



# TALKING TO YOUR LOCAL UTILITY ABOUT ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES

Like hundreds of schools, your district may be considering adding electric school buses (ESBs) to your fleet. Talking to your utility before making the decision can reduce costs, avoid delays, and ensure a smooth, successful transition. The Environmental Protection Agency encourages schools applying to the Clean School Bus program to reach out to utilities early in the process. **[See the template for partnership discussions on the EPA website.](#)**



## REACH OUT EARLY IN THE PROCESS

It is critical that you speak with your utility as early as possible, as installing a charging station can take much longer than expected. As large electric customers, most schools will have an account representative assigned by the utility. With smaller utilities, such as electric cooperatives, you should be able to find the right utility contact with a simple call to your local member service representative. However, it is important to note that it is possible that multiple utilities serve areas surrounding the school, so the utility that would serve the charging station could depend on where the buses will be charged. If you have trouble finding the appropriate point of contact, EPA recommends that you email either [CleanSchoolBusTA@nrel.gov](mailto:CleanSchoolBusTA@nrel.gov) or [CleanSchoolBus@epa.gov](mailto:CleanSchoolBus@epa.gov).

## CRITICAL ITEMS TO DISCUSS

- **Timeline.** Starting with a discussion about a realistic timeline to install charging stations may illuminate important issues to address as you work toward getting your bus. For example, it may be critical to discuss the trade-offs of locating charging stations at various sites that may have differing infrastructure requirements, as well as different size chargers that may require more upgrades. Speaking with your utility early can avoid the arrival of a bus prior to having the charging infrastructure in place.
- **Charging Location.** Consider all options for siting the charging infrastructure. Some facilities will require significant utility upgrades to support bus charging; other facilities may require little in the way of upgrades. Ideally, the utility, the bus manufacturer, the charging station vendor, and the school's electric contractor will collaborate to determine the optimal location and layout for the new system. In colder climates, charging and pre-heating (and heater selection), the vehicles in bus barns will extend the range.
- **Costs.** When deciding whether to apply for electric school bus funding, utilities can provide estimates of costs and the timeline for installing charging infrastructure.

**Schools and utilities share the same goal:  
a positive experience for everyone involved.**

