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Ohio small businesses can benefit from newly expanded program to address air quality

OAQDA's Clean Air Resource Center can help finance equipment to lessen emissions

COLUMBUS, OH – Air pollution issues are frequently associated with large manufacturers and heavy industry, but many small businesses in Ohio must also address air quality.

Smaller companies such as a dry cleaners, auto collision shops, printers, metal finishers and many others that may discharge harmful air pollutants fall under regulations that require the proper equipment and facilities to lessen hazardous emissions.

“Becoming and remaining compliant with changing federal and state clean air standards are challenges that many Ohio small business owners wake up to every day,” said Chadwick Smith, executive director for the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA). “Considering half of Ohio’s private workforce is employed by a small business, it is important to support those small businesses that maintain and create jobs, but also need air pollution controls.”

The Clean Air Resource Center (CARC) – a program of the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) provides grants and lower-cost loans to small Ohio companies that need to purchase air quality equipment. CARC has expanded its capacity to offer larger grants for qualifying small businesses.

The CARC program offers grants equal to 30 percent of equipment costs, and grants are capped at a maximum of \$30,000. Once projects are funded, grants are awarded to help cover closing costs as well as principal payments on the equipment after it has been installed and operational for at least six months.

CARC financing packages are structured to suit the needs of individual projects and incentivized through conduit bonds issued by OAQDA. These bonds can be federally tax-exempt or taxable, and all are exempt from Ohio income, real property, sales and use taxes for the term of the financing.

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Qualifying businesses must have fewer than 100 employees, emit less than 75 tons per year of all regulated air pollutants and emit 50 or less tons of any regulated pollutant.

Small businesses came under air pollution mandates in 1990, when the federal Clean Air Act of 1970 was amended to include small businesses. OAQDA created the CARC program in 1996 as a way to assist Ohio small businesses that must maintain clean air standards. Since its inception, a number of dry cleaners, auto body shops and other small businesses have utilized CARC financing to purchase and install air quality equipment.

Small business owners and financing agents are encouraged to contact the Clean Air Resource Center for more information, at 614-728-3540 or 800-225-5051, or visit the website at www.ohioairquality.org.