



Weatherization Workforce Development Program Request for Proposal

RFP Release Date: 6/13/2022
Bidder Questions Due: 6/24/2022
Answers Posted: 7/8/2022
Proposals Due: 7/18/2022

Summary

Efficiency Vermont, a statewide Energy Efficiency Utility, is seeking proposals from professionals or organizations **for programs that increase the number of people working in or supporting the weatherization field in Vermont.** Responses to this Request for Proposals (RFP) must be delivered electronically to Efficiency Vermont by **5 p.m. EDT on Friday, July 18th, 2022.** Efficiency Vermont will not accept responses submitted after **5 p.m. EDT.** Please submit your response electronically via e-mail to: afode@veic.org with **RFP Submittal for Weatherization Workforce Development Program** the subject line.

Efficiency Vermont will respond to individual questions regarding this RFP only as follows: Efficiency Vermont will receive questions regarding requirements and scope of work up to **5 p.m. EDT Friday June 24th, 2022,** via e-mail only, to afode@veic.org with **Weatherization Workforce Development Program Question in the subject line.** When appropriate, please refer to the RFP page number and Section Heading for ease of navigation and response. Efficiency Vermont will post answers on the Efficiency Vermont website <https://www.veic.org/requests-for-proposals> no later than **Friday July 8th, 2022.** Efficiency Vermont will not address questions submitted after **Friday June 24th, 2022.**

Background

Vermont Energy Investment Corporation

Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) is the administrator of Efficiency Vermont. VEIC is a mission-driven, nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the economic and environmental costs of energy use. It carries out its mission, in part, by designing and implementing innovative energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. Founded in 1986, VEIC is nationally and internationally recognized for advancing energy efficiency, energy conservation, and renewable energy programs and projects across the United States, Canada,

and Europe. VEIC employs 280 professionals and is headquartered in Winooski, Vermont. It has offices also in Washington, DC, and Ohio. For additional information, please see: VEIC Website: www.VEIC.org

VEIC is a **Just-labeled** organization, committing itself to corporate transparency on social justice and equity indicators. We've also adopted the **Social Vulnerability Index** across our entire organization to measure the impact our work has on underserved communities. With ongoing employee engagement in **social and energy justice principles**, justice and fairness are embedded in everything we do. We see opportunities everywhere to create new tools that can help us build the kind of company—and the kind of society—we want to see.

Efficiency Vermont

Launched January 1, 2000, Efficiency Vermont helps ratepayers reduce energy costs, strengthen the local economy, and protect the environment by making homes and business energy efficient. Efficiency Vermont provides technical assistance, rebates, and other financial incentives to help Vermont households, businesses and other institutions—such as K-12 schools—reduce their energy costs with energy-efficient equipment, lighting, and approaches to construction and major renovation. Efficiency Vermont partners extensively with contractors, suppliers, and retailers of efficient products and services throughout the state.

VEIC is the administrator of Efficiency Vermont under an Order of Appointment issued by the Vermont Public Utility Commission. For additional information, please see the Efficiency Vermont website: www.encyvermont.com

Scope of Work and Schedule

RFP and Implementation Schedule

Table 1. Implementation Schedule

Efficiency Vermont will attempt to adhere to the following schedule but reserves the right to adjust the below schedule as needed.

RFP release	June 13 th , 2022
Bidders Questions Due	June 24 th , 2022
Answers posted	July 8 th , 2022
RFP responses due	July 18 th , 2022
Bidder selected	August 8 th , 2022
Contract negotiations and signature*	August 22 nd , 2022

* Pending final execution of grant agreement with Efficiency Vermont and the Public Service Department.

Scope of Work

Vendor will design, implement and track a program that leads to an increase in the number of people working in or supporting the weatherization field in Vermont. The program must directly serve an eligible population, defined as:

- A. Low income (defined as less than 80% AMI); or
- B. Individuals who, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, are unemployed or are employed part time but want and are available for full-time work; or
- C. Moderate income (defined as income between 80%-120% AMI), or
- D. Workers whose entry to the weatherization workforce represents greater opportunity for economic advancement.

The targeted population must be prequalified as part of the program design to ensure that funds are being spent as consistent with the requirements of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

The program must focus on bringing in new entrants who will be actively working in the weatherization field, or supporting the weatherization field; that is, the program should not be limited to simply training participants and not connecting them to jobs, nor should it focus on re-training or up-skilling the existing weatherization workforce. Proposals should demonstrate how program participants will be recruited into the program and actively placed in jobs. Proposals should also include historic job placement metrics and, if applicable, any employers with whom the bidder intends to partner to new workers for placement in employment.

This program is funded by federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds provided through the State of Vermont. As a result it is anticipated that any contracts or other funding agreements issued to selected bidders will include Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants (sample provided as Appendix C) and may include additional ARPA-related requirements to be determined.

(continued on next page)

Program Design Parameters

Table 2. Prequalification Options and Eligible Services

Target Population	Prequalification Options ¹	Eligible Services Under RFP
Low-income Vermonters	Income verification based on paystubs or other monthly income statements	Career counseling and job placement or apprenticeship support; such services may be supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Training for new entrants to the weatherization workforce B. Wraparound services (childcare, transportation) C. Targeted marketing to recruit potential workers D. Stipends to cover time out of work to complete training E. Hiring bonuses (for workers or employers)
Unemployed or underemployed Vermonters	Documentation that they lost their job or their income was decreased as a result of the pandemic	
Vermonters who want to gain weatherization skills to better compete in the job market and transition into the weatherization workforce	Proof of employment or proof of income (at or below 120% AMI)	

Some examples of eligible program proposals may include, but are not limited to:

1. An apprenticeship program targeted at bringing unemployed or underemployed Vermonters into the weatherization workforce and moving them directly into full-time employment.
2. A “learn to earn” training program that provides signing bonuses, wraparound services (such as transportation and childcare) to support new workers from one of the eligible populations in completing basic weatherization skills training, and then coordinates with employers to support job placement and continued supportive services for a period after they are hired.

Preparing and Delivering a Proposal

For ease and efficiency of review, Efficiency Vermont has specified the requirements for submitting a proposal to this RFP. Bidders must follow, and be responsive to, ALL requirements of this RFP. Proposals should be clear and concise, presented in the form of a written response

¹ The lists or Prequalification Options in Table 2 are intended to be suggestive, not necessarily exhaustive.

with sections and sub-headings. Proposals that are not in the required format or incomplete may be disqualified at Efficiency Vermont’s sole discretion.

Bidders are required to propose, and will be scored upon, the individual criteria summarized in Table 3. **Every bidder is required to include a Bid Summary Table based on Table 3** below with the specific value or information they propose for each of the listed criteria. The Bid Summary Table shall be presented as part of the narrative summary.

Table 3: Response Summary, Evaluation Criteria and Points

Note that any category where the proposal does not qualify under the RFP terms described herein will automatically be scored “0”.

Scoring Category/Criteria	Max Points
Target Population is clearly identified and will be adequately prequalified according to program design	20
Recruitment Plan is well designed, targets the intended population, and appears likely to succeed in obtaining active participants in the program	30
Program Design is clearly described and benefits target population, and clearly leads to a significant increase in placement of new workers weatherization or weatherization-supporting jobs	40
Pricing is reasonable for program design and does not exceed \$500,000	10

Response Requirements

- F. **Company Info:** Name of the business, contact person, and contact information including full legal name, address, telephone, mobile telephone number, e-mail address, and website address, as applicable.
- G. **Company profile:** a brief company profile, not exceeding 500 words, including any subcontractors.
- H. **Statement of ownership:** the type of business entity (sole proprietorship, corporation, LLC, or other).
- I. **Narrative and Bid Summary Table:** a narrative outlining their approach to the Scope of Work and include proposed values or summary information for each of the scoring criteria listed in Table 3 above. (The values that the bidders provide in the bid summary table are its proposed values, which will not be binding on Efficiency Vermont. Efficiency

Vermont in its sole discretion will determine the final values to be awarded to each bidder.) Narrative should include a section dedicated to answering the following questions, preferably in a Q&A format:

- What market barriers does this proposal solve, and how will funding this proposal overcome these barriers? How would funding this proposal change the results of your program, as opposed to not receiving funding?
- Who is the target population of this proposal, and approximately how many people will participate in your program?
- How do you plan to recruit participants into your program that meet the eligible target populations?
- How will you conduct prequalification for participation in your program?
- How many people will you seek to place as new workforce participants in the weatherization field, or supporting the weatherization field, as a result of funding this proposal? What is the anticipated timeline for when new workers can be expected to be in field and actively working on or supporting weatherization projects?
- What is your historic job placement data for similar programs? Include any relevant metrics.
- Will you be partnering with local employers for program job placements? If so, please describe your plans.

J. Binding Transmittal Letter (1 page maximum): Each proposal must include a binding transmittal letter signed by a party authorized to obligate the bidder to the services described in their proposal. The letter must clearly identify the person authorized to serve as the organization's representative for future communications regarding the response. **The letter must state that the proposal is valid for 60 days.**

K. Budget (5 pages maximum): Each proposal must include a detailed budget. The budget for the Scope of Work shall not exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000). Bidder must include in their proposal a description of any assumptions made regarding the Scope of Work that may have an impact on the budget. Labor rates may be attached as a separate appendix.

- L. Qualifications and Team Experience** (5 pages maximum): This section of the response must demonstrate the bidder’s team’s (including any subcontractors) knowledge, experience and ability to successfully complete the Scope of Work.

Provide details on the roles and responsibilities of key personnel and team members including any subcontractors. Experience should include certifications and trainings for key staff.

- M. Proposal Exceptions Summary Form.** A Proposal Exception Summary Form (see below) with exceptions to items in any section of this RFP or the Efficiency Vermont’s Standard Contract terms and conditions. Failure to note exceptions on the Proposal Exception Summary Form will be deemed to be acceptance of the terms of this RFP and Efficiency Vermont’s Standard Contract terms and conditions in Appendix A. Efficiency Vermont will take these exemptions into consideration when evaluating responses. If exceptions are not noted in bidder’s proposal but raised during contract negotiations, Efficiency Vermont reserves the right to cancel the negotiations and award projects to other bidders. If Bidder would like to proposal their contract template, a copy of the template should be attached as an appendix.

RFP/ Contract Reference	Bidder’s Proposal Reference	Brief Explanation of Exception
(Reference specific outline point to which exception is taken)	(Page, section, items in bidder’s proposal where exception is explained)	(Short description of requested exception)
1.		
2.		

- I. Certificate of Insurance.** Bidder must supply a current Certificate of Insurance showing evidence of General Liability. If awarded a Contract, bidder will also be required to provide a final certificate of insurance to show compliance with the minimum insurance requirements outlined in the successful bidder’s contract. Efficiency Vermont anticipates the minimum requirements to be as outlined below but will confirm final insurance requirements prior to issuance of a contract. The final certificate of insurance shall comply with the requirements outlined in Efficiency Vermont’s Standard Contract (**Appendix B**). Bidder must raise any questions about the insurance requirements by the

deadline set forth above and must identify any exceptions to the anticipated minimum requirements in its response.

Insurance Policies	Limits
Commercial General Liability	\$1m per occurrence/\$2m aggregate
Automotive Liability	\$1m per occurrence single limit for bodily injuries and property damage
Crime Insurance	\$1m per occurrence for dishonest acts of Subcontractor's employees which result in a loss to the District or VEIC.
Environmental Liability	\$1m per occurrence/\$2m aggregate
Workers' Compensation (including alternate employer endorsements as may be requested by VEIC)	Statutory mandates
Employer's Liability (including alternate employer endorsements as may be requested by VEIC)	\$500k per accident; \$500k per disease; \$500k policy disease limit
Professional Liability Insurance (Errors & Omissions)	\$1m per occurrence/\$2m aggregate
Cyber Liability Insurance	\$1m per occurrence/\$1m aggregate
Sexual/Physical Abuse & Molestation	\$1m per occurrence/ \$1m aggregate
Umbrella or Excess Liability Insurance	\$3m per occurrence/\$3m aggregate (subcontracts under \$100k will only be required to have \$1m/\$1m)

J. Disclosure of any pertinent litigation. A bidder must disclose any past or pending judgments, lawsuits, actions, bankruptcies or information that may adversely affect the bidder's ability to meet any requirements of this RFP, the subcontract or the bidder's proposal. A bidder agrees to provide a detailed description of any of the above events and the applicable case number in its proposal.

- This disclosure obligation is an on-going material obligation that applies from the date of proposal submission through the expiration of any resulting subcontract award. Failure to disclose pertinent litigation may result in the disqualification of Bidder's proposal.

Limitation

This RFP does not commit Efficiency Vermont to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of proposals. Efficiency Vermont reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP, to negotiate with any qualified bidder or to cancel in part or in its entirety the RFP, if any of these actions is deemed by Efficiency Vermont in its sole discretion to be in Efficiency Vermont's best interest.

Appendix A: Questions and Answers

1. Can we use funds for a marketing/outreach campaign?

Outreach expenses are allowable as admin expenses, if they are tied to an eligible SFR program

2. Can funds be used for stipends, travel, etc., to help more heavily impacted populations? Can we pay stipends on behalf of new employers for on-the-job training, etc.?

There is a broad range of allowable expenses in relation to job training, but these expenses have to be cost effective and proportional in addressing the harm identified for the impacted populations, as defined in the final rule (e.g., unemployed and underemployed). To be eligible, the program should demonstrate how the expenses would reasonably be expected to address the identified harm (e.g., job impact) on the impacted population (e.g., unemployed). For example, Treasury allows the use of SFR for “assistance with transportation to and from a jobsite or interview”. The final rule outlines further guidance on this under the *Assistance to Unemployed and Underemployed Workers* section ([p. 4369](#)).

3. Can there be a focus on particular populations, or do programs have to focus exclusively on those populations, such as unemployed workers?

For most cases, the funding should be provided to/on behalf of eligible beneficiaries only. If funding is provided to assist individuals in job training, for example, this funding should be provided for eligible beneficiaries only. However, for some capital expenditures, it may not be possible to exclusively serve eligible beneficiaries – for example, the final rule enumerates “job and workforce training centers” as eligible capital expenditures for unemployed and underemployed workers.

4. Is additional training that may not lead to more people in the workforce, just repurposing existing people eligible? For example, additional training of fuel dealers is important to ensure they can transition to alternative heating systems that are being promoted such as heat pumps and advanced wood heating. Could ARPA funds be applied to this type of training?

Treasury notes, “recipients may provide job training or other enumerated types of assistance to individuals that are currently employed but are seeking to move to a job that provides better opportunities for economic advancement, such as higher wages or more opportunities for career advancement.” If this is the case here, and specific training in alternative heating systems is reasonably expected to provide better job opportunities for these individuals, then this use would appear to be allowable.

Please review **Appendix B: Efficiency Vermont Standard Contract** on our website for sample contract language.