



PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT

VERMONT CLEAN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT FUND

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

July 31, 2013

**Administration of the
Vermont Small Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program**

INTRODUCTION

The Vermont Public Service Department's (PSD's) Clean Energy Development Fund (CEDF) is seeking the services of a qualified contractor with demonstrated experience in program management, renewable energy technologies, stakeholder outreach, and incentive program development, analysis, and evaluation to administer the *Vermont Small Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program*. The contractor should demonstrate excellent written and oral communication skills. The *Vermont Small Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program* currently supports small-scale photovoltaic, solar hot water, and hydroelectric installations throughout the state. The contractor will work closely with the PSD, the CEDF, renewable energy installers, and the general public to support the installation of small-scale renewable energy systems in Vermont.

Proposals are due by 4:00 P.M. on Friday, August 23, 2013 with the goal of finalizing a contract before September 27, 2013. The contract period will run through September 2015. The CEDF has budgeted \$1,400,000 to continue the *Vermont Small Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program* for fiscal year 2014. These funds include the renewable energy system incentives as well as the administrative and program delivery costs of the chosen contractor.

Applicants mailing proposals should allow adequate time to ensure receipt of their proposal(s) by the deadline. Proposals are limited to 25 pages, with no less than a 12-point font and one-inch margins. One original signed hard copy, three additional hard copies, and an electronic copy of the proposal must be delivered to Andrew Perchlik, CEDF c/o Vermont Public Service Department. Proposals and questions should be addressed to:

Andrew Perchlik
CEDF c/o Vermont Public Service Department
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2601
Phone: (802) 828-4017
Email: andrew.perchlik@state.vt.us

BACKGROUND

The *Vermont Small Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program* was originally established pursuant to renewable energy legislation passed by the Vermont State Legislature during the 2002/2003 session, and signed into law by Governor Douglas in June 2003. Since 2003 the program has undergone at least thirteen substantial program changes and funding rounds. Several times the program was suspended for weeks or months due to a lack of funds.

The CEDF has developed a new incentive structure (see Appendix A) that the contractor should be able to implement by October 1, 2013. The CEDF may propose additional changes to the incentive program aimed at improving program effectiveness during contract term; the contractor will be responsible for evaluating and implementing such changes.

The incentive program currently provides incentives to eligible individuals, schools, low-income housing non-profits, and municipalities for a portion of the cost of installing solar electric, solar hot water, and hydro systems. Incentive levels and program design may be changed by the CEDF in the future.

Additional information on the *Vermont Small Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program* is available at: www.erc-vt.org/incentives

MINIMUM SCOPE OF SERVICES:

- Administer and deliver of the *Vermont Small Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program* on a daily basis.
- Maintain an incentive program database that shall include: reservations made and funds paid as well as the number, capacity, and total costs of installed systems broken down by technology.
- Incorporate program incentive changes as agreed upon with the CEDF and adapt program information, website, and forms to reflect changes.
- Keep updated and distribute incentive program eligibility guidelines, participation steps, and application forms. This includes distribution of program information, general information on customer-sited renewables included in the program, and funding sources through public outreach activities such as: customer service by phone, email, and updated website; representation and participation at appropriate public events, including meetings and community forums; and other activities as necessary.
- Maintain a website, which at minimum includes: program eligibility guidelines; participation steps and application forms; number and average costs of systems installed (updated at minimum on a quarterly basis); and amount of incentive funding distributed, reserved, and remaining (updated at minimum on a monthly basis).
- Receive and review all incentive reservation applications.
- Confirm that a Certificate of Public Good (CPG) for each system has been granted before final approval is given to proceed with the installation.
- Receive and review final project documentation for incentive payments.
- Perform and report on inspections/site visits of installed systems. A minimum of 10% of the installed systems must be inspected. The post-installation site inspection should confirm appropriate system installation practices and proper operation of the system.

- Provide the CEDF the following information on incentive program activity throughout the contract period:
 - number of incentive reservations approved
 - dollars of incentive funds reserved
 - dollars of incentive funds remaining
 - dollars spent on program delivery and administration costs
 - final installed prices for systems receiving incentive, and installed price per unit (e.g. \$ per installed kW or rated btu output.
 - quarterly program reports, which will include information on the number of reservation applications received and approved for each technology, total incentives disbursed, and remaining incentives available. In addition, these reports will track system types and size, installers (how many projects and incentive dollars for each installer), and where systems were installed by zip code and/or town.
 - annual detailed reports which will at minimum include: a summary of program activity to date; progress toward the long-term goal of developing sustainable markets and industries in Vermont; and recommendations for any changes and improvements to the program. The dates for these reports will be determined in consultation with the CEDF.

The program administrator shall provide analysis of program data and changes requested by the CEDF or the Clean Energy Development Board, such as changes in incentive levels and program design.

The CEDF will at minimum provide input on the development and administration of the program, including incentive levels, application requirements, program forms, and inspection levels for installed systems.

INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM APPLICANTS

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP. Fancy bindings, colored displays, promotional materials, and so forth, are not desired. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content. Information in the applicant's proposal which should be held confidential must be clearly marked as confidential and comply with an exemption from public inspection as per 1 V.S.A. § 317(c).

Grant proposals should be no longer than 25 pages, with no less than an 12-point font and one-inch margins (resumes **do not** count toward the 25-page limit) and must include at minimum the following information:

Identification of Organization

State the full name and address of the organization and, if applicable, other subcontractors that will perform, or assist in performing, the work. Include the organization's federal identification number.

Authorized Negotiators

Include the names, email addresses, and phone numbers of personnel authorized to negotiate the proposed contract with the State. All proposals must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the party (or parties) submitting the proposal.



Prior Experience Disclosure

Proposals must include a description of the applicant's experience in each of these areas: program management/delivery, renewable energy technologies, public outreach, customer service, and renewable energy incentive program development and administration.

Personnel

Each organization submitting a proposal under this RFP shall have demonstrable knowledge, skills, and experience as it relates to the required work. The proposal must identify all persons who will be employed in the proposed work by skill and qualifications. Identify key personnel by name and title and provide a resume for each (resumes **do not** count toward the 25-page limit). Subcontractors must be listed, including the firm name and address, contact person, and complete description of work to be subcontracted. Include descriptive information concerning subcontractor's organization and abilities.

Work Plan

Describe in narrative form the plan for accomplishing the work. Indicate the number of hours allocated to each task and which staff member(s) will complete the tasks. Include a description of key elements of the program design and a timeline for rollout of the new incentive program design. The work plan should also include:

- a plan for program evaluation
- a description on coordinating project approvals with the VT Department of Historic Preservation
- a description of how installers will be selected and verified for quality installations for participation in the program. This is currently being done via the Vermont Solar and Wind Partnership program. An up-to-date list of partners is available at: www.revermont.org/installers.php
- a financial management and control plan

Budget Considerations

Applicants must submit a proposed budget for this project and include narrative explanations. A detailed budget for the first year for the amount of \$1,400,000 should be included. The budget should indicate the percentages of the funds which will be allocated for administrative/program delivery costs and for incentives. The following cost elements should be included:

Personnel (position, rate, hours)
Fringe Rate
Travel (include mileage rate, etc.)
Supplies & Materials
Other (specify)
Total Direct Costs
Indirect Cost Rate
BUDGET TOTAL (*equal to \$1.4 million*)

Additional Information and Comments

Include any other information that is believed to be pertinent, but not specifically requested elsewhere in this RFP.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The CEDF will evaluate all proposals received based upon reasonableness of cost, completeness and quality of the proposal, qualifications of the individuals proposed to perform the work, relevance of previous experience, and any other criteria it deems relevant. Acceptance or rejection of any or all proposals will be determined by the exercise of the CEDF's sole discretion.

All proposals are subject to an evaluation by the CEDF, the PSD, and/or other reviewers. The CEDF reserves the right (but in no way is obligated) to interview the top prospective candidates to aid in the selection process.

The award of the contract will be made based on the following criteria:

1. Experience & Qualifications
 - Experience and expertise in program management, renewable energy technologies, public outreach, customer service, and renewable energy incentive program development and administration
 - Adequate staffing for described work
 - Knowledge of renewable energy incentive programs in other states
2. Work Plan
 - Clarity and reasonableness of work plan, including definition and timeliness of tasks to be performed
 - Plan and capacity for project control and financial management are sufficiently described
 - Strategy to administer and evaluate the incentive program
 - Capacity and timeline to take over administrative duties of the incentive program as soon as possible
3. Budget
 - Budget line items and amounts are sufficiently described and justified
 - Administrative costs are reasonable and competitive
 - Program delivery costs are reasonable and competitive

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The CEDF reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this RFP for any reason, to waive minor irregularities in any proposals received, and to negotiate with any party in any manner deemed necessary to best serve the interests of the State.
2. The CEDF shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by any party in preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.

3. The CEDF reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP at any time if the best interest of the State requires such action.
4. News releases pertaining to this RFP, contract award, or the project shall not be made without prior written approval from the CEDF.
5. The CEDF will pay for actual work performed and expenses incurred under this project up to the specified contract amount. Specific payment provisions will be arrived at upon mutual agreement of the parties. All payments will require the submission of an itemized billing of work performed to date in sufficient detail to justify payment.
6. All parties submitting proposals shall be Equal Opportunity Employers. During the duration of the performance of this contract, the contractor will be expected to comply with all federal, state, and local laws respecting non-discrimination in employment.
7. All deliverables submitted by the selected contractor shall become the property of the State.
8. Funds for this program are State funds and the selected contractor shall be responsible to meet all restrictions and reporting requirements required by the State of Vermont.
9. The CEDF and the PSD assume no liability in any fashion with respect to this RFP or any matters related thereto. All prospective contractors and their subcontractors or successors, by their participation in the RFP process, shall indemnify, save and hold the CEDF, the PSD, and their employees and agents free and harmless from all lawsuits, causes of action, debts, rights, judgments, claims, demands, damages, losses and expenses or whatsoever kind in law or equity, known and unknown, foreseen and unforeseen, arising from or out of this RFP and/or any subsequent acts related thereto, including but not limited to the recommendation of a contractor and any action brought by an unsuccessful applicant.

Vermont Renewable Energy Incentive Program Starting October 1, 2013

Incentive Structure	
<p><i>Customers have a maximum total customer incentive amount of \$5,500. Customers that have received incentives through this program previously may apply for an additional incentive, up to a total of \$5,500 (the previously received incentive will be included as part of the total \$5,500 maximum customer incentive amount). A customer may apply for more than one incentive, and may apply for different technologies. Each must be submitted as a separate project.</i></p>	
PV	
Residential Customers:	\$.25/W up to 10 kW
Special Customers¹:	\$1.25/W up to 10 kW
Solar Hot Water	
Residential:	\$1.50/100 Btu/d up to 200 kBtu/d
C&I:	\$1.50/100 Btu/d up to 1000 kBtu/d
MICRO-HYDRO	
Residential & C&I:	\$1.75 per 3 ft-gal/min up to \$8,750
Special Customers:	\$3.50 per 3ft-gal/min up to the lesser of \$17,500 or 50% of total cost

Additional program criteria for the Program can be found at:
http://publicservice.vermont.gov/topics/renewable_energy/cedf/funding#incentives.

The Clean Energy Development Fund and the Vermont Renewable Energy Incentive Program reserve the right to modify this program as needed.
 Contact Andrew.Perchlik@state.vt.us for additional information.

¹ Special customers are: Public Schools, municipalities, and non-profit low-income housing organizations.