



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Residential Sector
Market Characterization Study
for New Construction and Existing Homes

DATE ISSUED: 11/15/2024

QUESTIONS ON RFP DUE: 12/2/2024

PROPOSALS DUE: 12/20/2024

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INTRODUCTION

This Request for Proposals is to select a Contractor or team of Contractors to complete a residential sector market characterization study for new construction and existing homes. The study will characterize Vermont's current existing home and new construction residential markets by documenting building shell, cooling, heating, water heating, appliance, and electric panel details. The study will assess adherence to Vermont's Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) in the new construction market. The consultant will also be responsible for comparing current results to previous Vermont market characterizations and describing trends over time, as well as identifying areas of opportunity for further energy efficiency improvements in Vermont's residential sector.

Potential contractors must have extensive experience and demonstrated abilities in relevant evaluation techniques, strategies, and principles, including but not limited to study design, participant recruitment, data analysis, statistical sampling design, variance and bias, and report writing. **The budget for this total project is not-to-exceed \$650,000. The expected work schedule is 18 months and the expected contract period is 24 months.**

The Department of Public Service (PSD) is an agency within the Executive Branch of the Vermont state government that represents the public interest in energy, telecommunications, water, and wastewater utility matters. The PSD's mission is to serve all Vermont citizens through public advocacy, planning, programs, and other actions that meet the public's need for least-cost, environmentally sound, efficient, reliable, secure, sustainable, and safe energy, telecommunications, and regulated utility systems in the state for the short and long term.

Proposals are due by 4:00 PM 12/20/2024, the PSD intends to select a consultant by 01/15/2025. The contract will be executed as soon as practicable following the award; this can take up to eight weeks.

Questions about the RFP should be submitted via e-mail by 12/02/2024. Responses to questions will be posted on the [Vermont Business Registry](#) and the PSD website under the [Request for Proposals section](#).

Responses to this RFP should be sent in electronic format only. The proposals must arrive before the deadline. Proposals and questions should be addressed to:

Philip Picotte
Email: philip.picotte@vermont.gov

Date of Issue of the RFP	11/15/2024
Last Day for Submitting Questions	12/02/2024
PSD Response to Vendor Questions	12/06/2024
Proposal Due Date	12/20/2024

SCOPE OF WORK

The Vermont Department of Public Service is seeking an experienced energy efficiency program evaluation Consultant to provide residential sector (new construction and existing homes) market characterization studies related to the planning and evaluation of Vermont electric efficiency utility (EEU) programs.

The Department conducts its evaluation efforts in cooperation with the EEs: Efficiency Vermont (EVT) operated by Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC); Burlington Electric Department (BED), who delivers the EEU service to electric ratepayers in the City of Burlington; and Vermont Gas Systems (VGS), who delivers natural-gas efficiency services in their territory.

The Department conducts market characterization studies on a periodic basis; the last residential study began in 2020. The most recent market studies for both the residential and commercial sector can be found here: <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/evaluations-and-studies>. Respondents are encouraged to review the most recent study and the other materials at this site to familiarize themselves with the scope and methodology of the Department's past energy efficiency market characterization efforts.

The primary purpose of this study is to document current baseline data for existing homes and new construction in the residential sector. The study will document the existing saturation and efficiency levels of features such building shell, cooling, heating, water heating, appliance, and electric panel details, including age and fuel types, and adherence to Residential Building Energy Standards for new construction. Respondents are expected to propose a mix of remote (phone or internet) surveys and on-site verification techniques as the data collection methods. Separately, proposals should identify what market actors will be interviewed, such as energy efficiency program participants and non-participants, installers, distributors, and trade allies. Proposals should also address market actor awareness and opinions of the EEs services and recommendations for improvement.

Surveys and on-site assessments will not need to include comprehensive energy audit-type building measurements and detailed modeling of specific site energy use. Rather, data collection efforts will gather information on current physical building and equipment characteristics. (Blower door tests will be required for homes without recent blower door test results available.) The surveys will gather qualitative data on customer perceptions and receptiveness of energy efficiency as a practice as well as the quality of service provided by the EEs. The on-site assessments are not detailed quantitative energy audits; however, respondent proposals should include a simple summary report of findings for homeowners to use as a future resource for improving efficiency. This report would outline current conditions, indicate priority improvements, and direct the homeowner to discuss the findings with the relevant EEU.

The Consultant will use these surveys and assessments to characterize the existing homes and residential new construction markets in Vermont. Studies will propose methodologies that characterize the following territories: (1) statewide, (2) EVT's service territory (3) BED's service territory and (4) VGS service territory.

EEU territories vary in size and nature, and VGS territory overlaps with portions of EVT and BED territories. Proposals should outline a statistical sampling design able to answer multiple research questions with a single coordinated approach (include sample sizes and justify oversampling in territories as needed). Statistical confidence of findings should be proposed for the individual EEU territories and for the entire study. The PSD seeks the strongest and most reliable approach for accomplishing the goals of the research while keeping the study within the budget.

Task 1: Study of Residential New Construction and Major Renovation Projects for Single and Multi-Family Dwellings

The selected Consultant will use phone or internet surveys and on-site visits to document building and equipment “as-built” status and characterize current energy efficiency levels being achieved in these markets including, but not limited to:

- A. Determine HVAC equipment baseline including: size, type, fuel type, and associated efficiency characteristics of all HVAC equipment, including balanced ventilation systems, whole building ventilation controls, heating and cooling, water heating, air and ground source heat pump saturations, and use of wood for fuel. Also include thermostat types (smart, programmable and manual), customer thermostat usage practices, and Home Energy Management Systems. For heat pumps, survey homeowners about how the unit is being operated, share of heating load, and if window unit air conditioning was present prior to installation. Finally, record pertinent information about electric panel amperage capacity and open panel spaces, on-site Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) and energy storage systems.
- B. Residential building shell characteristics: Respondents should propose a method for assessing building shell characteristics in addition to the required blower door tests (methods could include visual inspection of insulation levels and others). Respondents should also propose a method for determining adherence to the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES). The proposed method should focus on technical compliance levels and be comparable to the method used in the most recent Vermont residential market assessment. (Sampling should include enough buildings to establish both single family and multi-family compliance.) The presence of a RBES certificate should be noted during data collection.
- C. Determine major appliance saturation baselines including: presence, number, size, type, fuel and efficiency characteristics (e.g., ENERGY STAR[®] or not) of all major household appliances. Gather age information for major appliances including refrigerators and freezers. Lighting and consumer electronics, such as televisions, computers, set-top boxes and game consoles, are not part of the study.
- D. Determine the characteristics of the renovation market (including gut rehabilitation and major additions) such as: practices regarding building shell efficiency, adherence to energy codes, associated appliance change-out, the degree which homeowners are working with EEUs when renovating and how energy efficiency might be better incorporated into the market.

Task 1 should take into account that the PSD expects the contractor will utilize approaches that will make it easy and practical to compare the new data with the data gathered through the PSD's past surveys and interview instruments for prior market characterization studies in Vermont. This could include the use of parts or all of previous survey instruments. (These instruments can be made available on request.) Task 1 should also include the development and delivery of a simple summary report of findings to building owners after on-site visits with appropriate recommended actions.

Task 2: Study of Existing Residential Single and Multi-Family Dwellings

The selected Consultant will include phone or internet surveys and on-site visits to document building and equipment "as-is" status and characterize current energy efficiency levels being achieved in these markets including but not limited to:

- A. Determine HVAC equipment baseline including: size, type, fuel type, and associated efficiency characteristics of all HVAC equipment, including balanced ventilation systems, whole building ventilation controls, heating and cooling, water heating, air and ground source heat pump saturations, and use of wood for fuel. Also include thermostat types (smart, programmable and manual), customer thermostat usage practices, and Home Energy Management Systems. For heat pumps, survey homeowners about how the unit is being operated, share of heating load, and if window unit air conditioning was present prior to installation. Finally, record pertinent information about electric panel amperage capacity and open panel spaces, on-site Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) and energy storage systems.
- B. Residential building shell characteristics: Respondents should propose a method for assessing building shell characteristics in addition to the required blower door tests (methods could include visual inspection of insulation levels and others). Respondents should also propose a method for determining adherence to the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES). The proposed method should focus on technical compliance levels and be comparable to the method used in the most recent Vermont residential market assessment. (Sampling should include enough buildings to establish both single family and multi-family compliance.) The presence of a RBES certificate should be noted during data collection.
- C. Determine major appliance saturation baselines including: presence, number, size, type, fuel and efficiency characteristics (e.g., ENERGY STAR[®] or not) of all major household appliances. Gather age information for major appliances including refrigerators and freezers. Lighting and consumer electronics, such as televisions, computers, set-top boxes and game consoles are not part of the study.
- D. For a representative sample of homes which are site-visited that use deliverable fuels (e.g., oil or propane), natural gas and electricity (heat pump, heat pump with supplement resistance baseboard and resistance baseboard) for space heat, obtain at least one year's worth of fuel/energy usage data and use that information to estimate home heating loads (in units of fuel and MMBtu/sq.ft.) as well as total energy intensity.

Alternative approaches that reduce the number of required surveys, such as data analysis of billing or consumption data, are permissible.

Task 2 should take into account that the PSD expects the contractor will utilize approaches that will make it easy and practical to compare the new data with the data gathered through the PSD's past survey and interview instruments for prior market characterization studies in Vermont. This could include the use of parts or all of previous survey instruments. Task 2 should also take into account the development and delivery of a simple summary report of findings to provide to building owners after on-site visits with appropriate recommended actions.

Note: If sampling for Task 1 and 2 includes multi-family buildings more than three stories in height, then the Commercial Market Characterization Consultant will be asked to collect data for those buildings and provide it to the PSD for use in the Residential Sector study. Co-ordination between contractors during the sampling phase is required.

Task 3: RBES Awareness, EEU Service Quality and Process Insights

The Contractor should use interviews and on-site data collection to gather data on awareness of, attitudes toward, and prior experience with RBES, as well as EEU programs and services by program participants and non-participants. Analysis of service quality and process insights should consider reasons for participation and non-participation in efficiency programs; including but not limited to participation motivation, barriers to participation and factors influencing decision making related to using or not using EEU services as well as attitudes, perceptions, energy efficiency literacy, and general awareness related to efficiency and EEU services.

Consultants should identify how EEU services could be modified to increase participation, improve operations and augment program design based on insights gleaned from characterizing the market. A discussion of these and other relevant qualitative observations should be made by the Consultant throughout the study.

Task 4: Market Actor Insights

Proposals should address an overall approach for surveying market actors. Areas of interest include retailer, installer, energy assessor, and homeowner insights, especially related to the following: circulator pumps, cold climate heat pumps, and heat pump water heaters. Proposals should also address market actor awareness and opinions of the EEU's services and recommendations for improvement.

Task 5: Characterization of EEU Jurisdictions and the State as a Whole

The consultant should propose a method for characterizing the state as whole and for each EEU jurisdiction. In addition to the overall statewide baseline, proposals should address the method and sample sizes for characterizing buildings and equipment in both new construction and existing residential buildings in each of the EEU jurisdictions (EVT, BED, and VGS). Proposals should include anticipated statistical confidence and precision levels of samples.

Task 6: Comparison of Results to Prior Vermont Residential Market Characterizations

The consultant should review the past residential market assessments posted on the Department's website and propose an analysis for comparing the results of this market characterization to the prior market characterizations. The objective of this task is to characterize how the Vermont

residential markets (existing homes and new construction) have changed over time. Prior residential market assessments include the following:

- 2020 Residential Market Assessment (completed 2023)
 - Single-Family New Construction Baseline & Code Compliance Study
https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/VT_2020_SF_RNC_Baseline_Final_Report_Jan242023.pdf
 - Single-Family Existing Homes Baseline Study
https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/VT_2020_SF_EX_Baseline_Final_Report_Jan242023.pdf
 - Multifamily Baseline Study
https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/VT_2020_MF_Baseline_Final_Report_Jan242023.pdf
- 2016 Residential Market Assessments (completed 2018/2019)
 - New Construction On-site Report with RBES Compliance
<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/VT%20SFNC%20Overall%20Report.pdf>
 - Existing Buildings On-site Report
<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/VT%20SF%20Existing%20Homes%20Overall%20Report%20-%20FINAL%20022719.pdf>
 - Multi-Family On-site Report
<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Vermont%20MF%20Onsite%20Report%20-%20FINAL%2009.06.18.pdf>

Pre-2016 market assessments are available upon request.

Task 7: Identify areas of opportunity for improving energy efficiency in the residential sector in Vermont, including both existing housing as well as new construction.

Drawing upon all the results of the study as well as the contractor’s experience and knowledge, identify any promising opportunities for improving the energy efficiency in existing homes, new construction, or major rehab/space addition market, which might be targeted by EEU programs and/or state policies in Vermont.

KICK-OFF MEETING AND REVISED WORK PLAN

If required, the Selected Contractor may meet with PSD staff and any other stakeholders as determined by the PSD to ensure a common understanding of the project’s needs and the proposed work efforts and products. Contractors should be prepared to identify the level of stakeholder assistance needed to carry out the work effectively, and the timelines associated with this assistance. This meeting should occur remotely within two weeks from the award of the evaluation contract unless directed otherwise by the PSD.

Following the kick-off meeting, a revised work plan documenting the common understandings between the contractors and the PSD (and stakeholders) should be submitted to the PSD. This plan should represent the detailed schedule for completion of interim products (e.g. any sampling plans, draft analysis plans, etc.) and final report products (e.g. the draft and final reports for new/existing single-family , and final project databases). The revised work plan should be provided to the PSD within two weeks following the kick-off meeting.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Management responsibilities include regular updates with the PSD project manager. The selected Consultant shall assign one project manager that will be the lead in terms of communication with the PSD. Management responsibilities include regular, every two weeks (at a minimum) updates with the PSD project manager via conference call, in which Consultant will provide a project progress review.

In addition, the Consultant shall prepare a monthly written report indicating the evaluation progress over the prior month, the planned activities for the next month, any issues that need to be addressed with suggested in-budget resolutions. These reports must be filed with the PSD manager by the 10th day of the month.

In addition, the Consultant should plan and budget for facilitating sufficient collaboration between the PSD and EEU's. The PSD is interested in including the EEU's input and perspective when appropriate. For example, the PSD will invite the EEU's to provide comments on draft evaluation instruments throughout the study including but not limited to survey design and sampling methodologies. Part of the Consultant's role will be to efficiently synthesize collaborative input.

BUDGETS

Respondents should clearly outline budgets for each component of this work as established in the scope of work and for the total project, including project management, kickoff meetings, database management, and reporting. Hourly rates should be identified and remain the same for the duration of the contract. Travel-related costs (mileage, meals, and lodging reimbursement) should be identified, budgeted separately, and then built into hourly billing rates. Should this not be possible or practical, the contractor should provide a reasonable argument as to why this is the case.

At the discretion of the State, a contract resulting from this RFP may provide that the State withhold a percentage of the total amount payable for some or all deliverables. Such retainage will be payable upon satisfactory completion and State acceptance in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract. **The Budget for this project is Not-To-Exceed \$650,000.**

PERFORMANCE

Contractor must agree to the following performance measure language:

1. Contractors will hold bi-weekly meetings with the Department to discuss progress.
2. Contractor shall notify the Department in a timely fashion should they anticipate any material impacts to either schedule or budget may occur and present a plan to mitigate those impacts.
3. Extensions to agreed-upon deliverable dates require approval of the Department.
4. Where possible, the contractor shall submit all work in advance of deadlines to allow adequate time for PSD review and production.

If the quality of work described above were to deteriorate in any way, the department would request that the work be resubmitted immediately at no additional charge. If there were no immediate improvement in the overall quality of work, the Department would no longer retain the Contractor.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Consultant hired must meet the following General Requirements:

1. Consultant(s) must have extensive experience and demonstrated abilities in all relevant aspects of energy efficiency evaluation techniques, strategies, and principles, including study design, participant recruitment, on-site data gathering in residential and/or commercial buildings, data analysis, statistical sampling design to address reliability, variance, and bias; and report writing. Consultants should possess a good knowledge of energy efficiency program design, implementation, monitoring, verification, and evaluation.
2. Consultant(s) must be fully conversant with current energy efficiency information technology systems, DSM tracking systems, and applications.
3. Consultant(s) must not be currently employed by a partner firm in Efficiency Vermont, by EVT itself, by the Burlington Electric Department or Vermont Gas Systems, and must agree not to undertake such employment during the term of this contract without explicit approval from the Department of Public Service.
4. Consultant(s) must be available to begin work immediately after the contract is awarded and commit to work completion as quickly as possible.
5. Due to the field sampling required for this study consultants should have the ability to be present in Vermont.
6. A lead Consulting firm and lead contact person must be identified in joint proposals.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Respondents must provide an hourly rate for various personnel to be assigned to each task identified in the proposal. While actual hours by task cannot be known with precision in advance, a best estimate should be provided with the proposal.
2. A Bidder shall be solely responsible for all expenses incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP and shall be responsible for all expenses associated with any

- presentations or demonstrations associated with this request and/or any proposals made.
3. Ownership of all work products will rest with the Department.
 4. Any work products will be delivered to the Department upon termination of the project.
 5. Contractors(s) must agree to enter a confidentiality agreement to protect certain customer specific information from public disclosure, as necessary.
 6. The PSD reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP at any time if the best interest of the State requires such action.
 7. The PSD reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received and to accept any portion of a proposal if deemed in the best interest of the State.
 8. The PSD reserves the right to accept or reject any bids, in whole or in part, with or without cause in the best interest of the State and to obtain clarification or additional information.
 9. The PSD reserves the right to to make purchases outside of the awarded Contracts where it is deemed in the best interest of the State.
 10. News releases pertaining to this RFP, contract award, or the Project shall NOT be made without prior written approval from the PSD.
 11. The PSD will select the winning bidder based on its sole opinion that the proposal submitted will be the most advantageous for the State.
 12. The PSD reserves the right to select without further discussing the proposals received. Therefore, each proposal must be submitted in the most complete and accurate manner possible. The PSD reserves the right to negotiate with the selected bidder in the best interests of the State.
 13. The PSD reserves the right to cancel any contract resulting from this RFP for cause, as will be defined in the final contract's Terms and Conditions.
 14. Contractor agrees to the terms and conditions of Attachment C which outline the Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants. Any requested deviations from these Attachments must be presented in the response to this RFP. The PSD and the State reserve the right to deny any such request.

The PSD assumes no liability in any fashion with respect to this RFP or any matters related thereto. All prospective service providers and their assigns or successors, by their participation in the RFP process, shall indemnify, save and hold the PSD and its employees and agents free and harmless from all suits, causes of action, debts, rights, judgments, claims, demands, accounts, damages, costs, losses and expenses of 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 service provider and any action brought by an unsuccessful prospective service provider.

It is imperative that the Contractor(s) reveal any connections they or any subcontractors have that may indicate a conflict of interest. A Contractor may not assign or subcontract the performance of a Contract or any portion thereof to any other entity without the prior written approval of the State.

As data handled by the selected Contractor(s) is potentially sensitive in nature, the Contractor will need to sign and abide by a confidentiality agreement.

Bidder Confidentiality and Access to Public Records: All responses and other information disclosed in connection with an RFP become the property of the State and, once the resulting Contract is finalized, may be subject to disclosure under the State's Public Records Act, [1 V.S.A. § 315](#) et seq. Accordingly, the RFP must instruct the bidder to identify any material included

in the response that is considered by the bidder to be proprietary or otherwise exempt from public disclosure in the event of a public records request, pursuant to [1 V.S.A. § 317\(c\)](#). The

bidder's response must include a written explanation for each marked section that would support a reasonable claim of exemption, such as, for example, a description of the proprietary nature of the information and the harm that would occur should the material be disclosed. Additionally, the RFP must instruct the bidder to include a redacted copy of its response. Redactions must be limited so that the reviewer may understand the nature of the information being withheld. It is typically inappropriate to redact entire pages, or to redact the titles/captions of tables and

figures. Under no circumstances can the entire response or price information be marked confidential. Should the Agency have concerns about the submitted redactions/explanations or lack thereof, the Agency may invite the bidder to provide sufficient explanation and/or appropriate redaction rights.

DATABASES FROM PROJECT

All survey, on-site, and (if applicable) interview data collected in this project shall be entered into an electronic database(s) and provided to PSD to support additional analysis and future evaluations. Data shall be submitted to the PSD in a mutually acceptable, commonly usable electronic format and a documented data dictionary describing the database contents. Proposals should discuss the suggested database to be used and the planned data quality procedures.

All information and data collected under this project must be provided to PSD upon request to support additional analysis and comments by staff. Quality control procedures must be applied to ensure that data is organized and submitted in a mutually acceptable, commonly usable electronic format. A transfer of all data shall occur upon termination of the contract. However, any and all data and information must be provided to the Department upon request at any point during the project period.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The contractor selection process will be carried out by a proposal review team comprised of Department staff and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate by the PSD. The Team will follow all appropriate procedures and requirements as required under the State of Vermont's acquisition process. Once a proposal has been selected, PSD will immediately notify

Respondents of their status. A successful contractor or contractor team must be available to begin work immediately following receipt of the award.

The Department's Proposal Review Team will score and review all proposals according to the following Selection Criterion:

1. Experience and demonstrated capabilities in energy efficiency evaluation and market characterization, including study design and data analysis. This includes experience with participant recruitment, especially renter and low-income participant recruitment. Please list two references that may be contacted to verify whether prior work was or was not satisfactory.
2. Experience of the key staff successfully completing similar projects, and the firm's ability to provide timely and in-budget results.
3. Ability to commit key staff for the duration of the project and complete the requested scope of work within the scheduled timeframe.
4. Experience of key personnel, as well as the proposed staffing plan.
5. Price and value.
6. Writing skills and abilities, including a demonstrated proficiency in conveying complex topics in clear and concise language (demonstrated through writing samples of key staff and overall quality of proposal).
7. Quality and completeness of the proposal (in terms of responsiveness to this Request for Proposal, organization, graphics, grammar, spelling, etc). The clarity and organizational aspects of the proposal will be considered an indication of those qualities in future deliverables from the contractor.

The Department may follow up with a round of questions to all or some of the applicants based on the information in the proposals. A phone interview may also be scheduled for additional clarification of the information in the proposals and the follow-up responses. The review sheet, provided on the following page, includes scoring elements as well as non-quantitative elements that will be considered when awarding a contract. The proposal with the highest score may not ultimately be awarded the contract.

Proposal Review Sheet

PROPOSER: _____

REVIEWER: _____

Rate proposal on each criterion on the following scale: 1=Fails criterion. 2= Minimally meets criterion. 3=Meets criterion. 4=Somewhat exceeds criterion. 5= Greatly exceeds criterion.

RATING (1-5)	CRITERIA
	1. Experience and demonstrated capabilities in energy efficiency evaluation and market characterization.
	2. Experience of <i>key personnel</i> in completing similar projects and ability to provide on-time, on-budget reports.
	3. Experience of <i>the Program Manager</i> and the <i>Bidding Firm(s)</i> in successfully completing similar projects and ability to provide on-time, on-budget results.
Score A-C Below	4. The proposal presentation for the following criteria:
	A. Clear understanding of requirements as laid out in the RFP; practicality of the proposed approach in meeting objective.
	B. Technical expertise to complete the project.
	C. Quantity and quality of work relative to specified budget.
	5. Proposed staffing plan of bidder, including staff assignments.
	6. Clarity and reasonableness of work plan, including definition and timeliness of tasks to be performed, quality assurance measures defined, and ability to start quickly.
	7. Timeline is reasonable and meets appropriate deadlines.
	8. Budget line items and amounts are sufficiently described and justified. Administrative costs are reasonable and competitive.
	9. Quality and completeness of the proposal (in terms of coverage, organization, graphics, grammar, spelling, etc.).
	10. Consultants/subs have an office located in Vermont 1=Yes 0=No
	11. Price.
	Total Score (Max 61 Pts. Possible)

12. **Other comments / qualitative reactions to proposal** including past performance of the bidder on PSD contracts and any proposed sub Consultants.

Notes on potential conflicts of interest:

PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

Proposals may include one or more contractors but should identify a primary lead contractor.

The proposal should clearly understand the issues to be addressed and describe how the contractor's proposed approach accomplishes the evaluation goals. The proposal should be structured to provide the following information:

1. Understanding of the scope of work and associated issues
2. Overview of the proposed approach
3. Detailed Work Plan and related task descriptions
4. Descriptions of similar projects
5. Qualifications of firm(s)
6. Qualification of individuals
7. Management and staff structure
8. References
9. Timeline
10. Task and total project budget that includes a listing of all staff assigned to the project and their time allocations and billing rates
11. Mandatory Bidder Form / Certificate of Compliance (see page 19 of this RFP)
12. Appendix A: Sample report from the prime contractor
13. Appendix B: Other attachments as appropriate

Understanding of the research goals and associated issues: This section should discuss the key issues associated with achieving the scope of work. It will allow the PSD to assess the contractor's understanding of the objectives that need to be addressed.

Overview of the proposed approach: This section should present an overview of the contractor's research overall approach/methodology, allowing the PSD to determine whether the proposed methods are appropriate to the objectives.

Detailed Work Plan and related task descriptions: This section should include a detailed work plan with a description of individual tasks/activities, a data management strategy (as necessary), and a staffing plan. This section should be descriptive enough to aid the PSD in understanding how the research will be conducted. This section should describe quality assurance measures that will be implemented to ensure that services will be delivered effectively, efficiently, timely, and competently. This section should also address any specific analytic approaches and related reporting activities.

Descriptions of similar projects conducted: This section provides a brief presentation of similar types of research conducted by the prime contractor and other key research team members. The discussion should allow PSD to assess the experiences of the contractor or the contractor team relative to the goals of this project.

Qualifications of firm(s): This section allows the contractor to present their corporate qualifications in addition to the above descriptions.

Qualification of individuals: The proposal should describe the individuals to be assigned to the tasks and their qualifications, along with the key staff's experience in successfully completing similar projects and the firm's ability to provide timely and in-budget results.

Management and staff structure: The proposals should clearly define the team's management and operational structure. Additionally, address the ability to commit key staff for the project's duration and complete the requested scope of work within the scheduled timeframe.

References: The contractor should provide at least two references for similar work from other clients. The references should include a brief description of the research effort, including the name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the client's representative for the referenced project.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

EXECUTIVE ORDER 05-16: CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS IN STATE PROCUREMENTS:

For bid amounts exceeding \$25,000.00, bidders are requested to complete the Climate Change Considerations in State Procurements Certification, which is included in the Certificate of Compliance for this RFP.

After consideration of all relevant factors, a bidder that demonstrates business practices that promote clean energy and address climate change as identified in the Certification, shall be given favorable consideration in the competitive bidding process. Such favorable consideration shall be consistent with and not supersede any preference given to resident bidders of the State and/or products raised or manufactured in the State, as explained in the Method of Award section. But, such favorable consideration shall not be employed if prohibited by law or other relevant authority or agreement.

WORKER CLASSIFICATION COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS:

In accordance with Section 32 of The Vermont Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Act No. 54), Bidders must comply with the following provisions and requirements.

1. **Self Reporting:** For bid amounts exceeding \$250,000.00, Bidder shall complete the appropriate section in the attached Certificate of Compliance for purposes of self-reporting information relating to past violations, convictions, suspensions, and any other information related to past performance relative to coding and classification of workers. The State is requiring information on any violations that occurred in the previous 12 months.
2. **Subcontractor Reporting:** For bid amounts exceeding \$250,000.00, Bidders are hereby notified that upon award of contract, and prior to contract execution, the

State shall be provided with a list of all proposed subcontractors and subcontractors' subcontractors, together with the identity of those subcontractors' workers compensation insurance providers, and additional required or requested information, as applicable, in accordance with Section 32 of The Vermont Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Act No. 54). This requirement does not apply to subcontractors providing supplies only and no labor to the overall contract or project. This list MUST be updated and provided to the State as additional subcontractors are hired. A sample form is available online at <http://bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms>. The subcontractor reporting form is not required to be submitted with the bid response.

ATTACHMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WITH CONTRACT

ATTACHMENT B – PAYMENT PROVISIONS

The maximum dollar amount payable under this contract is not intended as any form of a guaranteed amount. The Contractor will be paid for products or services actually delivered or performed, as specified in Attachment A, up to the maximum allowable amount specified on page 1 of this contract.

1. Prior to commencement of work and release of any payments, Contractor shall submit to the State:
 - a. a certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in Attachment C, Section 8 (Insurance), and with any additional requirements for insurance as may be set forth elsewhere in this contract; and
 - b. a current IRS Form W-9 (signed within the last six months).
2. Payment terms are **Net 30** days from the date the State receives an error-free invoice with all necessary and complete supporting documentation.
3. Contractor shall submit detailed invoices itemizing all work performed during the invoice period, including the dates of service, rates of pay, hours of work performed, and any other information and/or documentation appropriate and sufficient to substantiate the amount invoiced for payment by the State. All invoices must include the Contract # for this contract.
4. Contractor shall submit invoices to the State in accordance with the schedule set forth in this Attachment B. Unless a more particular schedule is provided herein, invoices shall be submitted not more frequently than monthly.
5. Invoices shall be submitted to the State at the following address: psd.invoice@vermont.gov.
6. The payment schedule for delivered products, or rates for services performed, and any additional reimbursements, are: _____.

ATTACHMENT C: STANDARD STATE PROVISIONS FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS

Revised October 1, 2024

“Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants” (revision version dated October 1, 2024) constitutes part of this Agreement and is hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein and shall apply to the purchase of all goods and/or services by the State under this Agreement. A copy of this document is available online at:

<https://bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms>.

MANDATORY BIDDER FORM / CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Complete sections A through E and sign at the end

Date:

For a bid to be considered valid, this form must be completed in its entirety, executed by a duly authorized representative of the bidder, and submitted as part of the response to the proposal.

- A. **NON COLLUSION:** Bidder hereby certifies that the prices quoted have been arrived at without collusion and that no prior information concerning these prices has been received from or given to a competitive company. If there is sufficient evidence to warrant investigation of the bid/contract process by the Office of the Attorney General, bidder understands that this paragraph might be used as a basis for litigation.
- B. **CONTRACT TERMS:** Bidder hereby acknowledges that is has read, understands and agrees to the terms of this RFP, including Attachment C: Standard State Contract Provisions, and any other contract attachments included with this RFP.
- C. **WORKER CLASSIFICATION COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT:** In accordance with Section 32 of The Vermont Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Act No. 54), the following provisions and requirements apply to Bidder when the amount of its bid exceeds \$250,000.00.

Self-Reporting. Bidder hereby self-reports the following information relating to past violations, convictions, suspensions, and any other information related to past performance relative to coding and classification of workers, that occurred in the previous 12 months.

Summary of Detailed Information	Date of Notification	Outcome

Subcontractor Reporting. Bidder hereby acknowledges and agrees that if it is a successful bidder, prior to execution of any contract resulting from this RFP, Bidder will provide to the State a list of all proposed subcontractors and subcontractors' subcontractors, together with the identity of those subcontractors' workers compensation insurance providers, and additional required or requested information, as applicable, in accordance with Section 32 of The Vermont Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Act No. 54), and Bidder will provide any update of such list to the State as additional subcontractors are hired.

Bidder further acknowledges and agrees that the failure to submit subcontractor reporting in accordance with Section 32 of The Vermont Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Act No. 54) will constitute non-compliance and may result in cancellation of contract and/or restriction from bidding on future state contracts.

D. Executive Order 05–16: Climate Change Considerations in State Procurements Certification

Bidder certifies to the following (Bidder may attach any desired explanation or substantiation. Please also note that Bidder may be asked to provide documentation for any applicable claims):

1. Bidder owns, leases or utilizes, for business purposes, space that has received:

- Energy Star® Certification
- LEED®, Green Globes®, or Living Buildings ChallengeSM Certification
- Other internationally recognized building certification:

2. Bidder has received incentives or rebates from an Energy Efficiency Utility or Energy Efficiency Program in the last five years for energy efficient improvements made at bidder's place of business. Please explain:

3. Please Check all that apply:

- Bidder can claim on-site renewable power or anaerobic-digester power ("cow-power"). Or bidder consumes renewable electricity through voluntary purchase or offset, provided no such claimed power can be double-claimed by another party.
- Bidder uses renewable biomass or bio-fuel for the purposes of thermal (heat) energy at its place of business.
- Bidder's heating system has modern, high-efficiency units (boilers, furnaces, stoves, etc.), having reduced emissions of particulate matter and other air pollutants.
- Bidder tracks its energy consumption and harmful greenhouse gas emissions. What tool is used to do this? _____
- Bidder promotes the use of plug-in electric vehicles by providing electric vehicle charging, electric fleet vehicles, preferred parking, designated parking, purchase or lease incentives, etc..
- Bidder offers employees an option for a fossil fuel divestment retirement account.

- Bidder offers products or services that reduce waste, conserve water, or promote energy efficiency and conservation. Please explain:

4. Please list any additional practices that promote clean energy and take action to address climate change:

E. Executive Order 02 – 22: Solidarity with the Ukrainian People

- By checking this box, Bidder certifies that none of the goods, products, or materials offered in response to this solicitation are Russian-sourced goods or produced by Russian entities. If Bidder is unable to check the box, it shall indicate in the table below which of the applicable offerings are Russian-sourced goods and/or which are produced by Russian entities. An additional column is provided for any note or comment that you may have.

Provided Equipment or Product	Note or Comment

Bidder Name: _____ Contact Name: _____

Address: _____ Fax Number: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

By: _____ Name: _____

Signature of Bidder (or Representative)

(Type or Print)

END OF CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

EXAMPLE: SUBCONTRACTOR REPORTING FORM

This form is provided for reference only and not required for proposals.

This form must be completed in its entirety and submitted prior to contract execution and updated as necessary and provided to the State as additional subcontractors are hired.

The Department of Buildings and General Services in accordance with Act 54, Section 32 of the Acts of 2009 and for total project costs exceeding \$250,000.00 requires bidders to comply with the following provisions and requirements.

Contractor is required to provide a list of subcontractors on the job along with lists of subcontractor's subcontractors and by whom those subcontractors are insured for workers' compensation purposes. Include additional pages if necessary. This is not a requirement for subcontractor's providing supplies only and no labor to the overall contract or project.

Subcontractor	Insured By		Subcontractor's Sub	Insured By

Date: _____

Name of Company: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

Title: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Fax Number: _____

By: _____

Name: _____

Failure to adhere to Act 54, Section 32 of the Acts of 2009 and submit Subcontractor Reporting: Worker Classification Compliance Requirement will constitute non-compliance and may result in cancellation of contract and/or forfeiture of future bidding privileges until resolved.

Send Completed Form to: Office of Purchasing & Contracting
133 State St, 5th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05633