**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP AMENDMENT #1 AND**

**SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202402045 Energy Burden Study |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Maine Office of the Public Advocate |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | March 7, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **AMENDMENT AND QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | March 11, 2024 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | March 19, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time ***(as amended)*** |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov |

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| **DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES IN RFP (if any):**All references to the Proposal Due date of March 18, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time are amended to March 19, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. |
| **REVISED LANGUAGE IN RFP (if any):**

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|  *Proposals must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:* **Submission Deadline:** March 19, 2024 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. *Proposals must be submitted electronically to:* Proposals@maine.gov  |

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| **All other provisions and clauses of the RFP remain unchanged.** |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, p. 7 | The RFP states the bidder will “develop a plan to collect such primary data in consultation with the Department and will analyze such data once collected.” Does the State of Maine, and will the Office of the Public Advocate be able to provide, household level energy bill spending data by fuel type, customer class, and household income that includes geographic information such as city/town or region from Maine energy utilities? |
| **Answer** |
| The OPA does not currently possess the listed information. The OPA will assist the successful bidder in identifying and, to the extent it is available, accessing data available from the listed State of Maine agencies and Maine utilities.  |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, p. 7 | The RFP states the bidder will “address where possible the ‘cliff’ experienced by some customers who have an increase in income that is sufficient to remove their eligibility for assistance programs but insufficient to ease the energy burden to the comparable level prior to the income increase.” Does the State of Maine, and will the Office of the Public Advocate be able to provide, household level energy bill spending data over time, including information on household income and eligibility status?  |
| **Answer** |
| The OPA does not currently possess the listed information. The OPA will assist the successful bidder in identifying and, to the extent it is available, accessing data available from the listed State of Maine agencies and Maine utilities.  |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, p. 7 | The RFP states that the Energy Burden Study report is to be provided by October 15, 2024. What are the expected responsibilities and tasks following this deadline for the remainder of the Initial Period of Performance (ending March 31, 2026)? Similarly, what are the expected tasks for the possible Renewal periods #1 and #2 which extend into March 2028? |
| **Answer** |
| Following the acceptance of the final report, the OPA anticipates using the study as part of its legislative and regulatory advocacy. In these contexts, the OPA may require additional technical support of the study, e.g., responding to inquiries for backup or supplemental information. For these tasks, it would be sufficient to provide hourly rates for such tasks. If a bidder is inclined, the OPA would find it useful if the bidder would identify any amount of such support (e.g., included hours) included in the bid. In either case, please be clear regarding your proposal in this regard. For the Renewal periods, the OPA anticipates that it may request to have the Study updated.  |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV, Section IV | Does the Office of Public Advocate have a desired total maximum budget for the total cost to perform all tasks? |
| **Answer** |
| In its RFP Planning document provided to the Division of Procurement Services, the OPA stated an “Expected Contract Amount” of $50,000. This amount is an extremely rough estimate and does not represent any attempt to quantify benefits from efficiencies that bidders may be able to bring to the project or the cost of tasks necessary to fulfill the scope of work that have not been adequately anticipated. |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part II, Section A, page 7 | Will the successful bidder be responsible for collecting primary data? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. To the extent that the successful bidder identifies the need to collect primary data in order to complete the scope of work, the successful bidder would be responsible for conducting or arranging for the collection of this data. |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Does OPA have an estimated budget in mind for this work? |
| **Answer** |
| In its RFP Planning document provided to the Division of Procurement Services, the OPA stated an “Expected Contract Amount” of $50,000. This amount is an extremely rough estimate and does not represent any attempt to quantify benefits from efficiencies that bidders may be able to bring to the project or the cost of tasks necessary to fulfill the scope of work that have not been adequately anticipated. |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part II, Section A, page 7 | Does OPA want the contractor to provide data or any results broken out by energy use (e.g., transportation)? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, the OPA would like the results broken out by broken out by high level usage category (e.g., domestic consumption, home heating, and transportation.) |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part II, Section A, page 7 | Does OPA want the contractor to provide data for costs by fuel type? What fuel types does OPA want the contractor to include? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, the OPA is interested in seeing the data broken out by fuel type, i.e., electricity, heating oil, gasoline, natural gas. |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part II, Section A, page 7 | Does OPA currently have access to data from Maine state sources (including the Maine Governor’s Energy Office (GEO), the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA), the Maine Climate Council, and the Maine Community Action Partnership (MeCAP))? Please describe the data available from these sources. Have these data been cleaned (e.g., to correct entries with invalid data types or clearly erroneous data)? Will the contractor be responsible for contacting Maine state organizations for data? |
| **Answer** |
| The OPA does not have direct access to the information that may be available from the listed agencies. The OPA will assist the successful bidder in identifying and accessing data available from the listed State of Maine agencies and Maine utilities. The OPA does not have an opinion regarding whether data from the listed agencies will be necessary to fulfill the scope of work, only that they may possess such data. The OPA does not have information regarding the quality of the data available from the listed agencies. |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part VI, Contract Administration and Conditions, page 15 | Should proposers attach edits to the sample terms and conditions with the proposal? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, please include any requested edits to the draft terms and conditions. |

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| **11** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services (both A and B), page 8 | Can you explain the two dates listed? Is the draft report due on October 15, 2024 and final report on December 1, 2024 or do these dates indicate something else?  |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, we are proposing the completion of a draft report by October 15, 2024, with a final report incorporating comments by December 1, 2024. These dates are preferred dates and represent internal deadlines established by the OPA, not by an external requirement, such as at the direction of the Legislature.  |

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| **12** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Contract Term – page 6 | The Scope of Services covers tasks that will be completed in 2024. Has the Department determined other tasks that it would like the consultant to support from December 1, 2024 – March 31, 2026? If yes, can the Department share those tasks? If not, is the Department looking for the consultant to share thoughts on other tasks that could be performed for the Department?  |
| **Answer** |
| Following the acceptance of the final report, the OPA anticipates using the study as part of its legislative and regulatory advocacy. In these contexts, the OPA may require additional technical support of the study, e.g., responding to inquiries for backup or supplemental information. The OPA would find it useful if the bidders would identify any amount of such support (e.g., included hours) included in the bid. The OPA would welcome suggestions regarding other tasks that could be performed by the successful bidder beyond those identified in the Scope of Work. |

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| **13** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D – page 21 | Is it correct to assume the total proposed cost should include only the tasks list in Part II Scope of Services Provided, A. Description of Responsibilities section on pages 7-8? If so, given (a) that the schedule proposed these tasks will be completed in 2024 and (b) that the cost sheet mentions Total Project Cost will cover the Initial Period of Performance as described in Part 1, C., is this just indicating that proposed rates should remain the same for staff positions throughout the initial period of performance?  |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, it is correct to assume that the proposed cost should include only the tasks identified in the question. Following the acceptance of the final report, the OPA anticipates using the study as part of its legislative and regulatory advocacy. In these contexts, the OPA may require additional technical support of the study, e.g., responding to inquiries for backup or supplemental information. For these tasks, it would be sufficient to provide hourly rates for such tasks. If a bidder is inclined, the OPA would find it useful if the bidder would identify any amount of such support (e.g., included hours) included in the bid. In either case, please be clear regarding your proposal in this regard. |