

# Market Research & Evaluation Request for Proposals: RFP #52341



## Codes Market Progress Evaluation Report (MPER) #2

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# 1 Background

## 1.1 About the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

The Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) is an alliance of more than 140 utilities and energy efficiency organizations working on behalf of more than 13 million energy consumers. NEEA is dedicated to accelerating both electric and natural gas energy efficiency, leveraging its regional partnerships to advance the adoption of energy-efficient products, services, and practices.

Since 1997, NEEA and its partners have saved enough energy to power more than 985,000 homes each year. As the second-largest resource in the Northwest, energy efficiency can offset most of our new demand for energy, saving money and keeping the Northwest a healthy and vibrant place to live. [www.neea.org](http://www.neea.org)

## 1.2 About NEEA's Codes Team

Building codes have the potential to significantly affect energy consumption throughout the Northwest. In partnership with regional stakeholders, NEEA's Codes team seeks to increase the effectiveness of energy codes by identifying new potential code measures, participating in public processes by providing data and analysis, working with state code bodies to support code implementation, and providing training and education to energy code stakeholders. The four states in NEEA's region (Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington) engage in the code development process along different cycles and code versions, and these states and their local jurisdictions differ in how they implement the codes. NEEA's activities are tailored to each state's approach and the current phase of its code cycle.

The NEEA Codes team has undergone significant changes in recent years, including absorbing activities previously conducted through other NEEA initiatives. As a result, the Codes team recently updated its logic model. These edits involved:

- Combining two separate residential and commercial Codes logic models into one logic model that covers both residential and commercial code work
- Removing logic model elements that no longer apply to the Codes team's work
- Adding current activities, outputs, and/or outcomes that were not documented in prior versions of the logic models
- Adding elements to better reflect the Codes team's interplay with other NEEA programs

## 2 Research Objectives

NEEA engages third-party evaluation contractors to conduct regular Market Progress Evaluation Reports (MPERs) to inform strategy and enable teams to measure progress toward the outcomes documented in their logic models. MPER scopes are tailored to meet an individual team's needs at the time the research is conducted.

NEEA's first Codes MPER was published in 2017, and this RFP is for the second Codes MPER. NEEA seeks to engage a qualified evaluation contractor to:

- 1) Assess the logic, clarity, and evaluability of the updated Codes logic model and make recommendations for improvement
- 2) Assess progress on outcomes related to the Codes team's training and education activities

Upon delivery of a satisfactory final report, the awarded contract may be extended to address additional areas of interest, including, but not limited to, an assessment of the Codes team's progress on outcomes associated with its work to influence state energy codes.

## **2.1 Review Updated Codes Logic Model**

NEEA uses logic models to document the logic underlying its activities. NEEA logic models include the barriers that NEEA's work is designed to overcome, and the opportunities activities are designed to pursue, NEEA's activities and associated outputs, and the intended outcomes – what NEEA's work is expected to achieve. The selected contractor will conduct a review of the updated Codes logic model to answer the following questions:

- 1) Does the logic model clearly and accurately capture the logic, or “theory of change,” underlying the Codes team's work? If not, what improvements do you recommend?
- 2) Is the underlying logic sound? For example, can the activities viably overcome the barriers? Can the activities logically lead to the outcomes? If not, what improvements do you recommend?
- 3) Are the outcomes evaluable? If not, what changes do you recommend to ensure that future research can assess the effectiveness of NEEA's Codes activities?
- 4) Are there any key differences between NEEA's residential and commercial Codes work that are not captured in the combined logic model? If so, how do you recommend NEEA better capture differences between residential and commercial Codes work?

Given the budget and timeline for the MPER (see Section 3.4), NEEA expects that the logic model review will rely primarily on secondary research.

## **2.2 Assess Progress on Training & Education Outcomes**

The selected contractor will assess the Codes team's progress on outcomes associated with its training and education activities conducted from 2019-2022, most of which are implemented by third-party contractors. These activities include:

- On-demand and live trainings and documents, such as fact sheets, available to the mass market<sup>1</sup> to build awareness and capacity to engage with new technologies, code measures, and building practices
- Project-specific support, including:
  - o Web-based tools that help market actors determine code compliance
  - o Hotlines to provide code-related technical support
  - o Virtual and onsite targeted education and training provided to building code officials and builders

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<sup>1</sup> Targeted market actors include, but are not limited to, design and construction professionals, building officials, plan examiners, home builders, contractors, field inspectors, and fire marshals.

The selected contractor will:

- 1) Summarize the goals, or intended outcomes, for each training and education approach (online trainings, web tools, hotline, etc.) and assess whether those outcomes match the outcomes documented in the logic model
- 2) Propose metrics and measure progress against those metrics for each logic model outcome linked to the team's training and education activities
- 3) Evaluate the extent to which changes in the market identified through the metric review (#2 above) are occurring as a result of the NEEA Codes team's work

NEEA delivers different training and education activities in each of the four states in its region. The selected contractor will not conduct separate evaluations for each state. Instead, the selected contractor will conduct an overall assessment of NEEA's training and education activities and outcomes, identifying meaningful differences across the states when they arise.

### **3 Parameters/Considerations**

#### **3.1 Respondent Recruiting**

NEEA encourages bidders to consider the best way to use contact groups in their proposed research approach – adding, excluding, or combining groups based on the bidder's view of how to best achieve NEEA's study objectives. In addition to any other groups identified by bidders as being relevant to the proposed study design, NEEA recommends bidders consider including the following groups:

- Current and former NEEA Codes staff
- Current and former staff from implementation contractors
- Organizations NEEA coordinates and collaborates with to deliver training and education activities
- Recipients of NEEA's training and education efforts

NEEA can provide the selected contractor with contact information for individuals representing the groups identified above. Bidders should include a detailed description of their proposed approach to recruiting any other potential respondents. Proposal budgets and timelines should reflect the fact that some respondent groups may be hard to reach. Additionally, bidders should build in time for NEEA and/or its funders to review contact lists and recruitment language, if deemed appropriate by NEEA.

#### **3.2 Sources of Information**

NEEA will provide the selected contractor with the following sources of information and encourages bidders to address the use of other sources of information in their proposals. Some of the following sources may contain confidential information and will be shared with the selected contractor once a non-disclosure agreement is signed.

- [Codes MPER #1](#)
- Updated Codes logic model
- Old residential and commercial Codes logic models
- Materials from the Codes team's logic model update process
- [Publicly available training and education materials](#)

- [Energy code websites:](#)
  - o <https://waenergycodes.com/>
  - o <https://betterbuiltnw.com/>
  - o <https://www.idahoenergycode.com/>
- NEEA Codes and Standards team newsletters, available on neea.org. The most recent newsletter is available [here](#).
- Training plans (approximately five per year), recruitment materials, instruction materials, and course evaluations, when available.

### 3.3 Deliverables

#### 3.3.1 Kickoff Meeting & Work Plan

The selected contractor will plan and set the agenda for a kickoff meeting to discuss project administration and expectations, research plans, and rough timelines. Prior to the kickoff meeting, the selected contractor will submit a draft work plan to the NEEA Market Research and Evaluation (MRE) Scientist managing the project. The work plan will describe data collection, analysis, and other proposed activities, deliverables, and timelines. Within one week of the date of the kickoff meeting, the selected contractor will submit a final work plan that incorporates any feedback received in writing and/or during the kickoff meeting.

#### 3.3.2 Interview/Survey Instruments & Contact Lists

The selected contractor will submit all interview/survey instruments, including recruitment scripts, to the MRE Scientist for review and final approval. To ensure that all research objectives are met, all instruments must include a table showing how each question corresponds with the research objectives. The MRE Scientist must approve all final instruments before fieldwork begins.

Upon completion of the project, the selected contractor will also provide NEEA with a list of all individuals contacted, their contact information, and any updates made to NEEA-provided contact lists.

#### 3.3.3 Final Report, Presentation & Raw Data

When the final stage of the research is nearing completion, the selected contractor will meet with the MRE Scientist to discuss the report outline and approach for providing a findings presentation to NEEA staff. The selected contractor will create a draft report that synthesizes findings for each of the research objectives, submit the draft report to NEEA for review and comment, then incorporate comments and submit the final report. NEEA will likely request more than one round of review on all or portions of the report depending on the degree to which the initial draft meets the team's needs. For the presentation, the contractor will provide the MRE Scientist with draft slides and incorporate feedback on the slides in the final findings presentation.

Upon completion of the project, the selected contractor will provide NEEA with de-identified raw data for all research activities (interview notes, survey data, etc.), unless the selected contractor and NEEA agree upon a different approach.

### **3.4 Budget & Timeframe**

Proposals should be provided on a time and materials basis. Bidders should provide a competitive budget estimate that is sufficient to cover their proposed work. NEEA believes a reasonable budget for this work is \$120,000. However, budget should not be considered a limiting factor, and bidders are invited to submit optional tasks with associated costs provided separately. NEEA's MRE Scientist will work with the selected contractor to negotiate the specifics of the proposed research activities to meet resource constraints. Proposal estimates should reflect that the selected contractor is responsible and accountable for the following:

- All logistics associated with executing the research tasks
- Preparing identified deliverables
- All subcontractors used on this project
- Contractors' allocation of resources to tasks
- Invoicing and expense reporting per contract terms
- Distribution of incentives for research participation

NEEA anticipates that research will begin in August 2022 and be completed by February 1, 2023.

## **4 Proposal Format**

### **4.1 Executive Summary of Research Design**

Describe your understanding of NEEA's Codes work and key areas of learning for this project. Include the key strategies and approach to the scope of the work, proposed costs, and the reasons NEEA should select your team.

### **4.2 Tasks and Deliverables**

Provide a detailed description of the specific methodologies and approach to be undertaken to complete the scope. Be sure to include project management activities. Identify all major phases and milestones for the project and the associated deliverables.

### **4.3 Project Timeline & Cost Estimate**

Provide the proposed timeline for all major phases and milestones of the project broken out by proposed task and associated deliverables. Include the cost estimate for each task including any direct costs.

### **4.4 Proposal Appendix**

- Hourly rate sheet for all proposed project team members with estimated hours by task
- Company background & qualifications
- Project team & team bios – Include information about team members and team structure, past team efforts on similar work, years of experience and other relevant qualifications.
- Examples of relevant prior work

## 5 Proposal Submission

All correspondence, including, but not limited to, questions and submissions shall be directed to Chris Cardiel, Market Research and Evaluation Scientist ([CCardiel@neea.org](mailto:CCardiel@neea.org)).

Bidder shall submit (1) electronic copy of the proposal by 5:00pm PST on the day listed in the RFP schedule below.

July 25, 2022	Intent to bid submission due
July 25, 2022	Bidder questions for clarification due
July 28, 2022	Answers to bidders' compiled, anonymized questions provided
August 9, 2022	Proposals due
August 18, 2022	Anticipated award date

### 5.1 Intent to Respond

All "Intent to Respond" forms (see Appendix A) must be received no later than 5:00 PM PST on the day listed in the RFP Schedule.

Only those parties submitting the "Intent to Respond" form will be provided with updates to the RFP, have questions responded to and have their proposals considered.

## 6 Scoring Considerations

Bidding firms will be rated in terms of the overall responsiveness to the RFP – how well all RFP requests have been addressed including, but not limited to:

- Demonstrated understanding of project objectives, nuances, and potential roadblocks to meeting objectives
- The thoughtfulness and appropriateness of the proposed design used to accomplish the desired results of the project
- Thoughtfulness and appropriateness of respondent recruitment approach and ability to address potential issues
- How well deliverable examples and descriptions meet the stated needs and intended use
- Overall value for expenditure
- Evidence of flexibility throughout the project lifecycle
- Ability to communicate complex ideas/concepts clearly and succinctly
- The balance of the complexity of design with the succinctness of communication of the design

In addition, the following factors will play a key role in the selection process:

- The experience and qualifications of the individuals specifically proposed to execute and manage the project. (Note: Proposed staffing is a significant factor in bidder selection. As such, no changes in key staff/substitutions or changes in roles/responsibilities can be made without the written agreement of the NEEA MRE Scientist once the RFP has been awarded.)

- The experience of the firm or team of firms making the proposal.
- The capability to execute the plan, including past experience and aptitude for collaboration.

Proposals will be evaluated by the NEEA MRE Scientist and other NEEA staff that we believe have the perspective needed to make this important decision. NEEA is under no obligation to provide work to any vendors responding to this solicitation, nor is there any obligation or intent implied to reimburse any party for the cost of preparing a proposal in response to this RFP.

## **7 Preferred Insurance**

Firms interested in working with NEEA should be aware of the following insurance requirements for all NEEA vendors.

Vendors must maintain adequate and reasonable insurance covering their performance under any offered contract, including, but not limited to Commercial General Liability insurance of at least \$1,000,000/occurrence, Business Automobile Liability insurance, and any workers' compensation and unemployment insurance required by law. Professional Liability and Cyber Liability insurance may also be required. NEEA may request a copy of such insurance policies prior to awarding work.

See sample terms and conditions for additional information about minimum insurance requirements: <https://neea.org/img/documents/sample-neea-contract-terms-and-conditions.pdf>.



# Appendix A - Intent to Respond Form

**RFP #:**           **52341**

Project Title:                   Codes MPER #2  
NEEA Point of Contact:   Chris Cardiel, [CCardiel@neea.org](mailto:CCardiel@neea.org)

Refer to Section 5: Proposal Submission for more details

**PLEASE PRINT:**

<b>Company</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>City, State, Zip</b>	
<b>Contact Name</b>	
<b>Contact Title</b>	
<b>Phone #</b>	
<b>E-mail</b>	

The company named above intends to submit a proposal in response to NEEA’s request for proposal listed above. Deadline for submitting the “Intent to Respond” form is end of business day of date listed in the RFP schedule.

**List any Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certifications and the state of the certifications below:**

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Signature of Authorized Representative \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_