



**EFFICIENCY MAINE TRUST
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR
LENDING SERVICES
RFP EM-014-2024**

Date Issued: January 24, 2024

Updated: April 11, 2024

Proposals Due: March 28, 2024, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (US)

Table of Contents

SECTION 1 – RFP INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS	3
1.1 PURPOSE	3
1.2 DESIGNATED CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS RFP	3
1.3 SCHEDULE.....	3
1.4 BIDDERS’ INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR.....	3
1.5 ANTICIPATED CONTRACT TERM.....	4
1.6 ANTICIPATED CONTRACT BUDGET.....	4
1.7 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL DEADLINE	4
1.8 SUBMITTING QUESTIONS	4
1.9 PROPOSAL CONFIDENTIALITY	4
1.10 CONTRACT AWARD.....	5
1.11 CONTRACTING PROCESS	5
1.12 RFP PROCESS – RESERVATION OF RIGHTS.....	5
1.13 CONTRACT AGREEMENT	5
1.14 REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION	6
SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION.....	7
2.1 EFFICIENCY MAINE TRUST.....	7
2.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	7
2.3 ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION.....	10
SECTION 3 – SCOPE OF WORK.....	11
3.1 PROJECT DELIVERABLES	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS.....	14
4.1 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION.....	14
4.2 FORMAT REQUIREMENTS	14
4.3 CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS.....	14
SECTION 5 – PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA	17
5.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	18

Separate attachments:

Attachment A – Project Cost Proposal Form

Attachment B – Agreement

Attachment C – Team Commitment Form

Attachment D – Confidentiality, Non-Disclosure and Protective Agreement

SECTION 1 – RFP INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

1.1 Purpose

The Efficiency Maine Trust (the Trust or Efficiency Maine) seeks a qualified contractor or team of contractors to provide lending services to support the Trust’s expanding finance initiatives through the Efficiency Maine Green Bank (EMGB). The awardee will serve as a “delivery team” for the Efficiency Maine Green Bank.

The Trust has issued a concurrent Request for Proposal for a Lending Platform (EM-013-2024). Bidders may be interested in applying for both RFPs, but are not required to do so.

1.2 Designated Contact Person for this RFP

James Neal
 Senior Program Manager for Finance Initiatives
 Efficiency Maine Trust
 168 Capitol Street, Suite 1
 Augusta, ME 04330-6856
 Phone: (207) 553-3091
 Email: james.neal@efficiencymaine.com

1.3 Schedule

	Milestone	Date/Deadline
1	RFP Issued	01/24/2024
2	Bidders’ Informational Webinar	02/13/2024, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
3	Questions Due	02/22/2024
4	Responses to Questions Posted	03/05/2024
5	Proposals Due	03/28/2024, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (US)
6	Anticipated Award Date	05/01/2024 (updated)
7	Anticipated Contractor Start	05/15/2024 (updated)

Schedule changes: The Trust reserves the right to modify this schedule at its discretion. Any changes or additional information regarding the RFP schedule and pre-bid activities, including responses to questions, will be posted on the RFP EM-014-2024 webpage <https://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities/rfp-em-014-2024/>.

1.4 Bidders’ Informational Webinar

For interested bidders, the Trust will offer an informational webinar that will discuss Efficiency Maine’s Green Bank and elements of this RFP. Bidders can sign up using the following link:

February 13, 2024 | 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Bidders’ Informational Webinar Registration
https://efficiencymaine.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Xg0WZl03TEqEjnwN5lD2lQ#/registration

1.5 Anticipated Contract Term

The Trust anticipates awarding one contract to cover a duration of four years to a single bidder or team of bidders, with an option of extending for another three years. The contract could be fixed cost, time-and-materials with a not-to-exceed maximum, or a hybrid.

1.6 Anticipated Contract Budget

The Trust currently operates a loan portfolio of approximately \$20 million and stands to receive up to an additional \$40 million in federal funds in 2024. It anticipates budgeting a combination of general revenue, interest rates and/or transaction fees to cover the costs of this contract.

The Trust anticipates that the annual budget for lending services will depend on the volume of loan activity during the fiscal year (runs July 1 through June 30). The Trust's current and future loan offerings are described in greater detail in the background section below.

The Trust will develop a budget for these lending services after reviewing submitted bids. Bidders are encouraged to develop the most cost-effective proposal that meets the requirements laid out below. Proposals that include a base scope and optional tasks priced separately will be considered. The contract will be structured on a Time and Materials basis with a Not-To-Exceed maximum budget, amendable with prior approval from the Trust.

1.7 Proposal Submittal Deadline

All proposals must be submitted electronically via the online Submission Form on the RFP EM-014-2024 webpage (<https://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities/rfp-em-014-2024/>). Proposals must be received by the due date and time specified in section 1.3. Bidders will receive a time-stamped confirmation email when their proposals are submitted. (Note: There may be a delay of a few minutes between submission and this confirmation email). Any proposal received after the deadline will not be considered. Proposals must be complete when submitted; changes or additions will not be accepted after the specified due date and time, except for any clarifications requested of bidders by the Trust. The Trust encourages bidders to submit their proposals with sufficient time to account for any technological challenges (e.g., Internet disruptions).

1.8 Submitting Questions

It is the responsibility of all bidders and other interested parties to examine the entire RFP and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions. Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email to the Designated Contact Person listed in section 1.2 prior to the due date for questions noted above in section 1.3. The subject line of the email should be: "Lending Services". Responses to questions will be posted on <https://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities/rfp-em-014-2024/>, as will all clarifications and amendments released in regard to the RFP. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to check this website periodically to obtain clarifications and amendments. Only those clarifications and amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

1.9 Proposal Confidentiality

Bidders should be aware that information provided to the Trust is subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA), 1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq., unless there is a specific confidentiality exemption in the Efficiency Maine Trust Act, 35-A M.R.S. §10106. Bidders should assume that all information submitted in response to

this RFP will be considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the Maine FOAA following announcement of an award decision.

1.10 Contract Award

The Trust will notify all bidders of the contract award decision by email. The Trust reserves the right to negotiate the final terms and conditions of the contract award with a winning bidder whose proposal is selected by the Trust, and to reject any winning bidder with whom the Trust cannot agree to terms and conditions meeting the Trust's needs, in the Trust's sole judgment. The Trust reserves the right to reject any proposal that does not meet these requirements.

1.11 Contracting Process

The selection process is governed by the Efficiency Maine Trust Rule Chapter 1: Contracting Process for Service Providers and Grant Recipients, which can be found on the Trust's website:

<http://www.efficiencymaine.com/docs/Chapter-1-Contracting-Process-for-Service-Providers-and-Grant-Recipients.pdf>.

1.12 RFP Process – Reservation of Rights

The Trust reserves the right to cancel or extend the RFP process at any time, and to issue clarifications and amendments to the RFP. The Trust also reserves the right to reject noncompliant submissions in response to this RFP. The Trust, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in proposals received in response to this RFP. Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Trust to make an award. The Trust will not pay any costs or expenses incurred by a bidder in connection with preparation of a proposal or response to this RFP.

1.13 Contract Agreement

A copy of the Efficiency Maine Trust Standard Agreement appropriate to this RFP is provided as **Attachment B – Standard Agreement**. This is the standard document that will complete the agreement for services between the winning bidder and the Trust.

Funding for the EMGB may derive in whole or in part from federal sources and carry with it certain federally-prescribed terms and conditions that must be included in contracts using such funds (such as Appendix II to 2 CFR Part 200 "Contract Provisions for Non-Federal Entity Contracts Under Federal Awards" and additional requirements). Any contract award will be subject to required federal contract flow-down provisions. The Standard Agreement may be updated prior to execution, and may be amended from time to time with mutual consent of the parties, to reflect any new federal funding requirements associated with the capital under management.

The winning bidder and its agents and subcontractors will be required to execute a nondisclosure agreement, see **Attachment D -- Confidentiality, Non-Disclosure and Protective Agreement**. 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.

1.14 Request for Reconsideration

An aggrieved person may request a hearing for reconsideration of a contract award decision by filing a written petition with the Executive Director of the Trust within 14 calendar days of the notification of the contract award. Each petition to reconsider must meet the requirements specified in Efficiency Maine Trust Rule Chapter 1, Contracting Process for Service Providers and Grant Recipients, Section 5(B), which can be found on the Trust's website under Documents and Services:

<http://www.efficiencymaine.com/docs/Chapter-1-Contracting-Process-for-Service-Providers-and-Grant-Recipients.pdf>.

SECTION 2 –BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Efficiency Maine Trust

The Efficiency Maine Trust (the Trust) is the independent, quasi-state agency established to plan and implement energy efficiency programs in Maine. Through its suite of nationally recognized programs, the Trust provides consumer information, marketing support, demonstration pilots, discounts, rebates, loans, and other initiatives to promote high-efficiency equipment and operations that help Maine’s homes, businesses, and institutions reduce their energy costs and lower their greenhouse gas emissions. The result is job growth, better grid reliability, improved energy independence, a stronger local economy, and critical progress toward meeting the State’s climate change goals. The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees.

2.2 Background and Context

In 2012, the Trust launched its first suite of loan products helping Mainers to finance clean energy and energy efficiency projects in their homes, followed in subsequent years by the introduction of loans and lease products catering to small businesses, municipalities, schools, and low-income households. In 2021, the Maine Legislature enacted Public Law, Ch. 358 authorizing the establishment of a more comprehensive financing program at the Trust.¹ Collectively, these financing initiatives are administered under the umbrella of the Efficiency Maine Green Bank (EMGB). EMGB initiatives are designed to drive private capital into market gaps for energy efficiency and clean energy equipment and services. Its financing initiatives serve as an important complement to the Trust’s \$100 million annual budget to provide other financial incentives (e.g., rebates, instant discounts) and technical assistance to Maine’s residents, businesses, and institutions.

In late 2022, Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). An important provision of the IRA authorizes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), a historic \$27 billion investment that will be used to capitalize green banks to facilitate development of energy efficiency and clean energy projects. EPA will implement the GGRF via three grant competitions to be awarded in 2024: the \$14 billion National Clean Investment Fund, the \$6 billion Clean Communities Investment Accelerator, and the \$7 billion Solar for All competition. The Trust has aligned with certain lead applicants for these funds and stands to receive up to \$40 million through the various channels.

The Trust is actively working to refine and expand its EMGB finance initiatives to deploy this injection of new federal capital into energy efficiency and clean energy projects in 2024 and the following years.² These funds will effectively triple the size of EMGB’s current portfolio, likely leading to new offerings and more complex administrative requirements. In order to support this expansion, the Trust is looking to build out the loan management capacity of its EMGB through two separate solicitations. As noted above, in addition to this RFP seeking lending services, the Trust has also launched a concurrent RFP for a lending

¹ Public Law, Chapter 358, 130th Maine State Legislature, First Special Session, [LD 1659, An Act To Create the Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator](#).

² In addition to the GGRF funds, the Trust will receive roughly \$800,000 in federal funds under the Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund Capitalization Grant Program in 2024. In future years, it may receive additional sources of federal or other public or private funding to support its EMGB initiatives.

platform as part of this work. Interested parties may also choose to apply for RFP-EM-013-2024 Lending Platform (<https://www.energymaine.com/opportunities/rfp-em-013-2024/>).

Current Finance Offerings

- **Home Energy Loans:** The EMGB offers loans that help homeowners pay for energy upgrades, all without borrower fees and with relatively low interest rates. The loan types comprise primarily unsecured Home Energy Loans and, less commonly, loans secured by a subordinate lien on a property. Over the course of fiscal year (FY) 2023, the EMGB loaned nearly \$9 million to residential customers who took advantage of rebates through Efficiency Maine's programs serving homeowners. These loans facilitated 1,264 projects, most of which involved the installation of heat pumps. Six of these projects were secured loans and 1,258 were unsecured.
- **Small Business Energy Loans:** The EMGB offers loans to businesses participating in the Small Business Initiative, which provides enhanced incentives for heat pumps and lighting upgrades to Maine's smallest commercial customers. In FY2023, the lingering effects of the pandemic continued to weigh on participation, as the EMGB loaned \$14,404 for three projects to small business customers.
- **Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE):** C-PACE is a financing model that enables a commercial property owner to place a special assessment on their property to finance energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy installations. This assessment is collected through the municipal property tax bill. The EMGB administers a C-PACE Program in Maine, facilitating these financing arrangements between customers and private, third-party lenders. The program launched in FY2023 and received its first application in December 2023. Municipalities are continuing to opt into the program by passing local ordinances.
- **Municipal Lease:** A municipal lease, sometimes referred to as a tax-exempt lease purchase, is a contract that allows an entity to obtain the use of equipment without incurring debt. This arrangement enables public entities, such as municipalities, to use utility bill savings to help pay for the financing costs on the lease. This mechanism lowers the upfront cost of a project (typically to \$0), spreads the costs of the project over several years, and leverages tax-exempt interest rates. The EMGB launched a municipal lease offering near the end of FY2023 and did not facilitate any leases before the end of the fiscal year. Through this finance initiative, the EMGB pairs eligible Efficiency Maine program participants with private, Maine-based lenders that provide this type of financing. Eligible participants include Maine municipalities or public PreK-12 schools (or school districts) under the Maine Department of Education.
- **Manufactured Home Heat Pump Lease:** The Trust provides rebates for whole-home heat pump systems replacing fossil fuel-fired furnaces in manufactured homes. Participants can cover their 20% share of upfront project costs (\$~2,000) through an equipment lease. After the payment obligations have been completed, the participant has the option to purchase the equipment for \$1. Additionally, the Trust fully warrants the working operation of the heat pump during this lease period. Over the course of FY2023, 18 participants enrolled in the pilot phase of this offering. The offering became more broadly available in FY2024, and activity is increasing.

For additional detail on the current offerings, visit the EMGB webpage (<https://www.energymaine.com/green-bank/>) and review the EMGB section of the Trust's FY2023 Annual Report (www.energymaine.com/docs/EMT_FY2023-Annual-Report_11.21.2023.pdf).

Future Finance Offerings

EMGB's future pipeline will deploy funds from the GGRF to significantly expand access to loans and leases as a complement to the Trust's existing suite of rebate programs. These programs are successfully driving customer demand (and contractor services) for energy efficiency and decarbonization through the increased access to heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, electric vehicles, and weatherization in particular. The Trust's aim is to provide a simple, one-stop shop for financing these projects, leveraging its substantial marketing and rebate budgets, and existing relationships with customers and vendors, to further streamline the investment process.

First, the Trust intends to offer an expanded suite of loan and lease products for residential borrowers. Loan products are generally intended to be unsecured while lease products will likely utilize a Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) lien on the equipment. The Trust anticipates a rise in demand for its finance products in 2024 and that the term lengths of most products will average 10 years. With GGRF funds, the Trust will expand EMGB to include a broader set of eligible measures (e.g., rooftop solar PV, EV charging, energy storage), increase the available borrowing amounts to allow for more comprehensive projects and whole-home solutions, and extend support to a wider range of eligible borrowers and property types (multi-family, non-owner occupied, etc.).

The Trust will also seek to expand the EMGB's capacity to deploy financing for energy projects in commercial and institutional facilities through both existing and new initiatives. The Trust intends to implement commercial lending products that may be unsecured or secured through personal guarantees, property collateral, or C-PACE. The Trust may also implement lease products. The demand, size, scope, and terms of these products will be widely varied.

Across its suite of offerings, EMGB anticipates processing between 50 to 250 applications per month under the EMGB, with an average funding amount between \$550,000 and \$2.7 million per month. Given the priority for rapid deployment of GGRF funds and longer recycling timelines, the Trust intends to position EMGB loan and lease assets to be attractive to the private market.³ It also intends to aggregate or warehouse assets and attract private capital through the use of credit enhancements. The Trust will design these finance initiatives to ensure that 40% of investment benefits flow to "low-income and disadvantaged communities" (LIDACs), per federal requirements.⁴ It also intends to focus on finance initiative designs that pay contractors (or "trade allies"⁵) directly, thereby reducing transactional friction

³ If the Trust sells assets to an investor, it may either (1) continue to service those assets itself (or through its sub-contractor), or (2) transfer those assets in their entirety, shifting servicing responsibilities to said investor or another entity.

⁴ The Justice40 Initiative is a government-wide initiative with a goal of having 40% of the benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. The census tracts that meet these criteria are highlighted on the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool map at <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>

⁵ "Trade ally" is the term the Trust uses for the contractors (e.g., plumbers, electricians, HVAC technicians, insulation installers, builders and vendors) that facilitate Maine consumers purchasing, installing and operating high-efficiency products and systems. Residential Registered Vendors (RRVs) serve the residential sector and Qualified Partners (QPs) serve the commercial sector. The Trust's trade ally network consists of over 1,000 participating contractors.

and streamlining project implementation. The goal is to improve the program experience for customers and trade allies alike.

2.3 Additional Sources of Information

Following are links to additional information that bidders may find helpful in preparing a response to this RFP:

TITLE	LOCATION (link)
Efficiency Maine Trust website	www.efficiencymaine.com
Efficiency Maine Trust Annual Reports	https://www.efficiencymaine.com/about/library/reports/
Efficiency Maine Trust – Triennial Plan	https://www.efficiencymaine.com/about/library/policies/
Efficiency Maine Green Bank	https://www.efficiencymaine.com/green-bank/

SECTION 3 –SCOPE OF WORK

In-house staff at the Trust manages the full suite of EMGB initiatives, overseeing the contractors who provide lending services as well as any related lending platform. The Trust staff makes final decisions on program design, eligibility, incentive levels, marketing plans, and project contracts, seeking guidance and input from the supporting contractors. The Trust intends to procure a lending platform that automates and simplifies much of the loan origination and servicing process.⁶ Nevertheless, the delivery team we are seeking through this RFP will be expected to help administer certain day-to-day tasks as needed, including providing customers and trade ally support, conducting any non-automated underwriting tasks, and following up on customer delinquencies. The Trust staff manages the program budget.

Following is a task-by-task description of the work covered by this RFP. As explained in section 4.3, below, bid proposals must reflect the bidder's plan, approach, capacity for each task and describe related experience.

Task 1: Project Kickoff Meeting

The winning bidder, in consultation with the Trust, will organize and facilitate a project kickoff meeting. The purpose of the meeting is for the Trust and the contractor to establish a common understanding of the deliverables, the overall platform development schedule, and to provide the foundation for development of the work plan. At a minimum, this meeting should include discussion of the proposed statement of work and schedule, initial data requests, and communication protocols and expectations.

Task 2: Trade Ally Management

The winning bidder must facilitate all aspects of trade ally participation in EMGB initiatives. This includes providing outreach to the contractor community to recruit new participants and assisting with all necessary onboarding tasks. It may also include helping trade allies that participate in EMGB's existing process transition to a new lending platform. Once trade allies are enrolled, the winning bidder must assist them with ongoing lending platform management (addressing technical difficulties, user management, documentation, etc.) and navigating any other program requirements.

Task 3: Customer Management

The winning bidder will be the primary point of contact for all customers receiving financing support under the EMGB. The winning bidder will be responsible for assisting customers with any questions related to the application process, payment process, portal management, or other program requirements. The winning bidder may receive inquiries directly or forwarded from the Efficiency Maine Call Center, and will be expected to satisfy certain service level agreements (e.g., answering 90% of calls within 20 seconds).

⁶ See RFP-EM-013-2024 Lending Platform (<https://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities/rfp-em-013-2024/>)

Task 4: Residential Underwriting

The majority of residential underwriting will be automated to the maximum extent practicable through the lending platform; customers will receive offers with no direct involvement from the service provider. Nevertheless, the Trust expects that about 10% of residential applications will require manual reviews. For example, the automated software might pull incorrect information or generate an error, leading to an application roadblock or contestable adverse action. The winning bidder will be responsible for managing this relatively small number of underwriting manual triggers. In these cases, they will review the applications and work with the customer to collect additional documentation as needed. All underwriting decisions will be based on a predefined set of criteria provided by the Trust. Winning bidders may issue adverse action letters as necessary.

Task 5: Commercial Underwriting

The underwriting process for commercial customers is generally more complex than it is for residential customers. With some minor exceptions, it typically requires a more nuanced review that is not well-suited to automated underwriting through the lending platform. The winning bidder will facilitate the underwriting process for this subset of EMGB activity, collecting the predefined documentation and other information necessary for the Trust or its agent to make an underwriting decision.

Task 6: Servicing

The winning bidder will engage with customers to manage any delinquencies and defaults (*not* collections) according to a prescriptive process established by the Trust. This will include sending written notices (e.g., letters, emails, SMS) and calling customers, and adjusting payment schedules at the direction of the Trust. It will also include keeping a detailed record of all contact attempts and associated outcomes.

Task 7: Tool Management

The winning bidder will become well-versed in the mechanics of the lending platform supporting EMGB initiatives. They will work with the Trust's lending platform provider to manage certain tool-related tasks and processes. For example, they will facilitate tool configuration (whether defining logic for new products or implementing fixes and enhancements to existing products), manage integration needs, and handle user privilege/access issues.

Task 8: Reporting and Other Deliverables

The winning bidder will work with the Trust staff to support a number of reporting requirements. For example, they will conduct monthly reconciliations between loan activity and program budgets and perform periodic reporting of financing activity by loan type and fund type. They will facilitate data sharing with Trust's project reporting and tracking database (effRT), cross-referencing project information as appropriate. They will conduct any analysis necessary for planning purposes, projecting future activity by loan and fund type, and anticipating any necessary program adjustments. They will assist the Trust staff in generating reports for its monthly Board meetings, annual report, annual audit, and any other needs as determined by the Trust. They will provide 1099-Int forms via the lending platform and address any other loan portfolio management tasks as discussed with Trust staff.

Task 9: Serving as the Lender

Historically, the Trust has generally not served as the lender for the EMGB's finance initiatives for residential borrowers. Instead, a licensed third-party provider has fulfilled that role (in addition to providing lending services). This third-party entity acts as a pass-through, lending out the Trust's funds on its behalf. In the future, the Trust is open to and will consider proposals that would maintain this same model or replace it with a different model (e.g., an arrangement where the Trust itself fills the role of lender of record), or some combination or variation of these models. Bidders should indicate which model is possible and/or preferential to them. If a bidder is able to serve as the lender, they should explain their capability and qualifications to do so. As noted in section 4.1, these bidders should provide proof of the relevant licenses required to lend in the State of Maine. If there are any costs associated with this task, they should be included in the Project Cost Proposal Form (see section 4.3(5)).

Task 10: Portfolio Transactions (optional)

As previously noted, the Trust intends to position EMGB loan and lease assets to be attractive to the private market. It also intends to aggregate or warehouse assets and attract private capital through the use of credit enhancements. Staff anticipates seeking advice from experts in this area on an as-needed basis. Though this is not a required task area for bidders in this RFP, the Trust welcomes the opportunity to add it to the ultimate scope of work if possible.

Note: The Trust does not anticipate that this contract will include collection or legal services.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Proposal Submission

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the online Submission Form on the RFP EM-014-2024 webpage (<https://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities/rfp-em-014-2024/>). All proposals must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in this RFP, in the online Submission Form instructions, and in the written supplements and amendments issued by the Trust. The online Submission Form will request the following documents:

- RFP response (see 4.3)
 - PDF format file named “Proposal_Bidder_Name_RFP_014_2024”
- Attachment A - Project Cost Proposal Form
 - Excel format file named “Project_Cost_Bidder_Name_RFP_014_2024”
- Suggested redlines to Attachment B - Standard Agreement [if applicable]
 - Word format file named “Standard_Agreement_Bidder_Name_RFP_014_2024”
- Attachment C – Team Commitment Form [if proposal involves any subcontractors]
 - PDF format file named “Team_Commitment_Bidder_Name_RFP_014_2024”
- Any additional relevant documents (Word, PDF, or Excel format, as appropriate) [if applicable]
 - Example: proof of relevant Maine lending licenses

4.2 Format Requirements

Proposals will be evaluated for adherence to the following format requirements:

- Proposals must be typewritten.
- Pages must be numbered.
- Unnecessary attachments (e.g., any attachments beyond those sufficient to present a complete, comprehensive, and effective proposal) will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal.
- Proposals must adhere to prescribed page limits specified in this RFP. The Trust values concise proposals.

4.3 Content and Organization Requirements

The proposal must include the following contents, which should be presented in the following order:

1. **Table of Contents**
2. **Introduction** (2 pages maximum)

Summarize understanding of the services requested in the RFP and proposed approach to fulfilling the requirements of this RFP. Briefly describe the proposed project team and qualifications.

3. **Statement of Work** (15 pages maximum)

Describe how your team will manage the tasks outlined above in section 3 as well as your management approach.

4. Qualifications, Staffing and Management (10 pages maximum)**a. Corporate Qualifications**

Describe the bidding team's qualifications, including brief descriptions of past experience on contracts of similar scope and size. If applicable, describe past experience with green bank clients and/or management of federal funds.

b. Individual Qualifications

For each staff member that is bid on the project, please provide a brief narrative that includes a description of the individual's role on this project and a summary of his or her relevant education, training, experience, and expertise. Include resumes in with other Additional Materials (see section 4.3(6)).

c. Organizational Chart

Provide an organizational chart of the proposed team for the program. The chart should identify key team members where identified, their roles, and relationships between staff and organizations (the Trust, the contractor, and any subcontractors). Clearly indicate the day-to-day primary point of contact for the Trust as well as the lead executive contact.

d. Disclosures

Disclose and provide details regarding any bankruptcy petition (whether voluntary or involuntary), receivership, insolvency event, or similar adverse financial circumstance suffered or incurred by bidder (or any predecessor entity) within the three years preceding the date of submission of this proposal. Disclose and provide details regarding any litigation, arbitration, or administrative proceedings involving bidder within the three years preceding the date of submission of this proposal in which the amount claimed or adjudged against bidder exceeded \$50,000. Disclose and provide details regarding any debarring or delisting from performance on federal government contracts or by the State of Maine within the three years preceding the date of submission of this proposal.

5. Cost Proposal (use Attachment A - Project Cost Proposal Form provided)**a. Narrative**

Provide a brief narrative explanation of rates listed in the project cost proposal.

b. Cost Form

Provide a completed Project Cost Proposal Form (Attachment A) detailing the breakout of costs, including labor hours, hourly rates and costs for all personnel, including any subcontractors; other direct fixed costs; and total costs in sufficient detail to allow assessment of the reasonableness of the basis. Use the assumptions provided on the "Assumptions" tab of Attachment A. Where any additional assumptions are made, please indicate clearly with a comment. All related expenses must be included and itemized on this form; any costs not included on this form will be disallowed. Provide separate rates by contract year (each on a separate tab).

The Trust recognizes that the categories and format displayed in the Project Cost Proposal Form may not conform to the way that the bidder traditionally expresses its pricing. Nonetheless, the Trust will use this form to facilitate a clear and consistent bid comparison and we appreciate

bidders doing their best to accurately and comprehensively reflect their pricing and costs according to the form's categories and format. Bidders may also add a supplementary tab to Attachment A detailing their preferred pricing structure for the Trust's consideration.

Bidders responding to *both* this RFP and the RFP for a lending platform (RFP EM-013-2014) will need to provide a separate Project Cost Proposal Form for each response. The Trust recognizes that some bidders may not parse out platform-related costs from servicing-related costs. In these cases, the Trust anticipates that the Project Cost Proposal Form for the lending services RFP (RFP EM-014-2024) may reflect some or all embedded costs associated with the platform, and the Project Cost Proposal Form for the platform RFP (RFP EM-013-2024) may either be empty or reflect only a subset of clearly identifiable platform-related costs (e.g., initial build-out costs). Bidders who elect to respond to both RFPs may reflect their costs across these spreadsheets as they see fit, using the narrative (section 5(a)) to clearly explain their rationale/process. Bidders should understand that the Trust will consider the sum of the totals on each Project Cost Proposal Form to reflect the full cost of the combined bids, so they should take care to avoid any duplication.

6. Additional Materials

a. References

Provide a list of references for the lead bidder and any subcontractors included in the bid. At least three references must be provided for each organization included in the bid. For each reference, please provide current contact information (name, company, telephone number, and email address) and a brief description of the work conducted for the reference and its relevance to the current RFP. If evaluations of bidder's programs are available, please provide a list of them that includes the report title, author/independent evaluator, publication date, and URL (or filename if provided electronically) for accessing the report.

b. Resumes

Provide resumes of key project team members. Key project team members identified in the proposal must be dedicated to the proposed project in the role proposed. Any substitutions of key project team members must be approved by the Trust.

SECTION 5 – PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals that meet the requirements established in the RFP will be evaluated by a proposal review team. The Trust reserves the right to decide whether a proposal is acceptable in terms of meeting the requirements of this RFP and to accept or reject any or all proposals received.

In evaluating proposals, the Trust reserves the right to take any of the following steps, with respect to either all of the proposals received or to a subset of proposals selected as superior to the others: (1) consult with prior clients on the performance of the bidder or of particular persons proposed for this bid; (2) schedule presentations or interviews with representatives of the bidder or persons proposed for the project; (3) conduct a review of past performance, including a review of reports, analyses, or other materials that would reflect the bidder's performance; and, (4) request additional data or supporting material.

5.1 Evaluation Criteria

In evaluating proposals submitted in response to this RFP, the proposal review team will use the following criteria:

Scoring Category	Maximum Points
1. Statement of Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Does the Statement of Work present a comprehensive, sound approach for accomplishing the requirements of this RFP? b. Is the Statement of Work thorough, specific and responsive to the requirements and details specified in the RFP? c. Does the proposal demonstrate a clear understanding of the Statement of Work and the Trust's expectations? d. Does the Statement of Work reflect best practices in delivering the specific programs described in this RFP? 	30
2. Staff and Organization Qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Is the proposed project staffing plan clear, well-defined, appropriate and realistic for the scope of the services requested? b. How qualified are the proposed personnel in terms of skills, expertise and experience relevant to this program? c. How qualified are the proposed organizations (lead bidder and subcontractors) in terms of demonstrated experience and capacity to execute this type of program? 	30
3. Project Cost/Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are appropriate resources being devoted? b. How does the total bid cost compare to other comparable proposals? c. Is the proposed budget consistent with the requested Statement of Work? d. How do the quoted rates compare to other comparable proposals? 	30
4. Overall Quality and Responsiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is the overall quality of the proposal submission, including: completeness, clarity, attention to detail, adherence to instructions and lack of errors? b. Does the proposal reflect and respond to the Trust's priorities? c. Does the proposal seek changes or exceptions? 	10
Total	100