

### ***Question of the Month:***

What is the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program?  
How is funding for the program distributed?  
Are alternative fuel and advanced vehicle projects eligible for funding through CMAQ?

**Answer:** CMAQ is jointly administered by two agencies of the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – with an overarching goal of reducing congestion and improving air quality through surface transportation improvement projects. The program was authorized by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, and it has been reauthorized under subsequent transportation legislation. CMAQ funds transportation projects that contribute to attainment or maintenance of the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). For more information about the NAAQS program, visit the EPA website (<http://www.epa.gov/airquality/cleanair.html>).

### ***Funding Appropriation, Apportionment, and Allocation***

Funding for the CMAQ program is appropriated on an annual basis by Congress and subsequently apportioned to the states by FHWA. The level of funding provided to each state is based on a formula that takes into account the population of each county that is in a nonattainment or maintenance area and the severity of the air quality problem in the associated area. Regardless of whether a state has any nonattainment or maintenance areas, each state is guaranteed a minimum apportionment of 0.5% of the year's total program funding, which can be used anywhere in the state.

Once funding is provided to each state, it is up to the state DOTs, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and transit agencies to allocate it to eligible projects and programs (see Eligible Activities below). The state may use their CMAQ funds in any ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter nonattainment or maintenance area to support initiatives that reduce transportation-related emissions. Funding does not need to be allocated in the same way it is apportioned and the U.S. DOT does not have a role in this allocation process. State agencies are encouraged to consult affected MPOs; determine state, regional, and local priorities; and develop CMAQ project selection processes. The selection process varies by state, but generally provides an opportunity for state and/or local agencies to present eligible projects and demonstrate how they would use the funding to meet the overall goals of the CMAQ program. States must submit annual reports to FHWA outlining the program investments and trends and, in most of the program's 19 years, have been required to share a portion of the cost of projects.

### ***Eligible Activities***

The following activities are generally eligible for funding under CMAQ:

- Acquiring alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) to be used in transit applications;
- Supporting the emissions-reducing element of publicly-owned non-transit AFVs;
- Subsidizing the incremental cost of purchasing privately-owned AFVs;
- Converting fleet vehicles to operate using alternative fuels;
- Establishing publicly-owned alternative fueling stations and other infrastructure necessary to fuel AFVs in areas where publicly-owned fueling stations are not in place or are not reasonably accessible;
- Converting a private fueling station to support alternative fuels through a public-private partnership agreement;

- Purchasing alternative fuels (only permitted in Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio);
- Purchasing idle reduction equipment; and
- Providing assistance to diesel equipment and vehicle owners and operators regarding the purchase and installation of diesel retrofits.

The CMAQ program defines alternative fuels as those identified by the Energy Policy Act of 1992. In addition, hybrid electric vehicles that meet the emissions and energy efficiency requirements of the program are eligible. Both passenger vehicles and heavy-duty vehicles are eligible for funding. Additional information about eligible projects can be found in the CMAQ program guidance document ([http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/cmaq/policy\\_and\\_guidance/cmaq08gm.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/policy_and_guidance/cmaq08gm.cfm)).

### **Additional Questions?**

For general information about CMAQ, including annual state apportionments and reports, visit the CMAQ program website ([http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/cmaq/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/)).

For specific information about funding and projects at the individual state level, please reference the CMAQ State Transportation Contacts website ([http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/cmaq/reference/brochure/brochure12.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/reference/brochure/brochure12.cfm)) and the FHWA Field Office website (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/field.html>).