Energy Trust of Oregon
Request for Proposals: Process Evaluation of the Residential Program

RFP Posted: September 30th, 2024

Intent to Bid & Questions Due: October 11th, 2024

Proposals Due: October 31st, 2024

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EnergyTrust of Oregon

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 energy 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 plan, budget 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 of Oregon is soliciting proposals to conduct a process evaluation of its Residential program ("the program").

Energy Trust's Residential program provides electric and gas energy-efficiency solutions for residential customers in existing and newly constructed single-family and manufactured homes in Oregon. The program also supports gas energy efficiency in existing and newly constructed single-family, manufactured, and small multifamily[1] homes in Southwest Washington. The program is managed by a Program Management Contractor (PMC), CLEAResult, which is responsible for overall management of program operations, development and implementation of offerings, budgeting and forecasting, marketing, outreach and customer service. CLEAResult subcontracts with a number of firms to fulfill the PMC responsibilities and comply with Energy Trust's Supplier Diversity Policy. The program also contracts with TRC for program delivery services related to new single-family residential construction, and with CLEAResult (under a different contract and with different CLEAResult staff) for program delivery services that support retail promotions, distributor sales, and online/DIY customer support services. These Program Delivery Contractors (PDCs) provide targeted, market-focused residential offerings and

[1] Small multifamily is typically defined as four or fewer units, or side-by-side townhomes. Multifamily properties with more than four units or that are arranged in a stacked format are served through the Existing (Commercial) Buildings program.

have smaller contracts focused solely on program implementation, not program management.

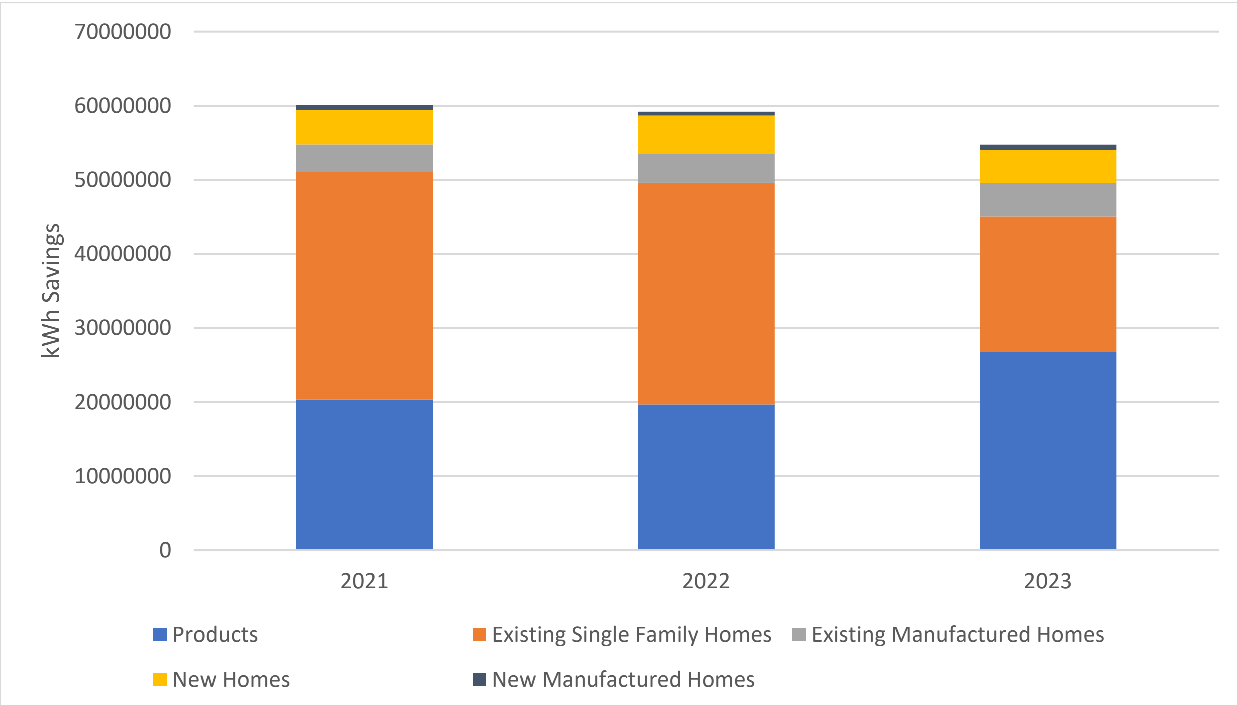
The program offers incentives for major residential end-uses, including HVAC, water heating, lighting, appliances, and weatherization. In order for Energy Trust to offer an incentive for a measure, the measure must pass a screening for cost-effectiveness or receive an exception from cost-effectiveness from the Oregon Public Utility Commission. The program works with a network of market actors – trade allies, distributors, retailers, homebuilders, home verifiers and community based organizations (CBOs) – to provide incentives and achieve savings. The program coordinates with Energy Trust's funding utilities to promote energy efficiency measures, as well as Clark Public Utilities in SW Washington to share costs and savings for dual fuel measures. The program also coordinates with NEEA and its Performance Path for new residential construction to align program requirements and modeling guidelines across the region, advance residential construction codes, and claim savings for new construction market transformation. As additional residential efficiency funding sources and programs have been entering the market in recent years the program has also begun coordinating more closely with organizations who administer those funding sources or programs. This includes organizations like the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE), Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF), and others.

Energy Trust has established organization-wide goals around expanding the participation of underserved customers and trade allies, including communities of color, rural communities, and low-income customers. The program also has its own sector-specific goals for serving these customer segments and communities. The program provides increased incentives for low-to-moderate income customers through its Savings Within Reach (SWR) and Community Partner Funding (CPF) offerings. The SWR offers provide higher levels of incentives to low-to-moderate income customers to offset the capital costs required to engage with energy efficiency upgrades. The CPF offers provide higher incentives and partners with community-based organizations (CBOs) to deliver the offers in underserved communities. By collaborating with CBOs, CPF offers are intended to tailor measures to the unique needs of specific communities.

In 2022 Energy Trust created the new Communities and New Initiatives (CaNI) sector within Energy Programs. This sector overlaps with all of the existing energy program sectors (Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Renewables) to create cross-cutting program strategies that integrate and center community and customer needs and experiences into program offers. In addition, 2022 also brought the new Innovation and Development (InnDev) group. This group functions to identify and pursue external funding opportunities for Energy Trust beyond existing funding provided by the Oregon Public Utilities Commission (OPUC). Both of these two new groups work closely with the Residential program on various efforts to further Energy Trust's strategic and program goals. Each group works with the program in different ways, namely dedicated collaboration projects with InnDev and through the Communities Infrastructure Workgroup with CaNI.

The following figures show Residential program savings by program component for 2021-2023[2]. For more data on the number of measures claimed and participating sites from 2021 through 2023, as well as the number of allies, see Appendix C.[3]

Figure 1. Oregon Electric Savings by Program Component, 2021-2023



[3] Project counts and savings totals may differ slightly from published Energy Trust reports.

Figure 2. Oregon Natural Gas Savings by Program Component, 2018-2020

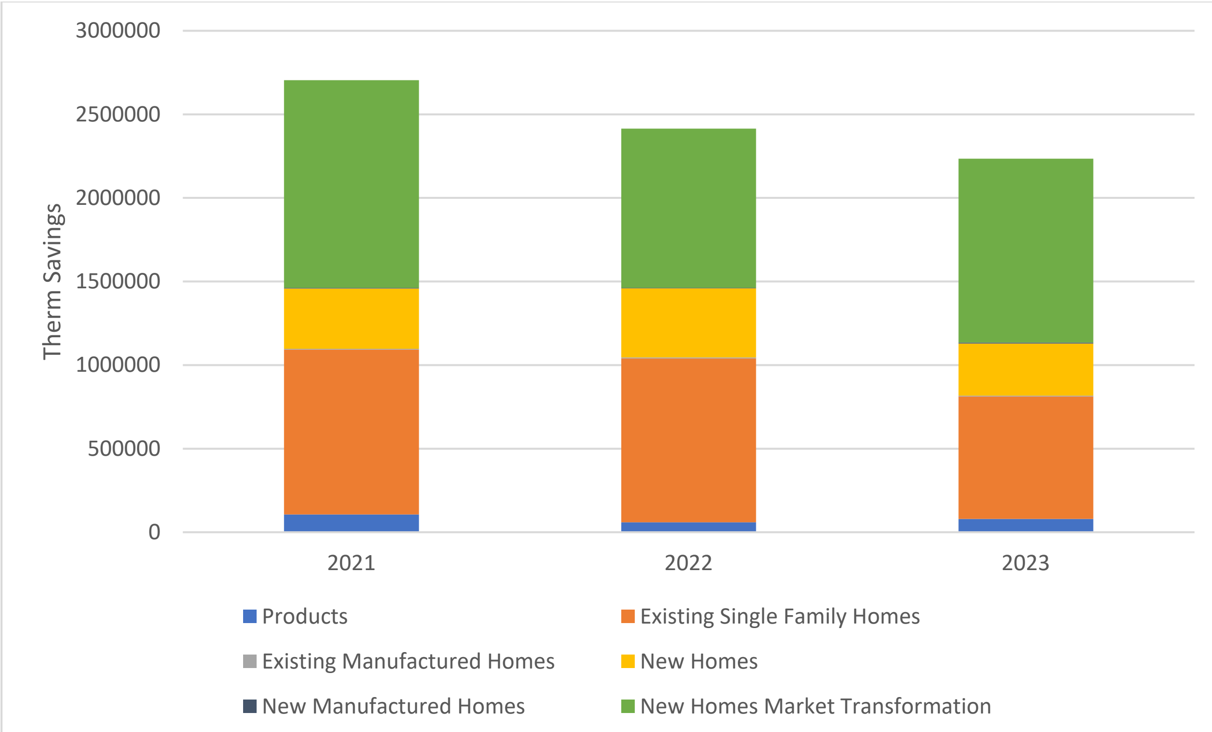
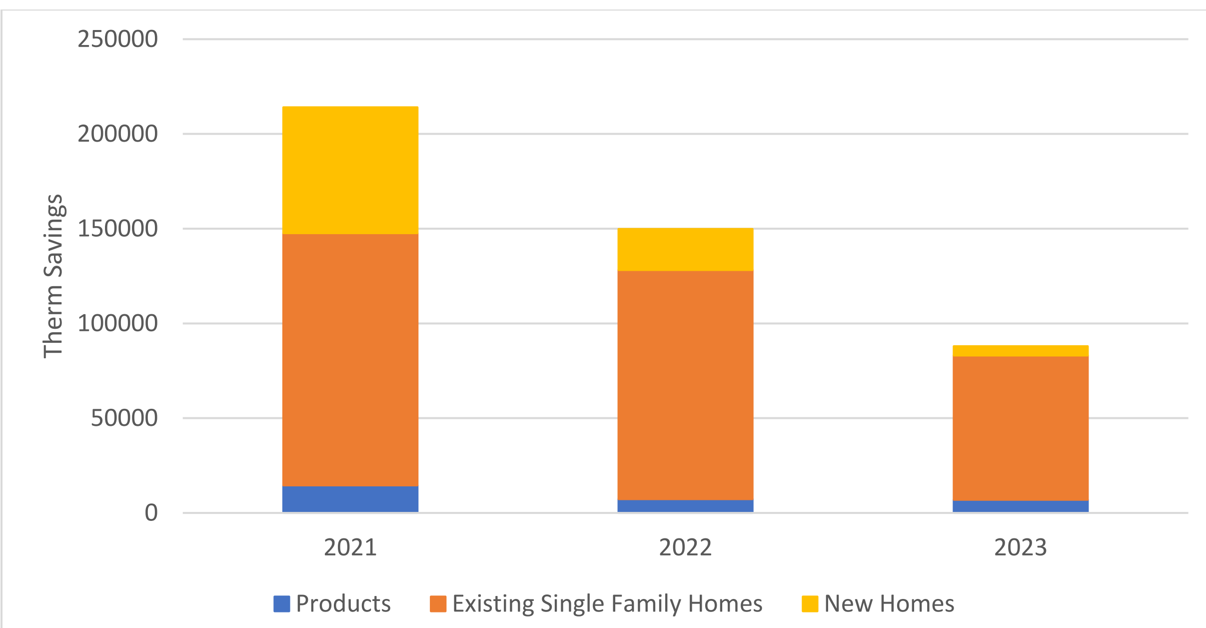


Figure 3. Washington Natural Gas Savings by Program Component, 2018-2020



The most recent process evaluation of the Residential program was completed in 2022. For more background on Energy Trust's Residential program, see "Residential Sector

Highlights" sections in Energy Trust's Annual Reports and previous program process evaluations on Energy Trust's website at: http://www.energytrust.org/about/reports-financials/documents/.

Research Objectives

Energy Trust performs process and impact evaluations on all of its programs on a regular basis. Given current efficiency market dynamics, anticipated market changes in the coming years, and demand for Energy Trust services, this process evaluation will develop a map of the program structure, coordination, and effectiveness of the relationships with various internal and external stakeholders; review how the program is serving customers with a focus on DEI initiatives; and take a forward-facing look at how the program expects the residential efficiency market to change and what steps they are taking to prepare for these changes.

The evaluation is anticipated to address the following questions:

Program Structure & Coordination

- What is the structure of ownership and responsibilities in the Residential program between program staff, other internal staff, and PMC/PDC teams?
- How effective is the relationship and structure between the program and CaNI in accomplishing program/CaNI tasks and goals?
- How effective is the relationship and structure between the program and InnDev group in accomplishing program/InnDev tasks and goals?
- How effectively is the program working with its funding utilities, ODOE, other funding organizations, the OPUC, Clark Public Utilities, and NEEA? What opportunities exist to make these relationships work better?
- How effectively is the program working with trade allies, CBOs, and other delivery partners? What opportunities and barriers exist to improve how the program works with each type of delivery partner to accomplish program and partner goals?
- How are new ideas for measures, program designs, and processes identified and moved from concept to implementation to evaluation?
- What are the communication channels between the program and other internal groups and the PMC and PDCs, and how effective are these channels? Where does direction to the PMC/PDCs on outreach, workforce development, Tribal engagement, and other strategies come from and how aligned is the direction with overall program direction?
- How effective are the relationships, management, communication, and delivery of services of the PMC/PDCs through/to their respective subcontractors? How do program stakeholders view the requirements and implementation of the Supplier Diversity Policy (SDP)?
- How can Energy Trust and/or the PMC/PDCs improve processes - for incentive processing, forms development, marketing campaigns and others - to increase efficiency?

Serving Customers & DEI Initiatives

- Which customer groups is the program serving well and effectively, and which are they struggling to serve well and effectively? Where does the program believe there are barriers or opportunities to effectively serve customer groups?
- What customer groups have been identified as priority customer segments? How and why have these groups been identified and defined?
- How effectively is the program developing regional, demographic, or technologically specific offers that respond to priority customer segment needs?
- What energy efficiency and non-energy benefits do priority customer segment focused offers provide to customers? How are these benefits valued and factored into offer development?
- How effectively is the program engaging and developing a trade ally network that is representative of the communities served by the program?
- How effectively is the program defining and implementing goals and metrics for DEI initiatives? How effectively is the program aligning these goals and metrics with organization wide goals, initiatives, metrics, and measurement activities?
- What information is the program collecting from program participants? What information would the program like to begin or cease collecting, and for what reasons?

<u>Future of the Residential Energy Efficiency Market</u>

- How is the program anticipating, preparing for, and planning to meet acceleration goals set forth by utilities and the OPUC? What barriers and opportunities exist for meeting acceleration goals?
- How is the program preparing for additional funding sources? What new delivery, administrative, or reporting requirements does the program anticipate will come with new funding sources?
- How effective is the current program structure for absorbing and implementing additional funding sources?
- How effectively is the program working with partners, internal support teams, and other stakeholders to prepare for acceleration and additional funding sources? What barriers and opportunities exist for more effective collaboration and preparation for these market changes?
- How effective will the PMC/PDCs model be as the residential energy efficiency market evolves? What roles and responsibilities could be better housed in internal teams or other partners, such as CBOs?
- How do the program and other stakeholders believe the residential energy efficiency market will shift over the next five years? How is the program prepared for or prepared to adapt to these expected changes?

The Residential program conducts some special activities, such as pilot projects, and participates in Energy Trust-wide efforts with funding utilities, including the Smart Grid Test Bed Collaboration project with Portland General Electric. While they may be noted in the course of this process evaluation, these activities and efforts have separate evaluations and this process evaluation will not specifically address them. The New Homes program component will be conducting a market assessment concurrently with this evaluation, and there may be coordination needed between these two efforts to avoid overlap, especially with trade ally engagement.

Tasks

It is anticipated that the selected evaluator will be required to undertake the following major tasks and the submitted proposal should address these topics.

Task 1. Review Program Material & Conduct Kick-off Meeting

The evaluator will schedule and hold a meeting with Energy Trust and PMC/PDC staff to present and discuss the proposed evaluation framework.

Prior to this meeting, the selected evaluator will receive and review several key program documents to help inform their development of the kick-off meeting agenda and understanding of the research objectives. These documents may include:

- 2023 Residential Annual Report
- 2024 Monthly and Quarterly PMC Reports
- 2023 & 2024 Energy Trust of Oregon Midyear and Annual Reports
- 2023 Community Partner Funding (CPF) Activity Summaries
- 2024 Residential Community Partner Funding Midyear Review Program Insights Report
- 2023 & 2024 Residential DEI Plans and Energy Trust DEI Plan
- 2024 Residential Marketing Plan & Calendar
- 2024 Program Implementation Manual
- 2022 Process Evaluation of the Residential Program
- Residential program data from 2022-2024

The selected evaluator will then develop a kick-off meeting agenda and materials. The kick-off meeting agenda should, at minimum, cover the project research objectives, methodology, necessary points of coordination between the program and evaluator, and draft schedule of tasks and deliverables. The kick-off meeting should provide opportunities for the selected evaluator and program implementation staff to ask questions, provide feedback, and identify points of contact for necessary coordination. The selected evaluator will take notes during/in reflection of the kick-off meeting and provide those to the evaluation project manager after the kick-off.

In addition to the development of a kick-off meeting, the selected evaluator will note interesting trends, findings, and data from the program material review. These notes will inform the selected evaluator during later data collection efforts. Findings from the program material review that are of interest and assist with answering the research questions should be included in the findings section of the final report.

The evaluator will incorporate discussion and input from the kick-off meeting as they develop the work plan (task 2).

Deliverables:

- Kick-off meeting agenda.
- Notes from kick-off meeting documenting discussions.
- Chapter(s) in final report detailing program material review and findings.

Task 2. Develop Project Work Plan

Following the kick-off meeting, the selected evaluator will develop a project work plan based on the outlined research objectives and tasks in this RFP and input from the kick-off meeting. This work plan will be the basis for and include all evaluation activities. The work plan will at minimum include:

- Evaluation goals and research questions.
- Evaluation methodologies.
- Sampling plans for surveys with trade allies and community based organizations.
- Recruitment and communications plan for each identified group of research participants.
- Schedule of tasks and deliverables.

Within the workplan, research questions should be clearly mapped to the methods that are intended to answer them. Given the nature of the research questions for this project it is assumed that the selected evaluator will draw upon several sources of collected information to answer many of the questions. This synthesis of collected information should be reflected in the workplan. The selected evaluator will provide the draft work plan to the Energy Trust evaluation project manager and program staff for review and incorporate feedback prior to finalization. For scheduling purposes, the evaluation contractor should assume that Energy Trust staff will review the work plan for up to two weeks before providing feedback. The selected evaluator will submit the final work plan within two weeks of receiving comments on the draft work plan.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final project work plan.

Task 3. Conduct Program & PMC/PDC Staff Interviews

Staff interviews will be used to determine answers to the relevant research questions as well as provide clarification on information in program materials. It is anticipated that the evaluator will conduct interviews with approximately 18-20 program staff at Energy Trust and its PMC and PDCs.

The selected evaluator will first develop a staff interview guide. One interview guide will be developed for all the staff interviews. Due to the scope of research questions relevant to staff interviews as well as the different roles of interview participants, the selected evaluator should develop the interview guide in a modular format by subject area. Interviews should be designed to take between 45-60 minutes. The selected evaluator will provide the draft interview guide to the Energy Trust evaluation project manager for review. For scheduling assumptions, the selected evaluator should assume a two-week review period before feedback is provided back to the selected evaluator. Once received, the selected evaluator will make changes to the staff interview guide prior to finalization.

Once the interview guide has been completed, the selected evaluator will work with the evaluation project manager and a representative of the Residential program team to identify interview participants as well as select/prioritize relevant interview guide modules for each interview participant.

After module selection and prioritization has been completed, the selected evaluator will work with either the evaluation project manager for internal staff or a representative of the Residential program for PMC/PDC staff to perform warm introductions between the selected evaluator and interview participants. The selected evaluator will provide template language to facilitate the warm introductions and will take the lead on communications, scheduling, and conducting the interviews after the warm introduction has been provided.

Proposals should include a proposed structure of the staff interview guide as well as a list of the expected topic area modules based on the research objectives listed above. Proposals should also indicate the number of individual and group interviews to be conducted.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final staff interview guide.
- Template warm-introduction language.
- Chapter(s) in final report on findings from staff interviews.

Task 4. Conduct Surveys with Trade Ally and CBO Delivery Partners

The selected evaluator will design, recruit for, and carry out a survey of a representative sample of trade allies and CBOs.

Using data provided by Energy Trust during task 1, the selected evaluator will develop a trade ally survey sampling plan. The sample should be designed to reach significance thresholds of 10% relative precision at 90% confidence at the population level as well as 15% relative precision at 90% confidence by program component[4] and trade ally role. See Appendix C for estimates of active trade allies by role in the Residential program. The selected evaluator will then draw the sample and submit it to the evaluation project manager for review prior to finalization. The selected evaluator may be required to remove a number of trade allies from the evaluation scope to avoid double-contacting trade allies that were recently engaged in other completed evaluations, ongoing evaluations, or program research projects.

The program currently partners with approximately 30 CBOs and Community Action Agencies (CAAs) as delivery partners. Each partner is engaged with the program in different capacities and functions. These partners are engaged in several ongoing

[4] Due to the overlap in trade ally engagement and enrollment between existing single family and existing manufactured homes as well as new single family and new manufactured homes, these program components may be combined for the purpose of this survey.

evaluation and program research projects. Due to this, the selected evaluator will work with the evaluation project manager and program staff to identify the appropriate number of CBOs to be recruited into this project. The evaluator should attempt to complete as many surveys as possible with CBO and CAA partners out of the eligible pool, but meeting standard confidence and precision thresholds may not be possible. For the purposes of developing a proposal, respondents may assume that 12 CBOs/CAAs will be eligible for surveying during this evaluation.

Once the list of trade ally and CBO/CAA partners has been developed, the selected evaluator will develop an online and/or phone survey instrument. The survey will address all relevant research questions and should be designed to take no more than 15 minutes to complete. To encourage participation and compensate delivery partners for their time, the selected evaluator should propose a modest gift card incentive. The 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 survey should be fairly similar across the two different types of delivery partners, with necessary language changes or slightly different questions to accommodate the individual research questions associated with each type of delivery partner.

The draft survey instrument(s) will be provided to the Energy Trust evaluation project manager and program team members for review. The selected evaluator should assume a review period of two weeks before feedback is returned to the evaluator. Once received, the selected evaluator will incorporate feedback and submit a final survey instrument within two weeks. Once finalized, the selected evaluator will test any online survey instruments and ensure that skip logic, survey flow, and question phrasing clauses are correctly implemented.

Once the survey instrument(s) have been developed and finalized, the selected evaluator will administer surveys according to the approved sample plan and CBO/CAA recruitment plan. It is expected that all respondents will be promised confidentiality in their responses, though the selected evaluator may include an option for respondents to provide feedback that they wish for Energy Trust to follow up on.

Proposals should specify sampling scheme, proposed number of sampled sites per trade ally type and overall, and the resulting relative precision for the trade ally survey sample. The proposal should also specify a plan for recruiting trade allies and CBO/CAA partners, including necessary assistance from Energy Trust staff. Finally, the proposals should include a proposed method (e.g. online, phone, both) for the surveys and a completion incentive amount.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final survey instruments.
- Chapter in final report on methodology and findings of surveys.
- Appendix to final report with survey instruments.
- Confidential appendix to final report with anonymized individual survey responses.

Task 5. Conduct Interviews with Industry Stakeholders

Energy Trust collaborates with a number of industry stakeholders to coordinate on, accomplish, and expand our ability to achieve our mission and goals. The selected evaluator will conduct group interviews with members of these organizations to gather information related to the relevant research questions.

The selected evaluator will develop distinct interview guides for Energy Trust's funding utilities, NEEA/Clark Public Utilities, and ODOE/PCEF. The selected evaluator will provide the interview guides to the evaluation project manager and program staff for review before finalization. The selected evaluator should assume a two week review period for draft instruments before feedback is provided back to the evaluator. Once received, the selected evaluator will incorporate feedback and finalize the interview guides. These interviews should be designed to take roughly 30 minutes and be conducted via teleconferencing software, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

Once the interview guides are completed, Energy Trust will assist the evaluator with scheduling the following interviews:

- An interview with a representative(s) from PGE
- An interview with a representative(s) from Pacific Power
- An interview with a representative(s) from NW Natural
- An interview with a representative(s) from Cascade Natural Gas
- An interview with a representative(s) from Avista
- An interview with a representative(s) from Clark Public Utilities
- An interview with NEEA's Residential New Construction Program Manager
- An interview with a representative(s) from ODOE
- An interview with a representative(s) from PCEF

Deliverables:

- Draft and final interview guides for utility interviews
- Draft and final interview guides for NEEA and Clark Public Utilities interviews
- Draft and final interview guides for ODOE and PCEF interviews
- Chapter in final report on methodology and findings of industry stakeholder interviews

Task 6. Reporting

The selected evaluator will produce a final report after all research activities have concluded. The selected evaluator will draw conclusions and make recommendations related to the research goals and objectives based on the evaluation findings. 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 report should include, at minimum, the following sections:

- Executive summary;
- Introduction, including description of the initiative and purpose of the study;

- Summary of methods, including survey samples, analysis methods, and data collection instrument design;
- Results, including charts and text highlighting key findings;
- Conclusions and recommendations relating to the findings and research objectives;
- Appendices containing interview guides and survey instruments and materials; and
- 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 produce a draft final report and provide it to Energy Trust. The draft report will be reviewed and commented on by Energy Trust staff, third-party reviewers, and other parties deemed appropriate by Energy Trust. The selected evaluator should assume a review window of two weeks for the draft final report. Upon receiving feedback on the draft, the selected evaluator will make revisions and deliver to Energy Trust a final version of the evaluation report within three weeks. 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.

In addition, the selected evaluator will create and deliver a 30-minute presentation of the evaluation findings at a public evaluation webinar hosted by Energy Trust's evaluation team. These public webinars provide an opportunity for Energy Trust staff and stakeholders, and other industry professionals, to see the results of Energy Trust's evaluation and research projects. The webinars also help to disseminate evaluation findings and lessons learned and make Energy Trust's programs more transparent. The selected evaluator will provide a draft slide deck at least three weeks prior to the webinar. The selected evaluator will make revisions to the slide deck based on Energy Trust feedback and will provide a final presentation prior to the webinar.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final evaluation report.
- Draft and final webinar materials.

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. During the fielding of the data collection methods, the selected evaluator will provide weekly 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 Evaluation Project Manager
- Frequent progress updates during data collection fielding
- Monthly status reports

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must be clear, complete and concise. Pages must be numbered, sections must be clearly titled, and fonts must not be smaller than 11 point. Respondent's proposal must contain the following elements; failure to include any required elements may result in the rejection of respondent's proposal. There is a 25-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 the project where the respondent team's experience will be particularly relevant or important. **Not to exceed four (4) 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 required that a minimum of 15% of the value of any resulting contract to be directed towards SDP qualifying firms. Any teaming should be reflected in the staffing and subcontracting plan and budget proposal. Please describe how this requirement will be met and list all relevant certifications and certification numbers. **Not to exceed one (1) page.**

Schedule of Tasks and Deliverables.

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 is interested in receiving the draft final report for this project by September 30th, 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.**

Detailed budget proposal.

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 $140,000; 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 $140,000 threshold listed here, we will consider it, but ask that bidders provide a rationale for why it is necessary. In addition, we ask bidders that are 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. Key team members includes any staff members who are engaged in the above tasks in meaningful ways, but does not need to include staff members who are solely engaged in report editing, quality assurance, etc. **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 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 that 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 compliance
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion responses
- Data security and confidentiality
- Work product example

Schedule & Administration of Proposal Selection Process

RFP Schedule:

- **September 30, 2024** RFP issued
- **October 11, 2024** **Intent to bid due**
- **October 11, 2024** Questions/request for additional information due
- **October 18, 2024** Response to questions posted no later than
- **October 31, 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 **October 11th, 2024**. Responses to questions and requests for additional information will be posted on Energy Trust's website no later than **October 18th, 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 31st, 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(s).

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?

Appendix C – Trade Ally Data for the Residential Program

Program Component	Trade Ally Type	Count
Existing Single Family/Manufactured Homes	Installation Contractor	630
Existing Single Family/Manufactured Homes	Retailer	61
Existing Homes Subtotal		**691**
New Homes	Builder/Developer	461
New Homes	Installation Contractor	135
New Homes	Verifier	27
New Manufactured Homes	Retailer	31
New Homes Subtotal		**654**
Products	Retailer	1115
Products Subtotal		**1115**
TOTAL[5]		**2305**

[5] Trade allies may enroll in more than one program component. The total presented here represents each individual trade ally, whereas the subtotals may include duplicate trade allies.