



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

For

Advanced Metering Infrastructure Implementation

Date Issued: November 7, 2022

Questions Due by: November 17, 2022

Proposals Due: November 30, 2022

Vermont Public Service Department

112 State Street

Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2601

(802) 828-2811

TTY/TTD (VT): 1-800-734-8390

Internet: <http://publicservice.vermont.gov/>

OVERVIEW:

Act 185 of the Vermont General Assembly’s 2022 Legislative session appropriated \$8,000,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Public Service “to offer up to 70 percent reimbursement to municipal and cooperative electrical distribution utilities for the implementation of one or more systems of Advanced Metering Infrastructure that has been approved by the Public Utility Commission.”¹

The Public Service Department (PSD or Department) requests proposals from municipal and cooperative electric distribution utilities for investments pursuant to Act 185. This Request for Proposals (RFP) outlines the Department’s objectives and selection criteria, and how funding is expected to be distributed.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Program Summary Details	
Recipient Eligibility:	Municipal or Cooperative Electric Distribution Utilities ² (DU) serving Vermont Residents
Funding Type:	Program Grant
Total Amount Available:	\$8,000,000
Cost Share Required from Grantees:	Minimum 30% cost share; 50% preferred
Eligible Projects/Technologies:	Implementation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure and associated costs

OBJECTIVES:

The Department’s objectives for this funding are to:

- Support installation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) for customers who do not currently have AMI, to give utilities and their customers opportunities to benefit from the AMI capabilities.
- Where municipal and cooperative utilities already have AMI installed, to support upgrades to AMI that will increase the availability and use of real-time data to provide additional services to customers.
- Encourage a minimum level of technological meter capability across all utilities that can facilitate grid optimization consistent with the 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan, capturing benefits including but not limited to:

¹ Act 185 of 2022, Section G.600(c).

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT185/ACT185%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

² Joint Action Agencies representing the interests of and submitting a proposal on behalf of municipal utilities may apply for and may be awarded funding.

- Development and modification of rate designs and other distributed energy resource (DER) visibility, communication, and control capabilities
- Development of customer-, circuit-, and system-level load shapes to optimize use of the distribution system and proactively plan for integration of high penetrations of inverter-based DERs
- Improvements to connect/disconnect procedures
- Put all Vermont electric customers on a level footing to receive services and offerings from their utility that support cost-effective delivery of electric service while facilitating electrification of thermal and transportation end-uses

SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Proposals must arrive at the Public Service Department (PSD) office by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, November 30. Proposals can be mailed or emailed. Applicants should allow adequate time to ensure receipt of their proposal by the deadline if mailing in a hard copy. Proposals received after this time and date may be considered subject to the Department's discretion. Information for what information to be included in the Initial Proposal is below.

Any questions regarding this RFP should be submitted in writing, preferably by email, with the subject line, "AMI RFP Question." Questions are due by close of business, Thursday, November 17, 2022. Responses to questions will be distributed to all potential awardees (municipal and cooperative electric distribution utilities) by Monday, November 21.

Proposals and questions should be addressed to:

TJ Poor
Director of Planning
Vermont Public Service Department
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2601
Phone: (802) 558-7022
Email: tj.poor@vermont.gov

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Term: The estimated project timeline should be clearly articulated in the proposal.

Reporting: Reporting shall be required for all programs receiving an award. Reporting shall include quarterly progress reports as well as a final report submitted within three months of the grant end date.

Quarterly reports and a final program report shall include expenditures made, specific activities, and results.

Cost Share: There is a 30% cost-share requirement, articulated by Act 185. As articulated below, projects with a greater cost-share (up to and exceeding 50%) are preferred. A letter of commitment identifying the cost share and its source of funding must be included as part of the proposal. For example, if an applicant has received a commitment from an organization to provide funds that cover part of the cost for the program, the applicant must provide a copy of the commitment letter.

Consistency with Act 185 and Testimony Supporting Act 185: The Act 185 appropriation is concise. While understanding that Act 185 was not completely consistent with any single entity's testimony before the General Assembly, the Department will look to consistency with the formal, public testimony to inform its decision-making process. Projects should be as consistent as possible with advocacy for the appropriation.

Public Utility Commission Proceeding: Act 185 requires reimbursement only for projects that have been approved by the Public Utility Commission (Commission). While proposals may be awarded, funding disbursement will only occur if and when Commission approval has been secured by the utility.

Nothing in this RFP or subsequent grant agreement will limit the Department's ability to take positions, require conditions, or otherwise act in the best interests of the State in its advocacy role before the Commission.

Agreement to explore innovative rates: The Department has an interest in ensuring that AMI functionality is used to the fullest extent cost-effectively possible. As such, recipients of funding must agree to explore the development of time-based or other innovative rates that utilize the data provided by AMI. If rates are not developed within 18 months of installation of AMI, a status update and explanation of key considerations must be provided to the Department.

Revisions: The PSD reserves the right to make necessary changes to this RFP at any time including termination of the program if in the best interest of the State.

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE INITIAL PROPOSAL

Applicants must submit an electronic copy of the proposal to TJ Poor at the Vermont Public Service Department. Proposals must arrive prior to the deadline.

Proposals will be reviewed by a project team selected by the Department. Proposals that best meet the objectives for the program selected. See "Evaluation Criteria" for more details.

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP. Fancy bindings, colored displays, promotional materials, and so forth are not desired. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

Proposals should be no longer than 10 pages, with no less than a 12-point font and one-inch margins. Appendices (if included) **do not** count toward the 10-page limit. The Summary Page

and all other information count towards the 10-page limit. Shorter proposals will not adversely affect the scoring, as long as all requested information is provided.

*A. **Summary Page** - Proposals must include a one-page summary that includes the following four items:*

1. **Program Title** - Provide a descriptive title for the program.
2. **Identification of Applicant Organization** - State the full name and address of the Distribution Utility responsible for the Proposal and list the main contact and their contact information.
3. **Program Description** that shall include, at a minimum:
 - Budget - Simple budget that includes cost share and any other possible funding for the program,
 - Expected project timeline,
 - Number and percentage of Customers/Members who don't currently have Advanced Metering Infrastructure that will have Advanced Metering Infrastructure as result of the project, and
 - Number and percentage of Customers/Members who currently have some form of Advanced Metering Infrastructure that will have improved capabilities because of the project.
4. **Signature** – Please sign to indicate you have read and acknowledge all of the conditions of this request for proposals, and that, to the best of your knowledge, the information you have supplied is accurate. Electronic signatures are allowed.

B. Program Narrative, Work Plan, & Timeline

Describe the proposed use of the amount requested. Provide a statement of to the program's goal(s) and objectives. Program Narratives shall:

1. Identify the details of the proposed project, including enhanced capabilities of the system, vendors (if known), process to implement,
2. Identify the proposed timeline for the project development, submission to Commission for approval, and implementation,
3. Identify the benefits that utility ratepayers may receive from this AMI project, including summary of any cost-effectiveness analysis (full analysis may be included in appendix),
4. Identify any barriers or challenges to implementation – including deployment and use of the full suite of AMI capabilities – and how they will be addressed
5. Identify any proposed outreach for the program, including whether, and if so, how outreach will be directed to customers/members that are low-income or otherwise from disadvantaged communities,

6. Define/describe any partnerships between the proposed program and those from other DUs, and
7. Describe the plan for accomplishing the work required to submit a proposal to the Commission for approval, and to create and deploy AMI, including the plan for project oversight, quality assurance measures, and financial management, and which team members will have these responsibilities.

C. Budget & Budget Narrative

Provide an estimated budget for the program that includes, at a minimum,

1. Budget line items and amounts that are sufficiently described and justified to explain the necessity of each item, including administrative costs
2. Cost Share proposal,
3. Demonstration that costs are reasonable and competitive

D. Experience & Qualifications of applicant and any sub-contractors (if known):

- Knowledge and experience in the relevant program area, including successful experience with similar programs
- Demonstrated ability to implement programs on time, on budget, and to complete the reporting requirements

E. Additional Information

Proposals must include information described in sections A-D above. Proposals can include any other pertinent and important information.

METHOD OF AWARD

Awards will be made in the best interest of the State. Priority will first be given to proposals that provide the greatest improvement of AMI capabilities to the most customers. Preference may be given to projects that offer a greater percentage of cost-share than the minimum 30% articulated in Act 185.

A selection committee will review and analyze all submittals based on their response to the information requested. At a minimum, the selection process will include the following criteria in the evaluation of proposals. Items below are not necessarily in order of priority.

- Number and percentage of customers without AMI that will receive it as a result of this project, and the extent to which enhanced capabilities will help meet the Objectives for this funding.
- Number and percentage of customers who currently have some form of AMI that will have capabilities enhanced as a result of this project, and the extent to which enhanced capabilities will help meet the Objectives for this funding

- Cost Share
- “Shovel-readiness” of the project (how quickly the work can begin)
- Proposed Budget

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Programs funded through this RFP must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Funded work must not harm or destroy historic buildings or archeological sites that are eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some buildings that are over 50 years old are likely to meet National Register criteria. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation can provide information on National Register status, appropriate treatments for improving energy performance in historic buildings, and a list of preservation consultants who can assist applicants in planning their projects. Applicants may want to consult the Division’s website at www.historicvermont.org
2. The PSD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this RFP for any reason, to waive minor irregularities in any proposals received, and to negotiate with any party in any manner deemed necessary to best serve the interests of the State.
3. The PSD shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by any party in preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
4. The PSD reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP at any time if the best interest of the State requires such action.
5. **News releases pertaining to this RFP, grant award, or the program shall not be made without prior written approval from the PSD.**
6. All parties submitting proposals shall be Equal Opportunity Employers. During the duration of the performance any grant agreement resulting from this RFP, the awardee shall comply with all federal, state and local laws respecting non-discrimination in employment.
7. After a grant agreement is executed and after the projects have received Commission approval, the PSD will reimburse the contractor(s) for actual work performed and expenses incurred up to the specified grant amount. Specific payment provisions will be arrived at upon mutual agreement of the parties. All payments will require the submission of an itemized billing of work performed to date in sufficient detail to justify payment. Final payment will require the submission of a final report.
8. Insurance:

- a. Workers Compensation: With respect to all operations performed, the awardee shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont.
 - b. General Liability and Property Damage: With respect to all operations performed under the grant, the awardee shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:
 - c. Premises - Operations
 - d. Products and Completed Operations
 - e. Personal Injury Liability
 - f. Contractual Liability
 - g. The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:
 - h. \$1,000,000 per Occurrence
 - i. \$1,000,000 General Aggregate
 - j. \$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate
 - k. \$ 50,000 Fire/ Legal/Liability
 - l. Automotive Liability: The awardee shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than: \$1,000,000 combined single limit.
 - m. **The awardee shall name the State of Vermont and its officers and employees as additional insureds for liability arising out of this Agreement.**
9. The PSD and the State assume no liability in any fashion with respect to this RFP or any matters related thereto. All prospective contractors and their subcontractors or successors, by their participation in the RFP process, shall indemnify, save and hold the State and its employees and agents free and harmless from all lawsuits, causes of action, debts, rights, judgments, claims, demands, damages, losses and expenses or whatsoever kind in law or equity, known and unknown, foreseen and unforeseen, arising from or out of this RFP and/or any subsequent acts related thereto, including but not limited to the recommendation of a contractor and any action brought by an unsuccessful applicant.
10. All grant awards are subject to the availability of funding.