



**EFFICIENCY MAINE TRUST
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
TO PROVIDE VARIOUS
COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING, AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT SERVICES
RFQ EM-006-2016**

**Date Issued:
March 17, 2016**

Closing Date: April 28, 2016, 3:00pm

SECTION 1 – RFQ INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

1.1 Title and Purpose

RFQ EM-006-2016 Request for Qualifications to Provide Various Communications, Marketing, and Logistical Support Services.

Efficiency Maine Trust (the Trust) is soliciting services from qualified firms or individuals to provide various communication, marketing, and logistical support services to help the Trust market its programs and report on its activities. Interested parties are asked to present their qualifications to provide one or more of the following communication services: advertising, copywriting, editing, event coordination, graphic design, market research, media coordination, outreach campaign coordination, and/or report design and layout. This RFQ is expected to establish a pool of prequalified professionals to assist the Trust with discrete projects or targeted outreach campaigns across the Trust’s programs and activities.

1.2 Designated Contact Person for this RFQ

Anne Stephenson
Efficiency Maine Trust
168 Capitol Street, Suite 1
Augusta, Maine 04330
Phone: (207) 213-4158
Email: anne.stephenson@efficiencymaine.com

1.3 Proposal Schedule

Event	Date/Deadline
RFQ Issued	March 17, 2016
Questions Due	April 7, 2016
Responses to Questions Posted	April 11, 2016
Submissions Due at Efficiency Maine Trust office	April 28, 2016 by 3:00pm local time
Anticipated Decision Date	May 12, 2016
Anticipated Contractor Start	May 26, 2016

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 Trust’s website at:

<http://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities>

1.4 Questions

Questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted by email to the Designated Contact Person listed in section 1.2 prior to the close of the Question Period specified in section 1.3. The subject line of the email should be: RFQ EM-006-2016 Questions. Responses to questions will be posted on the Trust’s website.

1.5 Proposal Submittal Deadline

Qualifications packages must be received at the Trust's office by the due date and time specified in section 1.3. Any package received after the deadline will not be considered. Packages 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. Each bidder is responsible for ensuring timely receipt of its qualifications package. Further details regarding proposal requirements are provided in section 5 of this RFQ.

1.6 Cost of Proposal Preparation

Costs incurred in the preparation of any qualifications package in response to this RFQ are the sole responsibility of the bidder.

1.7 Anticipated Contract Term

The anticipated term of the contract is July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019, subject to annual review by the Trust.

1.8 Anticipated Budget

The budget for each project will depend upon the nature and duration of the tasks required to complete the project. Each project will be executed through a specific Statement of Work (SOW) on a time-and-materials basis with a not-to-exceed maximum value for each individual SOW. It is anticipated that individual SOW budgets for smaller projects will range from \$200 to \$10,000. Larger projects will be sent to the prequalified list of consultants for estimates and assigned based on experience, expertise, capacity, concept, availability, and cost.

In the past, most communications and design efforts have been managed and implemented through individual program delivery team contracts. In FY2017, the Trust plans to manage many of these efforts centrally. The projected FY2017 budget for Efficiency Maine Trust programs, including energy efficiency incentives, is \$67 million. There is no set marketing budget; marketing and communications efforts will be adjust up or down in order to ensure the Trust meets its participation goals in the eight programs listed below in section 2.2.

1.9 Prequalification Decision

The Trust will notify all bidders of the prequalification decision by email. The anticipated decision date is specified in section 1.3. The Trust reserves the right to negotiate the final terms and conditions with winning bidders whose packages are selected by the Trust, and to reject any winning bidders with whom the Trust cannot agree to terms and conditions meeting the Trust's needs, in the Trust's sole judgment.

1.10 Selection Process

The selection of service providers and grant recipients 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.energymaine.com/docs/Chapter-1-Contracting-Process-for-Service-Providers-and-Grant-Recipients.pdf>

Prequalified contractors may be asked to assist the Trust on a variety of communications projects. The Trust will request support based on past experience or qualifications for the task, or will notify the list of potential contractors about a project and select a contractor based on availability. With the contractors prequalified under a specific qualification area, the Trust will establish a notification procedure and distribution of work. That process is subject to change based on quality of work or performance.

1.11 Related Requests for Proposals

The Efficiency Maine Trust posts all Requests for Proposals at <http://www.energymaine.com/opportunities/>.

Bidders are invited to respond to multiple requests for proposals in addition to this RFQ. However, bidders must submit a separate, stand-alone proposal in response to each request for which the bidder wishes to be considered. The Trust may award one bidder more than one contract.

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Efficiency Maine Trust

The Trust is the independent, third-party administrator for energy efficiency programs in Maine. The Trust's mission is to lower the cost and environmental impacts of energy in Maine by promoting cost-effective energy efficiency and alternative energy systems. The Trust does this primarily by delivering rebates on the purchase of high-efficiency lights and equipment to help customers save electricity, natural gas and heating fuels throughout the Maine economy. The Trust is governed by a stakeholder Board of Trustees with oversight from the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

2.2 RFQ Background

The Trust's strategic plan – the Triennial Plan – contemplates eight main programs: (1) Commercial and Industrial (C&I) Custom; (2) C&I Prescriptive; (3) C&I New Construction; (4) Small Business Initiative; (5) Consumer Products; (6) Home Energy Savings Program; (7) Low Income Initiatives; (8) Renewable Resource Fund. The Trust markets its programs to potential customers through tailored outreach campaigns across its programs for residential and business customers. These efforts are complemented by the Trust's Public Information initiatives, which seek to increase general awareness of the benefits of cost-effective, customer-sited energy resources, and of specific efficient technologies, operating practices, and behaviors. These initiatives also provide basic guidance on how to access Efficiency Maine programs. Through numerous communications channels, the Trust urges consumers who are planning to purchase new lighting, appliances, heating systems, and other equipment to consider buying one of the more energy-efficient models available.

Information is disseminated through the Trust’s website, printed flyers and brochures, traditional advertising, social media, and other multimedia tools. The Trust also manages targeted training sessions and attends industry events, such as forums and symposiums. The public information and outreach materials address saving energy and the co-benefits of energy-efficient choices. Co-benefits include lowering energy bills; improving grid reliability and suppressing the price for grid-supplied energy; increasing home comfort; promoting energy independence; reducing harm to the environment and human health; helping the Maine economy through job creation and job retention; and reducing a business’s operating and maintenance costs.

Through this RFQ the Trust is seeking to prequalify individuals or firms interested in providing communication and design services to the Trust as it develops public information and marketing outreach tools ranging from brochures to reports to events to market research. This RFQ is expected to establish a pool of prequalified communications professionals and designers to assist the Trust with discrete projects and large outreach campaigns.

Proposed personnel should have significant experience, expertise, and capacity in the service area or areas included in the bid. Individuals or firms may also be selected through this RFQ on the basis of their unique expertise or capabilities within distinct areas of specialization to provide services to discrete tasks; expertise in all potential service areas is not required and bids need not include all service areas.

2.3 Additional Sources of Information

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

TITLE	LOCATION (link)
Efficiency Maine Trust website	www.energymaine.com
Efficiency Maine Trust 2015 Annual Report	http://www.energymaine.com/docs/2015-Efficiency-Maine-Annual-Report.pdf
Efficiency Maine Trust – Triennial Plan (proposed)	http://emtplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/FY17-19-PLAN-APPENDICES-FINAL.pdf

SECTION 3 – POTENTIAL SERVICES AND ASSIGNMENTS

The Trust is seeking contractor(s) to provide services or complete assignments across the following areas:

- 3.1 Advertising** (e.g., developing brand strategies, developing and implementing advertising campaigns)
- 3.2 Copywriting services** (e.g., drafting copy for the website, print materials, and press releases)
- 3.3 Editing services** (e.g., copy editing and proofreading)
- 3.4 Event coordination** (e.g., coordination of meetings; coordination of stakeholder outreach; event planning)

- 3.5 **Graphic design services** (e.g., brochures, illustrations, images, point-of-purchase signage, web ads, newsletter templates, website graphics, conference display materials, mailings, data visualization projects or infographics, and print coordination)
- 3.6 **Market research** (e.g., evaluating marketing and outreach opportunities, evaluating effectiveness of marketing campaigns, and conducting customer satisfaction surveys)
- 3.7 **Media coordination** (e.g., recommendation, coordination, and placement of media buys including digital ads)
- 3.8 **Outreach campaign coordination** (e.g., recommendation and coordination of outreach or educational campaigns)
- 3.9 **Report design and layout** (e.g., layout and print coordination)

Contractor(s) may bid to provide services in one or more of these areas, and must indicate which services they are offering to provide under this bid as well as their qualifications and rates associated with the specific services. Contractor(s) should also describe their willingness, ability, and approach to coordinating subcontractors across service areas – including subcontractors who may be on other teams under this RFQ.

SECTION 4 – GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Contractor Responsibilities

The winning bidders will be responsible for adhering to the following requirements:

- **Confidentiality.** All the Trust’s customer information is confidential, and the winning bidder, its staff, and its subcontractors will be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement before any customer data is released to the contractor. See <http://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/35-A/title35-Asec10106.html> for additional information on related confidentiality restrictions.
- **Project Personnel.** In accordance with Standard Agreement, Rider B, Section 3, Provider Personnel (see Attachment B), no re-deployment or replacement of any Key Personnel may be made without the prior written consent of the Trust.
- **Call Center Coordination.** The winning bidder may be required to work cooperatively with the Trust’s call center contractor.

4.2 Efficiency Maine Trust Responsibilities

The Trust, through its designated manager for a given project or activity, will oversee and manage all work undertaken by the winning bidder, including but not limited to:

- Providing project oversight and management;
- Reviewing, commenting on and approving all deliverables as requested or required;
- Reviewing and approving, or rejecting, invoices;
- Providing guidance and direction regarding project implementation; and
- Making available relevant work products and data that are the property of the Trust.

SECTION 5 - PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Project Organization and Staffing Requirements

Qualification packages that include teaming arrangements must designate one party as the lead bidder. Personnel who are proposed shall be the actual project performers. Bidders may not substitute personnel without prior written approval of the Trust.

5.2 Submittal Requirements

Qualification packages must be delivered to the Trust by the due date and time specified in section 1.3 of this RFQ to the attention of the designated contact person specified in section 1.2. Four (4) copies of the qualifications package must be clearly marked, "**Response to RFP EM-006-2016 – Various Communications, Marketing, and Logistical Support Services.**"

Past bidders to RFQ004-2014 Request for Qualifications for Design Services need not resubmit qualifications for design services; bidders accepted under RFQ 004-2014 who are interested in being considered for communications work with the Trust going forward should send a letter indicating this interest and resubmit applicable hourly rates and costs by service area.

5.3 Format Requirements

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

- Qualifications package must be typewritten, using a standard font (11 or 12 point).
- Each page must state the page number, the name of the bidder, and the RFQ number.
- Each page must have one-inch margins.
- Unnecessary attachments (i.e., any attachments beyond those sufficient to present a complete, comprehensive, and effective qualifications package) will not influence the evaluation of the package.
- Qualifications package must adhere to prescribed page limits specified in section 5.4. Please note that each printed side counts as one (1) page.

The Trust reserves the right to reject any proposal that does not meet these requirements.

5.4 Content and Organization Requirements

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

a. Proposal Cover Sheet Form:

- Include a completed, signed Proposal Cover Sheet Form, which is provided in Attachment A.

- If the package involves any subcontractors, provide a completed Team Commitment page. Provide a completed, signed Proposal Cover Sheet Form, which is provided in Attachment A to this RFQ.
- b. Letter of Transmittal:** Provide a brief letter summarizing qualifications including area of expertise. (2 pages maximum)
- c. Company Profile:** Provide an overview of the company including location, number of staff, services provided focusing on company, company experience, and company qualifications. (two pages maximum)
- d. Individual Experience/Qualifications:** Identify the proposed personnel and their qualifications and capabilities to provide services within the relevant areas identified in section 3 of this RFQ. (one page per person)
- e. Management Approach:** Describe processes to ensure that assigned task orders will be completed on time, on budget, and with high quality and accuracy. (one page maximum)
- f. Hourly Rates and Expenses:** Provide hourly rates and costs for all personnel, including any subcontractors, and other direct costs. All related expenses must be included and itemized by relevant service area described in section 3.
Bidders accepted under RFQ 004-2014 must update their hourly rates and costs by relevant service area described in section 3.
- g. References:** Provide names, addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of representatives of three current or recent clients for whom the firm has provided services related to those in this RFQ.
- h. Samples:** Please provide at least three samples of recent work pertinent to the expertise for which the bidder is submitting qualifications and rates.
- i. Additional Data:** Provide any additional data considered essential to the qualifications package recognizing that the Trust appreciates and prefers succinct proposals.

SECTION 6 – QUALIFICATION PACKAGE EVALUATION AND DECISION

6.1 Evaluation

The selection team will use the following criteria when reviewing and ranking the consultant submittals:

- a. Qualifications and expertise of the firm and relevant experience of proposed personnel;
- b. Quality of portfolio and relevant past projects; and
- c. Rates

The Trust may at its discretion interview potential candidates or request additional information from select candidates. The Trust may interview references provided.

6.1 Prequalification Decision

The Trust will notify all bidders of the prequalification decision by email. The anticipated decision date is specified in section 1.3. The Trust reserves the right to negotiate the final terms and conditions with winning bidders whose packages are selected by the Trust, and to reject any winning bidders with whom the Trust cannot agree to terms and conditions meeting the Trust's needs, in the Trust's sole judgment.

Prequalified contractors may be asked to assist the Trust on a variety of communications projects. The Trust will request support based on past experience or qualifications for the task, or will notify the list of potential contractors about a project and select a contractor based on availability. With the contractors prequalified under a specific qualification area, the Trust will establish a notification procedure and distribution of work. That process is subject to change based on quality of work or performance.

SECTION 7 – GENERAL CONDITIONS

7.1 Reservation of Rights

The Trust reserves the right to cancel or extend the RFQ process at any time. The Trust also reserves the right to reject any and all submissions in response to this RFQ and to waive formalities if doing so is in the best interests of the Trust.

7.2 Contract Term and Compensation

A copy of the Efficiency Maine Trust Standard Agreement appropriate to larger projects under this RFQ is provided as **Attachment B – Standard Agreement**. This format is a standard document that will complete the agreement for services between the winning bidder and the Trust. Depending on the scope and duration of the project, the Trust may also use a shorter version of the standard agreement, subject to negotiation with the selected contractor.

The duration of the prequalification decision with one or more Contractors resulting from this RFQ shall be for up to two (2) years from the date of its execution. The Trust reserves the right to negotiate an additional one (1) year renewal with the selected Contractor(s). Contractor assignments will be based upon the bid hourly rates of the individual service provider(s) within the firm, plus approved expenses. All work assignments will be in the form of a Scope of Work (SOW) issued by the Trust. For a given SOW, the Trust shall have the right to request the services of specific individuals within the Consultant's firm and shall have the right to seek services of other Contractors if the requested individual is not available. Selected Contractors have no guarantee of receiving any SOWs during the term of the contract; there is no obligation of the Trust to provide any equitable distribution of work.

7.3 Billing

Invoices submitted for work performed under the resulting contract shall be sufficiently specific to allow the Trust to evaluate charges billed in light of the tasks required. Each invoice must include a clear breakdown, by task where appropriate, indicating the individual personnel who performed work; the date, nature, and duration of work; and the rate charged.

7.4 Termination of Contract

Termination of the agreement by the Trust is governed by section 7 of the Standard Agreement (see Attachment B).

7.5 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 prequalification decision. 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>