



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) FOR PLANNING, EVALUATION, AND RESEARCH TASKS

Energy Trust of Oregon, Inc. (Energy Trust), an Oregon non-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation, seeks qualifications from consultants with skills in qualitative research, quantitative research, engineering and measure analysis, and/or resource assessment and resource planning assistance to maintain a pool of qualified consultants for work on Energy Trust planning, evaluation, and research projects.

Consultants will be selected for the pool based on their submissions as requested in this RFQ. Consultants will be accepted into the pool on an ongoing basis through December 31, 2024.

Energy Trust Background

Energy Trust is an independent nonprofit organization, selected and overseen by the Oregon Public Utility Commission, to lead Oregon utility customers in benefiting from saving energy and generating renewable power. Our services, cash incentives and solutions have helped participating customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas, and Avista save more than \$5.3 billion on their energy bills since 2002. The cumulative impact of our leadership since 2002 has been a contributing factor in our region's low energy costs and in building a sustainable energy future. More information about Energy Trust's background, funding sources, strategic and action plans, policies and programs are available on our website at www.energytrust.org/about.

RFQ Background

Energy Trust provides marketing, technical services, and incentives for a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures for customers of Portland General Electric and Pacific Power, and efficiency programs for NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas, and Avista throughout their Oregon service territories. Energy Trust also serves customers of NW Natural in Southwest Washington. Energy Trust's efficiency and direct-use renewable energy programs serve all customers for electricity. Energy Trust's renewable energy programs provide support for a range of renewable generation resources that produce less than 20 MW of power per site.

The purpose of the RFQ is to provide Energy Trust with a pool of qualified consultants who can quickly and easily respond to requests for planning, evaluation, and research projects. Energy Trust plans to approve contractors for this pool that are qualified for any number of individual work areas as described later in this RFQ. Note that Energy Trust is not seeking contractors that are vendors of software or other IT tools and services.

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While Energy Trust anticipates a distribution of assignments and funds, depending on the resources and expertise of the consultant pool, Energy Trust does not guarantee that any consultant selected for the pool through this RFQ will actually receive an assignment or funding for planning, evaluation, and research projects, which are described in more detail below.

Final contracts resulting from this RFQ would be expected to have terms of no longer than two years. Energy Trust contracting is subject to Energy Trust's Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) requirements: https://www.energytrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Supplier-Diversity-Program_v10-Final.pdf

Evaluation and Research: Energy Trust contracts for a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative research to inform program design and planning. Qualitative and quantitative research are also often performed as part of process and impact evaluations, which Energy Trust conducts for all of its major efficiency programs on a regular basis, and for renewable programs on an as-needed basis.

Energy Trust plans to use this RFQ to select contractors for smaller research projects (less than \$100,000 each). Several of these projects are anticipated to occur each year. Larger projects (over \$100,000) will be contracted through public requests for proposals (RFPs), RFQs, or requests for information (RFIs). In rare instances, projects may be sole-sourced based on unique firm qualifications.

Engineering and Measure Analysis: Energy Trust contracts for a variety of engineering and measure analysis work. Much of this work is to provide engineering and analytical support to staff as they consider whether to approve new prescriptive energy efficiency measures as cost-effective under standard utility tests (total resource cost test and utility cost test, explained in Energy Trust's cost-effectiveness policy on the Energy Trust website, <https://www.energytrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/4.06.000.pdf>).

Resource Assessment and Resource Planning Assistance: Energy Trust contracts for a variety of work related to operating, updating, and expanding the capabilities of its *Analytica*-based Resource Assessment model that is used to estimate future energy efficiency potential, most often in conjunction with utility integrated resource planning (IRP) processes.

Energy Trust will sometimes set up umbrella task order contracts so that resource assessment and resource planning tasks can be assigned and contracted for on an ongoing basis. Single-purpose contracts may also be set up for some larger tasks.

RFQ Schedule

Statements of qualifications are accepted on an ongoing basis through December 31, 2024. Respondent submissions will be reviewed, and respondents will be notified of acceptance into the pool within 30 days of Energy Trust's receipt of a complete submission. Energy Trust may contract with contractors accepted into the RFQ pool on or after January 1, 2023.

Respondents may submit responses regarding any or all of the work areas described below. For example, they might choose to submit qualifications only for qualitative research. Or respondents may choose to submit qualifications for all of the work areas. Consultants accepted into the pool to be created as a result of this RFQ may also respond separately to larger Energy Trust requests for proposals or qualifications. As noted above, this pool is eligible to

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receive contracts for tasks and projects under the work areas described below, but no contracts are guaranteed even once accepted into the pool.

Any questions may be directed to Sarah Castor, Evaluation & Engineering Manager, sarah.castor@energytrust.org.

Description of Work Areas and Possible Contract Tasks

Listed below are four broad work areas under which planning, evaluation, and research tasks and projects are categorized and that contractors may submit qualifications for, as well as some detail on the types of tasks that would likely be part of a project in a given work area.

1. Qualitative Evaluation and Research

Perform qualitative evaluation and research, which could include tasks such as:

- Performing a literature review
- Performing process mapping, customer journey mapping and/or logic modeling
- Performing sample design
- Designing survey instruments
- Designing focus group discussion guides
- Designing interview guides
- Designing other data collection approaches – e.g., ride-alongs, virtual diaries, etc.
- Fielding surveys
- Conducting focus groups
- Conducting interviews
- Performing other data collection
- Performing qualitative data analysis
- Reporting

2. Quantitative Evaluation and Research

Perform quantitative evaluation and research, which could include tasks such as:

- Performing sample design
- Designing survey instruments
- Designing other data collection approaches – e.g., metering, etc.
- Fielding surveys
- Performing other data collection
- Performing quantitative data analysis
- Performing billing analysis
- Performing engineering review of projects
- Performing calibrated building simulation modeling
- Reporting

3. Engineering and Measure Analysis

Assist Energy Trust in analyzing or reviewing analysis of cost, savings, measure life, load shapes, and applications for potential energy efficiency measures, which could include:

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- Developing or reviewing assumptions and/or tools (e.g., Excel-based calculators)
- Comparing to established sources
- Critiquing reliability
- Negotiating with Program Management Contractor and Program Delivery Contractor measure experts to reach agreement on assumptions
- Documenting findings
- Assisting with benefit/cost calculations
- Performing building simulation modeling

4. Resource Assessment and Resource Planning Assistance

Develop, update, review, and/or revise inputs to, and findings from, various energy simulation models. Tasks could include:

- Updating and/or expanding the capabilities of Energy Trust's *Analytica*-based Resource Assessment model
- Operating Energy Trust's Resource Assessment model
- Reviewing/verifying results of energy modeling exercises
- Modeling whole home/building energy savings from different energy efficiency measures
- Developing presentations for utility integrated resource planning meetings and presenting related materials at these meetings
- Advising on the development of new energy simulation models
- Assisting with calibration of energy simulation models
- Updating measure characterizations for modeling based on updated Energy Trust data and/or other data sources
- Researching and characterizing emerging technology measures
- Providing training on analysis and modeling protocols
- Developing, updating, and refining load and/or savings profiles

Contractors also periodically assist in developing new avoided cost estimates in collaboration with Energy Trust's five funding utilities and the Oregon Public Utility Commission.

Completed work products may be posted and available to the public on Energy Trust's website (see <https://www.energytrust.org/about/reports-financials/documents/>).

Submission Requirements

Responses containing the information, and in the format, required below must be submitted electronically only to Sarah Castor, Evaluation & Engineering Manager, sarah.castor@energytrust.org.

1. Consultant qualifications and experience (up to 10 pages)

In this section, respondents should describe their qualifications and experience, including the following information:

- Respondent's primary business, length of time in business, and location of office(s).
- Contact information for respondent staff to whom Energy Trust should send inquiries about work related to this RFQ.
- The work area(s) for which respondent seeks to be considered.
- A summary of relevant project experience for the work areas and associated tasks listed in "Description of Work Areas and Possible Contract Tasks" above, including dates and a brief description of the nature and scope of work performed.
 - Energy Trust is interested in respondent project experience demonstrating familiarity with national/regional energy and energy efficiency industry, and/or familiarity with markets and/or customer segments served by Energy Trust.
- A link to one or more examples of reports, portions of reports, or other work product(s) produced.
- Contact information for three references regarding relevant project experience.

Respondents may submit responses regarding any or all of the work areas described in "Description of Work Areas and Possible Contract Tasks" above. For example, they might choose to only submit qualifications for qualitative research. Or they can choose to submit qualifications for all of the work areas.

2. Diversity, equity, and inclusion qualifications and experience (up to 10 pages)

Energy Trust seeks to contract with organizations that share its commitment to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and business environment and that apply a diversity and equity perspective to their work in planning, evaluation, and research as outlined in this RFQ. As part of Energy Trust's Supplier Diversity Program, this RFQ requests information about firm certifications with Business Oregon's Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) and non-certified statuses as BIPOC- and woman-owned businesses. Respondents must provide responses to each of the questions in Appendix A, and respondents may provide other relevant information describing qualifications and experience related to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.

3. Information on staffing and rates (up to 25 pages)

In this section, respondents should include the following information:

- A list of key staff that would be assigned to the types of contract scopes and tasks described in #1, above.
- Resumes, including relevant licenses, certifications, and training, as well as relevant experience, for key staff.

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- Proposed rates and pricing for all of the work areas for which you are submitting a response. Energy Trust is interested in fully loaded hourly time and materials pricing for key staff members as well as alternative price structures. Please include proposed rates for work that would be performed in 2023 and 2024.

4. Conflict of interest disclosure (up to 1 page)

In this section, respondents should disclose any direct or indirect, actual or potential conflicts of interest with Energy Trust.

A “direct or indirect conflict” is defined as any situation in which an individual or member of their family or close business or personal acquaintance, is employed by Energy Trust or the Oregon Public Utility Commission, or may be reasonably construed to have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest in any business affairs of Energy Trust, whether because of a proposed contract or transaction to which Energy Trust may be a party or may be interested or is under consideration, or whether such conflict is purely conceptual, because of similarity of business interests or affairs. If no such conflict exists, provide an explicit statement to that effect. The determination of whether a conflict of interest exists is left to Energy Trust at its sole discretion.

5. Interest in teaming (up to 1 page)

In previous solicitation processes, firms have expressed interest in forming teams to work collaboratively on contracts resulting from this RFQ or from other Energy Trust requests for proposals. Energy Trust is interested in assisting respondents in identifying other firms for teaming, including to fulfill the requirements of the Supplier Diversity Program.

Energy Trust will maintain a list of respondents interested in teaming and provide information to other respondents of this RFQ. Information provided to other respondents will include only:

- Respondent contact information for teaming inquiries
- Work areas submitted by respondent for this RFQ
- Respondent firm ownership status from Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Qualifications & Experience item 1.

Respondents may ask to be removed from this interest list at their discretion. Participation in this list is not required for selection into the pool and will not be considered in selection for projects. Proposals that arise out of participation in the list will be evaluated and selected along the same lines as all other proposals, as described above.

In this section, respondents should include the following information:

1. Does Energy Trust have respondent’s permission to share contact information, work areas and firm ownership status with other RFQ respondents who request it? Yes/No
2. If yes to (1), provide contact information for other respondents to communicate with you about teaming. If there are different contacts for different work areas, please provide all relevant contacts and their corresponding work area(s).

Selection of Consultants for Planning, Evaluation, and Research Projects

The typical process for selecting consultants for a specific planning, evaluation, and research project is described below.

Energy Trust provides a statement of work to a consultant (or a handful of consultants) accepted into the RFQ pool, and asks the consultant or consultants for a bid, which includes:

- A budget detailing the number of hours, proposed staff (including any subcontractors), rates, and any other costs
- A short summary of qualifications to do the work described in the statement of work, proposed approach, and a rough timeline

In selecting a consultant (or a handful of consultants) to provide a bid for a statement of work, Energy Trust considers the following criteria:

- Qualifications of proposed staff
- Qualifications of firm
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion qualifications
- Supplier Diversity Program requirements

In selecting a consultant to perform the work, Energy Trust considers the criteria above, as well as the following criteria:

- Quality of the short summary of qualifications to do the work described in the statement of work, proposed approach, and a rough timeline
- Budget

RFQ Governing Provisions

By submitting a response to this RFQ, respondent represents that it is authorized to submit a response and explicitly agrees and accepts the following provisions of this RFQ and all other terms and conditions set forth in this RFQ.

Right to Accept or Reject

This RFQ is not an agreement to purchase goods or services. Energy Trust is not bound to enter into a contract for goods or services with any qualified respondent. Energy Trust reserves the right to modify the terms of this RFQ at any time in its sole discretion. This includes the right to cancel this RFQ at any time. Energy Trust reserves the right to waive any nonconformity in submissions received, to accept or reject any or all of the items in the submission, and award any ultimate contract in whole or in part as it is deemed in Energy Trust's best interest.

Ownership of Responses

All materials submitted in response to this RFQ shall become the property of Energy Trust and will not be returned to the respondent.

Confidentiality

Respondents shall clearly identify those proprietary portions of their responses that they do not want revealed to third parties and label such portions as "Confidential Information." Except as required under Energy Trust policy, law or for regulatory purposes Energy Trust will maintain confidentiality of such information. Energy Trust may publish or otherwise share the list of consultants placed in the pool as a result of this RFQ, along with contact information for such consultants.

Respondent Expenses

Respondents are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing a response and for any subsequent negotiations. Energy Trust will not be liable to any Respondent for any claims, whether for costs or damages incurred by the respondent in preparing the response, loss of anticipated profit in connection with any final contract or any other matter whatsoever.

Appendix A. Diversity, equity, and inclusion qualifications and experience

Ownership, hiring practices, and policies

1. Indicate if respondent’s firm falls into one or more of the categories present in the table below. Please indicate all that apply.

	My firm is a...	My firm is seeking recognition as a...
COBID*: Emerging Small Business		
COBID*: Minority Business Enterprise		
COBID*: Women Business Enterprise		
COBID*: Service-Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise		
COBID**: Disadvantaged Business Enterprise		
Minority owned business		
Woman owned business		
Business certified through one or more State’s business inclusion and diversity programs that are not Oregon’s COBID Program. If yes, indicate the certification(s) in the space provided below.		
Business certified through a national business inclusion and diversity program that is not administered through Business Oregon’s COBID program. If yes, indicate the certification(s) in the space provided below.		

*Certified through Business Oregon’s Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID)

**Certified in this Federal Program administered by Business Oregon’s Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID)

2. **(Optional):** If your firm holds certification through a State (other than Oregon’s) business inclusion and diversity program or through a national business inclusion and diversity program that is not administered through Business Oregon’s COBID office, please indicate the certification held here.
3. Provide specific examples of activities, projects, or plans worked on or developed during the last 36 months that demonstrate how respondent promoted diversity, equity and inclusion within respondent’s company in the areas of (1) recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion and (2) training and professional development, and (3) respondent’s company operations and strategy.
4. Provide information regarding awards or recognition for respondent’s organizational policies and practices relating to diversity, equity and/or inclusion.

Planning, evaluation, and research experience

5. Provide specific examples of how respondent has collected, analyzed, and reported disaggregated firmographic data to baseline, benchmark and/or track participation of small- to medium-sized, rural, and/or minority- and woman-owned business customers.
6. Provide specific examples of how respondent has collected, analyzed, and reported disaggregated demographic data to baseline, benchmark, and/or track participation of residential customers with low and moderate incomes, living in rural areas, and/or communities of color.
7. Provide specific examples of how respondent has ensured cultural competence¹ in research or work and/or performed community-based research or work.

Experience in subcontracting with diverse firms and associations

8. Does respondent have an existing supplier diversity program?
 - a. If so, describe efforts respondent has made to increase business with woman-, minority-, and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses (i.e., does respondent's firm have a policy statement, participate in outreach activities, promote diverse firm subcontracting, publicize contract opportunities, provide certification assistance, etc.?)
 - b. If not, please explain why.
9. Does respondent mentor woman-, minority-, and service-disabled veteran-owned subcontractors?
 - a. If so, provide a summary of how respondent mentors mentor woman-, minority-, and service-disabled veteran-owned subcontractors.
 - b. If not, please explain why.

¹ The American Evaluation Association's [Public Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation](#) provides a detailed explanation of cultural competence in evaluation. While this statement is focused on evaluation, Energy Trust believes the practices outlined in the statement are applicable to the planning, evaluation, and research tasks described in this RFQ.