

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ)

Statutory Reference: [§ 85.245](#); 23 USC 149 Admin. Rule: N/A

Program objective:

To provide federal funding for transportation projects to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion in counties classified as air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas for the federal criteria pollutant ozone.

Program eligibility:

Under the CMAQ program, funds are available to counties, local units of government, transit operators and state agencies. Private entities interested in applying for funds must find a public sponsor with taxing authority to sponsor a project application. Applicants must provide at least a 20% match of the project's total cost. A project sponsor must pay for a project and then seek reimbursement for the project from the state. Projects costing \$200,000 total or more that involve construction are eligible for funding, as are non-construction projects costing \$50,000 or more. Projects must meet federal and state requirements.

Examples of eligible CMAQ projects include:

- Capital and operating assistance for new transit services
- Rideshare promotion, vanpool purchases and park & ride lots
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Alternate/clean fuel vehicles and fueling facilities
- Diesel engine idling reduction and retrofit projects
- Marketing programs designed to increase the public's awareness of air quality and transportation issues

Program definition:

The CMAQ program was created by the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and continued under SAFETEA-LU to provide funding for transportation projects that improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion. The funds are made available through a competitive application process in the 11 county area, taking place in odd numbered calendar years. Applications are typically available in late January and due in April.

Program description:

The federal funds are available in counties that are classified as air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas for the federal criteria pollutant ozone. In Wisconsin the counties include Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Waukesha, Washington, Ozaukee, Walworth, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Kewaunee and Door. Transportation projects eligible for funding must demonstrate emission reductions. All projects funded under the CMAQ program must be included in an urbanized area's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). CMAQ projects generally fall into one of three broad categories:

- Projects that reduce the number of vehicle trips and/or vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Projects that reduce emissions by improving traffic congestion
- Projects that reduce emissions through improved vehicle and fuel technologies

Program history:

The CMAQ program is authorized and funded under the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005. The state biennial budget approves an amount of CMAQ funds available for eligible applicants to compete for in the competitive application process. Note that the current federal transportation act, SAFETEA-LU, will be up for reauthorization in 2009. This could have a substantial impact on the 2009 CMAQ project review and selection process. Additionally, the designation of Wisconsin counties as non-attainment for fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) could further change future CMAQ funding eligibility and project funding criteria.

Application cycle:

Projects are solicited in odd numbered years with applications available in January and due in April. Two years of funding is made available to projects for the three fiscal years following the calendar year in which projects are selected. For example, in 2009, projects are developed for FY 2010-2012 funding.

Annual federal amount appropriated in state budget: \$11,619,000