**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**



**RFP AMENDMENT #1 AND**

**RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | RFP #202503036 Technical Assistance for Decarbonization and Energy Efficiency in Maine Public Schools |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Maine Department of Education |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | April 21, 2025 |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | April 24, 2025 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | May 8, 2025, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |
| **Unless specifically addressed below, all other provisions and clauses of the RFP remain unchanged.** | |
| **DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES IN RFP:**   1. Part I, Section C, Contract Term (pg. 7) states the end date of the contract will be 04/30/2027. 2. Part II Scope of Services to Be Provided (pg. 8) states “The technical consultant (TC) will work with a minimum of 10 schools….in two years, guiding them, in most cases, through an evaluation of their heating system(s), projecting costs, and advantages/disadvantages of various energy systems and guiding SAUs in the procurement process. 3. Part II Scope of Services to Be Provided (pg. 8) states “Bidders must have an on-the-ground presence in Maine, and the ability to travel to in-person meetings and site visits with schools when necessary.” | |
| **REVISED LANGUAGE IN RFP:**   1. Part I, Section C, Contract Term (pg. 7) is amended to state:   The potential term of the anticipated contract, resulting from the RFP, is defined as follows.  Note that these renewal periods are optional and are not guaranteed.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Period** | **Start Date** | **End Date** | | Initial Period of Performance | 05/01/2025 | 04/30/2027 | | Renewal Period #1 | 05/01/2027 | 04/30/2029 | | Renewal Period #2 | 05/01/2029 | 04/30/2030 |  1. Part II Scope of Services to Be Provided (pg. 8) is amended to state “The Technical consultant (TC) will work with a minimum of 10 schools….over the course of the multiyear contract period, guiding them, in most cases, through an evaluation of their heating system(s), projecting costs, and advantages/disadvantages of various energy systems and guiding SAUs in the procurement process. 2. Part II Scope of Services to Be Provided is amended to state “Bidders must have an office in any New England state and the ability to travel to in-person meetings and site visits with Maine SAUs/EUTs when necessary.” | |

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

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section  E. Budget pg. 7 | Are you open to a confidential conversation to align expectations for the scope with the budget price?  We are concerned that you may receive a low-quality offering. Our typical energy assessment reports includes: reviewing utility rates to ensure the correct tariff, reviewing the past 2 years of utility data to look for anomalies, citing descriptions of the building and MEP systems, and showing pictures of observations, showing a timeline and capital budget plan for the facilities mentioned that align with the jurisdiction’s sustainability goals. We don’t see a way to deliver all those items for all 10 schools within your budget of $120k. |
| **Answer** | |
| Each bidder will need to determine the exact products/services they can render within the confines of the budget. Within the required ten school districts (SAUs/EUTs) considerable variation may occur in terms of number of school buildings, square footage per building, the existence of past data, and the specific number of schools that need analysis within a district. Describing a “standard package” per district, recognizing that not all the analytical data points you describe above will be feasible, is permitted. Bidders can then mention additional services (perhaps a “premium package”) they might provide should time and workload allow. | |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | As a prequalified vendor for the State of Maine, we have previously received mini-bid RFPs in lieu of the more formal process.  I wanted to inquire whether a mini-bid RFP will be issued for this project as well. If so, we would appreciate the opportunity to receive it. |
| **Answer** | |
| No – the Department will not be issuing a mini-bid for these services related to DAFS RFP# 201712204. | |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services pg. 8 | Does the Department expect bidders to specify the number of schools that can be included in the project scope based on the available budget? |
| **Answer** | |
| The RFP calls for the successful Bidder to work with a minimum of ten schools over the course of the term of the contract. Bidders can specify their ability to meet or exceed that requirement but should describe what standard services they will provide to the SAUs/EUTs. | |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services pg. 8 | Has the Department determined a *maximum* number of schools that should be included in the project scope? |
| **Answer** | |
| There is no maximum number of schools established in the RFP. Bidders who seek to exceed the required ten schools should clarify how they will accomplish this without jeopardizing quality. | |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | What is the average number of schools within a SAU/EUT across the state?  What is the maximum number of schools in a Maine SAU/EUT? |
| **Answer** | |
| The average number of schools varies by district. On the two extremes islands schools, for example, usually comprise one building while larger city districts such as Portland and Lewiston can exceed 15 buildings. Bidders should assume the average Maine SAU manages approximately 3-6 school buildings. Note that the focus of the RFP is school buildings in which PreK-12 students are educated. Ancillary or non-educational buildings such as bus garages, administrative offices not within a school building, and maintenance workshops are generally outside the scope of the RFP.  Potential bidders are encouraged to utilize [Maine DOE’s data warehouse](https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/warehouse). | |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Will schools be required to submit a statement of interest in response to the Department's notification to be considered for selection in the project scope? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Does the Department have an existing asset management tracker or database for Maine K-12 schools' heating systems (fuel type, age, make/model)? If so, please provide a copy. |
| **Answer** | |
| The state does not track the HVAC/Energy System data of Maine Schools on an annual basis. However, a recent study completed by The Maine Educational and Policy Research Institute at the University of Southern Maine recently completed an Inventory of Maine Schools Facilities for the Maine DOE. It can be found on the MEPRI website and is also cited, with links, in the recently released Maine School Construction Commission interim report. | |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Does the Department have access to utility and/or fuel supplier bills for each K-12 school's energy purchases or will the awarded bidder need to work directly with selected schools to obtain historical bills and consumption data? |
| **Answer** | |
| The state does not collect energy data from Maine SAUs. The successful Bidder will work directly with local districts. Note that EUTs are managed directly by the state and the Maine DOE possesses all facility-related data for schools within that jurisdiction. | |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Has the Department or another state agency conducted any energy consumption benchmarking for K-12 schools to date? If so, please provide a copy. |
| **Answer** | |
| Specific energy consumption benchmarks have not been set specifically for Maine Public Schools. However, more generally, The Governor’s Office of Policy, Innovation and the Future, have set broad decarbonization goals for the state. Bidders might review the recently released (11/2024) Maine Won’t Wait report in which state-wide de-carbonization and efficiency goals are cited. | |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, Section B Stakeholder Communication pg. 9 | Are these technical presentations expected to be done in person or can these presentations be conducted virtually? |
| **Answer** | |
| Most presentations and discussions can be done virtually. It is assumed that on-sight analysis will need to occur at some point in the process, however. Note that in some cases, school committee meetings may not have the option of virtual access. | |

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| **11** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section  E. Budget pg. 7 | Please confirm whether the $120,000 maximum budget for the project includes a specified allocation for travel expenses. |
| **Answer** | |
| The RFP allows Bidders to include travel expenses, benchmarked to federal or state standards, within their budgets. | |

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| **12** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section  E. Budget pg. 7 | Are there limits or restrictions on how a bidder may utilize the budget to cover travel expenses for in-person site visits or meetings? |
| **Answer** | |
| It is assumed that Bidders will approximate federal and state benchmarks for travel and accommodations. | |

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| **13** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section A Purpose and Background, pg. 5  Part IV, Proposal Submission Requirements, Section III, Proposal Services, pg. 14 | What confidence does the Maine DOE have that the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684) (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law; BIL) and [Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5376?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22inflation+reduction+act%22%7D&s=2&r=1) funds will be available to fund projects, given the current federal government administration's lack of support for this funding mechanism? |
| **Answer** | |
| The funding for this particular contract – and all operational aspects of the Green Schools Program – derives from state funding. it has been approved, appropriated, and dispersed by the Maine State Legislature. Execution plans are not dependent on Efficiency Maine uniquely. In fact, funds presently remain within Efficiency Maine for continued electrification should schools move in that direction. The Direct Pay/Tax Credit from the federal government, which originated from the IRA, remains intact for any project started in 2025. Additionally, projections by entities close to the federal government (see Undaunted K-12 and US Climate Alliance’s federal grant report updates) foresee that the Tax Credit will continue beyond 2025 as it falls under the IRS tax credit system and is not a direct allocation. Bidders are expected to be familiar with Direct Pay/Tax Credits and guide schools in the reimbursement process. | |

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| **14** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, Section A Responsibilities, #2. Alternative System Evaluation pg. 8 | Could you please clarify what types of environmental impact assessments will be required in this scope of work? |
| **Answer** | |
| Environmental impacts refer, in this case, primarily to school air quality and energy system carbon emission. Bidders should be prepared to work with schools relative to determining the carbon footprint of the school HVAC system – or possibly the school at large if that data proves helpful to, for example, a School Sustainability Committee or a School Board. | |

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| **15** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, Section B Stakeholder Communication and Public Engagement, #1 SAU/EUT and Community Support, pg. 9 | Could you please provide your expectations on the level of support for each of the 10 schools? Will this include multiple in-person meetings, or do you expect the support to be behind the scenes assisting school staff to prepare for, and attend the meetings? |
| **Answer** | |
| Bidders should expect the work to vary vis-a-vis the needs of the specific school district. Likely, much of the work of the successful Bidder will be “behind the scenes” as opposed to direct work with the public or large groups. However, Bidders should be prepared for making public presentations or answering questions in a public setting as requested by school officials. | |

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| **16** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, Section B Stakeholder Communication and Public Engagement, #2 State-Level Coordination, pg. 9 | The RFP states that the vendor will develop and maintain a repository of technical resources, case studies, and best practices. Who is the audience for the repository, and will it be public facing? |
| **Answer** | |
| The audience for the repository is the client (a Maine SAU/EUT) with copies to the Maine DOE’s Green Schools Program. | |

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| **17** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, Section A, pg. 8 | Could you clarify what as-built drawings, maintenance records, or recent energy audits are available for each targeted school? Has there been previous technical or environmental consulting performed on any of these schools, and if so, can these reports be provided? What existing operational energy management or efficiency plans are currently in place across the school systems involved? Has there been previous technical or environmental consulting performed on any of these schools, and if so, can these reports be provided? What existing operational energy management or efficiency plans are currently in place across the school systems involved? Which schools currently have Building Management Systems (BMS)? Is energy consumption data readily available from existing BMS or metering systems, and what format is it provided in? Have there been any envelope or building enclosure assessments (e.g., thermal imaging, moisture intrusion, or air-tightness testing) completed previously? If so, could these reports be shared? Are there known issues related to the envelope, windows, roofing, or insulation at specific schools? |
| **Answer** | |
| The state does not require or collect drawings, maintenance records or energy audits of Maine schools. Strategic plans and records are managed at the district level and therefore vary by SAU/EUT. Some schools will have established data facilities/HVAC management software while others may not. Most school districts keep these records, however, for overall facility management. Please note that the Maine DOE has yet to solicit letters of interest to SAU/EUTs and has not defined any target schools at this time. | |

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| **18** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, Section A, pg. 8 | Are there any known operational challenges or priorities (e.g., occupant comfort, ventilation, indoor air quality) that should guide the technical assessments? |
| **Answer** | |
| Energy efficiency, cost savings, indoor air quality, and carbon reduction are core priorities. Bidders should expect that other indicators of health and well-being might be part of any project. | |

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| **19** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, pg. 8 | Please provide information about the following. These all have a significant impact on pricing.   1. number of school buildings to be included 2. their size. Some of our clients schools range from 30 kSQFT to 300 kSQT. 3. the type of school (high school versus elementary school) 4. the location of the schools, and 5. heating and cooling systems at the schools (simple steam heat versus hydronic versus 4-pipe HHW/CHW system) |
| **Answer** | |
| No schools have been solicited at this time. Bidders should estimate for a minimum of 10 school buildings (not necessarily school districts). The average school size per student in a Maine public school is 232 square feet and the average school size is 146. This will vary by level with high school and middle school comprising more students. Once solicitation (done through a Letter of Interest) has occurred there will be particular consideration to rural/suburban/urban balance, school-funding capacity and – depending on the responses – negotiating the work expectations with each SAU/EUT and the successful bidder. As implied by this response, location and exact type of heating/cooling system is to be determined. The successful Bidder will participate with the Maine DOE and the SAU/EUT to determine reasonable workload. | |

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| **20** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, pg. 8 | Will the Technical Consultant (TC) be eligible to construct the future projects resulting from the evaluation of the buildings? |
| **Answer** | |
| Whether the TC (successful Bidder) may bid for future work will be determined by the procurement policies of the individual SAU/EUT. | |

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| **21** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, Section B Stakeholder Communication pg. 9 | Please provide assumptions for the number of in-person meetings, site visits, school board meetings, etc. |
| **Answer** | |
| Virtual meetings will comprise the majority of client-TC interactions. Bidders should anticipate, however, some in-person assessments of the buildings. Many public meetings now allow for virtual presence. | |

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| **24** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Can you elaborate on where this contract ends regarding Owner’s Representative services? What should be assumed for pricing purposes? Will the TC provide OR services through the procurement of the ESCO and oversee the Investment Grade Audit as well? What about during construction? What should be included/excluded in our pricing? |
| **Answer** | |
| The successful Bidder will function as a Technical Consultant not as an Owner’s Representative. | |

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| **25** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV, Proposal Submission Requirements, Section III, Proposal Services, pg. 15 | Will all of the SAUs be assigned from the start? Or will there be a ramp up period? What should be assumed for the Work Plan Timeline? |
| **Answer** | |
| Maine DOE will solicit interest from Maine SAUs and EUTs. The successful Bidder will work with the Maine DOE to select the portfolio of schools based on a variety of factors, including the capacity of the TC (successful Bidder) to successfully complete the work. The work can be staggered as needed. A timeline of the work will be negotiated with between the TC, the Maine DOE and selected SAUs/EUTs. | |

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| **26** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D, Cost Proposal and Budget Narrative Form, pg. 25 | Can we add additional lines to the cost proposal form? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, please adjust the cost proposal form however you see fit to provide the required information. | |

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| **27** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, pg. 8 | Please clarify the difference between “per school” and “number of school buildings to be served”. |
| **Answer** | |
| The number of school BUILDINGS to be served is a minimum of 10. However, the number of total DISTRICTS may vary depending upon the number of schools that respond to the Letter of Interest and their exact needs. To give an example: a small rural district may choose to focus on only one elementary school. A mid-sized suburban district may request four schools to be reviewed. If both are selected for the portfolio, five of the ten schools would be set for analysis. There would be five more school BUILDINGS to be selected. | |

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| **28** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, pg. 8 | Is the State looking for this project bidders to be led by an engineering firm, architecture firm or other specialty firm? |
| **Answer** | |
| There is no prescribed TYPE of firm (engineering, architectural, specialty etc.), although basic certification in energy systems is required as part of the RFP. The successful Bidder will possess experience in evaluating and analyzing existing and potential energy systems and collaborating successfully with public sector entities. | |

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| **29** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services, pg. 8 | For the 10 schools that will be identified, can the level of audit expectations be defined? (i.e. ASHRAE Level 1, 2, etc.). This will have an impact on our level of effort and fee proposal which is stated to be capped at $120,000. We assume, based on the fee cap that high level building analysis is required. |
| **Answer** | |
| ‘High level’ is a reasonable and accurate description. The TC (successful Bidder) will analyze the existing systems with particular interest in Efficiency, Cost-Savings, Indoor Air Quality, and Carbon Reduction. They will then offer alternatives to the present systems as needed. | |