



Home Energy Rebates (IRA Sections 50121 and 50122): RFP Guidance for Program Planning, Technical, and Administrative Support

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Background

The \$8.8 billion Home Energy Rebates Program provides an unprecedented opportunity for states, territories, and Tribes to make American homes more comfortable while reducing energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Given the complexity and expertise required to plan, design, and execute these programs, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) expects that many states may contract with companies to develop and implement effective programs to both single-family homes and multifamily buildings. States may also choose to seek support and expertise in designing programs, completing and submitting the full application package to DOE, and providing ongoing program administration support.

To contract with these companies, many states will need to go through a competitive solicitation process, which includes a Request for Proposals (RFP). This document represents key recommended components of an RFP for states¹ and territories, focusing on the design, planning, application, and administrative support needed to develop and implement the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) authorized Home Energy Rebates Programs.

This RFP template can be included as part of a larger procurement request that also includes a scope of work for program implementation or may be competed as a separate procurement with the intention to release a subsequent RFP for program implementation based on the design and planning results of Home Energy Rebates awards.

Please note that states must follow their own state policies and procurement practices when soliciting for any subrecipient or contractor that may receive federal funds. States can only contract for and fund tasks that have been approved under their existing DOE Home Energy Rebates awards. States are also required to segregate and track costs by award.

This document assumes that states have their own specific requirements and internal procurement policies for many aspects of solicitation management, including the timeline, required RFP structure, budgeting, terms and conditions, scoring approach, etc.

This document focuses on key aspects of planning, administrative and technical support solicitations that states should consider including in their RFPs to ensure that the bidders provide sufficient detail on how they intend to implement the programs. These sections include:

- **Known Program Elements.** An overview of the state program including key goals and objectives that a bidder will need to know when developing responses.
- **Requested Tasks.** A scope of the list of tasks that states are requesting in the RFP, including aspects of program design and stakeholder strategy, application support, and state process support. A state should customize this section to ensure it reflects the state's vision of support.

¹ A separate template will be provided for the 50122 Program Requirements for Tribes.

- **Proposal Response Questions.** Lists of recommended questions for inclusion in the RFP for bidders to respond to in their proposal. These sample questions are designed to help states request key information from potential bidders to both distinguish between contractors and ensure that the contractor can meet the requirements. States should adjust this list based on relevant changes in the Requested Tasks section above.
- **Minimum Requirements.** In addition to the DOE program requirements,² additional key requirements developed by the state.
- **Other Proposal Requirements.** This provides brief recommendations for components of the RFP that states may or may not need, including bidder qualifications, proposal format, budget guidelines, timeline, and selection criteria.

Known Program Elements

In this RFP section, DOE recommends states provide known information to bidders about the intended design of their Home Energy Rebates program. If states have submitted any applications or plans to DOE (e.g., Early Administrative Funds Administrative and Legal Requirements Document (ALRD) or Program Funds ALRD application), states should consider providing those applications to give bidders additional detail on program design. Program design content may include the *known* aspects of the following:

- Vision, goals, and key metrics for the program(s).
- If known, also provide:
 - Which programs and pathways the state plans to implement (i.e., Home Efficiency Rebates – modeled or measured, Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates).
 - How the program(s) will operate within the state, including partnerships and program entities involved (e.g., contractors, retailers, auditors, installers).
 - Expected budget for the program.
 - Years of expected program delivery.
 - Included income levels (e.g., low income, moderate income, market rate).
 - Expected participant building type(s) (e.g., single-family, multifamily, manufactured homes).
 - Expected portion of funding that will be reserved for low-income qualified households.

Requested Tasks

In this section of the RFP, states should outline the areas of program design, planning, technical, and administrative support that the RFP would cover. States can leverage the

² The Requirements and Application Instructions can be accessed at <https://www.energy.gov/scep/articles/home-energy-rebate-programs-requirements-and-application-instructions>.

following list as a starting point, adding and removing tasks and focus areas to customize to the unique needs of the state. After customizing this section, states should also adjust the following section, "Proposal Response Questions," to ensure that the RFP questions and requested work align.

I. Program Design and Stakeholder Strategy

1. Conduct background research and collect data to inform program design. The contractor will complete foundational work (research, interviews, surveys, community meetings, literature review, baselining, data collection, etc.) to inform program design. This may include the following subtasks:

- Review and summarize federal program requirements.
- Conduct background research, including literature review to identify best practices.
- Document existing program landscape (within state or region) to identify potential programs to leverage or gaps in existing programs, including:
 - Other funding opportunities available to households,
 - Existing rebates offerings (e.g., amounts, eligibility requirements, qualified product lists, incentive delivery methods),
 - Existing market engagement efforts (e.g., qualified contractor networks),
 - Program achievements and hard-to-reach markets, and
 - Potential for coordination with Community-Based Organizations.
- Identify legal, policy, or political challenges and opportunities related to program implementation.
- Conduct secondary research³ to inform [market assessment](#), including:
 - Analyzing stock and program potential,
 - Assessing existing available qualified workforce, and
 - Assessing landscape of distributor and retail networks.
- Attend relevant presentations by DOE and other industry partners as appropriate to ensure the state has the latest information about the Home Energy Rebates Program.

2. Develop high-level program design strategy. The contractor will develop a high-level program design strategy. This may include the following subtasks:

- Identify program(s) and paths for state to apply for and implement.
- Identify key program aspects such as:
 - Eligible households,

³ Market assessment research has the potential to be large in scope and budget. States should consider focusing on utilizing existing information and/or informing the bidder to limit the scope of this effort.

- Eligible upgrades,
- Income verification methods,
- Rebate amounts and project cost caps,
- Education and outreach strategy,
- Managing qualified contractor networks, and
- Data and collection and reporting methods.
- Develop strategy for integrating rebates with existing federal, state, utility, and community-based programs, as appropriate and permitted under the law such as:
 - Developing co-branded customer resources (e.g., technology pages, brochures, webinars).
 - Integrating network enrollment processes for participating contractors.
- Conduct technical and financial analyses to support program design, such as:
 - Forecasts of energy savings by program,
 - Identification and review of tools available to support the program(s),
 - Financial analyses of proposed implementation approaches, including the integration of federal funding with existing state and utility incentive offers, and
 - Analysis and mapping of populations that meet the goals of the Justice40 initiative.⁴

3. Design and conduct stakeholder outreach. The contractor will develop and execute a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan that ensures key project stakeholders are informed and have an opportunity to engage with the program as it is developed and deployed. This may include:

- Identify relevant stakeholders and categorize the types of collaboration needed.
- Develop a strategy and timeline for scheduling, hosting, and convening stakeholder meetings.
- Assist in development of meeting materials as needed, including meeting agendas, presentations, and Q&A documentation.
- Conduct community and market research to support stakeholder engagement, identify existing program staff, supply chain contacts, and tradespeople that should be engaged or informed as programs proceed.
- Engage with external stakeholders and agencies to determine needs for residents, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and contractors.
- Support stakeholder meetings.

⁴ The Justice40 initiative, established by E.O. 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, sets a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities.

- Facilitate meetings, including development of agendas, discussion facilitation, and record keeping.
- Review technical meeting and public hearing submissions from stakeholders to inform program design.

II. Application Support

This section of the RFP focuses on providing expertise and support for developing, submitting, and receiving approval for the full DOE application package.

1. Establish an application project management plan and timeline. Develop a project management plan and timeline that outlines the application development, submission, review, and approval process. The plan should include key dates, required documents and workbooks, application tasks, application milestones, and expected roles/responsibilities of various staff (e.g., state, contractors, and partners).

2. Develop program application materials. The contractor will support states in the development of the program application materials and all relevant deliverables required by the DOE for the Home Energy Rebate Programs. This may include the following tasks:

- Review of sample application responses,
- Identification of needed information to draft responses,
- Draft of initial state narrative responses,
- Completion of budget templates, including forecasts of administrative, project and rebate budgets,
- Completion of all other applicable required documents,⁵
- Management of review and editing process for application responses, and
- Management of communications and versions of drafts between DOE and state during review and revision process.

3. Develop Implementation Blueprints. The contractor will collaborate with state staff and relevant partners to develop Implementation Blueprints. Blueprints that the state may select contractor to support include:

- A Community Benefits Plan, including a plan for addressing equity and environmental justice,
- An Education and Outreach Strategy,
- A Consumer Protection Plan,
- A Utility Data Access Plan,
- A Privacy and Security Risk Assessment for State Systems, and

⁵ The Application Checklist can be accessed at <https://www.energy.gov/scep/articles/home-energy-rebates-alrd-application-checklist>.

- A Market Transformation Plan.

III. State Process Support

This section of the RFP is to support state staff in internal processes as needed for other tasks not included above such as administrative and logistical support and state procurement processes for program implementation.

1. Provide project management and coordination. Support state staff as needed through all stages of the program lifecycle, such as launch and implementation.

- Establish a project launch and implementation timeline. Ensure project plans stay on track, schedule meetings, take and distribute notes, and follow up on action items.
- Support state staff in project management related activities.
- Track progress of milestones identified in timelines and report status to state staff.
- Support coordination with other program partners and funding sources.
- Collaborate with other relevant teams and industry partners as needed.

2. Support state procurement processes.⁶ Support solicitation and contracting process for the implementation contractor(s).

- Support state staff in developing RFP(s) and associated documents such as scope of work, proposal questions, background materials, budget workbook, scoring criteria, review processes, and other state contracting requirements.
- Support state staff in managing procurement processes, timelines, and deliverables.
- Support staff in communications with external stakeholders and DOE related to timelines of procurement processes.
- Support state in ensuring compliance with federal and state statutory requirements.
- Support state review processes by facilitating meetings and taking notes.

3. Provide ongoing administrative support. This section of the RFP should be included if continued administrative support is needed throughout the implementation of the Home Energy Rebates Programs. The contractor may provide on-going project management support for activities associated with the Home Energy Rebates Programs, including but not limited to:

- Assisting in establishing processes to track funding and budgets.
- Assisting in developing standardized data collection, reporting templates, and other procedures needed to meet DOE's reporting requirements. This may include data collection templates and process flow maps.
- Assisting with drafting programmatic documents, requests for information (RFIs), RFPs, or other documents as needed to execute the implementation plan.

⁶ As noted in Minimum Requirements section, states should clarify if the contractor selected for this work is barred from bidding on RFPs related to program implementation.

- Tracking program performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) and identifying key risks and dependencies that should be monitored.
- Establishing a process for tracking these risks and dependencies and alerting state staff when corrective action might be required. Tasks may include:
 - Developing templates for key risks and dependencies to share with state staff,
 - Providing regular status updates on implementation activities,
 - Developing monthly reports on program performance against key KPIs, and
 - Developing ad hoc written programmatic documents related to program implementation and reporting, as requested by the state.

Proposal Response Questions

The following sections list sample questions bidders should be directed to answer in their proposals; states should customize these questions for their own unique program design and needs. These questions are intended for states to understand how the bidders will fulfill the goals, design, and requirements of the program. These responses can be used to compare the approach and understanding of each bidder.

I. Experience

The RFP should request the bidders provide relevant information about their experience in the following areas:

- Conducting program design of energy efficiency programs.
- Experience with state or locally run programs.
- Braiding and coordinating programs.
- Coordinating with stakeholders.
- Applying for federal grants.
- Familiarity and any existing experience with IRA Sections 50121 and 50122.

II. Program Design and Stakeholders

Bidders should describe their proposed approach to:

- **Conducting background research and collecting data to inform program design,** including the subtasks noted in Section I #1 of Requested Tasks. The bidder should generally describe their approach to conducting literature reviews, policy analysis, and/or comparative research. Bidders should describe their experience understanding and meeting state and federal program data requirements, how they have used program data, and any lessons they have learned related to ensuring program data is accurate and useable.
- **Developing a high-level program design strategy,** including the subtasks noted in Section I #2 of Requested Tasks. The bidder should identify key issues they expect the

state will need to consider when developing its program design and how those issues will be addressed through the bidder's support of the program design.

- **Designing and conducting stakeholder outreach**, including the subtasks noted in Section I #3 of Requested Tasks. The bidder should identify known stakeholders within the state, strategic recommendations to support collaboration, and lessons learned from similar engagements that the bidder will use to support this task. Bidders should describe their proposed approach to collaborating with industry partners and other experts.

III. Application Support

Bidders should describe their proposed approach to:

- **Establishing an application project management plan and timeline**, including the subtasks noted in Section II #1 of Requested Tasks. The bidder should describe 1) how it will develop and maintain a plan and timeline, 2) how it will build in flexibility, 3) what important components it will track to support an efficient and effective process, 4) and what tools they use to ensure projects stay on track. The bidder should share examples of program implementation plans, and/or describe previous experience with preparing funding applications.
- **Developing program application materials**, including the subtasks noted in Section II #2 of Requested Tasks. The bidder should describe ways that it will support the state in 1) developing a comprehensive application that fulfills program requirements while incorporating state program design objectives, 2) communicating with DOE throughout application process, 3) navigating the DOE application review process, and 4) ensuring key timelines are maintained.
- **Developing Implementation Blueprints**, including the subtasks noted in Section II #3 of Requested Tasks. The bidder should describe how it will ensure all DOE requirements are met while leveraging existing information and the expertise of state staff to its fullest.

IV. State Process Support

Bidders should describe their proposed approach to:

- **Providing project management and coordination**, including the subtasks noted in Section III #1 of Requested Tasks. The bidder should describe their typical approaches for engagements, such as how they will support the state to ensure the programs and plans stay on track and are effectively coordinated.
- **Supporting state procurement processes**, including the subtasks noted in Section III #2 of Requested Tasks. The bidder should describe challenges they expect the state will encounter and strategies to overcome these challenges. The bidder should describe how they propose to ensure procurement is consistent with state and federal laws and guidelines.

- **Providing ongoing administrative support**, including the subtasks noted in Section III #3 of Requested Tasks. The bidder should describe effective processes, expected challenges, and lessons learned in similar engagements.

Minimum Requirements

- The RFP should instruct bidders to be aware of and adhere to all programmatic requirements in the [Program Requirements and Application Instructions](#) and [Administrative and Legal Requirements Document \(ALRD\)](#).
- The RFP should instruct bidders to review DOE's Home Energy Rebates [Frequency Asked Questions](#) and [Recommendations](#) pages.
- The RFP should clearly state whether the contractor selected for this work is barred from bidding on RFPs related to program implementation.
- The RFP should instruct the bidders to review the state's Home Efficiency Rebates and Home Electrification and Appliances Rebates application narrative documents (if submitted and approved).
- The RFP should include any additional requirements implemented by the state. These additional requirements may include:
 - State-specific program requirements,
 - Legal requirements,
 - State policies,
 - Partnerships with existing programs,
 - Rebate dollar amounts, and
 - Qualified products.

Other Proposal Requirements

RFPs generally include additional components that provide the bidder guidance on any additional information to be submitted and how that information should be provided. This includes expectations for how bidders should provide company and staff qualifications, the structure of the proposal and templates and formats for submitting key information including proposed budget and timeline to launch. States should consider adding the following to their RFPs:

I. Bidder Qualifications, Experience and Staffing Plan

The RFP should request:

- A summary of related expertise and minimum qualifications that speak to both single-family and multifamily experience.
- A plan for staffing the project that includes an organization chart and bios/resumes of key personnel.

II. Proposal Format and Submission

The RFP should include instructions for proposal structure, length, format, due date, etc.

III. Budget Guidelines

The RFP should include:

- An optional template in an Excel spreadsheet, or similar format, for completing the budget by category that allows for consistency among the different bidders and easy comparison by the state.
- The overall level of effort expected (e.g., a range of hours, Full Time Employees, or % of budget), budget range, and cost proposal requirements (e.g., costs by category, number of hours, hourly rates, etc.). RFP should define if the tasks will be fixed price or time and materials.

IV. Proposal Timeline

The RFP should:

- Request a timeline for the bidder that includes the schedule for developing a detailed implementation plan and preparation activities required to launch the program.
- Include key dates for RFP process, decision, project commencement, etc.
- Include a Bidder Webinar to review RFP process and allow for questions.
- Include dates for submittal of additional questions and response date.
- Allow at least 4-6 weeks from the time it is released until proposals are due.

V. Selection Criteria

The RFP should describe the criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals and compare bidder's proposals. Recommended criteria include how well the bidder responded to each of the proposal requirements and addressed the topics in the RFP, budget, schedule, and staff experience and expertise and preference for disadvantaged businesses.

VI. Contracting

Consistent with the state's procurement rules, the RFP should describe the contracting process and provide a draft contract for the bidder to reference.