

C. Consulting/Program Management/Administrative Fees

Q: Are consulting/engineering costs (including design, environmental, construction management, etc., and overall project management) eligible for reimbursement. If so, where does a county enter consulting fees on the invoicing forms?

A: Yes. Activities associated with a specific project and allocated as such or those specifically related to administration of the CETRZ are allowable costs. Project delivery tasks should be billed to each applicable project as a project expense. For example, environmental compliance costs should be allocated only to projects that required environmental review. Likewise, consultant assistance in assembling and preparing documentation should be allocated to each individual project rather than across the entire grant.

All project costs (including construction, consulting services, environmental reviews, etc.) should be listed as part of the project costs on the Individual Project Billing Summary Sheet. Counties need to attach to the Individual Project Billing Summary Sheet copies of all paid invoices for construction activities, consultant services, force account documentation and any other costs related to an individual project. Consultant services related to administration of the CETRZ should be included on the CETRZ Administration Billing Summary Sheet. Back-up materials to invoices paid by the county do not need to be included in the submittal to TxDOT. Charges for consulting services or program administration that are not directly allocable to projects or to CETRZ administration are not reimbursable.

Counties are responsible to make sure administrative costs comply with the program requirements and the Uniform Grant Management Standards. The administrative costs for the County Energy Transportation Reinvestment Zone reimbursable costs cannot exceed 5 percent of the total grant award for the county up to a maximum of \$250,000.

Q: Can a county be reimbursed for consulting/engineering cost incurred prior to the award of the grant?

A: No. Eligible costs are expenses that are incurred after the grant award notice. Costs incurred in preparation of the grant application, for creation of the CETRZ or for other program activities prior to the grant award date are not eligible even if they are not billed until after the grant award date.

Q: Counties often rely on outside professional grant managers to handle administrative functions (such as tracking and reporting, invoice/reimbursement requests, force account documentation, environmental review and compliance, labor standards compliance, acquisition/URA, etc. as well as a general requirement that we comply with UGMS and OMB Circular A-87). Assuming state procurement requirements are followed, will costs for these contracted services be eligible for reimbursement?

A. Counties are required to certify that they are complying with applicable laws and to submit invoices in a standardized format. Since the funds are coming from the state, the UGMS and OMB Circular A-87 apply – it is not a TxDOT-imposed requirement. Any of these services that are provided to accomplish performance of projects should be considered allowable and eligible expenses.

D. Design Criteria, Etc.

Q. Does the Design Criteria and Specifications need to be a written policy specific for these projects? Adopting Design Criteria and Specifications can be an involved process possibly requiring an engineer's assistance prior to adoption by Commissioner's Court. Can additional time be granted to complete this beyond the 30 day limit in Certification Form 1?

A. The county needs to have or adopt written design criteria, specifications and quality assurance standards that apply to these projects. They do not have to be unique standards that only apply to these projects. In many cases, a county already has standards for county roadway construction and maintenance. The intent is not to create a burden on a county to create new design criteria, specifications and/or quality assurance procedures. The intent is to ensure the roadway improvements are done to a minimum standard established by the county. The county may adopt TxDOT standards, an adjacent county's standards, a municipality's standards, AASHTO standards or create its own standards. Its standards need only cover the types of roadway improvements that it