

**AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program**  
**Williamson County Grant Activities Plan**

**Section 1: General**

**1.1 Purpose**

The Repair and Replacement Assistance Program is designed in conjunction with AirCheck Texas, the enhanced vehicle emissions testing program, to help vehicle owners comply with vehicle emissions standards. The immediate priority is to reduce ozone-forming pollutants created by on-road motor vehicles. This program addresses the highest polluting vehicles and provides an incentive for vehicle owners to contribute to the regional air quality solution.

**1.2 Participating Agencies**

1.2.1 Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is responsible for providing funding and determining program guidelines as specified by Title 5 Texas Health and Safety Code §382.209 and §382.210. TCEQ shall monitor implementation of the program. TCEQ has the ultimate approval of this Grant Activities Plan.

1.2.2 Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS) has authority over all state inspection stations and Recognized Emissions Repair Facilities. TxDPS is responsible for recruiting and maintaining data about these facilities.

1.2.3 Williamson County has requested implementation of the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program. Williamson County will appoint a County Program Manager who shall have authority to approve changes to this Grant Activities Plan. The County Program Manager is responsible for administration and implementation of the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program, including accounting, reports and customer service. The County Program Manager is also responsible for approving and submitting program and financial reports to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

**1.3 Amending the Grant Activities Plan**

Changes or adjustments to the Grant Activities Plan are submitted in written form from the county to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for approval. Significant changes to project scope or revenue must follow procedure as outlined in the Grant Agreement §1.4 and §3.4.

**1.4 Applications**

Applications are available at Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Stations, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) offices, Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS) offices, and other locations throughout the County.

**1.5 Confidentiality**

To the extent allowed by law, information provided to the County Program Manager and County Program Advisor by program applicants or Recognized Emissions Repair Facilities will remain confidential unless the applicant awards appropriate approval for disclosure.

## **Section 2: Program Outline and Participation Process**

### **2.1 A vehicle fails the annual mandatory emissions inspection test:**

- 2.1.1 The vehicle owner receives a Vehicle Inspection Report.
- 2.1.2 The vehicle owner receives information about the Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS) Extensions and Waivers.
- 2.1.3 The vehicle owner receives information about the Repair and Replacement Assistance Program, including a telephone number.
- 2.1.4 The vehicle owner contacts the Williamson County program by calling 1-800-978-1766. A voice recorder will answer and ask the vehicle owner to leave his/her name and callback numbers. This message will be in English and Spanish.

### **2.2 The Program Advisor will call the vehicle owner as soon as possible and collect data about the caller and enter it into the Williamson County AirCheck Texas Program Database (Database), including:**

- Contact phone number
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)
- License plate number
- Name
- Mailing address
- County of vehicle registration
- Vehicle make
- Vehicle model
- Vehicle year
- Driver's License Number

### **2.3 The Program Advisor arranges a process for the applicant to transmit required documentation to the Program Advisor. This includes:**

- Personal identification
- Proof of vehicle registration
- Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR)
- Proof of vehicle owner's income (see Section 6: Eligibility Verification)

### **2.4 The applicant is provided with necessary information regarding addresses, transmittal requirements, and an overview of the program.**

### **2.5 The vehicle owner mails the application and other necessary documentation to the Williamson County program office:**

- 2.5.1 The Program Advisor verifies the application is appropriately signed, certifying accurate and truthful information is provided.
- 2.5.2 Vehicle eligibility is determined through the Database or by presented registration documentation.
- 2.5.3 Congruence of information on the VIR and in the Database is verified
- 2.5.4 Complete application information is entered in the Database.
- 2.5.5 Income eligibility is verified (see Eligibility Verification).

- 2.5.6 Ineligible applicants are denied, and provided with an explanation letter.
- 2.5.7 Eligible applicants are approved for diagnostics, repairs and/or retirement.
- 2.5.8 The participant is given a voucher, information about local RERFs, and an explanation letter.
- 2.5.9 The Program Advisor answers additional questions.

**2.6 The participant presents their vehicle and voucher at the Recognized Emissions Repair Facility prior to the expiration date on voucher:**

- 2.6.1 A representative of the RERF verifies the authenticity of the voucher.
- 2.6.2 The Recognized Emissions Repair Technician (Technician) performs diagnostics, completes voucher, and prepares a repair estimate.
- 2.6.3 Options are presented to the vehicle owner.

**2.7 Vehicle repair and/or retrofit:**

- 2.7.1 Suggested services are indicated on the voucher.
- 2.7.2 Technician and vehicle owner sign the voucher.
- 2.7.3 Estimate is faxed to the Williamson County Fleet Manager (Additional estimates may be transmitted as needed).
- 2.7.4 County Fleet Manager verifies eligible expenses and faxes a signed estimate back to the RERF.
- 2.7.5 Technician performs necessary emissions repairs.
- 2.7.6 Vehicle is submitted for State Safety and Emissions Inspection and issued a inspection sticker if the vehicle passes both the safety and emissions tests. Vehicle is returned to the participant.
- 2.7.7 Invoice is then completed and signed by program participant and RERF representative.
- 2.7.8 Required documentation is sent to the County Program Advisor within five (5) business days of service completion. 30

**2.8 Vehicle Retirement:**

- 2.8.1 Technician certifies the vehicle was driven to the repair facility under its own power.
- 2.8.2 Technician and participant sign the voucher.
- 2.8.3 Estimate and signed voucher are faxed to the County Program Advisor.
- 2.8.4 Vehicle owner is directed to call the County Program Advisor for instructions on vehicle retirement and replacement.
- 2.8.5 Eligible costs for diagnostic tests and labor are charged to the County Program Advisor.
- 2.8.6 Required documentation is sent to the County Program Advisor within five (5) business days of service completion. ~~5~~ 30

**2.9 Vehicle owner contacts the County Program Advisor for instructions on vehicle retirement:**

- 2.9.1 County Program Advisor verifies retirement eligibility as affirmed by information on the voucher.

- 2.9.2 The vehicle owner is instructed to take their vehicle, Certificate of Vehicle Title, and Vehicle Retirement Information sheet to a licensed salvage facility.
- 2.9.3 The vehicle owner takes their vehicle to a licensed salvage facility, along with the Certificate of Vehicle Title.
- 2.9.4 Vehicle owner collects any money warranted for retirement of the vehicle from the salvage facility.
- 2.9.5 Vehicle owner receives receipt of sale or other documentation of vehicle title retirement from the salvage facility.
- 2.9.6 Vehicle owner completes information on the Vehicle Retirement Information sheet, and the salvage facility buyer signs the sheet attesting the vehicle will not be resold as a whole.

**2.10 Retirement documentation is provided to the County Program Advisor:**

- 2.10.1 Receipt of sale and Vehicle Retirement Information sheet are provided to the County Program Advisor.
- 2.10.2 County Program Advisor verifies congruency of documentation and participant information reported in Database.
- 2.10.3 Participant receives Vehicle Replacement Voucher.
- 2.10.4 Additional information about other services may be offered.

**2.11 Purchase of a Replacement Vehicle:**

- 2.11.1 The participant takes their Vehicle Replacement Voucher to a vendor for purchase of a replacement vehicle.
- 2.11.2 Upon selection of a replacement vehicle, the vendor must contact the County Program Advisor for verification of voucher authenticity and procedure.
- 2.11.3 The County Program Advisor verifies voucher, provides vendor with reimbursement instructions, and begins preparing for the reimbursement request.
- 2.11.4 Purchase of a replacement vehicle will commence between the vendor and the program participant.
- 2.11.5 Request for voucher payment is sent to the County Program Advisor along with appropriate documentation of sale and verification of current safety/emissions inspection sticker number.
- 2.11.6 The County Program Advisor reimburses vendor for voucher amount within 30 days of receiving request.

**Section 3: Administration**

**3.1 County Program Manager**

The County Program Manager is responsible for:

- Managing the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program.
- Advertising and posting program changes and additions.
- Providing information to the public and directing potential applicants to appropriate resources.
- Providing information to the media as requested.
- Maintaining a database of information on all transactions, and applicant verification.
- Evaluating the program and altering processes for maximum efficiency.

### **3.2 Program Advisor**

The Program Advisor is responsible for:

- Answering questions about the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program.
- Verifying income eligibility requirements are met by each applicant.
- Completing and verifying information recorded in the AirCheck Texas Program Database, and appropriately correcting misinformation.
- Issuing vouchers.
- Directing approved applicants to participating Recognized Emissions Repair Facilities.
- Maintaining application records in hard copy and within the AirCheck Texas Program Database.

## **Section 4: Program Office**

### **4.1 Operations**

Program participants, partners, and/or vendors can contact the Program Office by calling 1-800-978-1766. Staff at the Program Office will interact with participants, vendors, and other program partners through telephone, electronic mail, and/or facsimile transmittal. The Program Office does not have the ability to assist participants or partners in person.

### **4.2 Operating Hours**

Operating hours may fluctuate with the dynamic needs of the program. The County Program Manager may suspend operations for holidays, maintenance, administrative duties, or other reasonable needs.

### **4.3 Responsibilities**

The Program Office is responsible for:

- Answering questions about the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program.
- Collecting information from callers.
- Completing and verifying information recorded in the AirCheck Texas Program Database.
- Verifying vehicle eligibility requirements are met.
- Directing applicants to either mail or fax in their documents.
- Directing applicants to the appropriate service location or licensed salvage facility.
- Educating vendors and other program partners on reimbursement procedures.
- Listening and responding to appeals and complaints, or directing complaints and appeals appropriately.
- Maintaining application records in hard copy and within the AirCheck Texas Program Database.

## **Section 5: Eligibility Verification**

The program utilizes minimum eligibility requirements outlined by title 30 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §114.64(b) and §114.64(c). Additional requirements may be added as needed.

## **5.1 Vehicle Eligibility**

- 5.1.1 Vehicle registration requirements are verified primarily through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Vehicle Information Database. Staff contacts at the TCEQ shall relay information to the County Program Advisor by entering vehicle information eligibility information into the AirCheck Williamson County Program Database, or by providing verbal authorization over the phone. TCEQ can be contacted for vehicle eligibility verification at 1(888) 295-0141.
- 5.1.2 Applicants may submit proof of vehicle eligibility by presenting documentation of vehicle registration or vehicle inspection for the last 12 months to the Program Advisor.
- 5.1.3 Applicants must present to the Program Advisor a Vehicle Inspection Report indicating a failed emissions test.
- 5.1.4 For purposes of vehicle retirement, the program participant may be required to prove ownership of the vehicle, by presenting a Certificate of Vehicle Title.

## **5.2 Participant Eligibility**

- 5.1.1 Applicants may be required to provide proof of their current residence to the Program Advisor.
- 6.1.1 Income eligibility requirements are verified through the process outlined in Appendix A of this Grant Activities Plan.

## **Section 6: Authorizing Assistance**

### **6.1 Authority**

The Program Advisor and County Program Manager have authority to approve or deny applications within limits of the eligibility requirements outlined in Section 6.

### **6.2 Ineligibility**

Applicants determined ineligible receive information regarding the reasons for the determination.

### **6.3 Vouchers**

Following application approval, the County Program Manager or Program Advisor issues a voucher to the participant. There are three types of vouchers, which authorize reimbursement amounts defined by 30 TAC §114.64(d)(1). Vouchers expire after 30 days.

6.3.2 Diagnostic Only Voucher limits reimbursements to diagnostics only. Repair services are not eligible for reimbursement with this voucher.

6.3.3 Repair Only Voucher limits reimbursement to parts, labor, and retesting for repair services only. Diagnostic fees are not reimbursable for vehicles accompanied by this type of voucher.

6.3.4 Replacement Voucher offers reimbursement for vehicle replacement incentive.

### **6.4 Time Requirements**

6.4.1 As required by 30 TAC §114.64(b)(1), applications must be submitted within 30 days of failing the vehicle emissions test. Step 2, outlined in section 2.2 of this

- Grant Activities Plan, begins the application process. The date this step is completed shall be considered the application submittal date
- 6.4.2 From the application submittal date, applicants have 30 days to complete their application and receive a voucher. After 15 days, if an applicant has not completed their application, they will be contacted regarding this time requirement and the possible inactivation of their file.
  - 6.4.3 Applicants wishing to continue with the program after 30 days may be required to begin the process again with a new failed vehicle emissions test.
  - 6.4.4 Vouchers expire 30 days from date of creation.

## **Section 7: Recognized Emissions Repair Facilities**

Texas Department of Public Safety Recognized Emissions Repair Facilities (RERF) is the designated service provider for the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program. They afford diagnostics, repairs, emissions retesting, and professional recommendations.

### **7.1 Participation Requirements**

- 7.1.1 Recognized Emissions Repair Facilities interested in participating in the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program must provide the County Program Manager with:
  - Signed Participation Agreement to follow rules and requirements outlined in the Grant Activities Plan.
  - Service Fee Summary indicating their general business practices related to parts, diagnostic fees, average parts mark-up, labor fees, and other expenses that may be charged for reimbursement. (Note: this information will remain confidential)
- 7.1.2 RERF must retain records from participation in this program for a minimum of three years.

### **7.2 Program Procedures**

- 7.2.1 Upon presentation of a voucher, the RERF representative must verify that the license plate number, driver's license number, and Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) printed on the voucher and the vehicle are the same.
- 7.2.2 Recognized Emissions Repair Technician must perform diagnostics, formulate a repair estimate, and complete the voucher for each vehicle diagnosed, repaired, and/or recommended for retirement. The repair estimate must be faxed to the County Fleet Manager before repairs are rendered to the vehicle.
- 7.2.3 The Technician and the vehicle owner must sign the voucher, indicating their service suggestions and choices.
- 7.2.4 The RERF collects the required \$30 co-pay from participants with a repair voucher.
- 7.2.5 After repair services are complete, the RERF is responsible for documenting actual repairs, and faxing appropriate documents to the County Program Manager. Additionally, the RERF must retest the vehicle or submit the vehicle for a State Safety and Emissions inspection and issue the vehicle an appropriate State Safety and Emissions inspection sticker.

### **7.3 Customer Service Responsibilities**

- 7.3.1 The RERF must provide participants with professional recommendations for vehicle repair or retirement.
- 7.3.2 Priority is not required for program participants; however, each RERF must conduct business with AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program participants as with any other customer.
- 7.3.3 Every vehicle participating in the program must be diagnosed and provided with a repair estimate, whether eligible for repairs or retirement.
- 7.3.4 RERF technicians must make a best effort to repair vehicles at or below the estimated cost. If best efforts result in a repair cost above the estimated cost, the RERF must document the increased cost and submit a revised estimate to the County Fleet Manager if the repair cost is more than \$50 above the original estimate.
- 7.3.5 A Recognized Emissions Repair Facility may contract specific services or enter into agreement for a second facility to render services, if the RERF does not have the appropriate equipment to perform necessary services. The RERF may not transfer responsibility for those services to the second facility. Services provided by a second facility are subject to the same fee structure as the RERF, and cost for those services shall be included on the repair estimate and services bill.

### **7.4 Payment and Documentation Procedures**

- 7.4.1 RERF must deduct the \$30 co-pay from the final bill for submittal to the County Program Advisor. The final bill must reflect this deduction was taken.
- 7.4.2 The RERF may charge the County Program Advisor up to \$600.00 for eligible expenses for each vehicle accompanied by an authorized voucher.
- 7.4.3 The RERF shall not include any state or local sales taxes in the final itemized bill for payment by the County Program Advisor because the County Program Manager is a tax-exempt entity. (See Rule 3.322, Texas Administrative Code)
- 7.4.4 Eligible expenses include: diagnostic tests, state inspection fees, labor services, and parts directly related to vehicle emissions repairs. All other expenses are ineligible for reimbursement.
- 7.4.5 Only eligible expenses may be charged to the County Program Advisor. Any additional services performed on the vehicle must be included in a separate bill payable by the participant.
- 7.4.6 Only one transaction may occur for each voucher. If special needs warrant additional transactions, the RERF must obtain permission from the County Program Manager prior to performing additional charges.
- 7.4.7 The RERF must provide appropriate documentation to the County Program Manager within five (5) business days of service completion.

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Proper documentation for a Diagnostic Voucher includes:

- Completed and signed voucher
- Clearly marked repair estimate, indicating required services and cost to repair the vehicle emissions
- Final itemized bill for actual diagnostics and labor performed

Proper documentation for a Repair Voucher includes:

- Completed and signed voucher



- Repair estimate(s), clearly marked as estimate and signed by the County Fleet Manager
- Final itemized bill, with labor and parts separately itemized
- Vehicle Inspection Report from retest

7.4.8 The RERF must identify vehicles repaired in this program on the Department of Public Safety Repair Summary Sheet, and provide this information to the Department of Public Safety as required

7.4.9 The County Program Advisor may contact the RERF for reconciliation of ineligible expenses, billing errors, or other unauthorized charges, and request the RERF to fax or re fax appropriate documentation.

## 7.5 Second Opinions

Program participants wishing to receive a second opinion on the recommended repairs for their vehicle after receiving an initial diagnostic test and repair estimate may do so. However, the County Program Manager will not reimburse additional diagnostics performed by another repair center. If the participant chooses to conduct business with the new facility, they must verify the facility is a participating Recognized Emissions Repair Facility.

## Section 8: Licensed Salvage Facilities

Texas Department of Transportation licensed salvage facilities dismantle and dispose of retired vehicles. These facilities do not have a relationship with the County Program Manager for purposes of this program. Their participation may however require their staff or representatives to sign a vehicle retirement information sheet as presented by the participant.

## Section 9: Automotive Vendors

### 9.1 Participation Requirements

There are no specific requirements for participation in the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program in the capacity of selling replacement vehicles. Participants may choose their replacement vehicle from any business or individual.

### 9.2 Customer Service Responsibilities

Priority is not required for participants; however, each automotive vendor is obligated to conduct business with AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program participants as any other customer.

### 9.3 Payment Procedures

9.3.1 Within the limitations of the Vehicle Replacement Voucher amount, the vendor may charge eligible vehicle purchase fees to the County Program Manager, up to \$1000 including vehicle cost, taxes, title, license, inspection test fees, and registration.

9.3.2 The vendor is required to provide appropriate documentation to the County Program Manager within 15 days for reimbursement of goods and services. These documents may include:

- Original signed voucher
- Bill of sale and/or purchase receipt
- Vehicle title or other indication of title transfer

- Vehicle Inspection Report or inspection sticker number
- 9.3.3 Payment for automotive vendors may be issued by check or electronic funds transfer.

### **Section 10: Training and Certification**

- 10.1 Specific certification requirements have not been identified for the County Program Manager or employed staff. Training is conducted as needed to correctly perform required tasks.
- 10.2 Recognized Emissions Repair Facilities are bound by requirements outlined in The Texas Administrative Code §23.93. Additional state or federal requirements may apply to other program partners.

### **Section 11: Compensation**

Program participants do not receive financial assistance payments. All assistance is provided in the form of a voucher and payment is granted to the provider of goods or service.

### **Section 12: Appeals and Complaints**

Complaints regarding decisions rendered on vehicle or participant eligibility by the County Program Manager or Program Advisor(s) are directed to the Program Office for appropriate action as outlined by the County Program Manager.

### **Section 13: Monitoring**

The County Program Manager provides limited program monitoring, consistent with available administrative funding.

#### **13.1 Levels of Service**

The County Program Manager records indicators of service, including, but not limited to the following:

- Approximate number of calls received at the Program Office.
- Number of persons applying for assistance
- Number of persons qualifying for assistance
- Number of vehicles repaired
- Number of vehicles retrofitted
- Number of vehicles replaced

#### **13.2 Reporting**

13.2.1 The County Program Manager files quarterly reports, of the levels of service these reports are reviewed and forwarded to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

13.2.2 Financial status reports are filed by the County Program Manager for review on a quarterly basis, or as specified by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. These reports serve as reimbursement requests and are forwarded to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, pending any modifications.

13.2.3 The County Program Manager shall make additional data and reports available in a timely manner as requested by the Texas Commission on Environmental

Quality for use in development and improvement of the program and its requirements. Any preliminary or draft information provided shall not be used for financial auditing or investigation of administrative operations.

**13.3 Records**

The County Program Manager maintains records on the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program for a minimum of three years as required by Title 30 of the Texas Administrative Code, §114.70(c). Program partners, Recognized Emissions Repair Facilities, and other parties involved in program transactions are also required to maintain records for a minimum of three years.

**13.4 Local Advisory Panel**

The County Program Manager may arrange and organize a Local Advisory Panel to assist in various aspects of operating the AirCheck Texas Repair and Replacement Assistance Program.

**Section 14: Prevention of Fraud and Abuse**

Best efforts are made to assure program applicants, participants, partners, or employees do not commit fraud. Affidavits are required during several steps of the process relieving the County Program Manager and county of liability to dishonest actions. The County Program Manager may investigate any complaint of improper activity, and shall report to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Department of Public Safety or other local authorities if circumstances warrant.

**14.1 Auditing**

**14.1.1 Participant Information:**

Income and vehicle specifications are investigated when necessary to ensure compliance with 30 TAC §114.64(b) and §114.64(c).

**14.1.2 Recognized Emissions Repair Facility Transactions:**

Documentation of vehicle diagnostics, repairs, and other services is reviewed for ineligible and inconsistent costs. Reconciliation of errors or misuse is requested from the Recognized Emissions Repair Facility.

**14.1.2 Vehicle Dismantling:**

The County Program Manager will investigate a sample set of retired vehicles by contacting the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) information hotline at (512) 465-7611 to confirm retired vehicles are not re-titled.

**14.2 Quality Assurance**

The County Program Manager performs limited quality assurance checks on the collection of data, verification of income and vehicle eligibility, and payment procedures, consistent with available administrative funding.

**14.3 Affidavits**

Concluding each step of program participation, involved parties must sign an affidavit ensuring honest and lawful transactions, and releasing the County Program Manager of liability for damages or injury.

**14.4 Available Recourse**

The County has authority to take legal action against any or all perpetrators. Such an event may result in additional penalties imposed by the Texas Department of Public Safety or Texas Department of Transportation.

**Section 15: Fiscal Administration**

The County Program Manager will monitor expenditures daily. Resources may be added, and/or reassigned based upon need and available funding.

**15.1 Additional Funding**

This program may utilize funding from other identified sources.

**15.2 Accounts**

Program funds are maintained in accounts managed by the County Auditors Office.

**16.1 Budget**

An annualized budget is included in Appendix B.

**16.2 Program Income**

**16.2.1 Interest:**

Interest earned in excess of \$250 per year from the state funding is considered program income. Interest earned may be committed to vehicle repair, retrofit, and/or replacement.

