



RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

RFP EM-009-2026: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR INNOVATION HUB STATE-LEVEL PILOT SUPPORT SERVICES

Q1: What portion of the overall budget is dedicated to multifamily window air conditioning (AC) alternatives?

A1: We do not have a set expectation for resources allocated to any individual initiative and hope to maintain flexibility. We anticipate that the portion of pilot resources distributed between initiatives will shift as the pilot develops.

Q2: Are bids considered confidential?

A2: No.

Q3: We would like to include materials our firm considers confidential as part of our bid (e.g., a draft report, a list of current clients, or hourly rates). How do we label this information as confidential in our RFP submission?

A3: Please do not include any information considered confidential as part of an RFP submission. As described in section 1.8 of the RFP, information provided to the Trust will be subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) upon award. The Trust's RFPs are routinely subject to such requests.

Customers and contractors working with the Trust may make formal requests to the Efficiency Maine Trust Board of Trustees to exempt certain information from FOAA requests. Examples of requests that have been granted include information about detailed manufacturing processes or specific technologies employed in patented manufacturing systems; to date, the Board has not approved designating information like a draft report, a list of clients, or hourly rates as confidential.

Q4: Is Attachment D -- Confidential Information Management System Policy required to be signed by bidders as part of the proposal?

A4: No, we include the policy so bidders are aware of the provisions they will need to follow if confidential data will be accessed or transmitted as part of their work for the Trust. As described on page 5 of the RFP, the winning bidder and its agents and subcontractors will be required to follow the Trust's Confidential Information Management System Policy and complete Appendices A and B. Certain information regarding a customer that has participated or that may participate in a Trust program is deemed confidential by the Efficiency Maine Trust Act. See <http://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/35-A/title35-Asec10106.html> for additional information on related confidentiality restrictions.

- Q5: Can an entity — either as prime or subcontractor — submit a bid that addresses only Initiative 2 (ducted heat pumps in single-family homes), or must every submitting team commit to executing all four initiatives?**
- A5:** We anticipate awarding a contract to a Contractor or team of Contractors that can provide delivery support as described in the RFP for all initiatives of the Pilot.
- Q6: If full-scope commitment is required, would the Trust consider connecting interested specialist firms (like ours) with other bidders, so we could join as the ducted-heat-pump subcontractor under a different prime?**
- A6:** We expect that the winning bidder will work with contractors (mainly installers) beyond those identified in the initial proposal. To the extent the awarded Contractor intends to use sub-contractors for installation and repair services and those subcontractors are not specifically identified in the proposal, the Contractor may be subject to competitive procurement requirements and to Davis-Bacon wage requirements.
- Q7: Is partial-scope participation something the Trust would consider through a contract modification or add-on after award, even if not available at initial bid stage?**
- A7:** Please see A6. We intend to maintain some budget flexibility to expand upon or add initiatives in the future as the pilot develops.
- Q8: For initiative number 3, we could meet the requirements for the air-to-air heat pumps (300) and would not be able to bid on the 10 central water heaters. Is it possible to break up the initiatives?**
- A8:** Please see A5.
- Q9: Are subcontractors allowed to be added after award, in case the winning team needs a ducted-heat-pump specialist it did not originally include?**
- A9:** Please see A5 and A6.
- Q10: Attachment A describes the per-unit cost estimates as "not a firm not-to-exceed proposal" but a demonstration of understanding. How much deviation from the Trust's assumed unit costs is reasonable to propose for Initiative 2 equipment?**
- A10:** Per-unit cost estimates were added to allow proposers to demonstrate their understanding, skills, and experience, while recognizing the uncertainty about equipment costs for innovative technologies. Our expectation is that equipment and installation costs will need additional exploration after the contract is awarded.
- Q11: Is there a minimum budget allocation per initiative, or could funds be reallocated away from Initiative 2 toward the other three during the contract term?**
- A11:** The proposed budget per initiative is expected to change over the course of the Pilot.

Q12: Given that Davis-Bacon wage requirements apply to installation work, how does that interact with a subcontractor model where installers are sourced through an existing independent contractor network rather than as direct employees?

A12: If the awarded Contractor intends to use subcontractors for installation and repair services and those subcontractors are not specifically identified in the proposal, the Contractor may be subject to competitive procurement requirements and to Davis-Bacon wage requirements. The Trust will work with the awarded Contractor on an approach that meets grant requirements. By way of example, the Contractor may need to solicit labor quotes from multiple installation contractors in a given area. Subcontractor labor rates may differ by area according to Davis-Bacon prevailing wage.

Q13: When will Davis-Bacon reporting software be available, and will bidders get to test it before proposal submission?

A13: We anticipate LCP Tracker software will be available for implementers' use by the project kickoff date. Bidders should not expect to test it prior to submission.

Q14: Given that Task 2 (Implementation Plan) happens after award, and that procuring equipment procurement, recruiting subcontractors, and training take time, is there flexibility in how quickly Initiative 2 needs to reach its full 25-system target relative to the 9/30/2026 project launch date?

A14: All grant funds must be spent prior to the end of September 2029. The timing of equipment installation for each initiative is flexible, as is the total number of installed systems.

Q15: How much of the \$14 million is expected to be set aside for other work per Section 1.5?

A15: We have no firm expectations as to the amount of funds that will be set aside.

Q16: How frequently can the winning Contractor invoice the Trust for equipment and other installation costs? How quickly will the Trust reimburse invoices?

A16: The Trust would welcome frequent billing (every two- to four-weeks). The Trust recognizes that swift reimbursement is important for the prime Contractor and any installation contractors working on a pilot. While the Trust typically processes invoices in a timely manner, reimbursements under this procurement may be slower (up to 60 days) given the nature of federal grants and the associated requirements for documentation and reviews. The Trust will consider proposed project budgets that include interest on pending invoice amounts, recognizing that the prime Contractor may pay subcontractors while awaiting reimbursement from the Trust.

Q17: We'd be interested in partnering with another firm. Can a list of attendees from the RFP webinars be posted? Alternatively, can a list of potential interested partners be provided?

A17: A list of webinar attendees will not be shared with potential bidders. Bidders can refer to the Previously Awarded Contracts on our RFP page for bidders we have worked with in the past.

Q18: Section 4 – Proposal Requirements in the RFP mentioned a Reference Review Form as an optional form that could be used to submit three references. Where is that form?

A18: This form is not available and was removed from the updated RFP. Please include references as described in the updated RFP posted. This is the only change that was made to the updated RFP.