

Energy Trust of Oregon

Request for Proposals:

LED Grow Light Market Research

RFP Issued: **November 21, 2023**

Intent to Bid Due: **December 5, 2023**

Proposals Due: **January 5, 2024**

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About Energy Trust

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to delivering energy efficiency and renewable power benefits to 2.4 million utility customers. We are funded by and serve Oregon customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista, and Oregon and Washington customers of NW Natural. A non-stakeholder board of directors guides our work with input from three advisory councils, and we are overseen by the Oregon Public Utility Commission. Since 2002, our technical services, cash incentives and energy solutions have helped participating customers save \$6.3 billion on their utility bills. The cumulative impact of our leadership has been a contributing factor in keeping our state's energy costs as low as possible, adding renewable power to the grid from small and medium-scale projects, and building a sustainable energy future. More information about Energy Trust's background, funding sources, strategic and action plans, policies and programs is available on our website at www.energytrust.org/about.

Some of Energy Trust's requirements in this RFP and in any subsequent negotiating and/or contracting phases are driven by governing law, the provisions of our grant agreement with the OPUC (the OPUC Grant Agreement) and our funding agreements with each utility.

Introduction

Energy Trust is soliciting a third-party contractor to conduct market research to inform updated LED grow light offerings in its Residential and Business Lighting programs. Specifically, this research will inform measure updates relating to LED grow lights for residential and business cannabis growers. Energy Trust's Residential and Business Lighting programs offer incentives for LED grow lights used by cannabis growers in the residential and business sectors through two separate delivery channels.

The Residential program offers a midstream incentive through participating brick-and-mortar retailers. The program works with about 20 horticultural supplies retailers and offers instant discounts on LED grow light fixtures sold through these retailers. Small, medium, and large LED grow light fixtures receive an instant discount of \$50, \$100, and \$350 per fixture, respectively. Energy Trust incentives on residential LED grow lights are not available for online purchases.

The Business Lighting program offers a downstream incentive delivered through Energy Trust trade allies. Business cannabis growers who would like to purchase LED grow lights with Energy Trust incentives must contact an Energy Trust Business Lighting trade ally, who will assist the grower in completing project documentation forms and applications. Cannabis growers must have an active Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission (OLCC) license and hemp growers must have an active Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) registration. Unlike the Residential program incentive, the Business Lighting incentive is not limited to LED grow lights purchased at a

particular set of retailers. However, customers of the Business Lighting program must apply for this incentive through an Energy Trust Business Lighting trade ally, and the LED grow lights installed must be on the Design Light Consortium qualified products list.

Updated information on the pricing, efficiency, and market share of LED grow lights currently on the market will help inform updates to these offerings. Information from business cannabis growers on their dimming and installation practices will support measure updates for the Business Lighting program. Energy Trust is also interested in knowing important context regarding regulations on both residential and business cannabis growers, to help both programs understand any recent or future changes in this market. Finally, Energy Trust is interested in learning about and documenting current knowledge on the impact of a switch to LED grow lights on cannabis plant growth and quality.

Tables 1 and 2 show LED grow light projects for the Residential and Business Lighting programs.

Table 1. Residential LED grow light projects by bulb size, 2019 – Q2 2023

Year	Size	Projects	kWh Savings
2019	Extra Small (250-399 W)	4	10,759
	Small (400-599 W)	4	21,588
2020	Extra Small (250-399 W)	7	81,249
	Small (400-599 W)	3	21,588
	Extra Large (1000+ W)	16	993,690
2021	Small (400-599 W)	1	2,055
	Extra Large (1000+ W)	33	3,035,147
2022	Extra Small (250-399 W)	5	58,547
	Extra Large (1000+ W)	39	5,301,461
2023	Extra Small (250-399 W)	3	8,295
	Small (400-599 W)	1	2,849
	Extra Large (1000+ W)	25	4,907,160
Total		141	14,444,387

Table 2. Business LED grow light sites and projects by year, 2019 – Q2 2023¹

Year	Sites	Projects	kWh Savings
2019	13	14	2,451,145
2020	32	39	7,336,865
2021	31	38	12,959,669
2022	31	34	6,858,120
2023	23	30	6,358,016
Total	120	155	35,963,815

¹ Sum of Sites rows does not equal total due to some sites participating in multiple program years; total represents unique sites.

Energy Trust conducted market research informing the Residential program LED grow light offering in 2018. That report along with other past Energy Trust reports can be located on the Energy Trust website: <https://www.energytrust.org/about/our-impact/reports-financials/documents/?type=evaluations-research&keyword>.

Research Objectives

Energy Trust conducts market research to inform updates to program offerings, and this research will aim to address the following research objectives:

- Establish current baseline of efficiency, price, and market share for LED grow lights.
- Understand the sales cycle of LED grow lights.
- Understand what lighting efficiency and performance metrics are most important for cannabis growth.
- Learn about dimming settings and installation information for LED grow lights among business cannabis growers participating in the Business Lighting incentive.
- Understand current regulatory landscape for residential and business growers, and potential for change or stability in coming years.
- Document current knowledge regarding the impact of LED grow lights on cannabis growth or plant quality.

Tasks

If selected through this Request for Proposals (RFP), it is anticipated that the selected evaluator will be engaged by written contract to undertake the following major tasks.

Proposals should specifically address items in bold after each task.

Task 1. Study Kick-off Meeting

The selected evaluator will host a virtual kick-off meeting to meet with Energy Trust staff and Residential and Business Lighting program staff to establish points of contact, ask questions about the program, present the research framework and schedule, and discuss data requests and points of coordination. The selected evaluator will describe the proposed research methodologies, answer questions, and solicit input. Any necessary changes to the approach will be incorporated into the project work plan. The evaluator will describe the Energy Trust and third-party datasets needed to complete the study, interview process, survey, and additional research methods.

Deliverables:

- Kick-off meeting agenda

- Summary notes from the kick-off meeting

Task 2. Review Program Data and Develop Work and Sampling Plans

Energy Trust will provide the selected evaluator with a dataset of Residential and Business Lighting LED measure activity from 2019-2023, along with other program documentation necessary to develop a sampling plan. Based on the kick-off meeting discussion and a review of program activity data, the evaluator will develop a detailed work plan. The work plan will include:

- Evaluation goals
- Evaluation methodologies
- Sampling plan (see below)
- Schedule of tasks and deliverables (see below)

Sampling plan. The evaluator will develop a sampling plan based on the proposed methodologies, discussion at the kick-off meeting, and program data provided by Energy Trust. Energy Trust expects the selected evaluator to develop a survey sampling and recruitment plan for business cannabis growers who have participated in the Business Lighting LED grow light incentive between 2019 and 2023, to learn how they operate the lights they have installed including dimming settings and whether the lights are installed in a greenhouse or a warehouse. In total, 120 unique sites have participated in the Business Lighting LED grow light incentive from 2019-2023. The sampling plan should be designed to achieve 90% confidence and 10% precision.

Energy Trust expects the evaluator to develop a vendor interview sampling plan such that reliable and complete information on the sales cycle and market share of LED grow lights in the region can be obtained. Vendor interviews will include vendors who participate in the Residential program midstream incentive as well as big-box retailers. The selected evaluator will target 20 vendor interviews, including 10 out of the 20 vendors participating in the Residential program and 10 big-box retailers. These interviews will provide insight into the sales cycle and market share of LED grow lights.

The selected evaluator will also develop a manufacturer interview recruitment and sampling plan, to learn about the current efficiency and performance of LED grow lights available on the market. The selected evaluator should plan to identify and recruit manufacturers, with a goal of interviewing 10 manufacturers.

Schedule of tasks and deliverables. The evaluator will develop a schedule of tasks and deliverables. Energy Trust is interested in obtaining draft results for this study in late Q2 2024.

A draft work plan will be presented to the Energy Trust Evaluation Project Manager for review and approval before finalizing, and the evaluator will incorporate feedback into all components of the work plan, as needed.

Respondent proposals should include sampling plans for the program participant business cannabis grower survey, as well as vendor and manufacturer interviews.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final work plan
- Sampling plan

Task 3. Conduct Business Grower Survey

Using the survey sampling plan from Task 2, the selected evaluator will field a survey of business cannabis growers who have participated in the Business Lighting LED grow light incentive between 2019 and 2023 to learn about their dimming and installation practices. The selected evaluator will coordinate with the Business Lighting program and program management contractor (PMC), CLEAResult, to make initial introductions with business growers for the survey. Survey recruitment will include email introductions and reminders, and may also include phone calls and other outreach methods. Completion incentives may be provided to encourage responses.

The survey instrument will be designed to take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete, and will get information on the dimming settings that growers use once their lights are installed, as well as whether their lights are installed in a greenhouse or a warehouse. The selected evaluator may field the survey online or over the phone. The evaluator will provide the draft survey instrument and any outreach materials to the Energy Trust Evaluation Project Manager for review and will make suggested changes before fielding the survey.

Respondent proposals should include the evaluator's approach to survey fielding, including how initial introductions and continued outreach will be conducted to encourage responses.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final survey instrument and recruiting materials
- Section in report outlining methods and findings of business grower survey

Task 4. Conduct Vendor and Manufacturer Interviews

Using the vendor sampling plan from Task 2, the selected evaluator will conduct vendor interviews to understand the pricing and sales cycle of LED and other grow light options. For Residential program participant vendors, initial outreach will be made by Residential program or PMC staff, after which the selected evaluator will approach the vendor for an interview. The selected evaluator will conduct all outreach to big-box retailers for interviews. The selected evaluator will provide the draft vendor interview guide to the Energy Trust Evaluation Project Manager and will incorporate feedback before finalizing and conducting interviews. The selected evaluator will also request recent sales data from vendors who are recruited for interviews; vendor sales data will be used in Task 5.

Using the manufacturer sampling plan from Task 2, the selected evaluator will conduct manufacturer interviews to understand the efficiency and performance of LED grow light options on the market in the region. The selected evaluator will conduct all outreach to manufacturers for interviews. Manufacturer interviews will be designed to provide insight into how the efficiency and performance of LED grow light options have changed over the last three years, and what lighting performance metrics may be important to growers. The evaluator will provide the draft manufacturer interview guide to the Energy Trust Evaluation Project Manager and will make suggested changes before conducting manufacturer interviews.

Respondent proposals should include a plan for recruiting vendor and manufacturer interviewees, including how big-box retailers and manufacturers will be identified and recruited for interviews. Proposals should also detail the evaluator's approach to outreach and scheduling these interviews.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final recruitment plans and interview guides
- Section in report outlining methods and findings of vendor and manufacturer interviews

Task 5. Analyze Sales Data

Using sales data provided by vendors in Task 4, the selected evaluator will assess the market share of LED grow lights and other grow light options in the region. This analysis will provide quantitative information on the pricing and sales volume of LED and other grow light options, to complement information from vendors regarding the pricing and market share of these items. The selected evaluator will perform any necessary data cleaning and quality checks and will report market share and pricing information collected from the data in the final report.

Respondent proposals should include respondent's approach to acquiring and analyzing sales data.

Deliverables:

- Section in report outlining findings of sales data analysis.

Task 6. Conduct Secondary Research and Literature Review

The selected evaluator will conduct secondary research to identify regulatory factors that may impact home and business cannabis growers. This may include changes to regulations, licensing processes, or other factors. The evaluator will report on how the current regulatory landscape has changed in the last three years, and highlight any areas where changes in regulations might impact program participation numbers for the Residential and Business Lighting programs going forward.

The selected evaluator will also conduct a literature review focused on how LED grow lights impact cannabis plant growth and the quality of the product grown. There is interest in the Residential and Business Lighting programs in learning whether there are benefits to growers that come with a switch to LED grow lights, in addition to energy savings. The literature review should present quantitative results on the impact of LED grow lights on overall plant growth, as well as other measurable qualities of the plants that are important to growers. In reporting the findings of the literature review, the selected evaluator will comment on the degree of crossover between the technologies used as controls in the research and technologies currently available in the market as alternatives to LED grow lights (drawing on results from Tasks 4 and 5).

Proposals should include respondent's approach to finding and presenting relevant regulatory insights, as well as respondent's approach to conducting a literature review on the impact of LED grow lights on cannabis plant growth.

Deliverables:

- Section in report about current regulatory landscape and any recent or upcoming changes with potential to change the market for LED grow lights
- Section in report outlining methods and findings of literature review

Task 7. Reporting

The selected evaluator will produce a final report after all tasks are completed which summarizes the key research methods, findings, and conclusions. Key findings will be highlighted with compelling tables, charts, and graphics. The use of tables and graphs is also recommended for material that does not lend itself well to narrative form. The selected evaluator will draw conclusions related to the research goals and objectives based on the findings. The report should include the following sections:

- Executive summary
- Introduction, including description of the purpose of the study
- Summary of methods, including data sources used
- Results, including charts and text highlighting key findings
- Conclusions relating to the findings and research goals
- Appendices containing survey instrument and materials
- Appendices containing detailed tables of results, crosstabulations, or additional analyses that may be of interest but are not of key importance

A draft market research report will be reviewed and commented on by Energy Trust staff, PMC staff, third-party reviewers, and other parties deemed appropriate by Energy Trust. Based upon these comments, the selected evaluator shall make revisions and deliver to Energy Trust a final version of the report within two weeks of receiving feedback. Achieving an acceptable final report may take more than one iteration between the evaluator and Energy Trust. Where applicable, data, phone conversations, non-confidential sources, publications, and other media used in the

report must be referenced and cited. It is anticipated that any respondents or sources can be promised confidentiality in terms of attribution of responses. Findings and conclusions shall be based on the information collected by the selected evaluator and referenced in the report.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final written report

Task 8. Project Management

The selected evaluator will manage all aspects of this research project to ensure that it remains on-schedule and below the contract budget cap. Project management will include hosting regular bi-weekly check-in meetings with Energy Trust staff during the research. During the fielding of the business grower survey and interview recruitments, the selected evaluator will provide bi-weekly updates to Energy Trust staff on recruitment and data collection progress. The selected evaluator will proactively advise on ways to maximize study quality throughout the project.

The selected evaluator will be required to submit monthly status reports presenting the following:

- A summary of accomplishments during the previous month
- Current month's activities and plans
- Variances in schedule or budget, including any necessary explanations
- If applicable, any issues or concerns to be addressed with proposed solutions

These reports are due by the 10th of every month and must accompany the invoice, starting with the first month after work begins.

Deliverables:

- Regular check-in meetings with Evaluation Project Manager
- Frequent survey updates during fielding
- Monthly status reports

Schedule

Energy Trust anticipates that a contract will be awarded in January 2024 and that the project will kick off immediately thereafter. Preliminary results will be ready to review in May of 2024, and a draft report will be delivered in June 2024.

Budget

It is anticipated that the approximate budget for the scope as described in this RFP will be in the neighborhood of \$100,000; however, Energy Trust reserves the right to revise budget assumptions at any time. The proposal should be bid as a time-and-materials, "not-to-exceed" type contract. Final budget determination will be documented in the

resulting contract between the selected respondent and Energy Trust, as described below.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must be clear, complete, and concise. Pages must be numbered, sections must be clearly titled, and fonts must not be smaller than 11 point. Respondent's proposal must contain the following elements. Failure to include any required elements may result in the rejection of respondent's proposal. Please note the 22-page limit for the proposal content. The page limit does not include resumés of key staff and subcontractor team members, insurance coverage information, conflict of interest disclosure, or representations page. These latter items should be addressed in attached appendices.

1. Proposal Content

- 1) *Team structure and qualifications.* Proposals should provide a description of the team's qualifications to conduct this market research project, an overview of the lead firm, any subcontractors, and the structure of the project team. **Not to exceed four (4) pages.**
- 2) *Staffing and subcontracting plan.* Describe the project team structure, role of each key team member, subcontractor roles, COBID numbers for COBID certified subcontractors (see *Supplier diversity requirements section below*) and the management plan. **Not to exceed two (2) pages.**
- 3) *Technical proposal.* Proposals should briefly describe the approach to the specific tasks identified in the Tasks section above, with emphasis on specific proposal requirements in bold at the end of tasks. **Not to exceed nine (9) pages.**
- 4) *Supplier diversity requirements.* Proposals should indicate if respondent's firm or subcontractors are certified with the Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) of Oregon as one or more of the following: Minority Business Enterprise, Women Business Enterprise, Emerging Small Business, or Service-Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise.

It is required that a minimum of 20% of the value of any resulting contract be directed towards COBID certified firms. This should be reflected in the staffing and subcontracting plan and budget proposal. **Please describe how this requirement will be met. Not to exceed one (1) page.**

If respondents need assistance making connections with COBID-certified research, evaluation, data analysis, and engineering firms, or other types of potential partners, Energy Trust can facilitate introductions with firms in our Planning and Evaluation contractor pool. If this is of interest, bidders should reach out to the Energy Trust contact listed below when providing their intent to bid.

- 5) *Proposed schedule of deliverables.* A proposed schedule of deliverables, including a kickoff meeting scheduled within two weeks of awarding the contract. **Not to exceed one (1) page.**
- 6) *Detailed budget proposal.* A detailed budget proposal broken out by task and by individual performing the work for the market research project. Key staff should be identified by name, with billing rates for each. Assume that billing will be on a time and materials basis, up to a “not-to-exceed” cap. Proposals should describe the underlying budget assumptions and any drivers of cost that can be modified without compromising the integrity of the research.

It is anticipated that the budget for the scope described in this RFP will be approximately \$100,000; however, Energy Trust reserves the right to revise its budget assumptions at any time. We ask bidders to propose as competitive a budget for the project as they can, while being realistic about the scope that they can complete within that budget. If the proposed budget will exceed the \$100,000 threshold listed here, we will consider it, but ask that bidders provide a rationale for why it is necessary. In addition, we ask bidders proposing to exceed the budget threshold listed here to provide alternative budget scenarios where they could stay within the budget by making certain trade-offs – either by dropping tasks, reducing complexity in places, or reducing sample sizes and precision for the evaluation.

Proposals should summarize the budget in a table, breaking out the estimated hours and costs by task and staff member. Please use the following budget template. Staff and subcontractors listed in the budget should be identified by name, with billing rates for each. **Not to exceed two (2) pages.**

Budget Template

Staff Name	Firm	Hourly Rate	Hours Per Task			Total Hours	Total Cost
			Task 1	Task 2	Task...		
Staff Member 1							
Staff Member 2							
Staff Member...							
Subcontractor 1							
Subcontractor...							
Total Hours Per Task							
Direct Costs							
Total Cost Per Task							
Optional: Year 2023 Hours							
Optional: Year 2023 Cost							

- 7) *Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) & cultural competence experience.* Proposals should describe respondent's recent activities, policies, and investments aimed at integrating DEI into their business operations. 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 cultural competence lens to their evaluation work. Respondents must provide responses to each of the DEI and cultural competence related questions in **Appendix B. Not to exceed two (2) pages.**
- 8) *Data security and confidentiality.* Proposals should provide a brief description of respondent's approach to data security and confidentiality. Please describe how respondent will ensure that customer information and interview responses are kept secure and confidential during fielding, data transfers, storage, and analysis. **Not to exceed one (1) page.**

2. Work Product Example

Proposals should include **one past report** that showcases the respondent team's work on a similar project, as well as their data presentation and reporting capabilities. If needed, the names of people and organizations may be redacted from the report to allow sharing it. The work product example should be included as an appendix to the proposal; **if the report is available on a public website, a working link to the report is sufficient. No page limit, but please keep materials to a minimum.**

3. Staff Resumés

Proposals should include resumés of all key team members from the lead firm and any subcontractors who will be performing work. These should be included in an appendix to the proposal. **No page limit.**

4. Insurance coverage information.

Energy Trust requires its contractors to maintain, at a minimum, workers compensation insurance, adequate commercial general liability insurance coverage, and automobile liability insurance. Cyber liability coverage may also be required. Provide a description of the insurance coverage provided by respondent for performing the impact evaluation work, including:

- Whether such coverage is on a "comprehensive" or "commercial" form
- Whether such coverage is on a "claims made" or "occurrence" basis
- All endorsements excluding coverage of any nature, if any
- All limits, including aggregate limits and the current remaining coverage amounts under those limits
- Effective date

This information should be provided in an appendix to the proposal. **No Page limit.**

5. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Respondent must disclose any direct or indirect, actual, or potential conflicts of interest respondent may have with Energy Trust in its proposal. A “direct or indirect conflict” is defined as any situation in which an individual or a member of their family or close business or personal acquaintance, is employed by Energy Trust or the OPUC, 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 a potential conflict of interest is identified by the respondent, then the respondent should identify strategies to mitigate the conflict. If no conflict is identified by respondent, the respondent will explicitly provide such a statement in their RFP response. The determination of whether a conflict of interest exists is left to the sole discretion of Energy Trust. This information should be provided in an appendix to the proposal. **No page limit.**

6. Representations and Signatures Page

Respondent’s proposal must contain the signature of a duly authorized officer or agent of the respondent company submitting the proposal. Respondent’s duly authorized officer or agent shall sign **Appendix A** certifying to the representations stated on **Appendix A**. The signed page should be provided as an appendix to the proposal.

Please note that the 19-page limit for the proposal content does not include the work product examples, resumés of key staff and subcontractor team members, insurance coverage information, conflict of interest disclosure, or representations page. These should be addressed in attached appendices.

Proposal Selection Criteria

Proposals will be judged on the following criteria, and any other factors deemed relevant by Energy Trust:

- Technical proposal, including proposed approach to specific evaluation tasks and the evaluation overall
- Qualifications of the project team and staffing plan (includes all subcontractors that will be involved in the evaluation)
- Responses to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and cultural competence questions
- Proposed budget and schedule of deliverables
- Plan to meet COBID certification requirements
- Data security plan

Schedule & Administration of Proposal Selection Process

RFP Schedule

- **November 21, 2023** RFP issued
- **December 5, 2023** **Intent to bid due**
- **December 5, 2023** Questions/request for additional information due
- **December 12, 2023** Clarifications/question responses posted to website
- **January 5, 2024** **Proposals due**

Requests for Additional Information and Proposal Submission

Any questions and/or requests for clarification regarding this RFP, as well as stating intent to bid on the project, must be submitted via email to the contact named below by **December 5, 2023**. Responses to questions and requests for additional information will be posted on Energy Trust's website no later than **December 12, 2023**. Energy Trust cannot accommodate individual phone, mail, or fax inquiries about the RFP. All questions must be submitted via email.

Stating intent to bid does not obligate a respondent to submit a proposal. Only electronically submitted proposals (in PDF form) will be accepted; faxed or print proposals will not. A signed letter of transmittal (cover letter) is required and should be scanned and submitted along with the proposal. All proposals must be received by 5pm Pacific Time on **January 5, 2024**. Energy Trust will not be obligated to consider information received outside this time interval for the purposes of this RFP. Please submit proposal to:

Leila Shokat
Project Manager – Evaluation
Energy Trust of Oregon
Email: leila.shokat@energytrust.org

Revisions to RFP

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an addendum will be issued by Energy Trust and will be posted on the website. Respondents should contact Energy Trust if they find any inconsistencies or ambiguities to the RFP. Clarification given by Energy Trust may become an addendum to the RFP.

Withdrawal and Modification of Proposals

Respondents may withdraw their proposal and submit a revised proposal prior to the response deadline. After the response deadline, respondent-initiated changes will not be accepted. Respondents may withdraw their proposal from consideration at any time.

Proposal Evaluation and Notification for Negotiations

Energy Trust will review the proposals as received and may initiate negotiations with the leading respondent(s).

Validity and Deadlines

Proposals should specify the date through which the proposal is valid.

RFP GOVERNING PROVISIONS

All submitted proposals are subject to the following additional provisions.

Right to Accept or Reject Proposals, Multiple Awards

Energy Trust reserves the right to make multiple awards, reject any and all proposals and to waive any nonconformity in proposals received, to accept or reject any or all of the items in the proposal, and award the contract in whole or in part as it is deemed in Energy Trust's best interest. Energy Trust may also choose to negotiate any of the details of proposals prior to contracting.

Confidentiality

Respondents shall clearly identify only those portions of their proposals that they do not want revealed to third parties and label such portions as "Confidential Information". Except as required under law or for regulatory purposes Energy Trust will maintain confidentiality of such information. Energy Trust will not accept proposals or other documents that are marked to indicate the entire document is the confidential or proprietary information of the sender or that restricted handling is required. Normal business practices will be observed in handling proposal materials.

Ownership and Return of Proposals

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

No Verbal Addendums

No verbal agreement or conversation made or had at any time with any officer, agent, or employee of Energy Trust, nor any oral representation by such party shall add to, detract from, affect or modify the terms of the RFP, unless specifically included in a written addendum issued by Energy Trust.

Proposal Costs

Each proposal prepared in response to this RFP will be prepared at the sole cost and expense of the respondent and with the express understanding that there will be no claims whatsoever for reimbursement from Energy Trust.

Waiver of Claims

Respondent waives any right it may have to bring any claim, whether in damages or equity, against Energy Trust or its officers, directors, employees, or agents, with respect to any matter arising out of any process associated with this RFP.

Energy Trust Rights Reserved

Energy Trust reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any or all proposals in whole or in part, to waive any minor irregularities or informalities in a proposal, and to enter into any agreement deemed to be in its best interests. In addition to any other enumerated reserved rights and/or options as stated in this RFP, Energy Trust may in its sole discretion do any one or more of the following:

- Determine which proposals are eligible for consideration in response to this RFP.
- Disqualify proposals that do not meet the requirements of this RFP, in the sole determination of Energy Trust.
- Negotiate with any respondent to amend any proposal.
- Select and negotiate and/or enter into agreements with respondent(s) who, in Energy Trust's sole judgment, are most responsive to the RFP and whose proposals best satisfy the interests of Energy Trust, in its sole discretion, and not necessarily on the basis of price alone or any other single factor.
- Issue additional subsequent solicitations for proposals, including withdrawing this RFP at any time and/or issuing a new RFP that would supersede and replace this one.
- Vary any timetable or schedule, add or change any provisions discussed herein.
- Conduct any briefing session or further RFP process on any terms and conditions.
- Suspend or modify the RFP process at any time.
- Enter into relationships with more than one respondent.

Resulting Contract(s)

The selected respondent will be required to execute a written contract, including a detailed statement of work, with Energy Trust to perform the evaluation work. No award will be considered a commitment, and no obligations or legal relations shall exist between Energy Trust and the selected respondent until a final and binding contract has been executed by and between Energy Trust and the contractor. Time is of the essence with regard to this program, and prolonged contract negotiations will not be undertaken. In general, Energy Trust strongly prefers contracts that are consistent with Energy Trust's standard terms and conditions; negotiations for such contracts can generally be completed quickly. In some cases, a few terms and conditions may need to be substituted or waived, in accordance with contract negotiations. Any party involved in these contract discussions can terminate negotiations at any time and for any reason. If it appears that contract negotiations

are not proceeding in a timely manner, Energy Trust may opt to terminate the discussions and select another respondent.

Appendix A – Representations and Signature page

I, the undersigned declare that;

1. I am an authorized agent of the respondent and have authority to submit this proposal on behalf of the respondent.
2. The information provided in this proposal is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
3. I have read this Request for Proposals in its entirety and agree unconditionally to all of its conditions and requirements.
4. The respondent has not directly or indirectly induced or solicited any other respondent to submit a false or sham proposal.
5. The respondent has not solicited or induced any other person, firm, or corporation to refrain from proposing.
6. The respondent has not sought by collusion to obtain for itself any advantage over any other respondent or Energy Trust.
7. The respondent's proposal is genuine; not made in the interest of, or on behalf of, any undisclosed person, firm, or corporation; and is not submitted in conformity with an agreement of rules of any group, association, organization, or corporation.
8. I understand and accept that the approval or rejection of respondent's request is within the sole discretion of Energy Trust and that there is no legal commitment until all due diligence has been performed and a properly authorized contract has been duly and properly executed.
9. I authorize the representatives of Energy Trust to investigate the business and personal financial credit history of respondent, its affiliates, and all associated partners, principals and management and authorize the release of all said information.
10. I agree that I will report immediately in writing to Energy Trust any changes to the information contained herein at any time while I am under consideration for funding.

The information contained in this proposal and any part thereof, including its exhibits, schedules, and other documents and instruments delivered or to be delivered to Energy Trust is true, accurate, and complete. This proposal includes all information necessary to ensure that the statements therein do not in whole or in part mislead Energy Trust as to any material fact.

Date: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Name and Title: _____

(please print)

Appendix B – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion & Cultural Competence Experience

Diversity, equity, and inclusion experience

1. Provide specific recent examples of activities, policies or investments that demonstrate how respondent promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion within respondent's company in the areas of
 - a. recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion;
 - b. training and professional development;
 - c. industry workforce development and support.

Cultural competence in evaluation

Culture shapes each step of the evaluation process—from the conceptualization of a study and its research questions; to decisions on what data to collect, how to collect it, and how to analyze it; to the interpretation and presentation of results. Culturally competent evaluation requires researchers to recognize their own cultural assumptions about a research project, continually consider cultural and contextual factors in their research design, and implement methodological adjustments to account for diverse research contexts.

2. Provide your plan to apply culturally competent research practices in this project.
3. Provide a specific example of your team's experience applying culturally competent research practices when working with diverse customer groups; how did the research project's goals, methods, or outcomes change?