

# Residential RFP Questions and Answers

Updated May 6, 2022

## General Questions and Answers

Bidder Questions	Energy Trust Responses
Where does Multifamily fit in the contracts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multifamily customers in Oregon are served through Energy Trust's Existing Buildings program. The Residential program team coordinates closely with the Existing Buildings program to support customers in small multifamily properties, which include attached residences such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and rowhouses. Multifamily customers in Washington are served through the Residential program.</li><li>• Some small multifamily new construction projects are served by the EPS New Construction program in Oregon and Washington. These structures include new construction single family with ADUs, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and rowhomes in both Oregon and Washington. Energy Trust's Commercial New Buildings program covers larger multifamily projects and is not part of this contract.</li><li>• The Residential program serves existing detached single-family and manufactured homes customers through Home Retrofit, midstream, and online offers.</li></ul>
Is Energy Trust looking to award three separate contracts to three separate implementers?	The RFP will result in three distinct contracts; however, a single firm may be awarded more than one contract. Each contract must comply with Energy Trust's Supplier Diversity Requirements.
Can you provide an overview of how you visualize installation contractors participating in the delivery of residential energy saving measures?	Installation contractors maintain participation agreements directly with Energy Trust and are supported by PMCs and PDCs. The Residential PMC and PDCs are responsible for working with Energy Trust to develop and update participation agreements in alignment with program requirements. There could be circumstances where installation contractors bring other value to the PMC or PDC as it relates to demonstration projects around new technologies or similar partnerships that expand the way in which measures, or trade allies support the program. We are open to fair and competitive

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	processes for trade allies to access Energy Trust, but we don't want to preclude creative ways to advance program goals.
For the three contracts Energy Trust will award, Vendor A can get all three contracts, or Vendors A, B and C can receive contracts. What is the ideal combination?	Any of those iterations could occur. The goal of the RFP is to identify the best contractor or contractors to deliver services to Energy Trust.
Will Energy Trust require vendors to mail checks it has cut, or can a vendor cut and mail them directly?	Vendors are required to manage and deliver checks that are printed by Energy Trust. This includes inserting check in envelopes, mailing incentive checks to the assigned name and mailing address listed on the completed project paperwork and verifying that information matches the corresponding W-9 (if applicable) that has been collected by the PMC or PDC.
Does Energy Trust prefer that vendors create their own online data intake forms, or leverage Energy Trust's system for customer and trade ally-facing functions?	Energy Trust maintains paper and online forms to manage participation agreements with trade allies and application materials to collect customer project data. We maintain an infrastructure/process to develop new and maintain existing forms that is largely driven and supported by our PMCs.
Can you clarify how Energy Trust works with Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) on low-income energy efficiency and solar projects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) administers funding derived from USDOE, LIHEAP, and other Oregon utility energy assistance and weatherization sources to support low-income customers. Energy Trust coordinates with OHCS and maintains limited co-funding partnerships providing weatherization and manufactured home services for low-income customers.</li> <li>• Energy Trust also manages an Equitable Solar Initiative to expand solar energy opportunities for customers with low- to moderate incomes, communities of color, rural communities and those serving them. Energy Trust manages the Equitable Solar Initiative internally, but there may be customer service scope as part of the Residential Program services RFP.</li> <li>• Energy Trust is part of the Program Administration team for the Oregon Community Solar Program (ORCSP). ORCSP provides access to solar for those who can't install it on site. Customers can subscribe to a portion of the output from a larger solar project. Some of Energy Trust's program responsibilities include overseeing the state's community solar projects, serving as the key point of contact for project managers and subscribers, and managing daily program operations. The PMC and PDC services are separate from ORCSP.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Trust is exploring additional support for low-income solar opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p>In the RFP it requires use of the Retail Sales Allocation Tool (RSAT) for Midstream program delivery. Is the RSAT still supported by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) with yearly updates?</p>	<p>The RSAT is no longer supported by BPA. Energy Trust has built upon BPA's prior investments and updates the tool periodically using new information when available.</p>
<p>Can privately held companies, who do not audit or publish financial statements, provide financial statements directly to someone at Energy Trust in order to meet the requirements? Can we ensure those statements are treated as confidential information?</p>	<p>We will accept internal financial statements and a corresponding letter from your bank to demonstrate a company's financial stability. We will treat these materials as confidential and share only with a small internal team.</p>
<p>Does Energy Trust of Oregon offer any flexibility in incentive payment structure to ensure timely payments to the market? Is an "accrual account" possible?</p>	<p>Energy Trust maintains strong financial controls, governed by a board committee, to ensure effective stewardship of utility customer funds. We are open to learning about different approaches, such as an "accrual account", that support an improved experience for customers, trade allies and program allies.</p>
<p>In RFP Section 3 Proposal Format and Content, if a bidder chooses Option 4 (any combination), does Energy Trust only want one proposal document with those contract sections or a separate proposal document for each contract?</p>	<p>Bidders may submit a separate proposal for each contract or include all contracts in one proposal. However, proposals must be clear so that each contract scope can be independently evaluated. A bidder responding to multiple scopes may include an optional appendix, not to exceed four pages, which articulates the value of combining scopes under the delivery of one bidder team. This optional appendix must be called "Appendix D: Efficiency Narrative for Multiple Scopes".</p>
<p>Please clarify RFP Section 4.4. Proposal Submittal and Method of Delivery:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are hard copies indeed required or are electronic copies sufficient?</li> <li>If required, how many copies should be submitted?</li> <li>Where should proposals be delivered (address, hours office will be open)?</li> </ol>	<p>Energy Trust requests digital proposals only.</p>
<p>Table 2: Page Limits in the RFP lists the 'References' section page limit as 'n/a' in that column. In the RFP Section 3.12 References description, can you please clarify how many pages are allowed and how they should be included in the overall bid package?</p>	<p>References may be included as an appendix to your proposal and have no page limits.</p>

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In the RFP, Table 2: Page Limits for the Supplier Diversity Requirements includes a note to “Complete and submit Appendix N: Contracting Plan Template and include in your proposal for the Supplier Diversity Requirement section.” Can this be clarified?	The format demonstrated for the “Appendix N: Contracting Plan” template must be used to address the Supplier Diversity Requirements and included in the main body of your proposal with a total limit of six pages.
In RFP Section 3.8.1 Transition and Implementation Timeline, it states: “Provide a schedule, in the form of a Gantt chart.” Can the schedule be attached as an appendix to the proposal or is it meant to be included in the four-page limit in the proposal response section?	The Gantt chart may be included as an appendix and will not count against the overall page limit for the transition section.
In RFP Section 3.14.3 Financial Package, please further define “significant role” and clarify which bullets subcontractors that align with those requirements must provide with our bid package at time of submittal.	This information applies primarily to the prime contractor and/or a subcontractor with a “significant role”; a role that would support the implementation of the program and could handle program funds. Energy Trust expects the prime and subcontracting firm, who play a significant role, to provide proof that the company is financially stable.
In the Appendix D: Pricing and Savings Proposal Template, on the first tab – ‘Template Directions and Terms’ – can you clarify if it is permissible to add an additional appendix for the “separate pricing narrative document” to our proposal package? If so, is there a page limit?	Bidders may submit a separate proposal for each contract or include all contracts in one proposal. However, proposals need to be clear so that each contract scope can be independently evaluated. A bidder responding to multiple scopes through a single proposal may include an optional appendix, not to exceed four pages, which articulates the value of combining scopes under the delivery of one bidder team. This optional appendix must be called “Appendix D: Efficiency Narrative for Multiple Scopes”.
In the Appendix D: Pricing and Savings Proposal Template, ‘Tab 8: Contracting Plan’ does not include a breakdown for multiple contracts. Should bidders duplicate those cells in the same tab for each contract they are bidding on, or does Energy Trust prefer to amend ‘Appendix D - Tab 8’ to allot space for each contract option and reissue?	The Appendix D: Pricing and Savings Proposal Template has been updated to include a table for each contract and re-posted on Energy Trust’s website in the RFP.
If transition work begins in October 2022, and the contract begins in January 2023, would select firms be able to submit their startup expenses for this program from October 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022? What do you anticipate the cap on startup costs would be?	Transition costs should be priced according to the tasks that are described in your transition plan to take over delivery of services starting January 1, 2023. There is no cap on transition costs, however, bidders should be thoughtful in their approach to managing costs of the transition.

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How does a bidder delineate time and activity that's between 3.3.6 Outreach and Field Services and 3.4.2 Outreach and Field Services for the PMC proposal option?	PMC field services are about general management of the whole network of field representatives related to those activities, whereas the field services under the Home Retrofit program are specific to the delivery of those offers that sort under the Home Retrofit Program.
For the PMC option, should a bidder anticipate staffing the whole portfolio and if so, where should this be entered?	Yes. In Appendix D: Pricing and Savings Proposal Template, a bidder inputs all staffing and position descriptions and/or direct cost descriptions in the 'PMC Price Proposal' tab for all relevant activities. For further guidance, the 'Template Directions and Terms' tab offers direction on how to define and input these items.
The EPS New Construction Program Delivery Contractor (PDC) option in the RFP directs that measure development will be a joint effort between the program management contractor (PMC) and PDC, with the PMC responsible for managing technical copy writing and analysis documented in Measure Approval Documents (MADs) and the technical analysis of savings, costs and non-energy benefits in the CEC for each measure. This is a departure from precedent – in recent years the PDC has performed all analysis, cost data collection, and authored the MADs. To inform our pricing, can you confirm that it's your intent to shift this work to the PMC?	Yes. The EPS New Construction PDC is responsible for providing the inputs used to inform cost-effectiveness calculations. The PMC is responsible for drafting the Measure Approval Documentation and finalizing cost effectiveness calculations.
Is a company permitted to propose a program innovation that requires evaluation and approval by Energy Trust without including all of the required proposal parts/sections that were listed in the webinar? For example, can a program innovation be submitted for consideration without completing the pricing, staffing, diversity, and other proposal parts/sections that a full proposal would entail?	Responses to the RFP must be complete with all required parts/sections to be considered. Innovative program ideas can either be proposed to one of the program's implementor firms as part of this RFP process (i.e., partnering), or directly to Energy Trust, but not as a response to the RFP.
Does Energy Trust intend to use the current customer experience on the website regardless of PMC or PDC chosen?	Energy Trust program marketing develops and manages strategies that drive customer experience and has recently developed enhancements to the website that will persist, regardless of the selected PMC or PDC.
For midstream measures the amount of information and qualification requirements can have a large impact on customer participation in each measure. Can Energy Trust provide a list of basic current program delivery models for measures that are included in the M&O channel specifically?	<p>The M&amp;O contract includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appliance incentives (Energy STAR® clothes washers and dryers) as an instant discount (or other customer benefit) provided in-store through the retail channel</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water heating incentives (Energy STAR gas tank and hybrid electric tank) as an instant discount provided in-store through the retail channel, as an instant discount provided by distributors to contractors, and as an instant discount provided online by either retailers or distributors</li> <li>- Grow light incentives as an instant discount provided in-store through brick-and-mortar retailers</li> <li>- Smart thermostat incentives as a digital coupon redeemable at participating retailers or as an instant discount provided through direct online fulfillment</li> <li>- Gas fireplaces w/electronic ignition (SPIF) incentives for reporting sales of efficient and/or full category data.</li> <li>- Smart thermostat optimization services provided by manufacturers, directly through connected thermostat devices</li> </ul>
<p>In order to understand the level of effort and scope needed for the midstream program, it is important to understand the current program landscape. Can you provide both retailers/manufacturers and corresponding measures that are supported by the Atlas instant validated coupon platform, and e-commerce platforms (both hosted by Atlas and other online retailers and manufacturers)?</p>	<p>Currently the only measure supported by Atlas is a smart thermostat. Nest and Ecobee are the two approved thermostat manufacturers. Retailers participating in the thermostat instant coupon offer include Home Depot, Lowes, Best Buy, and the Google Store.</p>
<p>Does Energy Trust expect the PDC to service retailers who carry products like smart thermostats where only a post purchase rebate is available?</p>	<p>In-store services are only required for retailer locations participating in the instant discount retail program (including grow light retailers). Retailer relationship management is also needed for retailers participating in the smart thermostat instant coupon or any other online promotions.</p>
<p>Regarding residential measures and incentive delivery, there seems to be multiple paths by which customers/partners can receive incentives/benefits through the program. To confirm, the M&amp;O scope is only concerned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Customers applying for a rebate online or in-store by providing the required information in Atlas and being approved using a coupon code validation or API (Nest, HPWHs, smart thermostats)</li> </ul>	<p>The M&amp;O scope is concerned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Customers applying for a digital thermostat coupon or directly purchasing a thermostat online by providing the required information in Atlas</li> <li>b) Contractors who purchase qualified equipment through a participating distributor and provide the required information. The distributors pass through the rebate and get reimbursed for providing the correct information to Energy Trust (hybrid electric water heaters (HPWHs), gas tank water heaters). Distributors receive a SPIF for reporting sales of gas fireplaces</li> </ul>

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<p>b) Contractors who purchase qualified equipment through a participating distributor and provide the required information. The distributor passes along the rebate and gets reimbursed for providing the correct information to Energy Trust (HPWHs, gas fireplaces)</p> <p>c) Customers who get instant markdowns at retail (qualified grow lights only)</p> <p>d) Appliance retailers who receive an upstream rebate from appliance distributors for stocking qualified appliances (nationwide indie retailers only).</p> <p>Please correct or amend descriptions as applicable.</p>	<p>with intermittent pilot ignitions which differs from the downstream incentive that is provided for customers purchasing qualifying fireplaces.</p> <p>c) Customers who get instant markdowns at retail (qualified grow lights, gas tank water heaters, clothes washers, dryers and hybrid electric water heaters)</p> <p>d) Appliance retailers who receive an upstream rebate from appliance distributors for stocking qualified appliances (Nationwide indie retailers only)</p> <p>Additionally, there are online fulfillment promotions for qualified water heaters where customers can purchase water heaters and/or water heater installation services and thermostat optimization services provided by Resideo for connected Honeywell thermostats.</p>
<p>Is Energy Trust able to demonstrate the Atlas customer engagement third-party platform for interested bidders?</p>	<p>The Atlas third-party platform tool provides an online energy assessment service for customers of the Home Retrofit program and is central to thermostat offers within the Midstream Online PDC program. Unfortunately, at this time, Energy Trust is not able to demonstrate the Atlas product, but interested bidders are encouraged to demonstrate their expertise in providing similar solutions in their response to the RFP. In the RFP, bidders have an option to propose a new approach, but Energy Trust does not anticipate replacing Atlas in the first year of the contract.</p>

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategies

Energy Trust is focused on advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the organization and across programs. Energy Trust continuously seeks to better serve low-and moderate-income homeowners, renters, small businesses, and those in communities of color or rural areas.

Energy Trust is seeking delivery approaches and strategies that will help position the Residential program for long-term success in providing more value to all customers.

Equity in program design and outreach will continue to be a focus for all Energy Trust programs to serve customers that have historically not participated in energy-efficiency and renewable energy programs. To address these challenges, the Residential program will need to develop and expand connections with communities, cultivate existing customer and trade ally relationships to encourage repeat participation, and establish new relationships. The program must prioritize and engage customers and communities that have not been served in the past.

### **Diverse Contractor**

Energy Trust defines a **Diverse Contractor** as a company on an implementation team (including a prime contractor) that meets one or more of the definitions established under State law in ORS Chapter 200 for the following categories, and either certified by, or having filed an application for certification with, Oregon's Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID). This includes:

- Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Woman Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Service-Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (SDVBE)
- Emerging Small Business (ESB)

Energy Trust has a goal of providing opportunities for Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Woman Business Enterprise (WBE), Service-Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (SDVBE), and/or Emerging Small Business (ESB) enterprises that are certified by COBID, referred to as Diverse Contractors in the RFP.

In RFP responses, Energy Trust expects to see:

- A variety of Diverse Contractors that will best help us meet the communities in our service area with meaningful roles on the implementation team.
- A proposed pathway to further increase contract spend with Diverse Contractors over future program years.

Other state or federal diversity certifications will not be counted toward the Diverse Contractor requirements. To be counted as part of the Diverse Contractor requirement, firms must be Oregon COBID-certified or have their certification in process when a proposal is submitted, and all certifications must be completed and verified by the selection date for the RFP.

*Note: Energy Trust encourages teams to work with community-based organizations (CBOs) and other stakeholders that represent a specific geographic region, such as an isolated rural area, or a group with a shared goal, such as reducing energy burden for low-income*



customer or building a sustainable community. Teaming with CBOs or other stakeholders will not count toward the Diverse Contractor Spend Goal for this RFP.

## DEI and Supplier Diversity Questions and Answers

Bidder Questions	Energy Trust Responses
Will firms that are COBID eligible but are either “in the process of certification” or “committed to becoming certified prior to 2023” qualify under the diverse supplier spend on proposals?	Yes. Firms may be in the certification process when a proposal is submitted, but all certifications must be completed and verified by the RFP selection date.
Is the 20% supplier diversity spend required for each contract or for the entire sector (for example, if a bidder submits a proposal for both a PMC and a PDC contract)?	Each of the three contracts must meet the 20% contract expenditure requirement. Energy Trust requires that a minimum of 20% of the total contract payments for program services goes to diverse firms that hold a current COBID certification. This requirement applies to all bids, including proposals from a COBID-certified prime bidder.
Is the 20% supplier diversity requirement calculated by hours worked or dollars spent, and does this also account for the online program?	The 20% Diverse Contractor Spend Goal requirement is based on contract payments (i.e., dollars spent) for total program implementation services, such as delivery, marketing, and outreach, and is measured individually for each of the three contracts that will be awarded.
How will the supplier diversity requirement be managed? Will it be managed annually?	This requirement will be tracked on an annual basis. Supplier diversity performance criteria will be included in each contract and failure to achieve goals could impact contract extensions.
Many COBID contractor firms, including community-based organizations (CBOs), prefer to be non-exclusive in their proposals. That way if they don’t win one contract they do not miss out on the others. Can we presume some share of spend on COBID-certified firms, even if they are not exclusively tied to one bidder?	We do not expect COBID-certified firms or CBOs to commit exclusively to a single prime team and they may maintain options to work with multiple firms. We do expect that prime bidders are able to identify scope for COBID-certified firms and include details in the proposals that demonstrate commitments between COBID-certified firms and prime bidders. Additional direction is included in the RFP.
How does the 20% COBID requirement work for third-party subcontractors under a non-COBID-certified prime firm?	Generally, in the chain of contract spending, any dollars that are spent by a COBID-certified firm count towards the supplier diversity requirement (Diverse Contract Spend Goal in the RFP). PMC and PDC contractors will be required to identify all COBID-certified firms that receive payment under the contract in their monthly invoices. Currently, Energy Trust does not differentiate between different types of costs, but preference will be given to proposals that include payments to COBID-certified firms for services rather than for other direct costs.

Bidder Questions	Energy Trust Responses
<p>Are there specific cost-effectiveness calculations Energy Trust uses to create special offers to reach DEI goals? If not, how does Energy Trust justify potential increased costs for reaching out to these communities and groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All offers with savings are subject to cost-effectiveness screening at the measure and program level, where both the Total Resource Cost (TRC) test and Utility Cost Test (UCT) must pass with a Benefit/Cost Ratio (BCR) greater than or equal to 1. In Oregon, Energy Trust operates within the Oregon Public Utility Commission's (OPUC)'s cost effectiveness framework established in OPUC docket UM-551. Please reference <a href="#">Energy Trust's Cost-Effectiveness Fact Sheet</a> for further information. In Washington, Energy Trust operates under broader cost-effectiveness guidance. The tests are applied at the portfolio level, although new measure cost-effectiveness is sometimes examined. There is no exception process in Washington. In most cases, Energy Trust offers the same measures in both states.</li> <li>• The residential program has discretion within the program level BCRs to pay more for offers focused on customers historically underserved by Energy Trust, including offers delivered by community partners. The program can set incentive levels for various offers within the maximum incentives that are cost effective. Currently, Energy Trust provides maximum incentive levels for offers that deliver benefits to focused customer groups. In addition, Energy Trust works with community and agency partners to leverage outside funding that can be considered complementary and improve the measure TRC.</li> <li>• The OPUC provides some flexibility to how Energy Trust applies the cost-effectiveness requirement for offers that do not pass the TRC or UCT. Cost effectiveness exceptions may be allowed for a few situations, for example, limited scale pilots for new technologies or delivery approaches, the presence of significant hard-to-quantify non-energy benefits, measures that provide consistency with other regional offers or across a range of equipment sizes, and emerging OPUC policy objectives such as improving air quality. More information on cost effectiveness exceptions is available through the <a href="#">OPUC proceedings on measure exceptions</a>.</li> <li>• Program marketing is another approach to engage customers through measures or offers that do not require cost effectiveness screening.</li> </ul>
<p>Will the PDC be able to work across Energy Trust service territory for the duration of the Residential program or will the PDC have to work within the region-specific approaches that serve rural areas where Energy Trust staff, Diversity Advisory Council members,</p>	<p>The PDC is responsible for delivering the proposal scope across the Energy Trust service territory, and community partners are expected to support the strategy that is developed by the PDC.</p>

Bidder Questions	Energy Trust Responses
Community Based Liaisons and CBOs have developed relationships and customers?	
Where do retail or midstream customer DEI outreach and offers end and Home Energy Retrofit offers begin? Does Energy Trust prefer that the PDC create offers for the M&O channel audiences that would specifically otherwise be referred to the Home Energy Retrofit program, or vice versa? For example, would Energy Trust be interested in increased incentive offers through the midstream program for highly impacted customers and vulnerable populations?	Midstream DEI strategies are encouraged and likely include areas of coordination with the Home Energy Retrofit program but should primarily involve midstream or online channels and audiences. We welcome ideas for increased incentive offers through the midstream or online programs that deliver benefits to priority customer groups engaging, or willing to engage, in these channels. Responses should indicate necessary coordination and support that the Home Energy Retrofit PMC would be expected to collaborate on.