

Energy Trust of Oregon

Request for Proposals:

Dual Fuel Heat Pump Pilot Phase One Evaluation

RFP Issued: **September 3rd, 2024**
Intent to Bid & Questions Due: **September 16th, 2024**
Proposals Due: **October 4th, 2024**

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About Energy Trust

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to delivering energy efficiency and renewable power benefits to 2.4 million utility customers. We are funded by and serve Oregon customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista, and Oregon and Washington customers of NW Natural. A non-stakeholder board of directors guides our work with input from three advisory councils, and we are overseen by the Oregon Public Utility Commission. Since 2002, our technical services, cash incentives and energy solutions have helped participating customers save \$7.2 billion on their utility bills. The cumulative impact of our leadership has been a contributing factor in keeping our state's energy costs as low as possible, adding renewable power to the grid from small and medium-scale projects, and building a sustainable energy future. More information about Energy Trust's background, funding sources, strategic and action plans, policies and programs are available on our website at www.energytrust.org/about.

Some of Energy Trust's requirements in this RFP and in any subsequent negotiating and/or contracting phases are driven by governing law, the provisions of our grant agreement with the OPUC (the OPUC Grant Agreement) and our funding agreements with each utility.

Introduction

Energy Trust is soliciting a third-party evaluation contractor to conduct an evaluation of an in-progress residential pilot.

Dual-fuel heat pumps (DFHPs), also known as hybrid-HVAC or hybrid heating, refers to a combination ducted heat pump and gas furnace HVAC system where the gas furnace acts as the auxiliary heating system, instead of an electric resistance backup found in most heat pump systems. See **Figure 1** for an example configuration of this kind of system.

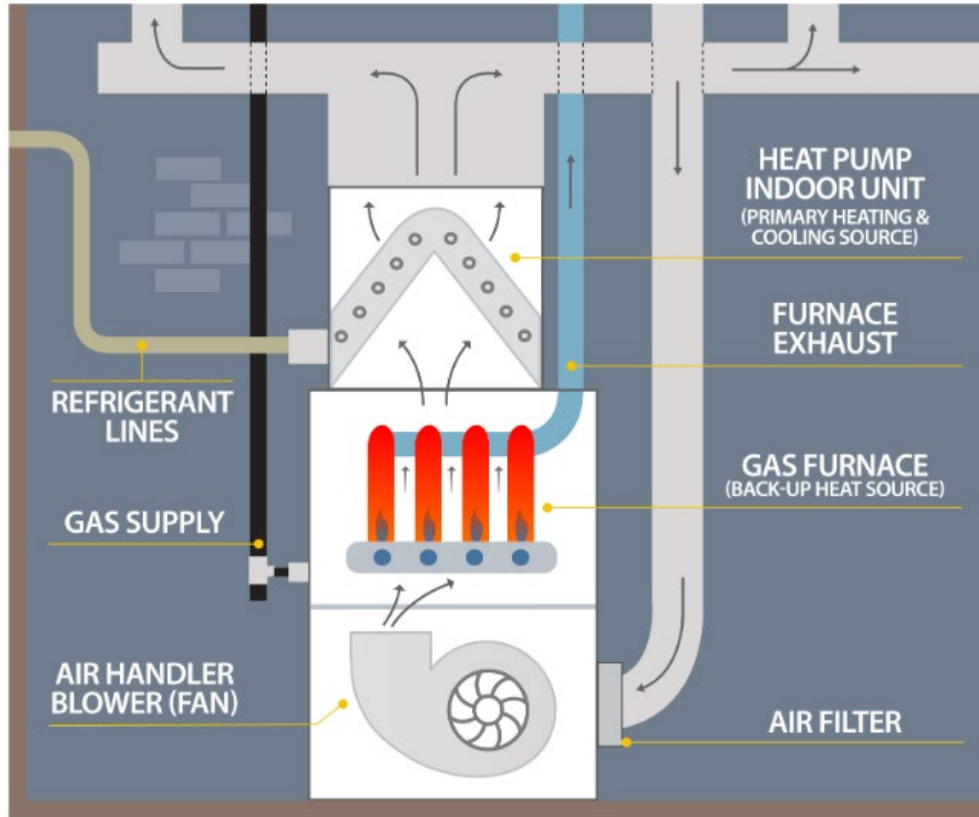


Figure 1¹

Energy Trust is engaging with this technology for the first time in this pilot in partnership with our five funding utilities and the Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC) to explore this technology configuration and potential for a future Residential measure in Energy Trust's portfolio. The research design has been co-created with Energy Trust's funding utilities and the findings of this pilot will be shared directly with the utilities, OPUC, and other interested parties. Energy Trust is engaging in this research as a data collection and analysis entity, not as an advocate or opponent to this technology. The goal of this pilot is to collect information about the existing market and real-world behaviors of these systems to inform future decisions of their applicability to the Energy Trust Residential program.

This pilot will be delivered in up to 90 homes that fit the following characteristics:

- Are single family, site-built dwellings.
- Have an existing gas furnace that is no older than five years old.
- Have a sufficiently weatherized home via engagement in a utility operated or Community Action Agency (CAA) operated low-income assistance program, or are determined to be sufficiently weatherized during an in-home audit.
- Have ducting and electric panels compatible with DFHP system requirements.

¹ Margolies, J. (2022) *Dual fuel heat pumps: Advancing beneficial electrification*. Slipstream, Inc. Retrieved from [URL](#).

- Were built after 1970.
- Are low- or moderate-income households².
- Have no existing central air conditioning system installed.
- Are continuously occupied residences with 12+ months of pre-DFHP participation gas and electric energy use data available.
- Are customers of a participating electric (Portland General Electric or Pacific Power) **and** gas (NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas or Avista Natural Gas) utility within Energy Trust service territory.

Households that are identified as potential participants in this pilot are contacted by CLEAResult, the Energy Trust residential Program Management Contractor (PMC). Households that are interested in participation then complete a multi-stage audit process. During the audits, the PMC staff will conduct a review of the home, equipment, and participant characteristics to determine pilot eligibility based on the above criteria. 200-Amp electrical panels will be given preference over smaller panels which will be assessed for eligibility on a site-by-site basis.

In addition, the details of the system, potential impacts, and terms of participation will be communicated to the customer to confirm their interest in participating. Customers that meet the selection criteria and are interested in participation are then referred to a pre-selected group of seven trade ally installation contractors who will complete the next steps of equipment procurement and installation with the customer. PMC staff will then conduct a final verification visit and test that the system has been installed correctly. Energy Trust is paying the full cost of equipment and installation for sites participating in this pilot, up to a maximum of \$12,000 per unit. This unit cost cap includes all equipment and labor costs for the DFHP system and necessary secondary infrastructure upgrades.

DFHP systems installed during this pilot will be 2-ton capacity heat pumps (or sized appropriately for cooling demand) with a switch-over to the gas furnace set between 30- and 40-degrees Fahrenheit outside air temperature (depending on site and heat pump characteristics).

Research Objectives

This pilot will go through two different phases of evaluation. The first phase is focused on process considerations, customer data collection, qualitative outcomes of the pilot, and a broader market assessment using the following research objectives and questions. A planned future phase two of the evaluation of this pilot will focus on different elements,

² Low and moderate income for this pilot is defined in several ways. In the customer referral process, participants will be identified first from participants in other low-income programs (such as Community Action Agency, Community Based Organization (CBO), or utility-operated programs), secondarily from previous Energy Trust Savings Within Reach (SWR) participants, and third through any customer who would be eligible for either of those other participation pathways. Participants will be asked to self-certify their income during the audit stage of the pilot process.

particularly pilot measure impact on energy use, utility system demand, and carbon emissions. The research objectives for this phase one include:

- Determine the customer costs and benefits of DFHP system installations within the study population.
 - What are the customer perceptions of energy costs following the installation of their DFHP system? What are their perceptions of changes of gas and electric costs respectively?
 - How do customers value the addition of cooling capabilities provided by an installed DFHP system?
 - How do customers value or think about a backup-auxiliary fuel benefit provided by an installed DFHP system?
 - What changes in comfort and living conditions do customers in homes with DFHP systems installed experience?
 - Are customers with installed DFHP systems making changes to components of their system such as set points, heating/cooling cycles, or other components and for what reasons?
 - What maintenance, upkeep needs, and issues do customers experience with their DFHP systems?
- Determine the costs and process considerations associated with installing DFHP systems within the study population.
 - What are the characteristics of other necessary infrastructure (such as electric panels, ducts, etc.) required to install the DFHP system to agreed upon efficiency levels³ without incurring significant additional installation costs or time?
 - What types of homes were served well by this pilot, based on housing characteristics including location, year built, utility, income level, and other characteristics? What homes were disqualified, at what stage of outreach, and for what reasons?
 - What is the cost of installing DFHP systems in homes meeting the pilot selection criteria? What is the cost of secondary infrastructure improvements (ducts, electric panels, etc.)? What is the cost of the pilot process (i.e., recruiting sites, auditing home conditions, etc.)?
 - What is the time interval from site recruitment to successful installation of DFHP systems? Where do delays typically occur and what causes them?
- Determine the ways in which the pilot development, administration, customer outreach/recruitment, and installation was successful and unsuccessful.

³ “Agreed upon efficiency levels” refers to cost-benefit assessments made by the Program and installation contractor to keep costs below \$12,000 total while also ensuring a functional system is installed in each site. This level may differ from site-to-site depending on the existing conditions, installation contractor, selected ducted heat pump system, etc.

- What were the primary influences that drove participants to apply for the pilot? What aspects of marketing materials and outreach were successful in engaging participants?
- How successful do pilot stakeholders believe the co-creation and development process was in creating a sound pilot program design with actionable results?
- What barriers and opportunities to implementation and program development do stakeholders believe exist for this pilot?
- What barriers and opportunities do stakeholders believe exist in creating a permanent, non-pilot measure for DFHPs within the Energy Trust Residential program?
- What goals do stakeholders have for the DFHP pilot? What would a successful pilot outcome look like to them?
- How did Trade Ally installation contractors view the pilot in terms of quality control requirements, ease of installation, and measure 'fit' for the identified homes?
- Determine the activity levels, driving factors, and costs of DFHP installations occurring outside of Energy Trust's pilot in Oregon.
 - What types of homes and residents are most frequently installing DFHP systems?
 - Under what baseline conditions are trade allies and other installation contractors recommending DFHP systems to customers?
 - When trade allies and other installation contractors install a DFHP, how often is the customer's decision based on their recommendation? How often is it based on pre-existing customer interest in a DFHP system?
 - Among trade allies and other installation contractors that have experience installing these systems, what volume of installations have they completed in the last three years? What trends are they noticing in the market for this equipment?
 - What is the typical total installation price of a DFHP system? How does this price compare to a traditional gas furnace replacement and/or ducted heat pump system installation?
 - What do trade allies and other installation contractors use as selling points to encourage customers to install a DFHP system? Which selling points do they believe to be most effective? Which selling points do they believe to be least effective?
 - What names and language do trade allies and other installation contractors use to communicate about DFHP systems? What information do they provide to customers about how they work?

Tasks

Energy Trust envisions that the selected evaluator will utilize the following tasks to determine answers to the research objectives and questions.

Task 1. Project Initiation and Work Plan

Once a contract has been awarded, Energy Trust will provide the selected evaluator with pilot documents and resources to gain an understanding of the context, background, and to-date activities of the pilot. This will include technical requirements, pilot scoping notes and resources, program forms, and participant outreach, phone screen, and audit materials.

After the selected evaluator has reviewed the above materials, they will host a virtual kick-off meeting with Energy Trust and Residential PMC staff. This kick-off meeting will allow the evaluator to establish points of contact for various steps of the project, ask questions about the pilot, present the evaluation framework and schedule, and discuss data requests. The selected evaluator will also use the kick-off meeting to solicit feedback and input on the evaluation approach and incorporate any input into the work plan and other deliverables.

After the kick-off meeting, the selected evaluator will develop a project work plan containing the following elements:

- Evaluation goals
- Evaluation methods
- Schedule of tasks and deliverables

Schedule of tasks and deliverables: The selected evaluator will develop a schedule for all tasks and deliverables. This schedule will include timelines for the evaluator to request Energy Trust staff input or assistance, major task work, and draft and final deliverables. For all research instruments and deliverables, the selected evaluator should assume a two-week review period for Energy Trust and PMC staff to provide input. Energy Trust is interested in obtaining the draft final report for this study in Q4 2025.

The draft work plan will be provided to the Energy Trust evaluation project manager and Residential team for review and approval prior to finalization. The evaluator will incorporate the provided feedback into all components of the work plan as needed.

Deliverables:

- Kick off meeting agenda.
- Summary notes from the kick-off meeting
- Draft and final project work plan

Task 2. Review and Summarize Program Data

As part of the hands-on approach to this pilot, Energy Trust and CLEAResult are collecting data from residents and their homes at several touch points prior to the

installation of the DFHP system. These three touch points include an application form, phone screening, and on-site audit of the home. Key information related to the research objectives that is collected during these touch points includes:

- Home type and age.
- Existing heating and cooling equipment in the home.
- Number of residents.
- Motivations for participating in the pilot.
- Participation in an income qualified bill discount program offered by their utilities.
- Demographic characteristics.
- Furnace, HVAC system, ductwork, and electric panel specifications.
- Site photos.

The selected evaluator will review the notes from the three touch points for all 90 qualified customers, as well as any customers who were disqualified at various points throughout the process, to summarize findings related to the research objectives above. In addition, the selected evaluator will note customers where information is incomplete to allow the evaluator to collect the missing information during the customer survey (see Task 6).

Since the pilot is ongoing, the selected evaluator will need to analyze customer information from the three touch points as they occur. The selected evaluator and Energy Trust evaluation project manager will determine the appropriate cadence for providing the ongoing participant documentation to maximize efficiency during the development of the project work plan.

As units are installed in participant homes the selected evaluator will also review and summarize the invoices submitted to Energy Trust by the installation contractors. The selected evaluator will summarize the division of costs on the invoices into several discreet bins, including:

- Capital infrastructure (of the DFHP system)
- Capital infrastructure (of secondary infrastructure)
- Labor costs (of the DFHP system)
- Labor costs (of secondary infrastructure)

Program data and installation contractor invoices will be summarized and included in deliverables at the population level. In addition, this data will be cut and provided in a confidential appendix along several strata of interest. These strata include electric and gas utility, home type, and trade ally. The selected evaluator will also maintain a participant level summary of all of the program and invoice data. This participant level resource will also be provided to Energy Trust as a confidential appendix to the final report.

Deliverables:

- Section in the final report summarizing anonymized program data and installation contractor invoices.

- Confidential appendices to the final report summarizing program data and invoices along several stratifications and at the customer level.

Task 3. Conduct Energy Trust, CLEAResult, and Utility Representative Interviews

The selected evaluator will perform a series of qualitative interviews with stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of the pilot. The selected evaluator will work with the Energy Trust evaluation project manager and Residential staff to identify the correct individuals to interview, including up to four Energy Trust staff, up to three CLEAResult staff, and up to five utility representatives. For the CLEAResult and utility representative interviews, the selected evaluator will leverage existing Energy Trust connections and relationships to contact and recruit stakeholders for the interviews.

The selected evaluator will design a single interview guide to be used for each of the three distinct groups of stakeholders. The interview guide should be designed to be somewhat modular to tailor the questions to each stakeholder group's distinct role in the pilot. Energy Trust and CLEAResult interview guides should be focused on pilot administration, the pilot design process, customer recruitment, and pilot goals/outcomes. The utility representative interview guides should be focused on pilot codesign with Energy Trust, utility goals for this pilot and DFHP technology, and the utilities' role in participant selection and recruitment. The interview guide will be provided to the Energy Trust evaluation project manager and program staff for review and edits. The selected evaluator will incorporate all edits prior to finalizing and contacting the stakeholders to schedule their interviews.

Interviews should be designed to take between 30 minutes and one hour, depending on the stakeholder's role. Interviews should be conducted over the phone or videoconferencing software. The selected evaluator will take notes and potentially record interviews to ensure that responses are adequately captured and recorded. It is expected that results from the interviews will be presented in aggregate and that individuals will be promised confidentiality in their responses during the interviews.

After interviews are completed, the selected evaluator will summarize the responses and findings by stakeholder group. The final report will include a section summarizing the responses collected during the interviews. Responses will be presented in aggregate, though individual quotes or sentiments may be used anonymously to illustrate findings more effectively.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final Energy Trust, CLEAResult, and utility interview guide.
- Section in final report summarizing interview findings by stakeholder group.

Task 4. Conduct Installation Contractor Interviews

The selected evaluator will also perform a series of interviews with installation contractors who are both engaged and not engaged in this pilot.

The selected evaluator will first work with the Energy Trust evaluation project manager, Residential team, and CLEAResult project team to identify residential HVAC contractors who may be engaging with DFHP technology outside of the Energy Trust pilot. The selected evaluator may also use existing connections and resources in the industry to identify additional contractors. Once a list of firms is identified, the selected evaluator will develop an interview guide and recruitment plan to invite firms to participate in an interview as part of this evaluation. The interview guide for these interviews should focus on understanding the non-pilot DFHP market. The recruitment plan will include warm leads that leverage existing Energy Trust/CLEAResult relationships for firms that have an existing relationship with Energy Trust. The interview guides and recruitment plan will be provided to Energy Trust and the PMC team for review. The selected evaluator will incorporate all feedback on the recruitment plan and materials prior to finalization.

Once the interview guide and recruitment plan have been finalized, the selected evaluator will recruit firms for interviews following the recruitment plan. The selected evaluator should seek to complete 8-10 interviews with non-pilot participant installation contractor firms with representation from various geographic locations in Energy Trust's service territory. The selected evaluator will offer a \$50-100 gift card as compensation for their time in the interviews and to increase response rates. The selected evaluator will make it clear in all recruitment and delivery language that the gift card is being provided by the selected evaluator, not Energy Trust, and the selected evaluator will be solely responsible for any required tax reporting.

In addition to the non-pilot participant contractor interviews, the selected evaluator will interview each of the 7 trade ally firms participating in the pilot. These interviews will focus on the trade ally experience in the pilot and with the pilot structure, but may include elements of the non-participant interviews to understand how these firms are engaging with the broader market for DFHPs. Due to the ongoing relationship between the Residential Program, PMC, and these trade allies the selected evaluator will leverage those relationships to recruit the participating trade ally firms to the interviews. The selected evaluator will offer a \$50-100 gift card as compensation for their time in the interviews and to increase response rates. The selected evaluator will make it clear in all recruitment and delivery language that the gift card is being provided by the selected evaluator, not Energy Trust, and the selected evaluator will be solely responsible for any required tax reporting. The selected evaluator will develop an interview guide for the participating trade ally interviews and provide it to Energy Trust for review. The selected evaluator will incorporate all necessary edits prior to finalization and recruitment of trade allies for these interviews.

Interviews should be designed to take between 30 minutes and one hour. Interviews should be conducted over the phone or via videoconferencing software. The selected evaluator will take notes and/or record interviews to ensure that responses are adequately captured and recorded. It is expected that results from the interviews will be presented in aggregate and that individuals will be promised confidentiality in their responses during the interviews.

After interviews are completed, the selected evaluator will summarize the responses and findings for each distinct contractor group. The final report will include a section summarizing the responses collected during the interviews. Responses will be presented in aggregate, though individual quotes or sentiments may be used anonymously to illustrate findings more effectively.

Respondent proposals should include how the selected evaluator plans to recruit installation contractors and the proposed incentive level and delivery mechanism for contractors.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final participating and non-participating installation contractor interview guide.
- Draft and final installation contractor recruitment materials and language.
- Section in final report summarizing interview findings for each trade ally type.

Task 5. Plan & Conduct Customer Surveys

The selected evaluator will design, recruit for, and conduct a phone/web survey of pilot participants. Due to the small population size of the pilot, the selected evaluator will attempt to conduct the survey with a census of participants.

First, the selected evaluator will develop a draft survey instrument and proposed survey medium (e.g., phone, web, or both). The survey instrument should be designed to determine answers to all of the relevant research questions and focus on customer motivations to participate, lived experience with the equipment, and household/demographic characteristics of participants. The selected evaluator will also develop a draft customer recruitment plan. The customer recruitment plan should leverage existing Energy Trust relationships with the customer to generate warm leads and align with the proposed survey medium(s). The customer recruitment plan should specify mode of outreach, relative dates of outreach to other contact attempts, responsible party for conducting that outreach attempt, and how the selected evaluator will coordinate the outreach efforts between their staff, Energy Trust staff, and PMC staff. The customer recruitment plan should also include draft template language for each outreach attempt. The selected evaluator will provide both the draft survey instrument(s) and customer recruitment plan to the Energy Trust Evaluation Project Manager and Residential staff for review prior to finalization. The selected evaluator will then incorporate all feedback into the draft versions before finalization. Once the survey instrument(s) are finalized, thorough testing of any web-survey instruments will be conducted to ensure the logic, display order, and response selection functionality works as intended.

The survey instrument will be administered on a rolling basis to different participants based on the date of their installation of their DFHP system. Energy Trust anticipates installing all of the DFHP systems by March of 2025. The selected evaluator will administer the survey to each participant after they have gathered enough lived experience with the pilot system to be able to respond about its effectiveness. The

selected evaluator should attempt to align survey administration waves with shoulder seasons, to allow respondents to reflect on the use of their system during the respective summer cooling and winter heating seasons. It is expected that all surveys will be administered by Q4 2025. Surveys should be designed to take 15 or fewer minutes to complete and use clear, concise language. To encourage participation and compensate participants for their time, the selected evaluator should propose a monetary survey completion incentive in their RFP submission. These monetary incentives must be clearly provided by the selected evaluator, not Energy Trust, and the selected evaluator will be solely responsible for any required tax reporting.

The selected evaluator will also include questions in the participant survey about any technical, comfort, or use issues with their DFHP system that they would like Energy Trust to follow up on. In cases where the participant indicates that they would like Energy Trust to follow up, the selected evaluator will provide that information to the Energy Trust Evaluation Project Manager within one week of receiving it. Energy Trust will provide a template for the feedback to be provided in.

The results of the participant survey will be summarized and presented in aggregate. It is expected that participants will be offered confidentiality in their responses, except where program follow-up is requested. Responses will be cut and analyzed along several key parameters of interest, including utility service areas, heating zone, and other customer household characteristics. In addition, the survey responses should be compared to customer data collected during the three program implementation touch points previously summarized in Task 2 to gain a complete understanding of customer motivations and experience with the pilot measure throughout the stages of the process.

The final report will contain sections on survey design, implementation, recruitment, and findings. Participant survey results will expressly illustrate how participant value assessments of the DFHP system change or remain the same over time. To further illustrate findings, the selected evaluator should pull out individual, anonymized, quotes and responses.

Respondent proposals should propose survey modes, survey completion incentives, a customer recruitment framework, and the contractors' general approach to administering and analyzing the survey responses.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final participant survey instruments.
- Draft and final survey customer recruitment plan and outreach language/materials.
- Requests for follow-up from participants provided to Energy Trust within one week of receiving the request.
- Section(s) in the final report summarizing participant survey methodology, recruitment, and results.
- Appendix to the report with final participant survey instrument(s).

Task 6. Reporting

The selected evaluator will produce an interim memo following the completion of Tasks 1, 3, & 4. This interim memo will be specifically tailored to displaying results related to research objectives three and four;

“Determine the ways in which the pilot development, administration, customer outreach/recruitment, and installation was successful and unsuccessful.”

&

“Determine the activity levels, driving factors, and costs of DFHP installations occurring outside of Energy Trust’s pilot on Oregon.”

The memo will also provide recommendations for how the pilot could be improved or changed to address barriers or weaknesses that were identified over the course of the completion of Tasks 1, 3, & 4. The selected evaluator will provide a draft memo to the Energy Trust Evaluation and Residential staff for review and will incorporate all edits into the final version of the interim memo. The final version should be submitted to Energy Trust within three weeks of receiving comments on the draft.

The selected evaluator will produce a final evaluation report after all evaluation tasks are completed summarizing the research methods, evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Key findings will be highlighted with compelling tables, charts, and graphics. The use of tables and graphs is also recommended for material that does not lend itself well to narrative form. The selected evaluator will draw conclusions related to the research goals and objectives based on the evaluation findings. The report should include the following sections:

- Executive summary
- Introduction, including description of the initiative and purpose of the study
- Summary of methods, including survey recruitment, analysis methods, and interview design
- Results, including charts and text highlighting key findings
- Conclusions and recommendations relating to the findings and research objectives
- Appendices containing survey and interview instruments and materials
- Appendices containing detailed tables of results, crosstabulations, or additional analyses that may be of interest but are not of key importance

The selected evaluator will provide a draft report with all of the above elements. The draft report will be reviewed and commented on by Energy Trust staff, third-party reviewers, and other parties deemed appropriate by Energy Trust. Based upon these comments, the selected evaluator shall make revisions and deliver to Energy Trust a final version of the evaluation report within three weeks of receiving feedback. The selected evaluator should anticipate that Energy Trust and other parties will review the draft report for roughly two to three weeks before returning the feedback. Achieving an acceptable final report may take more than one iteration between the evaluator and Energy Trust. Where applicable, data, phone conversations, non-confidential sources, publications, and other media used in the report must be

referenced and cited. It is anticipated that any respondents or sources can be promised confidentiality in terms of attribution of responses. Findings and conclusions shall be based on the information collected by the selected evaluator and referenced in the reports.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final interim memo.
- Draft and final written evaluation report.

Task 7. Project Management

The selected evaluator will manage all aspects of this evaluation project to ensure that it remains on-schedule and below the contract budget cap. Project management will include hosting regular check-in meetings with Energy Trust staff during the evaluation. These check-in meetings will vary in cadence depending on the scope of work being completed at that time. Check-ins may range from bi-weekly to monthly or even less frequent. The Energy Trust Evaluation Project Manager and selected evaluator will discuss check-in cadence as needed throughout the project. During the fielding of the survey instruments, the selected evaluator will provide regular updates to Energy Trust staff on the data collection progress. The selected evaluator will proactively advise on ways to maximize study quality throughout the project.

The selected evaluator will be required to submit monthly status reports presenting the following:

- A summary of accomplishments during the previous month.
- Current month's activities and plans.
- Variances in schedule or budget, including any necessary explanations.
- If applicable, any issues or concerns to be addressed with proposed solutions.
- Compliance with supplier diversity requirements (see Proposal Requirements), including current and total amounts invoiced to date for COBID-certified firms relative to total contract spending.

These reports are due by the 10th of every month and must accompany the invoice, starting with the first month after work begins.

Deliverables:

- Regular check-in meetings with the Energy Trust evaluation project manager.
- Regular progress updates during survey administration and fielding.
- Monthly status reports and invoices.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must contain the following information. There is a 24-page limit for proposals, not including résumés, insurance coverage information, conflict of interest disclosure, or representations and signature page.

1. Proposal Information

Team Structure & Qualifications

Proposals should provide an overview of the lead firm and any subcontractors. We encourage respondents to create a team of firms with specialized expertise to fill different project roles where applicable. Proposals should describe the respondent team's qualifications and experience doing similar work and identify specific aspects of survey administration where the respondent team's experience will be particularly relevant or important. **Not to exceed three (3) pages.**

Staffing and subcontracting plan

Describe the project team structure, role of each key team member, subcontractor roles, COBID numbers for COBID certified subcontractors (see *Supplier diversity requirements section below*) and the management plan. **Not to exceed two (2) pages.**

Technical proposal

Provide a detailed project proposal for the evaluation, including proposed approach to the to the specific tasks identified in the "Tasks" section above, as well as respondent's approach to the evaluation overall. Respondents should follow the bolded proposal instructions in the Tasks section and refrain from simply repeating the study tasks. **Not to exceed eight (8) pages.**

Supplier diversity requirements

Proposals should indicate if respondent's firm or subcontractors are certified with the Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) of Oregon or US Small Business Administration (SBA) as one or more of the following certifications that qualify under Energy Trust's Supplier Diversity Policy (SDP).

Qualifying COBID certifications:

- Minority Business Enterprise
- Women Business Enterprise
- Veteran Business Enterprise
- Service-Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise
- Emerging Small Business,

Qualifying SBA certifications:

- Small Disadvantaged Business
- Women Owned Small Business
- Economically Disadvantaged Women Owned Small Business
- Business Development Program (8a)
- Veteran Owned Small Business
- Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business
- Historically Underutilized Business Zone Certification (HUBZone)

It is not required for a minimum value of any resulting contract to be directed towards SDP qualifying firms. However, Energy Trust still encourages interested firms to create teams that include SDP qualifying firms. As such, proposals which direct at least 15% of the value of a resulting contract may receive up to a 5% bonus during scoring. Any teaming should be reflected in the staffing and subcontracting plan and budget proposal. **Not to exceed one (1) page.**

Schedule

Provide a schedule of major activities and deliverables listed in the Tasks section above, with approximate dates. The schedule should assume that a project kick-off meeting will be scheduled within three weeks of awarding the contract.

Energy Trust's Supplier Diversity Policy requires RFP and RFQs be posted to Energy Trust's website for a minimum of one month. Energy Trust also typically takes 2-3 weeks to review, score, and select contract awardees from submission pools. Contracting and project initiation often take 1-2 additional weeks after a contractor is selected. Please factor these timelines into your proposed schedule.

Energy Trust anticipates all pilot measures to be installed by March 2025. The draft evaluation report for this project should be delivered by December 31st, 2025. A final report will be delivered within three weeks of having received all comments and edits on the submitted draft. These schedule assumptions may be reassessed once the project begins. **Not to exceed two (2) pages.**

Budget

Provide a detailed budget proposal, based on the proposed methods and staffing plan. Proposals should assume a time-and-materials contract with a "not-to-exceed" budget cap. Proposals should describe the underlying budget assumptions and any drivers of cost that can be modified without compromising the integrity of the evaluation.

It is anticipated that the budget for the scope described in this RFP will be approximately \$110,000; however, Energy Trust reserves the right to revise its budget assumptions at any time. We ask bidders to propose as competitive a budget for the project as they can, while being realistic about the scope that they can complete within that budget. If the proposed budget will exceed the \$110,000 threshold listed here, we will consider it, but ask that bidders provide a rationale for why it is necessary. In addition, we ask bidders proposing to exceed the budget threshold listed here to provide alternative budget scenarios where they could stay within the budget by making certain trade-offs – either by dropping tasks or reducing complexity in places.

Proposals should summarize the budget in a table, breaking out the estimated hours and costs by task and staff member. Please use the following budget template. Staff and subcontractors listed in the budget should be identified by name, with billing rates for each. **Not to exceed two (2) pages.**

Budget template:

Staff Name	Firm	Hourly Rate	Hours Per Task			Total Hours	Total Cost
			Task 1	Task 2	Task...		
Staff Member 1							
Staff Member 2							
Staff Member...							
Subcontractor 1							
Subcontractor...							
Total Hours Per Task							
Direct Costs							
Total Cost Per Task							

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) & cultural competence experience

Proposals should describe respondent's efforts and experiences in integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion into their business operations, both internally and externally, and their experience conducting culturally responsive research and evaluation work. Energy Trust seeks to contract with organizations that share its commitment to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and business environment, and that apply a diversity and equity perspective to their work. Respondents must provide responses to each of the questions in **Appendix B. Not to exceed four (4) pages.**

Data security and confidentiality

Proposals should provide any data security certifications (e.g., ISO-27001 or SOC 2) that are held and **maintained by the respondent and any subcontractors engaged in the project.** Energy Trust recognizes that these certifications can present significant barriers for some firms. If your organization or subcontractor does not hold any relevant data security certifications, please provide a brief description of the **systems, policies, and procedures** used to ensure that Energy Trust provided data and data collected throughout the evaluation are kept secure and confidential during fielding, data transfers, storage, and analysis. **Not to exceed two (2) pages.**

2. Work Product Example

Proposals should include **one past report** that showcases the respondent team's work on a similar project, as well as their data presentation and reporting capabilities. If needed, the names of people and organizations may be redacted from the report to allow sharing it. The work product example should be included as an appendix to the proposal. **No page limit, but please keep materials to a minimum.**

3. Resumés

Proposals should include resumés of all key team members, from the lead firm and any subcontractors who will be performing work. These should be included in an appendix to the proposal. **No page limit.**

4. Insurance Coverage Information

Energy Trust requires its contractors to maintain, at a minimum, workers compensation insurance, adequate commercial general liability insurance coverage, and automobile liability insurance. Cyber liability coverage may also be required. Provide a description of the insurance coverage provided by respondent for performing the impact evaluation work, including:

- Whether such coverage is on a “comprehensive” or “commercial” form
- Whether such coverage is on a “claims made” or “occurrence” basis
- All endorsements excluding coverage of any nature, if any
- All limits, including aggregate limits and the current remaining coverage amounts under those limits
- Effective date

This information should be provided in an appendix to the proposal. **No page limit.**

5. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Respondent must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest respondent or its subcontractors may have with Energy Trust in its proposal. A conflict of interest is defined as any situation in which an individual or a member of their family or close business or personal acquaintance, is employed by Energy Trust or the OPUC, or may be reasonably construed to have a personal or financial interest in any business affairs of Energy Trust that may impair or appear to impair respondent’s objectivity in performance of the work in this solicitation or any other Energy Trust contract or situations in which respondent may have an unfair advantage.

The following are examples of actual or potential conflicts of interest that could require a mitigation plan or could be grounds for exclusion from competition in Energy Trust’s discretion:

- *A respondent has or had access to nonpublic information (e.g., budget, evaluation criteria, another contractor’s proprietary data, etc.) via the performance of another Energy Trust contract or subcontract that provides respondent with an unfair advantage in responding to this solicitation.*
- *A respondent on an evaluation project that would involve evaluating the performance of Program X has an existing subcontract with one of Energy Trust’s prime contractors for which it is paid to implement some portion of Program X.*

- *A respondent who has assisted Energy Trust or one of its current contractors in drafting the statement of work in a solicitation on which it now seeks to submit an offer will be automatically excluded from competing on that specific solicitation.*

Respondent's disclosure must specifically address any existing contracts between Energy Trust and the respondent, its staff, or any of its proposed subcontractors. If a potential conflict of interest is identified by the respondent, then the respondent should propose strategies to mitigate the conflict by submitting a mitigation plan which, if acceptable to Energy Trust, will become part of the contract terms if respondent is selected for award. If no conflict is identified by respondent, the respondent will explicitly provide such a statement in their RFP response. The determination of whether a conflict of interest exists is left to the sole discretion of Energy Trust. This information should be provided in an appendix to the proposal. **No page limit.**

6. Representations and Signatures Page

Respondent's proposal must contain the signature of a duly authorized officer or agent of the respondent company submitting the proposal. Respondent's duly authorized officer or agent shall sign **Appendix A** certifying to the representations stated on **Appendix A**. The signed page should be provided as an appendix to the proposal.

Proposal Selection Criteria

Proposals will be judged on the criteria listed below. As noted above, failure to meet the proposal requirements may result in the rejection of a proposal without scoring.

- Technical proposal
- Qualifications of proposed team and staffing plan, including subcontractors (if applicable)
- Proposed budget
- Supplier Diversity Program eligibility (bonus to score only)
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion responses
- Data security and confidentiality
- Work product example

Schedule & Administration of Proposal Selection Process

RFP Schedule

- **September 3, 2024** RFP issued
- **September 16, 2024** Intent to bid due
- **September 16, 2024** Questions/request for additional information due
- **September 20, 2024** Response to questions sent no later than

- **October 4, 2024** **Proposals due**

Requests for Additional Information and Proposal Submission

Any questions and/or requests for clarification regarding this RFP, as well as stating intent to bid on the project, must be submitted via email to the contact named below by **September 16th, 2024**. Responses to questions and requests for additional information will be posted on Energy Trust's website no later than **September 20th, 2024**. Energy Trust cannot accommodate individual phone, mail, or fax inquiries about the RFP. All questions must be submitted via email.

Stating intent to bid does not obligate a respondent to submit a proposal. Only electronically submitted proposals (in PDF form) will be accepted; faxed or print proposals will not. A signed letter of transmittal (cover letter) is required and should be scanned and submitted along with the proposal. All proposals must be received by 5pm Pacific Time on **October 4th, 2024**. Energy Trust will not be obligated to consider information received outside this time interval for the purposes of this RFP. Please submit proposal to:

Cody Kleinsmith
Project Manager – Evaluation
Energy Trust of Oregon
Email: cody.kleinsmith@energytrust.org

Revisions to RFP

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an addendum will be issued by Energy Trust and will be posted on the website. Respondents should contact Energy Trust if they find any inconsistencies or ambiguities to the RFP. Clarification given by Energy Trust may become an addendum to the RFP.

Withdrawal and Modification of Proposals

Respondents may withdraw their proposal and submit a revised proposal prior to the response deadline. After the response deadline, Respondent initiated changes will not be accepted. Respondents may withdraw their proposal from consideration at any time.

Proposal Evaluation and Notification for Negotiations

Energy Trust will review the proposals as received and will initiate negotiations with the leading respondent.

Validity and Deadlines

Proposals should specify the date through which the proposal is valid.

RFP Governing Provisions

All submitted proposals are subject to the following additional provisions.

Right to Accept or Reject Proposals, Multiple Awards

Energy Trust reserves the right to make multiple awards, reject any and all proposals and to waive any nonconformity in proposals received, to accept or reject any or all of the items in the proposal, and award the contract in whole or in part as it is deemed in Energy Trust's best interest. Energy Trust may also choose to negotiate any of the details of proposals prior to contracting.

Confidentiality

Respondents shall clearly identify only those portions of their proposals that they do not want revealed to third parties and label such portions as "Confidential Information". Except as required under law or for regulatory purposes Energy Trust will maintain confidentiality of such information. Energy Trust will not accept proposals or other documents that are marked to indicate the entire document is the confidential or proprietary information of the sender or that restricted handling is required. Normal business practices will be observed in handling proposal materials.

Ownership and Return of Proposals

All materials submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of Energy Trust and shall not be returned to the respondent.

No Verbal Addendums

No verbal agreement or conversation made or had at any time with any officer, agent, or employee of Energy Trust, nor any oral representation by such party shall add to, detract from, affect or modify the terms of the RFP, unless specifically included in a written addendum issued by Energy Trust.

Proposal Costs

Each proposal prepared in response to this RFP will be prepared at the sole cost and expense of the respondent and with the express understanding that there will be no claims whatsoever for reimbursement from Energy Trust.

Waiver of Claims

Respondent waives any right it may have to bring any claim, whether in damages or equity, against Energy Trust or its officers, directors, employees, or agents, with respect to any matter arising out of any process associated with this RFP.

Energy Trust Rights Reserved

Energy Trust reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any or all proposals in whole or in part, to waive any minor irregularities or informalities in a proposal, and to enter into any agreement deemed to be in their best interests. In addition to any other enumerated reserved rights and/or options as stated in this RFP, Energy Trust may in its sole discretion do any one or more of the following:

- Determine which proposals are eligible for consideration in response to this RFP.

- Disqualify proposals that do not meet the requirements of this RFP, in the sole determination of Energy Trust.
- Negotiate with any Respondent to amend any proposal.
- Select and negotiate and/or enter into agreements with Respondents who, in Energy Trust's sole judgment, are most responsive to the RFP and whose proposals best satisfy the interests of Energy Trust, in its sole discretion, and not necessarily on the basis of price alone or any other single factor.
- Issue additional subsequent solicitations for proposals, including withdrawing this RFP at any time and/or issuing a new RFP that would supersede and replace this one.
- Vary any timetable or schedule, add or change any provisions discussed herein.
- Conduct any briefing session or further RFP process on any terms and conditions.
- Suspend or modify the RFP process at any time.
- Enter into relationships with more than one Respondent.

Resulting Contract

The selected respondent will be required to execute a written contract, including a detailed statement of work, with Energy Trust to perform the evaluation work. No award will be considered a commitment, and no obligations or legal relations shall exist between Energy Trust and the selected respondent until a final and binding contract has been executed by and between Energy Trust and the contractor. Time is of the essence with regard to this program, and prolonged contract negotiations will not be undertaken. In general, Energy Trust strongly prefers contracts that are consistent with Energy Trust's standard terms and conditions; negotiations for such contracts can generally be completed quickly. In some cases, a few terms and conditions may need to be substituted or waived, in accordance with contract negotiations. Any party involved in these contract discussions can terminate negotiations at any time and for any reason. If it appears that contract negotiations are not proceeding in a timely manner, Energy Trust may opt to terminate the discussions and select another respondent.

Appendix A: Representations and Signature page

I, the undersigned declare that;

1. I am an authorized agent of the respondent and have authority to submit this proposal on behalf of the respondent.
2. The information provided in this proposal is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
3. I have read this Request for Proposals in its entirety and agree unconditionally to all of its conditions and requirements.
4. The respondent has not directly or indirectly induced or solicited any other respondent to submit a false or sham proposal.
5. The respondent has not solicited or induced any other person, firm, or corporation to refrain from proposing.
6. The respondent has not sought by collusion to obtain for itself any advantage over any other respondent or Energy Trust.
7. The respondent's proposal is genuine; not made in the interest of, or on behalf of, any undisclosed person, firm, or corporation; and is not submitted in conformity with an agreement of rules of any group, association, organization, or corporation.
8. I understand and accept that the approval or rejection of respondent's request is within the sole discretion of Energy Trust and that there is no legal commitment until all due diligence has been performed and a properly authorized contract has been duly and properly executed.
9. I authorize the representatives of Energy Trust to investigate the business and personal financial credit history of respondent, its affiliates, and all associated partners, principals and management and authorize the release of all said information.
10. I agree that I will report immediately in writing to Energy Trust any changes to the information contained herein at any time while I am under consideration for funding.

The information contained in this proposal and any part thereof, including its exhibits, schedules, and other documents and instruments delivered or to be delivered to Energy Trust is true, accurate, and complete. This proposal includes all information necessary to ensure that the statements therein do not in whole or in part mislead Energy Trust as to any material fact.

Date: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Name and Title: _____

(please print)

Appendix B: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Experience

Diversity, equity, and inclusion experience

1. Provide specific recent examples of activities, policies or investments that demonstrate how respondent promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion within respondent's company in the areas of
 - a. recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion;
 - b. training and professional development;
 - c. industry workforce development and support.

Cultural competence in evaluation

Culture shapes each step of the evaluation process—from the conceptualization of a study and its research questions; to decisions on what data to collect, how to collect it, and how to analyze it; to the interpretation and presentation of results. Culturally competent evaluation requires researchers to recognize their own cultural assumptions about a research project, continually consider cultural and contextual factors in their research design, and implement methodological adjustments to account for diverse research contexts.

2. Provide your plan to apply culturally competent research practices in this project.
3. Provide a specific example of your team's experience applying culturally competent research practices when working with diverse customer groups; how did the research project's goals, methods, or outcomes change?