project would provide access to students to walk to the state park and beach and be educated on safe pedestrian practices. Would this be eligible for funding? Is this the only category where that funding would be available, or is there another category of funding where this project could be funded on its own?
- h. Our educational programming is a little bit different so I wanted to make sure it was an eligible cost. The high school we're working with is interested in our organization providing training to students, kind of like workforce development, creating the structure so they can have their own club and can encourage other students to bike and walk to school. I wanted to see if that programming idea is eligible - I guess that's the planning pot?
- i. I see that bikesharing is eligible, correct? We were thinking of building up a bike library.

Answer: Refer to the Eligible Projects section that starts on page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 15 of the Planning RFA for a list of eligible project types and categories for each program. See the RFA Errors & Clarifications section above for clarification on the two project requirement described on page 17. Projects must meet all other eligibility requirements as set out in the RFAs in order to be eligible for funding. CARB cannot determine eligibility of a specific project without reviewing the entire application for that project.

33. Question: Does STEP usually fund single projects or multiple projects? (If multiple projects are recommendations from a transportation plan)

Answer: CMIS and STEP fund multiple projects under a single grant/within a single community. Per page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "CMIS and STEP grants fund a variety of planning and capacity building, clean transportation, and supporting projects that work together to increase transportation equity and achieve the community's vision." See the RFA Errors & Clarifications section

above for clarification on the two project requirement described on page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA.

34. Questions:

- a. If a microtransit service was one of the two projects required, then would the application also need to include another type of project from Table 4 or 5? Does it have to be in a different project category or just any other project that fits along with these examples that are given? So microtransit service could be one of them and then another project could be fare subsidies or bike/active transportation infrastructure? Could the second project come from Table 6?
- b. Clarifying question for Table 4, when it says that you have to propose 2 projects—can both projects be in the active transportation section of that table, such as a bike path and bike infrastructure like fix-it stations? For new bikeways and pedestrian walkways, would a Class I meet both those categories?
- c. It sounds like as long as you have two distinct projects within the bucket, which includes all these sharing options... If we are looking to provide both a microtransit option as well as the bike library, would those count as distinct projects?

Answer: See the RFA Errors & Clarifications section above for clarification on the two project requirement described on page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA.

35. Question: Should the projects be related to each other or in some sort of larger concept? Is that not a factor?

Answer: Per page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "CMIS and STEP grants fund a variety of planning and capacity building, clean transportation, and supporting projects that work together to increase transportation equity and achieve the community's vision." The overarching goal of CMIS and STEP is to increase transportation equity. Page 4 of the CMIS/STEP RFA describes this goal in more detail. How projects address these goals will be factored into project selection, per the scoring criteria described in the RFA.

36. Question: Under the category "shared mobility" - if one project was to purchase an eligible vehicle could the second project be the operations of that vehicle?

Answer: While purchase of vehicles is an eligible cost, it is not listed as an example project type in Table 4 of the CMIS/STEP RFA. The purchase and operations of a single shared mobility service may be considered one project, as demonstrated by the example project type "new or expanded zero-emission service" within the shared mobility project category on page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA.

37. Question: Is design and construction eligible for either program? For a beautification project that involves building better bike and walkways at or near a transit center.

Answer: For CMIS and STEP, both design and construction are eligible costs, per page 22 of the CMIS/STEP RFA. For Planning, design is an eligible project as part of the clean transportation, land use, and transportation equity plan project category, per page 15 of the Planning RFA. The project must also meet the Planning RFA criteria, including the goals of supporting increased access or identifying/addressing a community need identified, as described on page 17 of the Planning RFA. If an Applicant wanted both design and construction to be funded under one grant, they would need to apply to CMIS and STEP.

## **Q&A Session #2**

38. Questions:

- a. In order to further incentivize VMT reduction on an individual basis, would the STEP grant allow individuals to be paid for their trips and/or VMT saved by taking transit or by using active transportation?
- b. For this grant can we apply and create a Medi-Call Peer Support Specialist Training for Job readiness for the justice-impacted?

Answer: Refer to the Eligible Projects section that starts on page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 15 of the Planning RFA for a list of eligible project types and categories for each program.

39. There is a project example under active transportation, implementation grants that is "maintenance of infrastructure." Would that infrastructure only apply to that which is being built or created under this grant, or could it be an existing sustainable transit network in place? Could you give an example of this?

Answer: "Maintenance of infrastructure" is an example project type on page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA. There is no specification that this must be only for infrastructure developed through the grant; it may cover existing infrastructure as well.

40. Are training sessions/lessons for how to use e-bikeshare systems and ride e-bikes considered a cost under Table 4. Clean Transportation Projects (on page 17 of the STEP RFA) or a cost under Table 6. Capacity Building and Planning and Supporting projects (page 18)?

Answer: Table 6 of the CMIS/STEP RFA includes example project types such as "Educational resources and training for clean transportation." The example project types under Table 4 of the CMIS/STEP RFA are focused on



infrastructure and operations of transportation services that can achieve quantifiable GHG reductions.

41. Question: Under STEP grants, can we apply for a vehicle, as well as operations cost, for rural mobility transportation services to an outlying rural community that is not served by our regional transit system? If so, must it be an EV or can it be a hybrid vehicle?

Answer: Refer to the Eligible Projects section that starts on page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA for a list of eligible project types and categories and page 21 for a list of eligible costs. Per page 25 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "For funded light-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicle purchases: Vehicles must be zero-emission. ZEVs include electric-drive, all-battery electric vehicles, and fuel-cell electric vehicles."

42. Question: I have a small car service business that I'm trying to expand and grow. Should I apply for this grant if I want to build a fleet with zero emission (electric) vehicles? At the moment I'm renting out gasoline cars to vacationers and locals in my community. But I would like to change that with zero emission vehicles. Also, do I have to reside in California to apply for this grant?

Answer: Page 13 of the CMIS/STEP RFA provides information on Lead and Sub-applicant eligibility. Also, per page 21 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, an ineligible project is, "Vehicle or fleet replacement that does not support new or expanded service (except for the school-related vehicles and equipment in Table 5)."

43. Question: I am with a nonprofit and we are considering a capacity building grant that I think would fall under STEP to assess the transportation needs of a particular low-income community in our county. What we're trying to assess is, would we be able to assist that community and their transportation needs in the future? But we're also specifically interested in a sub population in that low-income community which would be older adults. Is that something that is within the scope of this? It would also be a very small grant, I would think, compared to what other people's needs are—it's just capacity building, doing needs assessment surveys, that type of thing.

Answer: Per the RFA Errors & Clarifications section above., "Each CMIS and STEP application must include at least two **distinct project types** from the **Example Project Types** listed in Tables 4 and 5." A capacity building or needs assessment project as a standalone project may be eligible for funding from the Planning RFA. Review the Planning RFA for more information on eligibility requirements.

## **Project Community and Map**

### ***Q&A Session #1***

44. Question: The map instructions in the Concept Phase Application Template (Appendix A) says that the required format is .shp, .kml, or .kmz file type. Those formats only show a layer. The intro page says it would be a "basic Project Community map". Shouldn't jpg or png be allowed to show a simple stylized map with the required elements (project area, disadvantaged communities)?

Answer: The location information necessary to verify eligibility and score applications in this RFA requires CARB to use ArcGIS mapping software. Therefore, CARB requires the Project Community boundary to be supplied as a layer using an ArcGIS-accessible file type: .shp, .kml, or .kmz. The TA providers can help Applicants develop this Project Community layer. Applicants may also submit a .jpg or .png map to help illustrate their project and project area, but this is not required.

45. Question: Our City as a whole is close to 50% disadvantaged, and we can verify if it is truly over 50% if needed, but wanted to know if the percentage is reflected as the organization administering the project or the determined project boundaries?

Answer: Per the definition of Project Community on page 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 10 of the Planning RFA, the Project Community is the "geographic area where the residents who are primarily intended to benefit from the project reside." It is not necessarily the entire area in which the transportation projects will be located. "The Project Community may be represented by a contiguous or non-contiguous geographic area but must be at minimum within connected counties." This is the geographic area that has the percent disadvantaged or low-income community requirement.

46. Question: Could you reiterate something you touched on earlier about the purpose of the mapping submittal and what areas would be disqualified?

Answer: Per page A-6 of the CMIS/STEP RFA Appendix A and the Planning RFA Appendix A, the Project Community map "will be used to confirm that the Project Community meets eligibility requirements and will be used to score whether the Project Community is rural and whether the Project Community has received past funding from CMIS, STEP, or similar State programs." The eligibility requirement asks, "Is more than 50 percent of the Project Community in disadvantaged or low-income community census tracts?" and is listed on page A-4 of Appendix A. Applications where 50 percent or less of the Project Community is in disadvantaged or low-income community census tracts may not meet the eligibility requirement. Page 9 and 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 8 and 10 of the Planning RFA have definitions of

disadvantaged and low-income communities. Applicants are encouraged to work with the technical assistance providers and refer to the California Climate Investments priority populations map on page 10 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 9 of the Planning RFA to help determine their community's eligibility.

47. Question: I'm curious about the map/shapefile. Does the project boundary need to be continuous, or can it be two separate hotspots in the community?

Answer: Per page 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 10 of the Planning RFA, "The Project Community may be represented by a contiguous or non-contiguous geographic area but must be at minimum within connected counties."

## **Q&A Session #2**

48. Questions:

- a. Can we as an organization apply to access funding from you with respect to a project in Nigeria?
- b. Could this funding be available out of the US country? Could it be possible to receive a grant from CARB to implement a program by the Córdoba State Government?

Answer: Per Page 4 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and the Planning RFA, "the overarching purpose of these programs is to increase transportation equity in disadvantaged and low-income communities throughout California." See the terms and definitions section for complete definitions of disadvantaged and low-income communities and how to identify them.

49. Question: If we were to apply for projects at multiple schools, how would you define the Project Community?

Answer: CARB cannot provide specific recommendations as to how to define the Project Community. Applicants should follow the definition of Project Community on page 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA: "A geographic area where the residents who are primarily intended to benefit from the project reside. The Project Community may be represented by a contiguous or non-contiguous geographic area but must be at minimum within connected counties." Also note that to be eligible, per page 13 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "More than 50 percent of the geographic area of the Project Community must be within low-income or disadvantaged community census tracts and at least 50 percent of the total proposed budget must fund projects located within the low-income and disadvantaged community census tracts in the Project Community."

50. Questions:

- a. Can we apply for a bike voucher program where the project area is citywide if the city qualifies as 50% low-income or disadvantaged?
- b. Could STEP fund a statewide transportation needs assessment for my organization? And could it just generally support looking into the ZEV infrastructure needs of specific communities?
- c. More than 50% of the geographic area of the project community views what must be within low-income or disadvantaged community census tracts. So I look at your map that is off of the FAQ. So I got 4 schools, actually 5 schools within some zones, and then the other half of my district is not qualifying. So how should we interpret? That is, if I know I have 5 schools that fall within the qualifying zones, can I include additional project capacity at schools that are outside of that as long as the ask is not more than 50% in the low-income area and 50% in the non-low-income area?

Answer: CARB does not provide a size requirement for the Project Community and cannot give specific guidance to prospective Applicants regarding how their Project Community boundary is defined. Per page 11 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 10 of the Planning RFA, the Project Community is "a geographic area where the residents who are primarily intended to benefit from the project reside. The Project Community may be represented by a contiguous or non-contiguous geographic area but must be at minimum within connected counties." See page 13 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 12 of the Planning RFA for more information on Eligible Communities, which includes the requirements that, "More than 50 percent of the geographic area of the Project Community must be within low-income or disadvantaged community census tracts," and, for CMIS/STEP only, "At least 50 percent of the total proposed budget must fund projects located within the low-income and disadvantaged community census tracts in the Project Community."

51. Question: In the Planning RFA on page 27 in the table, the very first line third column, it says the project community does not overlap with an area served by an MPO. What is an MPO?

Answer: Per page 36 of the Planning RFA, MPO stands for a metropolitan planning organization.

52. Question: I believe our MPO is TransPlan, so East Contra Costa County. We would be applying for funding for regional trail improvements, so it would overlap with some unincorporated Contra Costa county jurisdiction. Would that disqualify us?

Answer: Page 35 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 27 of the Planning RFA includes a scoring criterion: "Project Community does not overlap with an area served by an MPO or an urbanized area per the 2020 census." This is not an eligibility requirement. Applications that meet this criterion will receive two points. If the "Project Community overlaps with an area served by an MPO or an urbanized area per the 2020 census," no points will be awarded to the application for this scoring criterion. Per page 37 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 28 of the Planning RFA, "Applications that meet the eligibility requirements and score 70 percent or higher (25.2 points out of 36 points) will be invited to submit a Full Phase application."

53. Question: I was talking to one of the technical assistance providers and he said that for the application, we'll need to submit a map showing the city boundary, and as long as we just submit a screenshot of the city map, that was sufficient enough for the application. But while I was looking at Appendix A, which is the application, it says that the map actually needs to be submitted in a required format. So I just want to double check—would we need to get back in touch with the technical assistance provider to have an actual map created in the required format listed here?

Answer: Per page A-6 of the CMIS/STEP RFA Appendix A and page A-5 of the Planning RFA Appendix A, "Work with the technical assistance providers to create [the Project Community] map in the required format (.shp, .kml, or .kmz file type)." The location information necessary to verify eligibility and score applications in this RFA requires CARB to use ArcGIS mapping software. Therefore, CARB requires the Project Community boundary to be supplied as a layer using an ArcGIS-accessible file type: .shp, .kml, or .kmz.

## **Funding, Budget, and Resource Contributions**

### ***Q&A Session #1***

54. Question: What is the range of funding awarded for projects? Would STEP partially fund a project if the project cost is high? Can sponsors split a project into phases to increase chances of getting funding?

Answer: Per the Concept Phase eligibility requirements table on page 34 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, the total budget requested must be "less than or equal to \$14.85 million", which is the total available funding for each program this Fiscal Year. There is no limit to the amount of resource contributions that may be used to support a project, so CARB may partially fund a project that was also funded through outside resource contributions. In addition, the long-term sustainability of the project is a scoring criterion, as described on page 43 of the CMIS/STEP RFA.

55. Questions:

- a. What are the fund matching requirements and/or expectations?
- b. While we understand that a local match isn't required, will the contribution of local funds make an application more competitive and/or be a part of the evaluation process?
- c. Is there any kind of match share requirement and if so, what is it?

Answer: Per page 30 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 22 of the Planning RFA, "Resource contributions may be provided to cover project costs but are not required." All the information that will be factored into the scoring criteria are detailed in the scoring criteria tables in the RFAs. However, per page 13 of the Planning/CMIS/STEP Application Guidance, "CARB funds may not be used to pay for childcare-related costs, food and beverages, general meetings that do not specifically discuss or advance implementation of the CARB-funded projects, or any of the other costs listed as ineligible in the CMIS and STEP RFA. CARB recommends that Grantees use resource contributions to fill the funding gaps that CARB funds cannot fill."

56. Question: If we get STEP funding, can we use it as a local match for a state-funded active transportation project? We have a project funded through the Active Transportation Program Cycle 6 and the jurisdiction wants to know if we could use STEP funds as a local match to build out that project.

Answer: CARB does not have restrictions on how Planning, CMIS, and STEP funds are used for other programs' match requirements. Those restrictions may exist within the program in question—in this case, the Active Transportation Program.

57. Question: Are there minimum and maximum funding requests?

Answer: Per Table 9 on page 34 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, the total budget requested must be "less than or equal to \$14.85 million." Per Table 6 on page 26 of the Planning RFA, the total budget requested must be "less than or equal to \$500,000." No minimums were provided.

58. Questions:

- a. I saw that there is a cap on indirect costs. Is there a cap on fringe benefit rate when you're figuring out your billable rate? Is fringe considered part of indirect?

- b. We interpreted that we could be reimbursed for a salary rate but not sure that other costs embedded in paying for an employee be eligible - can employee fringe benefit costs also be allowed for reimbursement? It was connected with indirect costs. No more than one percent is a challenging part and is probably what triggered questions about the fringe rate as well.

Answer: Per the Planning/CMIS/STEP RFA Appendix B, Attachment III, "Labor rates must account for overhead and fringe benefits." CARB has not specified a cap on the fringe benefit rate.

59. Question: Are you viewing indirect rate differently than overhead rate? It seemed like from the budget document that you could put overhead rate into the billable staff rate. Is there a definition of overhead rate? Not more than one percent for indirect costs seems hard, especially when you have multiple partners. How do you break that out over separate budgets and over different lead applicants and sub-applicants in the budget?

Answer: Per page 10 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 9 of the Planning RFA, "Allowable indirect costs are a pro rata share of general management (overhead) costs for operations that support the work performed under the Grant Agreement, such as accounting, budgeting, payroll preparation, personnel services, utility costs, rent, and centralized data processing not already identified or reimbursed as a direct cost." Per the Planning/CMIS/STEP RFA Appendix B, Attachment III, "Labor rates must account for overhead and fringe benefits." CARB understands that different organizations may calculate overhead and indirect costs differently and will work with the selected funding recipients to determine the best approach for tracking indirect costs during grant implementation.

60. Question: We have a variety of Caltrans grants and they have an ICAP approved rate and it covers the fringe rate. Could we bill at that fringe rate and just indicate that that is our ICAP approved fringe rate approved by Caltrans? Asking to make sure when developing budgets that we're developing budgets that will accurately reflect what CARB would pay out if we were to be part of a winning application.

Answer: CARB does not have specific limits on fringe rates; however, all project costs must be appropriately documented as described in Appendix C for the Planning and CMIS/STEP RFAs. Since different State programs have different requirements and expectations, staff cannot confirm that a rate approved by Caltrans will be approved by CARB.

**Q&A Session #2**

61. Question: Are CARB STEP funds solely from state sources? My understanding is that they are from state Cap and Trade auction moneys?

Answer: Per page 4 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "These programs are part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment - particularly in disadvantaged communities."

62. Question: Is there a difference between indirect cost and overhead cost?

Answer: Per page 10 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 9 of the Planning RFA, "Allowable indirect costs are a pro rata share of general management (overhead) costs for operations that support the work performed under the Grant Agreement, such as accounting, budgeting, payroll preparation, personnel services, utility costs, rent, and centralized data processing not already identified or reimbursed as a direct cost." CARB understands that different organizations may calculate overhead and indirect costs differently and will work with the selected funding recipients to determine the best approach for tracking indirect costs during grant implementation.

63. Question: Are indirect cost rates honored for reimbursement? Can we apply all soft costs to the CON total project cost?

Answer: For CMIS and STEP, per page 10 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "Indirect costs shall NOT exceed one percent of the total CARB Grant Funds awarded." Per the RFA Errors & Clarifications section above, "Indirect costs shall NOT exceed **fifteen** percent of the total CARB Grant Funds awarded." Refer to page 21 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 17 of the Planning RFA for a list of eligible costs. CARB does not characterize "soft costs" in this RFA. In distinguishing and characterizing costs in applications, applicants should work within the direct and indirect cost descriptions provided in the RFAs. See the terms and definitions section for more information on indirect and direct costs.

64. Question: As we are asking for projects 100% within DACs, we would like have a no-match application. Is this ok?

Answer: Per page 30 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 22 of the Planning RFA, "Resource contributions may be provided to cover project costs but are not required."



## Other

### **Q&A Session #1**

65. Question: Do you prefer applications for a specific location (and if so, can you provide any indication of where such projects would be most urgently needed)?

Answer: Applications must be for a specific Project Community and the community must meet the eligibility requirements listed in the RFA. To maintain impartiality, CARB cannot give specific guidance to prospective Applicants regarding where certain projects may be needed.

66. Question: If I have more than one project to propose, should they be complete separate applications, or one application with multiple divisions, or separate complete applications submitted together with an overarching concept description?

Answer: Applications will compete against each other for funding and, per page 45 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 35 of the Planning RFA, "while there are no restrictions on the number of applications that a Lead Applicant may submit, CARB will award at most one application per Lead Applicant."

67. Question: Can you shape awards (present or future) to move the concept forward from its starting position? Or do we need to shape the proposal and the process for getting the new industry started to your existing RFA criteria?

Answer: The eligibility requirements and scoring criteria for this RFA will not change to accommodate other projects.

68. Question: Can you please provide a walkthrough of the Data Collection, Evaluation, and Reporting requirements?

Answer: Per page 30 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 22 of the Planning RFA, Grantees, in coordination with their partners, will be required to "collect data on projects quarterly" and "report data annually to CARB [or the PCB Administrator]." "Data types collected and reported to CARB will vary based on the activities and project types implemented." Some examples are included in Table 8 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and Table 5 of the Planning RFA. The Grantee, in coordination with their partners, will also be required to "regularly evaluate project impacts based on identified metrics of success, including direct community feedback" and "regularly update processes and project implementation based on evaluation results." Much of the detail on these evaluations will depend on the circumstances of the projects and Grantees and will be determined with CARB and the Grantee through the Grantee's data collection, evaluation, and reporting plan.

69. Question: Let's say we have a school district with multiple schools and we're thinking about fleet electrification. Would each school have to be considered as a separate project/application or could we combine those into one project/application, especially if they are in close proximity to each other and all belong to one school district? If they are combined/have shared resources, then can they be one application? And otherwise, would they have to be separate?

Answer: CMIS has no limitations on the number of projects, schools, or sites that may be included in a single application.

70. Question: Does involving the schools, and thus applying to CMIS, trigger any other additional requirements to those in STEP? If our project involved schools and thus became a part of CMIS, would we be required to try to build out replacement for dirty fuels with EVs in schools?

Answer: To be eligible for CMIS funding, per page 34 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, a public school or local education agency must be included as an Applicant.

71. Question: What was the program that was more directed toward advanced technology? Can you post a link to that?

Answer: The Advanced Technology Demonstration and Pilot Project solicitation can be found here: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/low-carbon-transportation-investments-and-air-quality-improvement-program/low>.

72. Question: Earlier in the meeting today, someone asked if projects could be combined or if they should submit a bunch of separate projects and the answer was, there's no limit to the number of separate projects they could submit. But as far as a non-contiguous geographic area, our county is large. If we had one application with one project in one city and another project in the same county but in another area—they're two separate projects—that would fit the criteria for two distinct projects, and they could be in one application?

Answer: Per page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "CMIS and STEP grants fund a variety of projects that work together to increase transportation equity and achieve the community's vision." CARB cannot determine eligibility of a specific project or approach without reviewing the entire application for that project.

73. Question: I see in the scoring criteria that 90 to 100 percent is given if the Lead Applicant is a tribal government or at least two CBOs are applicants. I don't see local government - was that intentional?

Answer: Per Table 10 on page 35 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and Table 7 on page 27 of the Planning RFA, during the Concept Phase, two points will be awarded

to applications that meet the following criterion: "Lead Application is a tribal government or at least two community-based organizations are Applicants." Local governments are eligible Applicants for Planning, CMIS, and STEP, but points from this scoring criteria category may not be awarded to applications that have a local government as an Applicant.

74. Question: I know you pulled up past projects. The only ones I could see are from last year. Is there another location where you have past projects from other years? Can you provide the link to past projects?

Answer: CMIS and STEP have each had only one past solicitation. All funded CMIS, STEP Planning, and STEP Implementation projects from these past solicitations can be found here: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/lcti-step-pcb-cmis>. Note that existing CMIS, STEP Planning, and STEP Implementation projects were selected in past solicitations that may have used different eligibility requirements and scoring criteria to inform project selection.

## **Q&A Session #2**

75. Questions:

- a. What are the operation expectations for STEP? The RFA lists March 2027 as the Grant Term end date. Is there any expectation for ongoing operations for services provided through STEP/CMIS?
- b. If our project were eligible, how many years of operations cost could we request?

Answer: Per page 7 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "All CMIS and STEP funds must be expended within the Grant Term." Per page 8 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, the grant term will end on March 15, 2027. Per page 29 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "Applicants are encouraged to extend... written agreements, as well as the partnership agreement and other plans... beyond the Grant Term to support long-term project sustainability. However, all CARB Grant Funds must be spent within the Grant Term." Per Table 12 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, applications will also be scored on the long-term sustainability of the proposed projects.

76. Question: I'm interested in learning more about the Grants that you both (Bree and Heather) are the point of contact for.

Answer: If you are interested in the current RFA, find out more information on CARB's RFA webpage: [Planning, CMIS, and STEP FY 2022-23 | California Air Resources Board](#). If you are interested in learning about past CMIS and STEP projects, find out more information on CARB's clean mobility webpages:

[Sustainable Community-Based Transportation Equity Investments | California Air Resources Board.](#)

77. Question: I was curious if there is a third-party administrator for the Sustainable Transportation Equity Project or the Clean Mobility in Schools Implementation Programs? I know that there is a new solicitation for a statewide planning and capacity-building administrator, but I was curious if there was an administrator, like CALSTART is to CMO, for STEP and CMIS?

Answer: With the funding available in this RFA, CMIS and STEP projects will be directly administered by CARB.

78. Question: I have questions about the CMO vs STEP grant. Is the funding the same? Is there competition between the two? The City is looking into applying for a STEP grant but has already agreed to be a partner for a CMO grant. Would the City be competing against itself?

Answer: CMO and STEP have separate funding allocations and separate application and selection processes. This STEP RFA is separate from past CMO application windows.

79. Question: How can we, a company that works on EV charging installation for multi-family residential properties, make ourselves known to Lead Applicants that we are interested in being a sub-applicant as charging station providers?

Answer: CARB is not in a position where it can recommend or advertise the availability of any sub-applicants or sub-applicant services to any prospective applicants. What is available is the list of attendees that will be posted after the meeting.

80. Questions:

- a. We're planning on putting in a concept proposal and we'd like to include a microtransit program as part of that application. We're trying to figure out how to meet your requirements to get into an agreement with an operator of that service by the November deadline, assuming we were to pass the first phase. Our competitive procurements take 4 to 6 months, so I wanted to see if you've seen other cities figure it out and select someone. And I'm trying to figure out how to meet our requirements and yours given the short turnaround. One thought was to piggyback on other cities who run RFPs who included that clause. So far I've been talking to other cities and other cities who are trying to do the same thing for other grants are not finding anyone who's issued an RFP. So another question I had related to this was could we sign an MOU with a vendor conditional on us doing an RFP after we get the award, should we get

it? And then it might remain the same Sub-applicant, or it might be a different Sub-applicant depending on the outcome of that competitive procurement.

- b. Is a memorandum of understanding (MOU)/agreement required for both a sub-applicant and the community partner(s) before project implementation/after grant agreements are executed?

Answer: Per page 29 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 21 of the Planning RFA, "After Grant Agreements are executed, Grantees must execute written agreements with each of their Sub-applicants. Fully executed agreements must be in place before the Sub-applicants can incur any costs for which the Grantee will seek reimbursement, so it is important to execute these agreements as soon as possible." And per page 14 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 13 of the Planning RFA, "While not directly responsible for implementing components within the project, Community Partners should have a formal agreement, such as a contract or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), with the Lead Applicant or a Sub-applicant." Per page 29 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "Fully executed agreements must be in place before the Sub-applicants can incur any costs for which the Grantee will seek reimbursement, so it is important to execute these agreements as soon as possible."

81. Question: We're looking into applying for both CMIS and STEP. Under CMIS, we would implement bicycle and ped improvements and for STEP we're talking about a citywide bike voucher program. In this case, do we need to define two different project communities, or would it be just one project community? And for the eligible projects, you know how on the RFA it says we have to choose 2 different project types. We just have to include two total for both CMIS and STEP, right?

Answer: Per page 17 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "CARB encourages Applicants to work with partners throughout the Project Community and identify cross-program connections and opportunities to synergize. For example, a community that is interested in both a CMIS grant and a STEP grant may develop one joint application that includes both school-based and community-based projects and that connects the projects to maximize benefits to students and other community residents." An application that takes this approach must meet the requirements as set forth in the CMIS/STEP RFA and would be evaluated as a single application.

82. Question: Are lead applicants limited to one application?

Answer: Per page 45 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 35 of the Planning RFA, "While there are no restrictions on the number of applications that a Lead Applicant may submit, CARB will award at most one application per Lead Applicant."

83. Question: What is the policy here for duplicate project areas like, if two different applicants apply for a similar project in the same project area?

Answer: CARB does not currently have a policy on that situation. See page 45 of the CMIS/STEP RFA and page 35 of the Planning RFA for a description of the project selection process.

84. Questions:

- a. On page 6 of the CMIS and STEP RFA, it says that CARB expects to fund between 2 and 4 CMIS and STEP grants in total. That's a little confusing. You must be expecting 2 to 4 very large projects. So if we're only wanting, say, \$300,000 or \$400,000, can you just talk about that? Am I interpreting that right? You just plan to fund a couple of very large projects?
- b. The total budget for STEP is \$14.85 million, and only 3-4 will be rewarded is that correct?

Answer: CMIS and STEP do not have minimum budget size requirements. Per page 6 of the CMIS/STEP RFA, "The maximum funding amount available this Fiscal Year for CMIS and STEP is \$29.65 million. CARB encourages each Lead Applicant to request the funding amount - no matter how small - that will efficiently and effectively meet their community's needs. CARB expects to fund between two and four CMIS and STEP grants in total." This expectation is based on the size of projects that have been funded by CMIS and STEP in the past but may not be the outcome of the current RFA.

85. Question: Could you maybe explain the key differences between STEP and CMO? We were looking into applying to CMO, and I guess I'm just kind of having a hard time understanding what those key differences are between STEP and CMO and which makes sense for us.

Answer: Clean Mobility Options is currently a first-come, first-served program that funds shared mobility projects with budget maximums and provides significant capacity building support to under-resourced applicants and implementers. STEP is a competitive program that has the flexibility to fund a larger variety of transportation services, including but not limited to shared mobility projects, with larger funding needs. While both programs aim to increase transportation equity, STEP has an additional goal to reduce vehicle miles traveled.