

Answers to Submitted Questions

Regarding:

Request for Proposals (RFP) For
Statewide Weatherization Barrier Remediation Program Operator

Issued By: The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

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| <p align="center">Subcontracting and Program Requirements</p> | <p>1. Page 8 of the RFP references adherence to "rules as defined by DSS." What are these rules? Do the DSS rules apply to projects that are not funded through LIHEAP?</p> | <p>In addition to complying with Federal LIHEAP statutes and regulations, the Program Operator(s) will be legally required to comply with any rules set by Department of Social Services (DSS) regarding the remediation of health and safety barriers under the RFP. DEEP is working with DSS to ensure that these rules are clearly identified for the Program Operator(s).</p> <p>DSS' rules will only apply to projects that receive funds from the LIHEAP Block Grant administered by DSS. To the extent a project is funded solely through ARPA, the DSS rules would not apply to that individual project.</p> |
| | <p>2. Will the Program Operator(s) have to follow State of Connecticut or DEEP procurement requirements for their subcontractors, or can they create their own procurement requirements?</p> | <p>Pursuant to the sample contract terms, the Program Operator(s) may make its sub-awards, using either its own competitive selection process or the values established in the state's competitive selection process as outlined in DAS General Letter 71, whichever is more restrictive.</p> |
| | <p>3. Are we expected to get multiple bids for each project, or to qualify a vendor to provide services?</p> | <p>This will be left to the discretion of the Program Operator(s), provided that it follows the procurement requirements in the contract.</p> |
| | <p>4. In cases where the homeowner is paying for the</p> | <p>Any pre-existing relationship between remediation vendors and HES vendors would be unaffected</p> |

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| | <p>remediation when required, will pre-existing relationships between remediation vendors and Home Energy Solutions vendors be impacted once the contract for this RFP is awarded?</p> | <p>insofar as it relates to work for customers who would not qualify for assistance under the Weatherization Barrier Remediation Program.</p> |
| | <p>5. If a HES Vendor is working under the selected Program Operator(s), would that HES vendor have any say in who is recommended to remove said barrier or would that be at the discretion of the Program Operator(s)?</p> | <p>HES vendors will not be subcontracted by a Program Operator(s), and therefore HES vendors will only be making recommendations as to who should remove said barrier if that HES vendor is a selected Program Operator.</p> |
| <p>Customer Data Sharing and Eligibility Considerations</p> | <p>6. Can you clarify who is responsible for developing the project tracking sheet, DEEP or the Program Operator(s)?</p> | <p>The Program Operator(s) will develop the tracking sheet in close collaboration with DEEP.</p> |
| | <p>7. Please provide more insight into how program data will flow between the weatherization contractors, the utilities, the Program Operator(s), and other relevant parties. Will the Program Operator(s) be responsible for creating the referenced tracking sheet?</p> | <p>As stated in the RFP, the Program Operator(s) will lead this collaborative process, but DEEP plans to be involved in the development and implementation of data management practices and will work with the Community Action Agencies and Electric Distribution Companies to ensure the Program Operator(s) receives any necessary information to deliver on its responsibilities.</p> <p>The portion of the RFP that addresses data tracking and sharing requirements was left purposefully vague to allow for a collaborative process between the Program Operator(s), DEEP, and other relevant</p> |

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| | | <p>parties to create this system. Some of this work is already underway, including efforts by the Utilities and Community Action Agencies to streamline data management systems. Exact data management methodologies will be established during the contracting phase of this RFP.</p> |
| | <p>8. Who will collect customer demographic data? Can DEEP and utilities ensure vendors provide demographic data the RFP is asking for to the Program Operator(s)?</p> | <p>The RFP lists specific demographic information that the Program Operator(s) must track In Section II.E Contract Management/Data Reporting. Some of this participation data will be collected by the weatherization agency, while other information, including certain demographic data, will be the responsibility of the Program Operator(s).</p> <p>DEEP will work with the Program Operator(s) and other parties to develop collaborative data management practices. The exact data management methodology will be finalized during the contracting phase of this RFP.</p> |
| | <p>9. Will property owners have to submit a separate application to the Program Operator(s) to be considered for this program?</p> | <p>Property owners will not need to fill out a separate application to participate in the Weatherization Barriers Remediation Program. Referrals from the HES-IE and WAP programs will serve as the application for this program. The Program Operator(s) will be responsible for establishing that customers are eligible to receive assistance through LIHEAP. The exact details of customer intake will be finalized in the contracting stage.</p> |
| | <p>10. Will there be guidelines for prioritizing program referrals?</p> | <p>Prioritization guidelines are not established at this time. DEEP will work closely with the Program Operator(s), once selected, and other parties to</p> |

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| | | <p>establish relevant guidelines for prioritizing program participants</p> |
| | <p>11. Will the program accept referrals in real time or begin with the existing pipeline of deferred projects?</p> | <p>Homes that have already been deferred from the HES-IE or WAP programs will be a priority for this program. However, the Program Operator(s) will have the flexibility to accept referrals in real time based on capacity and relevant prioritization guidelines. Prioritization guidelines will be established cooperatively with DEEP during the contracting phase.</p> |
| | <p>12. Can the utilities work with DEEP while the RFP is open to help identify customers that have already been deferred from programs due to weatherization barriers?</p> | <p>Utilities play a significant role in identifying customers who have already been deferred from programs due to weatherization barriers. While the RFP is open the utilities may work with DEEP to compile a list of said customers. However, the utilities may not work with DEEP on prioritization guidelines for said customers while the RFP is open.</p> |
| | <p>13. Can DEEP provide added information on the format of existing utility and Weatherization data sets, as the RFP requests integration?</p> | <p>DEEP will provide information on the format of existing data sets to the Program Operator(s), once selected, to assist with integration.</p> |
| | <p>14. During the RFP conference DEEP staff indicated that the Program Operator(s) would need to confirm client eligibility for LIHEAP. Would DEEP accept weatherization</p> | <p>The Program Operator(s) may review information confirming customer eligibility that is supplied by the weatherization agency or HES-IE vendor; however, the Program Operator(s) will make independent determinations on customer eligibility</p> |

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| | <p>agency or HES IE vendor supplied information confirming eligibility?</p> | <p>for the Weatherization Barriers Remediation Program.</p> |
| | <p>15. Is qualifying for HES-IE or WAP sufficient to qualify for this program?</p> | <p>To participate in the Weatherization Barriers Remediation Program, a customer must qualify for HES-IE or WAP and have a vendor of one of these programs confirm the presence of a health and safety issue that prevents weatherization. The Program Operator(s) will establish customer eligibility for the Program including, where applicable, confirming customer eligibility to receive LIHEAP assistance through the use of the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program application.</p> |
| <p>Barrier Remediation Job Expenditures</p> | <p>16. In scenarios where homes have multiple barriers, can the Program address additional barriers that were not originally identified by the HES-IE or WAP technician?</p> | <p>As stated in Section II.B Service Overview, the purpose of the program is to address health and safety barriers that directly impede the ability to move forward with weatherization measures. As long as identified health and safety barriers directly inhibit weatherization work and are within the program guidelines and budget requirements, they may be addressed with program funding.</p> <p>As mentioned in Section II.C.2 under Service Collaboration and Coordination, the Program Operator(s) is required to work closely with remediation contractors and health and safety specialists regarding allowable expenses to ensure all expenses will be approved under Program rules. If a selected entity leverages additional health and safety remediation funding beyond those offered through this RFP, those funds may be applied to participating homes with health and safety hazards that do not meet program guidelines. Bidders with the ability to leverage additional sources of health</p> |

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| | | <p>and safety funding will be viewed favorably in the RFP evaluation process, as noted in Section III.B.4.4.</p> |
| | <p>17.What happens in a scenario when the cost of remediating identified barriers exceeds the allowable budget?</p> | <p>The program will assess projects on a case-by-case basis, but projects exceeding the maximum allowable budget will be deferred from the program. For example, the combined ARPA and LIHEAP budget scenario has a \$30,000 maximum expenditure limit per job, aimed to provide adequate funding to address barriers, given that the Program Operator(s) adheres to the \$15,000 average across annually completed jobs. However, as mentioned in III.B.4.4, additional preference will be given to bidders who demonstrate the ability to leverage additional sources of funding that may be able to cover additional health and safety barriers encountered in homes.</p> |
| | <p>18.In Section II.C.2, the service expectations outline that the selected entity shall determine appropriate credentials for a health and safety specialist, then identify and hire a qualified and properly credentialed health and safety specialist(s) to perform various core components of service. If our organization has staff that are qualified and have the appropriate credentials for completing some of these tasks would that be acceptable? Also, would it be acceptable to then identify a credentialed health and safety</p> | <p>Once the selected entity has determined the appropriate credentials and hiring for a health and safety specialist, the entity may share the duties of that health and safety specialist (as outlined in Section II.C.2) among current staff and subcontractors .</p> |

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| | <p>specialist to complete the task our organization's staff person is unable to do?</p> | |
| <p>Administrative/Program Revenue and Funding</p> | <p>19. Is the 10 percent reserved for administrative costs a fixed amount for projects that do not receive LIHEAP funds?</p> | <p>While LIHEAP rules limit administrative expenses to no more than 10% of the award, ARPA funds do not have a capped administration percentage. Please refer to 2 CFR 200 for specifics regarding allowable expenses. When submitting their budget(s), respondent(s) must limit administrative expenses to 10% for the LIHEAP portion but may exceed 10% for the ARPA portion. A budget justification is required for both funding sources and preference is given to respondent(s) who can demonstrate access to other sources of administrative funding (Section III.B.4.4).</p> |
| | <p>20. Can we submit budgets for less than the budgeted amount and lower the projected number of homes served in Attachment 2?</p> | <p>The RFP outlines three distinct budget scenarios in Attachment 2. The potential bidders may tailor their proposals around these scenarios.</p> |
| | <p>21. Why do budget Scenarios 1 and 2 in Attachment 2 of the RFP have similar service goals even though the budgets are different?</p> | <p>Because Scenario 1 is a combined ARPA and LIHEAP budget scenario, there is more flexibility to pursue comprehensive projects, leading to higher average and maximum job costs. Therefore, even though the overall budget for Scenario 1 is larger, the service goals are similar to other budget scenarios.</p> |
| | <p>22. Would it be possible to ask bidders to budget separately</p> | <p>The Program Operator(s) will be allowed to incur both Programmatic and Administrative costs prior</p> |

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| | <p>for these (and any other necessary start-up development) tasks and allocate funds separately from the 10% on-going administrative tasks to cover these costs and ensure that a robust system is established before opening the program in April? Would your funding rules allow this bifurcation of the development and administrative costs?</p> | <p>to the anticipated April 1, 2022 Program start date for developmental purposes. Anticipated developmental expenses must be included in respondent(s) budget proposals for any/all budget scenarios (Section III.B.4.4).</p> |
| | <p>23.How is DEEP defining the executive salary and fringe included in the admin costs?</p> | <p>DEEP defines the administrative costs as the salary, fringe benefit, and indirect costs associated with staff for the time they work on appropriate projects related to the grant. If 10% of their time is devoted to LIHEAP projects, for example, 10% of their total salary, fringe benefit and indirect costs will be reflected as grant costs. Please see 2 C.F.R. 200 for more information about allowable expenses.</p> |
| | <p>24.Can you please expand on the administrative cost limitations? Our institution has a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (2 CFR 200.414). How do we incorporate these costs into the budget?</p> | <p>Salary and fringe benefit costs associated with the project will be multiplied by the recipient's previously negotiated indirect rate and those costs will be included in the total overall administrative costs.</p> |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Verifying Weatherization Work Completion</p> | <p>25. Is there room for the Program Operator(s) to coordinate with the utilities on oversight of the completion of weatherization work?</p> | <p>As stated in Section II.C.2, the Program Operator is expected to coordinate "with the referring weatherization entity (HES-IE or WAP) and customer(s) to confirm the remediation of barriers and ensure the customer receives weatherization measures." Specifically, the Program Operator must obtain a signed agreement from the customer that they will permit weatherization measures to be completed after the barriers are addressed, inform the referring weatherization entity (HES-IE or WAP) once the barriers have been addressed and the home is cleared to receive weatherization services, and track the completed weatherization of homes that participate in the Barrier Remediation Program to the extent the data are available. The selected Program Operator(s) is not responsible if a third party's data is not shared, provided they made a good-faith effort to obtain the data and informed DEEP of the situation. The ultimate responsibility for completion of the weatherization work remains with the utilities and DEEP.</p> |
| | <p>26. How will the Program Operator(s) know when weatherization work has been completed? Who is accountable to ensuring that the weatherization/energy work is completed by the HES IE vendor/WAP agency and that information on the energy job completion is provided back to the Program Operator(s)? The RFP does not envision a contractual</p> | <p>The Program Operator(s) will be responsible for tracking the completion of weatherization work after barrier remediation. DEEP will work with the Program Operator(s) and other parties to develop collaborative data management practices that will facilitate tracking of completed weatherization work. As mentioned in sections II.C (Scope Of Service Description) and II.E (Contract Management/Data Reporting) the selected entity will be responsible for (1) coordinating with and establishing processes with entities such as the Community Action Agencies and the Gas and Electric Distribution Companies who are responsible for managing statewide weatherization</p> |

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| | relationship between the Program Operator(s) and those organizations completing the energy work, making it difficult for the operator to take on this task. | work; and (2) providing DEEP with access to a basic shared tracking sheet or dashboard showing job progress through the various phases, from intake through completion of weatherization measures by a weatherization vendor. |
| Workforce Considerations | 27.What role does the Program Operator(s) play in determining what the workforce training needs are? | As described in Section II.C.3 (Scope of Service Description), the Program Operator(s) is responsible for tracking the training and development needs of participating subcontractors to ensure adequate staffing and supply of a diverse, equitable, and skilled workforce. DEEP sees value in monitoring whether there is adequate staffing and workforce to support the Program and will rely on the Program Operator(s) to track any workforce or training needs that arise in the implementation of the Program. |
| RFP Response | 28.If one had provided information to DEEP as the agency was working on the design for this program—but did not see or have access to any draft RFP text or any non-public RFP text --would that be considered a conflict of interest? | In the development of this RFP, DEEP actively sought input regarding the design of the program via a public process in the form of two planning workshops and a public input session to review a draft RFP. If the information was provided during this public process, then there would not be a conflict of interest. |
| | 29.Are bidders permitted to include letters of support as part of proposals? Are letter(s) of support viewed | Section III.A.5 of the RFP states "Attachments other than the required Appendices or Forms identified in the RFP are not permitted and will not be evaluated... Failure to abide by these instructions will result in disqualification." Under |

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| | <p>favorably as part of proposal submissions?</p> | <p>this provision, letters of support may not be submitted. However, Bidders may submit references as stated in Section III.B.4 4.1 Organization, Experience, and Service Delivery, "A top scorer will also provide at least two (2) references that can speak to the bidder's ability to appropriately manage a budget and deliverables and provide quality customer service" and in Section IV.D.4.1.1.g, "Grant Awards / Grant Manager or Client References: Please provide at least two (2) grant manager, client, or other applicable references that can speak to any of the bidder's relevant experience listed in 4.1.1.e. Additionally, please list any federal grants over \$100,000 in award that have been managed over the last three years, along with any relevant audit findings for each grant description. Note: In section g) of Organizational Profile, when providing references please prioritize previous grant managers or clients that can speak to the bidder's ability to appropriately manage a budget, deliverables, and quality customer service. Include an email address, phone number, and brief relationship summary for each reference."</p> |
| | <p>30.In section 4.2.1 (Staffing Plan) item c asks for a Personnel Organization Chart. Does this refer to a sub-chart for this project or a full organizational chart?</p> | <p>Per Section IV.D.4.2.1.c of the RFP, please provide a list or chart of key personnel and brief job descriptions. The chart must include any personnel who will be coding any portion of their salary to the Program, to include supervisory and executive positions. Please limit the organizational chart to personnel working in the Program.</p> |
| | <p>31.In section 4.4.1(Financial Profile) item e asks for annual budget and revenues for the</p> | <p>Audited financial statements will be accepted so long as they include the entity's annual budget and</p> |

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| | <p>past three years. Would audited financials meet this requirement?</p> | <p>revenues for the past three (3) years, as stated in Section IV.D.4.4.1.e of the RFP.</p> |
| | <p>32.How will applications for less than 221 units be scored?</p> | <p>DEEP cannot provide a score estimate at this time. However, as stated in 3.B.4.4, "A top scorer in this category includes a detailed budget (using the Budget Template provided as Attachment 2) for program operation covering all setup costs, planning services, equipment cost, installation services, operation and maintenance, and all other associated costs." A cost-competitive proposal will submit budget worksheets with all appropriate cost information and that achieve the Performance Metrics for the budget scenarios they choose to submit (combined, LIHEAP only, or ARPA only) as established in Attachment 2 of the RFP.</p> |