

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR FLEET ADVISORY SERVICES

I. PURPOSE

The Connecticut Green Bank (“Green Bank”) is preparing to issue a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for a Fleet Advisory Services (“FAS”) provider aimed at supporting the electrification of school bus fleets in Connecticut. This Request for Information (“RFI”) seeks input from vendors, stakeholders, and potential partners on the draft scope of services and structure for the program. Your feedback will help shape the final design of the RFP, ensuring that it meets the needs of school districts and fleet operators looking to transition to electric school buses.

II. GREEN BANK BACKGROUND

The Green Bank was established by the Connecticut General Assembly in 2011. As the nation’s first green bank, it is leading the clean energy finance movement by leveraging public and private funds to scale-up renewable energy deployment and energy efficiency projects across Connecticut. The Green Bank’s success in accelerating private investment in clean energy¹ is helping Connecticut create jobs, increase economic prosperity, promote energy security and address climate change. For more information about the Green Bank, please visit www.ctgreenbank.com.

III. FAS BACKGROUND

The Green Bank has identified the electrification of school buses as a critical step in advancing Connecticut’s clean transportation goals and achieving community health benefits that studies demonstrate can result in reduced rates of adult mortality and childhood asthma.² The proposed FAS program will support school districts in the planning and deployment of electric buses, providing a range of services such as technical assistance, financial strategy development, and infrastructure design support. This RFI aims to gather insights to inform the FAS program and align it with the needs of stakeholders.

¹ “Clean energy” means solar photovoltaic energy, solar thermal, geothermal energy, wind, ocean thermal energy, wave or tidal energy, fuel cells, landfill gas, hydropower that meets the low-impact standards of the Low-Impact Hydropower Institute, hydrogen production and hydrogen conversion technologies, low emission advanced biomass conversion technologies, alternative fuels, used for electricity generation including ethanol, biodiesel or other fuel produced in Connecticut and derived from agricultural produce, food waste or waste vegetable oil, provided the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection determines that such fuels provide net reductions in GHG emissions and fossil fuel consumption, usable electricity from combined heat and power systems with waste heat recovery systems, thermal storage systems, other energy resources and emerging technologies which have significant potential for commercialization and which do not involve the combustion of coal, petroleum or petroleum products, or nuclear fission, financing of energy efficiency projects, projects that seek to deploy electric, electric hybrid, natural gas or alternative fuel vehicles and associated infrastructure, any related storage, distribution, manufacturing technologies or facilities and any Class I renewable energy source, as defined in CGS 16-1(a)(2).

² <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/electric-school-buses-may-yield-significant-health-and-climate-benefits-cost-savings/>

The FAS will support Connecticut Public Act (P.A.) [22-25](#) by creating a pathway for environmental justice communities to chart a course to electrification within the timeframe established by this Act. The FAS will also support broader efforts outlined in PURA Docket No. 21-09-17³, which investigates medium- and heavy-duty electric vehicle charging programs. The Green Bank envisions FAS being delivered in two primary phases: Fleet Electrification Planning and Fleet Deployment:

Fleet Electrification Planning

The Green Bank envisions developing a front-end, electrification planning track under its overall FAS offering that is focused on helping participants more effectively accomplish the following tasks:

- Understand the capital costs, technical needs, and logistical and operational adjustments associated with fleet electrification and a corresponding investment strategy (grants, loans, utility incentives, etc.) to address those specific needs.
- Apply for federal grant funding with a strong narrative and understanding of their capital and project needs; and
- Strategically develop RFPs and transportation service contracts that incorporate fleet electrification milestones.

To accomplish these key tasks, the Green Bank would help facilitate users' participation in the electrification planning program and interaction with contractors who would be responsible for technical planning tasks such as assessing routes and recommending specific vehicle models. The Green Bank envisions including the following components in an FAS electrification planning program:

- Site logistics and charging capacity assessments
- Alternative site identification options, if needed
- Vehicle route assessments
- Cost modeling, including assessments of solar and battery storage potential
- Emissions reduction modeling
- Low, medium, and high fleet electrification conversion options and cost projections
- Grant and incentive identification and capital stacking strategy development, including federal tax credits
- Federal and state grant application support
- Model contract and RFP development

Insights on the electrification planning tasks above would help inform the development of a user-specific "Fleet Electrification Roadmap." This Roadmap document would provide not only targeted actions that program participants can take to pursue fleet electrification steps on their own but also a shareable narrative and body of evidence to strengthen their pursuit of grant funding opportunities, such as those offered by the EPA Clean School Bus Program.

Fleet Deployment

The purpose of the "Fleet Deployment" program would be to ensure project success by providing support for the following key tasks across various funding models (federal grant, state grant-Green Bank financing blend, school district-led, etc.):

³ [Docket No 21-09-17, PURA Investigation into Medium and Heavy-Duty Electric Vehicle Charging](#)

- Supervision of engineering, procurement, and construction (“EPC”) contractor(s) responsible for charging depot construction/upgrades and EVSE installation.
- Developing a braided financial strategy blending grants and financing offerings for pre-identified and as-needed project needs from financial providers such as the Green Bank. Examples include:
 - Financing to cover additional hardware costs for vehicles and EVSE following the application of grant awards;
 - Bridge loans for incentives to be delivered in the future, such as those made available through federal tax credits and make-ready infrastructure programs; and
 - Financing for discrete project costs often not covered by federal and state grant programs, such as necessary utility-side upgrades to support fleet charging.

The specific tasks below will be initiated for entities that either secure requisite grant funding or indicate their willingness to pursue vehicle deployment activities with currently accessible capital resources:

- Assisting with evaluating bids to RFPs including fleet electrification provisions.
- Supporting the vehicle and charging station hardware procurement process.
- Identifying and facilitating training opportunities for vehicle maintenance staff and drivers.
- Facilitating communication between contractors and electric utilities.
- Ensuring the full delivery/reimbursement of applicable awards and incentives.
- Providing project updates to school district and school board officials and generally ensuring that project deadlines are met.

IV. INPUT REQUESTED ON PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Through this RFI, the Green Bank seeks input on the proposed FAS program:

1. **Fleet Electrification Planning** – Based on the proposed FAS program outline presented above:
 - a. Do the proposed services cover all necessary planning elements?
 - b. Are there additional services that should be offered?
 - c. What is the range of costs to provide this service (per vehicle, per district)?
 - d. Are there any services listed above that should not be offered as part of an FAS and, if so, why?
 - e. What duration (e.g. months, years) should the Green Bank anticipate that school districts/fleets will require this assistance?
 - f. Are there specific coordination activities that the Green Bank should undertake with electric utilities to promote fleet electrification planning success?
 - g. Are there any barriers in offering these services that the Green Bank should be aware of?

2. **Fleet Deployment** – Based on the proposed FAS program outline presented above:
 - a. Are the support services outlined sufficient for ensuring smooth deployment?
 - b. What additional support could enhance the process?
 - c. What is the range of costs to provide this service (per vehicle, per district)?
 - d. What specific training and technical assistance do school districts, maintenance staff, and drivers require to manage electric school buses effectively? Should this be part of an FAS program?
 - e. Are there any specific challenges in stacking federal/state grants and financing that the FAS program should address?
 - f. What duration (e.g. months, years) should the Green Bank anticipate that school districts/fleets will require this assistance?
 - g. Are there specific coordination activities that the Green Bank should undertake with electric utilities to promote fleet deployment success?
 - h. Are there any barriers in offering these services that the Green Bank should be aware of?

3. **Role of Third-Party Operators** – In Connecticut, a significant percentage of school buses are operated by third parties (e.g., First Student, Dattco, All-Star Transportation, etc.). Given this paradigm:
 - a. What role should third-party operators play in an FAS program?
 - b. How should the Green Bank facilitate coordination between school districts and third-party operators to ensure successful fleet electrification?

4. **Cost Containment** – In order to create a sustainable program, the Green Bank has the following questions:
 - a. How should the Green Bank prioritize school district participation in the FAS program?
 - b. How should the Green Bank structure the FAS program to scale as more school districts and operators transition to electric fleets over time?

V. RFI RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit your response by Tuesday, October 29th, 2024 to RFP-Responses@ctgreenbank.com.

Should the respondent note any discrepancies, require clarifications or wish to request interpretations of any kind, please submit a written request to Sara Harari, Associate Director of Innovation & Senior Advisor to the President, by email at RFP-Responses@ctgreenbank.com.

Following the review of the RFI responses, the Green Bank will finalize the structure of an FAS offering and will seek to issue an RFP in early 2025.

Freedom of Information Act. The Green Bank is a “public agency” for purposes of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”). Any information received pursuant to this RFI will be considered public records will be subject to disclosure under the FOIA, except for information falling within one of the exemptions in Conn. Gen. Stat. Sections § 1-210(b) and § 16-245n(d). It is also the Green Bank’s intention to utilize any and all information provided as part of your RFI response without attribution.