

Support for Ontario School Bus Operators: Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System Grant Program Guide

June 2022

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Program Overview

The Support for Ontario School Bus Operators: Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System Grant Program is to provide one-time funding to assist Ontario-based school bus operators with the adoption of updated lighting requirements for school buses in Ontario.

This program guide is intended to provide operators with an overview of how to apply for the Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System Grant Program.

Updated Lighting Requirements for Ontario School Buses

Starting July 1, 2022, Ontario will require all school buses manufactured on or after January 1, 2005, to:

- be equipped with four (4) overhead amber signal-lights and four (4) overhead red signal-lights (Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System); and
- display revised signage to be placed on the rear of vehicles to read “do not pass when red lights flashing”.

The Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning system uses two stages of flashing overhead signal-lights to signal that a school bus is slowing (overhead amber signal-lights) and stopping (overhead red signal-lights) to surrounding road users.

It is acknowledged that school bus operators will need to complete retrofits on vehicles to operate equipment in compliance with requirements that come into force on July 1, 2022. To support the successful implementation of these changes, the Ministry of Transportation will implement an education and awareness period from July 1, 2022, to September 1, 2022 (without penalties).

Information concerning these changes can be accessed here:

- [Bill 246, Safer School Buses Act, 2021 - Legislative Assembly of Ontario \(ola.org\)](#)
- [Highway Traffic Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8 \(ontario.ca\)](#)
- [R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 612: SCHOOL BUSES \(ontario.ca\)](#)

Application Requirements

School bus operators who own and operate vehicles that meet the eligibility criteria can apply and will need to provide the following information in the application.

- Legal business name as registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).
- Operating business name (trade name)

- CRA Business Number. If you do not have a CRA Business Number, please refer to the Government of Canada webpage, How to Register for a Business Number or CRA Program Accounts (<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/businesses/topics/registering-your-business/register.html>)
- Applicant contact information (e.g., legal name, phone number, email address) and business mailing address associated with the business banking account.
- For each school bus that is eligible for the grant and that is going to be included in the grant application (see Eligibility Overview section below), Vehicle Identification Number(s) (VIN) and Registrant Identification Number(s) (RIN).

When to Apply

Online applications for the Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System Grant Program will be available beginning June 17, 2022 until July 31, 2022.

How to Apply

Online application can be accessed via this link: <https://www.app.grants.gov.on.ca/8lamp/#/>

The application must be submitted by:

- (a) The owner/sole proprietor of the school-bus operator business; or
- (b) An authorized signing officer for the Applicant and have authority to bind the Applicant.

Businesses that do not meet the eligibility criteria noted below (see Eligibility Overview section) will not be able to submit an application.

Eligibility Overview

Operator Eligibility

This grant program is available to school bus operators active and registered in Ontario providing to and from school student transportation services in Ontario for one or more of the prescribed Educational Organizations including student transportation consortia, school authorities and provincial and demonstration schools identified by the Ministry of Education. Please see [Appendix B](#) for list of organizations.

Vehicle Eligibility

- School buses must be registered and meet the definition of a school bus as specified in [Section 175](#) of the *Highway Traffic Act*.
- Applicants must be the Plate and Vehicle Registrant and hold a Registrant Identification Number assigned by the Ministry of Transportation that corresponds to each school bus at the time the application is submitted.
- Each school bus must have active and registered license plates with the Province of Ontario that is valid as of June 1, 2022.
- Each school bus must be manufactured on or after January 1, 2005 and is not currently equipped with an Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System.

What to expect after applying

The applicant will receive an email confirmation once the application is successfully submitted. This email, and any subsequent communication will be sent to the email address noted in the application.

The submitted application will be reviewed and validated to ensure:

- The manufacturer of the school bus, manufacturing date and whether the bus currently has LED lighting system;
- Confirmation with the applicant and each school bus listed in the application meets the eligibility criteria (as noted in the Eligibility Overview section)

If your application is missing information, you will be contacted via email for more details. A response must be provided within the deadline provided, otherwise, the application will be closed.

If your application is approved, you will receive an email with information regarding payment details.

Payment

Approved applicants will receive funds via Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) directly into their business bank account. To facilitate this EFT, the applicant will be contacted to provide the following information.

- A void cheque and the business' bank account information including the name and address of the financial institution, account holder name, account number, branch code
- The void cheque needs to show either the legal business name or operating business name of your business.

Note: The bank account must be registered under the legal or operating business name with a Financial Institution located in Ontario. Personal banking accounts used for business purposes will not be accepted.

Approved applicants will receive funds via EFT directly into their business bank account; and an email notification will be sent to the applicant at the time of the EFT.

Audit and Compliance

Applicants will be required to provide an attestation by November 30, 2022 to confirm that each vehicle approved for grant under this program has been upfitted to operate the Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System. Failure to provide attestation or any fraudulent activity could result in recovery of funds. Additional details on Attestation will be provided after the Payment is released.

All applications and the corresponding grant are subject to audit by the Government of Ontario, or its authorized representatives, upon reasonable notice to the grant recipient. Applicants are required to keep all documents required to prove their eligibility for the program for seven years.

Any audit process may encompass taking or requiring copies and extracts of records maintained by the recipient to verify compliance with the eligibility criteria outlined in this guide and the terms and conditions of the Program.

If records are deemed inadequate to permit a determination and/or verification of eligibility, repayment of the grant funding by the recipient will be required. Any funding received by a recipient under this Program in excess of the amount the recipient is eligible to receive is required to be repaid, and interest shall accrue on the amount of the overpayment from the date of notification of the overpayment, given by the Government of Ontario.

The Province is bound by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Ontario) and that any information contained in this application or otherwise in connection with the Program may be subject to disclosure in accordance with that Act.

Contact Us

If you have questions about this application or need more information, please contact:
Student.transportation@ontario.ca

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. What is this grant program?

The Support for Ontario School Bus Operators: Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System Grant Program is an Ontario government program administered by the Ministry of Education. This program provides one-time funding to assist Ontario-based school bus operators in the adoption of updated lighting requirements for school buses in Ontario which come into force on July 1, 2022.

Q2. What are updated lighting requirements for school buses in Ontario?

On May 12, 2021, the *Safer School Buses Act, 2021* received Royal Assent and amended the *Highway Traffic Act* to mandate all school buses manufactured on or after January 1, 2005, to operate an Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning system in Ontario effective July 1, 2022.

The Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning system uses two stages of flashing overhead signal-lights to signal that a school bus is slowing (overhead amber signal-lights) and stopping (overhead red signal-lights) to surrounding road users.

The adoption of this system will make it easier for other road users to recognize when school buses are slowing and stopping when compared to the system which has historically been required in Ontario (which specifies the use of overhead red signal lights only).

In order to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements in Ontario vehicles manufactured on or after January 1, 2005:

- are to be equipped with four (4) overhead amber signal-lights and four (4) overhead red signal-lights; and
- are to display revised signage to be placed on the rear of vehicles to read “do not pass when red lights flashing”.

Information concerning these changes can be accessed here:

- [Bill 246, Safer School Buses Act, 2021 - Legislative Assembly of Ontario \(ola.org\)](https://www.ola.org/bills/246)
- [Highway Traffic Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8 \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statutes/990/H8)
- [R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 612: SCHOOL BUSES \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/1990/612)

Q3. What will happen if school bus operators do not retrofit impacted equipment by July 1, 2022?

It is acknowledged that school bus operators will need to complete retrofits on vehicles to operate equipment in compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements that come into force on July 1, 2022.

To support the successful implementation of these changes, the Ministry of Transportation will implement an education and awareness period from July 1, 2022, to September 1, 2022 (without penalties).

Q4. What about school buses manufactured prior to January 1, 2005? Are they eligible to receive funding? If not, why not?

No. School buses manufactured prior to January 1, 2005 will not be eligible to receive funding under this program. School buses manufactured prior to January 1, 2005 will not be required to change to the Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System.

Q5. What are the grant amounts?

The program will provide access to four (4) distinct grant amounts ranging from \$110 to \$1630. See table below on Bus Model, Current Lighting Equipment and corresponding grant amount.

Bus Model	Current Lighting Equipment (Overhead Signal Lights)	Grant Amount per Eligible Vehicle
Model: Saf-T-Liner C2 (Thomas Built Buses)	LED Lights	\$1,630
Model: Saf-T-Liner C2 (Thomas Built Buses)	Non-LED lights	\$500
All Models excluding Saf-T-Liner C2 (Thomas Built Buses)	LED Lights	\$340
All Models excluding Saf-T-Liner C2 (Thomas Built Buses)	Non-LED Lights	\$110

Q6. How will payments be determined?

Payments will be calculated based on the number of eligible school buses submitted by the applicants and validated by the Province. Each eligible school bus will receive a grant amount based on:

- whether bus model is Saf-T-Liner C2 (Thomas Built Buses) or not; and
- whether the bus is current equipped with LED lighting

The total payment will be the sum of the grant amounts for all eligible vehicles in the application subject to review and validation.

Q7. Will I receive funding before retrofits are made to buses?

School bus operators are encouraged to begin the retrofits as early as possible to ensure that all impacted school buses are compliant with legislative and regulatory requirements.

Operators may apply for the grant for eligible school buses June 17 – July 31, 2022. Once an application is submitted and validated, funding is expected to flow to the applicant in September 2022.

Timing of when impacted school buses are upfitted to the Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System requirements is up to the Operator. The Operator will be responsible for ensuring compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements and any associated penalties.

Q8. Can I apply more than once?

No. Each bus operator is able to submit one application for this grant program. The application can, however, include all school buses that meet the eligibility criteria.

Q9. If I receive new vehicles after I apply, can I apply again?

No. Applicants may only apply for funding once. The application form can be accessed and edited multiple times prior to submitting. You are encouraged to hold your application until the new vehicles can be added to your submission.

Q10. How will my information be collected and used?

Information will be collected through the online application form. Information provided will be used for the assessment of grant eligibility and will be subject for review and validation by the Province.

The Province is bound by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Ontario) and that any information contained in this application or otherwise in connection with the Program may be subject to disclosure in accordance with that Act.

Q11. What is meant by “currently equipped with LED Lighting”?

School buses with overhead signal lights equipped with LED lights, which will require retrofitting with new LED lights in order to operate an Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System.

Appendix B: List of Consortia, School Authorities and Provincial and Demonstration Schools

To be eligible for the grant payments, school bus operators must meet eligibility requirements, including providing to and from school student transportation services in Ontario to one or more of the prescribed student transportation consortia, school boards, school authorities and provincial and demonstration schools identified by the Ministry of Education as below.

Student Transportation Consortia

- Algoma & Huron Superior Transportation Services
- Chatham Kent & Lambton Administrative School Services (C.L.A.S.S.)
- Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières
- Consortium de transport scolaire de l'Est
- Consortium de Transport Scolaire d'Ottawa
- Durham Student Transportation Services
- East of Thunder Bay Transportation Consortium
- Halton Student Transportation Services
- Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS)
- Huron Perth Student Transportation Services
- Niagara Student Transportation Services
- Nipissing Parry-Sound Student Transportation Services/Services de transport scolaire Nipissing-Parry Sound
- North East Tri-Board Student Transportation
- Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium
- Ottawa Student Transportation Authority
- Rainy River District Transportation Services Consortium
- Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium
- Service de transport de Wellington - Dufferin Student Transportation Services
- Service de transport Francobus
- Service de Transport Scolaire- Brant Haldimand Norfolk-Student Transportation Services
- Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium
- Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services
- Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO)
- Student Transportation of Peel Region
- Student Transportation Service Consortium of Grey-Bruce/Consortium de Service de Transport des Élèves de Grey-Bruce
- Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario
- Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay
- Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR)
- Student Transportation Services of York Region
- Sudbury Student Services Consortium/Consortium de services aux élèves de Sudbury
- Toronto Student Transportation Group
- Tri-board Student Transportation Services
- Trillium Lakelands District School Board
- Windsor-Essex Student Transportation Services/Service de transport des élèves– Windsor-Essex

School Authorities

- James Bay Lowlands DSA
- Moose Factory Island DSA
- Moosonee DSA
- Penetanguishene Protestant DSA

Hospital Boards

- Bloorview School Authority
- Campbell Children's School Authority
- John McGivney Children's Centre School Authority
- KidsAbility School Authority
- Niagara Children's Centre School Authority
- Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario School Authority

Provincial and Demonstration Schools

- Amethyst Demonstration School
- Centre Jules-Léger
- Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf
- Robarts School for the Deaf
- Sagonaska Demonstration School
- Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf
- Trillium Demonstration School
- W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind