

GRADE

Grants to Replace Aging Diesel Engines

FAQs for GRADE 2021

- 1. How are projects selected for funding?** After your application is received, it will be assessed based on factors like project feasibility and location (priority will be given to projects with an impact to environmental justice areas). In addition, pollution reductions will be calculated by air quality staff and project will be ranked according to pollution reduced per grant dollar spent. The most cost-effective projects will rank the highest. An awards selection committee comprised of air quality professionals and environmental advocates representing will make the final selections.
- 2. Once a project is approved, when will I receive the money?** GRADE is a reimbursement program. A funding agreement between the grant recipient and Mecklenburg County will be signed. The project can then be completed. The grant recipient pays for the project upfront out of their capital expense fund and then gets a rebate in the approved amount from Mecklenburg County. The money does not get disbursed until the new equipment has been purchased, old equipment scrapped, and the [Final Expense-Reimbursement Forms](#) are submitted per the [GRADE Checklist](#) to Mecklenburg County for final approval. Most reimbursements are made within three to four weeks of submitting *all* necessary reimbursement paperwork.
- 3. How much funding can I receive?** GRADE replacement and repower grants are funded starting from 25% of the cost of new equipment, depending on the replacement fuel technology.
- 4. Is a match required?** Yes. Equipment replacement and repower require matching funds starting from 75% of the cost of new equipment, depending on the replacement fuel technology.
- 5. Can I sell my old equipment to offset the cost of new equipment?** No. The old equipment must be permanently destroyed.
- 6. How long will I have to complete the project?** Typically, all projects must be completed within 6 months of submitting a signed funding agreement to Mecklenburg County. Extended timeframes can be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
- 7. Am I eligible to receive a grant?** In general, in order to be eligible for funding for an equipment/vehicles replacement or repower, the award recipient will have to verify that the equipment/vehicle to be replaced is currently in proper working order and would otherwise continue to operate in the eligible region at least 75% of the time for the next 3 years. Additionally, the replacement or repowered equipment must be used for the same or similar purpose as the retired equipment and will operate in the eligible region at least

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75% of the time over the next 5 to 10 years. See project guidelines for specific eligibility requirements.

- 8. Will I be able to use the vendor of my choice for the replacement or repower of the vehicle/equipment?** Most grant recipients will be required to get quote from multiple vendors before placing an order. For purchases that cost more than \$250,000, recipients are subject to formal competitive bid requirements: sealed bids or competitive proposals. If your project requires a competitive bid process, MCAQ staff will provide more information about the requirements.
- 9. Will I be eligible for replacement or repower cost reimbursement if I finance my equipment?** Yes, financing is a purchase option that will be eligible for reimbursement funding should a grant be awarded. Additional documentation will be necessary to complete the funding agreement for candidates using this option. However, any leased equipment will NOT be eligible for the grant.
- 10. Why is the funding agreement with Mecklenburg County?** Mecklenburg County is the only local government with a fully staffed Air Quality department. Mecklenburg County, on behalf of the eight counties within the Charlotte Maintenance region, applied to NC DOT for grant money to improve local air quality. The award was made directly to Mecklenburg County Air Quality to be sub-granted out for projects. In order to conduct business with Mecklenburg County, sub-grant recipients must register as a vendor in the [MeckProcure System](#). This will include an online registration portion and **MOST IMPORTANTLY THE SUBMISSION OF SIGNED, PAPER COPIES OF SEVERAL FORMS.** [W-9 Form](#) , [ACH-IAT Form](#)
- 11. Will I be issued an IRS form 1099 if I accept grant money?** Yes, Mecklenburg County will issue an IRS form 1099 if any vendor/recipient is paid \$1,500 or more. Please consult your tax advisor to properly report any grant money received.
- 12. Who can I call for help with the application?** If a particular question and answer is not listed above, or if additional help is needed to complete an application, contact the GRADE Grant Administrator at 704-336-5430 or by email at Sheldon.Turner@MeckNC.gov.
- 13. Learn more about GRADE and see past projects at** [Mecklenburg County GRADE Story Map \(arcgis.com\)](#).