EFFICIENCY MAINE TRUST
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR
RETAIL AND DISTRIBUTOR PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

RFP EM-010-2022

Date Issued: 12/20/2021

Proposals Due: 2/4/2022, 11:59 p.m. EST

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Separate attachments:
Attachment A – Project Proposal Cost Form
Attachment B – Standard 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) seeks a qualified contractor or team of contractors to manage our retail and distributor programs.

1.2 Designated Contact Person for this RFP

Andy Meyer
Senior Program Manager
Efficiency Maine
Email: andy.meyer@efficiencymaine.com

1.3 Schedule

Milestone	Date/Deadline
1. RFP Issued	12/20/2021
2. Questions Due	1/7/2022
3. Responses to Questions Posted	1/14/2022
4. Proposals Due	2/4/2022, 11:59 p.m. EST
5. Anticipated Award Date	2/25/2022
6. Anticipated Contractor Start	4/1/2022
7. Program Launch	7/01/2022

Schedule changes: Efficiency Maine 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: http://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities

1.4 Anticipated Contract Term

The Trust anticipates awarding three contracts for one year each to cover a total period of performance from 7/1/2022 through 6/30/2025.

1.5 Anticipated Contract Budget

The anticipated 3-year budget for this program is approximately $74,000,000 as outlined in the Trust's proposed Triennial Plan IV (Fiscal Years 2023-2025) which can be found here: https://www.efficiencymaine.com/about/library/policies/. The actual budget each year will be updated pursuant to approvals by the Trust's Board of Trustees and orders by the Maine Public Utilities Commission. The proposed budgets for this program should cover all costs including administration, incentives, and marketing. Note that a portion of the authorized budgets may support program-related activities conducted by Trust staff or separate contractors.

1.6 Proposal Submittal Deadline

All proposals must be submitted electronically via the online Submission Form on the RFP EM-010-2022 webpage (https://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities/rfp-em-010-2022/). 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).

1.7 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: "Retail and Distributor Program RFP Questions". Responses to questions will be posted on https://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities/rfp-em-010-2022/, as will all clarifications and amendments released regarding 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.

1.8 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.

1.9 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.

1.10 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 .

1.11 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.

1.12 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. The winning bidder and its agents and subcontractors will be required to execute a nondisclosure agreement. 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.

1.13 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 Trust is the independent administrator for programs to improve the efficiency of energy use and reduce greenhouse gases in Maine. The Trust does this primarily by delivering financial incentives on the purchase of high-efficiency equipment or changes to operations that help customers save electricity, natural gas and other fuels throughout the Maine economy. The Trust is a quasi-state agency governed by a Board of Trustees with oversight from the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

Given the Trust's mission, the Trust generally seeks the following qualities in delivery teams and program designs:

- Market-Based – The Trust prefers market-based programs where customers select their own prescriptive measures and installer as opposed to programs where the program administrator models or decides the upgrade and manages the installer.
- Maximize Cost-Effectiveness – While other program goals and objectives may dictate specific measure mixes, the Trust prefers delivery teams that can find creative ways to achieve all program goals while maximizing the Efficiency Maine Primary Benefit Cost Ratio.
- Verifiable Savings – Innovative program delivery and measure offerings are valued by the Trust; however, only verifiable savings can be claimed. Bidders that can show a record of achieving verifiable savings and launching new measures with means of determining verifiable savings will have an advantage.
- Drive Demand for Installed Measures–The Retail Program and the Distributor Program are principally interested in achieving cost-effective energy savings resulting from completed efficiency projects. The Trust will not look favorably upon administration programs through this RFP that prioritizes training new installers or increasing stock on shelves at the expense of achieving completed measure installations.
- Leverage Private Sector – The Trust makes every effort to support the private sector rather than compete with it. Therefore, the Trust seeks delivery teams that have a record of collaborating with local organizations, supply chains, and contractors.
- Core Competency of Customer Service – Program management is a function of Trust staff. Delivery teams may be directed to undertake many tasks of varying complexity such as consultation on program design and outreach. That said, the core competency of delivery teams must be adherence to highest levels of customer service, including fast and efficient processing of participant project documents, timely communications, and ability to work with retailers, distributors, contractors and program participants to achieve best outcomes.
- Third-Party Standards – The Trust typically uses third-party standards rather than developing its own. The Trust relies on organizations like ENERGY STAR®; Building Performance Institute (BPI); the Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI); Design Lights Consortium (DLC); and others. Therefore, delivery teams that are familiar with relevant third-party standards are preferred.
- Continuous Improvement – The Trust listens to stakeholders, monitors developments in energy efficiency technologies and programs, and modifies its programs as needed. Experience in continuous improvement is an advantage for a bidder.
- Pay for Energy Savings – The Retail Program and Distributor Program place a high priority on investing funding on customer incentives for actual energy savings and minimizing costs of program delivery. Therefore, bidders for these programs are encouraged to avoid administratively intensive, behaviorally focused, complex programs, and incentives for activities that do not save energy.

- Simple Teams – While bidders are welcome to partner with other companies to form a team, unnecessary complexity in the team's organization would be considered a disadvantage. Simple teams with logical roles and experience working together are preferred.

2.2 Background and Context

Efficiency Maine offers rebates, discounts, loans, technical information and networks of independent installers to help homeowners and businesses to invest in energy efficiency. To do this, Efficiency Maine runs multiple residential and business programs that share a common website, Call Center, energy savings database, and networks of trade allies (one residential network and one commercial/industrial network). Programs are administered by competitively bid contractors referred to as "delivery teams."

2.3 Program Overview, Objectives, Design and Requirements in the Triennial Plan

The administration of two programs is included in this one Request for Proposals: The Retail Initiatives Program and he Distributor Initiatives Program (residential and commercial heating and water heating systems).
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2.3.1 Retail Initiatives Program

As described in the proposed Triennial Plan, this program offers incentives for consumer products through retail channels. These products sell in relatively high volumes and achieve predictable savings when installed. High-efficiency products promoted through the program typically include LEDs, appliances, thermostats, and other consumer goods. The Trust provides incentives through the Retail Initiatives Program in the form of markdowns and mail-in rebates; this program supplements other Trust programs that engage the expertise of trade allies or incentivize products through markdowns at distributors. The Trust's Retail Initiatives offer incentives to multiple customer groups including residential, low income, and commercial customers.

Program Objectives – The Retail Initiatives Program has the following objectives:

- Reduce total energy costs;
- Offer all customers, regardless of geographic location or income level, a reasonable opportunity to participate in a conservation program;
- Increase consumer awareness and use of high-efficiency products;
- Reduce peak load demand for electricity; and
- Create more favorable market conditions for the increased use of energy-efficient products and services.

Program Design – This program leverages relationships with retailers of energy-efficient products to discount products on the shelf or distribute rebate information to customers at the point of purchase. The program relies on extensive use of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the major vendors of energy-efficient products. The Trust uses these MOUs to negotiate discounted prices for Maine customers, product placement, and availability of high efficiency appliance models and informational materials. The Trust maintains point-of-purchase materials and verifies in-store pricing through frequent visits to all participating retailers.

Measures Promoted – The Trust evaluates products for inclusion in Retail Initiatives based on cost-effectiveness, demand, and availability. The program often relies on third-party standards (e.g., ENERGY STAR) to establish which energy-efficient products are eligible for incentives. That said, the appliance market has seen increasing efficiency across many products, meaning that the difference in baseline products versus efficient models can be more modest than in the past; this positive market transformation has resulted in some consumer products being removed or excluded from the program. By way of example, the energy savings between an ENERGY STAR television and the baseline model is now so small that the Trust has found it better to invest in incentives for other high-efficiency products.

Incentives and Financial Considerations – Retail Initiatives incentivize the purchase of energy-efficient lighting by providing the minimum discount necessary to drive consumer action. The Trust bases incentives for appliances and other consumer products on the incremental price difference between conventional and high-efficiency models. Incentives generally are set at a percentage of this incremental difference in order to guide customer choice to the high-efficiency model. This program delivers financial incentives to participating Maine residents and businesses through two mechanisms:

- Markdowns: The Trust will enter into MOUs with retailers and manufacturers; MOUs typically specify that the Trust will reimburse stores if they sell high-efficiency products at agreed, discounted prices according to program guidelines.
- Mail-in rebates: For larger items, such as water heaters or appliances, consumers will typically make the purchase, pay full price, and then submit a rebate claim form to the Trust.

Marketing and Outreach – The purchasing decision for many energy-efficient consumer products is made at the store. In order to influence the customer to make an energy-efficient choice, the Trust focuses marketing efforts for this program on point-of-purchase materials including in-store displays, customer demonstrations, and training for store personnel. This has included working with stores on, and paying marketing fees for, promotional placements including end caps and aisle pallets; sales records demonstrate that these placements significantly impact sales volume, although only in conjunction with incentives. In-store personnel can also influence the number of energy-efficient models sold. In other cases, customers are motivated to purchase higher efficiency products based on low prices. For situations where customers conduct research on consumer products prior to purchase, the Trust focuses its efforts on keyword marketing, website information, and education of the installer community. For example, if a Maine customer searches “broken water heater” online, they may see an ad describing water heater rebates and Trust resources. The Trust also works to educate plumbers and other contractors about heat pump water heaters and other technology to help vendors convince customers to purchase energy-efficient water heaters at the time of replacement. Because the replacement window is so short, installer familiarity with efficient options is important; if the efficient option is less expensive than the standard unit, familiarity may be less important.

Quality Assurance/Quality Control – Field representatives will visit stores to ensure that agreed upon markdown prices and discounted products match MOU terms, that point-of-purchase materials are being used properly, and that store employees are aware of the available measures. For example, the Trust will verify payments to participating retailers against MOU agreements to ensure that only program-approved LEDs are being incentivized. Retailers will be required to receive a waiver for any purchases exceeding quantity limits as described in the MOU; a Maine address is required as verification for larger purchases.

The Trust will review all rebate claims to ensure that the product and participant are eligible. In addition, contractors who want to appear on the Efficiency Maine Registered Vendor List as an installer must meet program requirements. For example, plumbers on the list are currently required to demonstrate a State plumbing license and proof of insurance, and to sign a code of conduct.

The Trust will carefully monitor product pricing and incentive amounts to motivate customers and installers to purchase high-efficiency models.

2.3.2 Distributor Initiatives Program

As described in the proposed Triennial Plan, this program offers incentives for efficient products, including lighting and heating systems, acquired through distributors. Distributors are supply houses where contractors and larger customers go to purchase plumbing, heating, refrigeration and electrical supplies. Distributors stand in contrast to retail stores where homeowners and smaller commercial customers typically shop.

The distributor channel is an important complement to the retail channel as well as planned or customer-driven efficiency projects. In general, the measures discounted at distributors include:

- Products sold at significant volumes (e.g., typical residential boilers);
- Products that are not typically offered for sale at retailers, due to their size or specialized applications, such as a boiler or furnace; and/or
- Products that are not typically chosen or specified by the customer, such as a circulator
- pump.

The Distributor Initiatives Program serves all sectors of the Maine economy including residential, low income, commercial, and industrial customers. This program includes measures that reduce natural gas, unregulated heating fuels, and electricity consumption.

Program Objectives – The Distributor Initiatives Program has the following objectives:

- Incentivize measures to reduce electricity, natural gas, and heating fuel consumption;
- Reduce total energy costs;
- Reduce peak load demand for electricity;
- Help contractors and customers overcome barriers to implementing efficiency projects;
- Promote high-efficiency equipment options when customers and contractors are replacing inefficient or burned-out equipment or adding new equipment; and
- Create more favorable market conditions for the increased use of energy-efficient products and services.

Program Design – The program relies on Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with distributors to promote and incentivize efficient heating, plumbing, commercial kitchen, and lighting equipment. The MOUs also require participating distributors to report on key data points including measure characteristics, fuel type (for HVAC and plumbing measures), and installation location. The Trust will frequently visit participating distributors to ensure the availability of informational materials, and answer distributor staff questions about data collection, eligible models, and more.

Measures Promoted – Determining if a measure is a good candidate for this program involves consideration of several questions:

1. Is the equipment traditionally purchased at distributors?

2. Is the market for the measure large enough that participating distributors will stock it?
3. Are the market barriers associated with selecting efficient equipment overcome by the program design?

Whenever possible, eligible measures will be verified and vetted by a third party. For example, measures incentivized through the program may be listed and verified by ENERGY STAR, the Consortium for Energy Efficiency or the Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute. These organizations also provide technical information on high-efficiency equipment and installation best practices.

Incentives and Financial Considerations – The program will discount efficient heating systems, light bulbs, and other equipment by the percentage of the incremental price difference between conventional and high-efficiency models required to motivate the sale. These incentives will be delivered as a markdown, administered pursuant to individual MOUs between the Trust and participating distributors. In some cases, the Trust may also incentivize distributors to collect and report data as that burden shifts from contractors to distributors in this program model. Furthermore, depending on the measure and level of activity, the Trust will provide distributors per-unit payments to offset administrative and marketing costs and to encourage sales.

Marketing and Outreach – The primary goal of this program is to capture replace-on-burnout or emergency replacement purchases rather than proactive replacements. These transactions are largely between distributor staff and installation contractors. With that in mind, the marketing and outreach for the program focuses primarily on distributors. This includes educating distributor staff, posting signage about instant discounts at the distributor, and making contractor- and customer-facing materials available at the distributor’s location. In addition, the Trust may market efficient options directly to customers in the hopes that they will ask their contractor about a “discounted equipment upgrade” or instant discounts.

Quality Assurance/Quality Control – Program field representatives will visit distributors to ensure that data collection processes are in place and that distributor staff is familiar with eligible equipment; in addition, program representatives will verify that informational materials are available for contractors. Program staff will review instant discounts processed by distributors to ensure that the product and participant are eligible. The Trust will carefully monitor product pricing and program participation to assess appropriate discount amounts.

2.4 Efficiency Maine Reporting and Tracking (effRT)

The Trust’s programs are data-driven and their success hinges on the capacity to measure and verify the energy and cost savings derived from program participation. The primary tool that Efficiency Maine has developed for data management is known as the Efficiency Maine Reporting & Tracking System (effRT) database. The database platform manages the data for all of the Trust's active programs and ensures consistent and accurate estimates of energy savings. The system also enables trade allies (such as Qualified Partners) to expedite the processing of incentives, significantly reducing paperwork.

The winning bidder will be required to use effRT for documenting and processing project applications as well as for reporting on program results. The effRT database is SQL-based with an online interface created and currently maintained with ASP.net tools. Since its initial development to support delivery of the Business Incentive Program, the effRT database has been continuously refined to address the evolving needs and features of additional programs offered by the Trust. The Trust continues to work toward a fully unified data management structure that can capture and report on a diverse array of data originating from a variety of sources, without being burdensome to program administration, delivery, and reporting requirements.

2.5 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/
Program pages	Heat pump water heaters ECM circulator pumps Clothes Washers Room Air Purifiers LED light bulbs
Previous program information (Evaluations, Reports, etc.)	https://www.efficiencymaine.com/about/library/reports/
Efficiency Maine Trust Residential and Commercial Technical Reference Manuals	https://www.efficiencymaine.com/about/library/policies/

SECTION 3 – SCOPE OF WORK

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: Program Start Up Plan
The winning bidder must develop a transition plan that outlines all major tasks associated with taking over the management of this program.

Task 2: Program Design Review
For context, the current program in FY2019 uses the following approach for specific measures that we plan to offer under this contract. Actual measures and incentive levels may vary during the course of the contract:

- LEDs – In the Retail Initiatives Program, we plan to continue negotiating markdowns with approximately 10 retailers at 200 retail stores for 1 to 5 SKUs each. Bulbs do not need to be ENERGY STAR but must produce at least 60 lumens per watt and have at least a 10,000-hour life. We pay a markdown for bulbs promoted off shelf. We currently target the lowest list priced bulbs and, thus far in FY2022, offer incentives and marketing fees sufficient to bring the price down to approximately $0.50 per A-line bulb and $1.00 per reflector or candelabra bulb. We expect to drive 1.5 million LEDs this year with $3.8 million of incentives (approximately $2.50 per bulb).
- ENERGY STAR Heat Pump Water Heaters – In FY2022, we offer a $850 mail-in rebate for retail sales and expect to drive 3,000 units. We also currently offer a $950 instant rebate (plus $50 administrative fee) through one of approximately 15 participating distributors at about 45 locations and expect to drive approximately 7,000 additional units through this channel. This measure will be included in both the Retail and the Distributor Programs.
- ENERGY STAR Clothes Washers – We offer a $50 mail-in rebate and expect to drive approximately 6,000 units in FY2022.
- Energy Star Room Air Purifiers – We offer a $50 mail-in rebate and expect to drive approximately 200 units in FY2022.
- ECM Circulator Pumps – We offer $75 instant rebates plus $10 administrative fees and expect to drive 12,000 units in FY2022.

The winning bidder will need to review the existing program design including all internal and customer-facing material, recommend any changes for Efficiency Maine's consideration.

Task 3: Customer Service
The winning bidder will be required to handle all calls forwarded from Efficiency Maine's Call Center Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except State holidays. This program typically receives 50 calls per day and we expect at least 90% of calls to be answered within 20 seconds.

Task 4: Efficiency Maine Call Center Coordination
All customer calls come in through Efficiency Maine's central Call Center. Calls are forwarded to the appropriate program team (e.g., the Retail Program). The winning bidder will be required to work cooperatively with the Trust's central call center and assist with call center training, monitoring, and support to ensure maximum customer satisfaction and cost-effective program delivery.

Task 5: Trade Ally Databases Management

Currently, over 600 trade allies offer dozens of services from weatherization to oil heating systems to heat pump water heater installations. These trade allies are independent installers. There is no fee to become a trade ally and Efficiency Maine does not set any pricing guidelines. They are simply licensed, insured and committed to follow Efficiency Maine's code of conduct. The winning bidder will need to supply updated information on trade allies related to these two programs to be used by the administrator of the web-based Vendor Locator Tools (https://www.efficiencymaine.com/at-home/vendor-locator/ and https://www.efficiencymaine.com/at-work/qualified-partners/). Administering the database itself is outside the scope of this RFP.

Task 6: Retailer / Manufacturer / Distributor / Installer Support

This program relies heavily on a field team currently using five field representatives (reps) and a field manager that visit stores and distributors on a set frequency (e.g., weekly for large stores, monthly or quarterly for smaller retailers). Field reps will verify that pricing matches MOUs, help reset shelves, move inventory onto shelves, negotiate for off-shelf space, install and maintain point-of-purchase material (signs, rebate claim forms, technology brochures, etc.), and train store personnel on our programs. They will perform similar functions for distributors as well as helping with submitting midstream instant rebate claims. Representatives also recruit new retailers and distributors as necessary. Delivery team field reps and office personnel also will work closely with field and headquarters staff of key manufacturers, distributors, and retailers to ensure best pricing, adequate inventory, and product knowledge.

Task 7: Updates to Efficiency Maine's Energy Savings Tracking Database ("effRT")

The winning bidder will be required to upload to Efficiency Maine's existing tracking database, called "effRT," all data required to claim savings and facilitate program evaluation. Information may include product details, product features, product price, distributor/retailer name, distributor/retailer location, purchase date, customer information, installer information, installation location, incentive, rebate claim date, intended use (residential/commercial), etc. This information will need to be uploaded as rebates are paid. Incentive related information must be uploaded weekly, while administrative costs can be billed and uploaded monthly.

Task 8: Program Marketing

The winning bidder will be responsible for all program marketing needed to drive demand that will fully invest available funds. Any customer-facing material will need to be approved by Efficiency Maine in advance.

Task 9: Incentive Processing

The Retail Program issues nearly 20,000 mail-in rebate checks per year and issues markdown incentives for roughly 1.5 million LEDs to approximately ten retailers with 200 locations. We allow customers to have their rebate mailed to their installer if desired. Efficiency Maine asks customers to allow six weeks to receive mail-in rebates. Distributor Program will be reimbursing approximately fifteen distributors at 40 to 50 locations for claims made weekly or monthly.

Task 10: Support for Efficiency Maine "Corporate Marketing"

The winning bidder will provide support such as identifying potential testimonial participant recommendations, providing and analyzing program progress data, and providing any other information needed by Efficiency Maine for promotional initiatives that may go beyond program marketing.

Task 11: Maintenance of efficiencymaine.com Website

The winning bidder will provide program-related recommendations to Efficiency Maine's web team and provide information necessary to keep the site accurate at all times.

Task 12: Support for Efficiency Maine Home Energy Loans

Efficiency Maine offers loans for all energy efficiency measures that are eligible for rebates. While loans are outside the scope of this RFP, we may call upon the winning bidder to support the loan team. Examples include modifying program materials like brochures, web pages (via Efficiency Maine's web team) and mailers.

Task 13: Support Program Evaluation Studies

The winning bidder will support independent program evaluators, as requested. Requests may include information such as inspection reports, sample rebate claim forms, program participant contact information, installer contact information, etc.

Task 14: Weekly Program Reporting

The winning bidder will need to provide weekly reports in Excel, Google Sheets or similar format as approved by the Trust. Following are examples of elements currently in tracking reports:

- Fiscal year-to-date actual vs plan and forecasted full-year vs plan:
  - Rebates by upgrade type
  - Incentive, administrative ("delivery"), and marketing costs by fund type
  - Energy savings
- Full-year rebate quantity and cost forecast by week by measure
- Trade ally program participation (e.g., by number of upgrades)

Task 15: Budget Management

The winning bidder will be responsible for managing the program in such a way as to exceed savings goal without exceeding the budget.

Task 16: Billing

Invoices must include sufficient backup to allow the Trust to confirm that they are legitimate. For example, billed hours by employee and rates matching the contracted rates must be outlined and any expenses passed through without markup.

Task 17: Program Transitions

The Trust expects the winning bidder to work with all preceding and succeeding contractors to accomplish smooth transitions. Transitions must be performed in an organized and efficient manner with a minimum of disruption to customers, trade allies, retailers, distributors, manufacturers and other energy-efficiency service partners.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Proposal Submission

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the online Submission Form on the RFP EM-010-2022 webpage (https://www.efficiencymaine.com/opportunities/rfp-em-010-2022/). 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, including Appendices A and B (References and Resumes)
  - *PDF format file named "Proposal_Bidder_Name RFP_010_2022"*
- Attachment A - Project Cost Proposal Form
  - *Excel format file named "Project_Cost_Bidder_Name_RFP_010_2022"*
- Suggested redlines to Attachment B - Standard Agreement [if applicable]
  - *Word format file named "Standard_Agreement_Bidder_Name_RFP_010_2022"*
- Attachment C – Team Commitment Form [if proposal involves any subcontractors]
  - *PDF format file named "Team_Commitment_Bidder_Name_RFP_010_2022"*
- Any additional relevant documents (Word, PDF, or Excel format, as appropriate) [if applicable]

4.2 Format Requirements

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

- 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)**

   This section must include how the bidder plans to achieve the tasks outlined above in Section 3.

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. For each, provide the client's name, the results achieved, and how the work is relevant to the current RFP.

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 Appendix B.

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. Financial capability

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.

5. Cost Proposal (use Attachment A Project Cost Proposal Form provided)

Narrative: Provide a brief narrative explanation of the project cost proposal, including the total not-to-exceed price, the portion dedicated to transition plan activities, and an explanation of all relevant cost assumptions.

Cost Form: Provide a completed Project Proposal Cost Form (Attachment A) detailing the breakout of costs, including labor, marketing, incentives, and miscellaneous costs in sufficient detail to allow assessment of the reasonableness of the basis for the not-to-exceed level proposed. 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 program year (July 1 – June 30) for FY2023, FY2024, and FY2025.

The winning bidder will be bound by the labor rates and not-to-exceed level specified in the contract and will be required to complete all tasks specific in that agreement without charges above the total agreement price.

6. Appendices

a. Appendix 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. Appendix 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 **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 **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 **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 **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**