

**Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”):
RFQ # 53291
Commercial Water Heating Lab Testing**



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1 Introduction

The **Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, Inc. (NEEA)** is an alliance of more than 140 utilities and energy efficiency organizations working on behalf of over 14.5 million energy consumers across Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington (“the Northwest Region”).

Since 1996, NEEA has taken a market-driven approach to energy efficiency that is grounded in data, collaboration, and rigorous evaluation. NEEA works to transform markets by filling information gaps and identifying and removing barriers so that the market can align around evolving electric and natural gas energy efficiency needs. For more information, visit neea.org.

1.1 Acronyms and Definitions

The following acronyms, definitions, and terms provide relevant information:

Term	Definition
ACWH or Program	NEEA’s Advanced Commercial Water Heating Program
Applicant(s)	Any individual or firm who submits an RFQ response to be considered a qualified firm
CWHS(s)	Commercial Water Heating System(s)
GHP	Gas Heat Pump
QP(s)	Qualified Party/Parties – any individual or firm who NEEA considers and will solicit for future work based on demonstrated qualifications and expertise
Project	The field of study or work to be completed by a QP which NEEA identifies to form the underlying need or basis for this RFQ
Proposal	Applicant’s submission that forms the basis of its request for NEEA evaluation as a QP
Limited RFP	Limited Request for Proposals – to be distributed only to QPs for any future Projects NEEA may consider contracting with a QP

2 Background

This RFQ will identify labs that can perform various tests of CWHSs to validate the performance and savings of GHP technology when integrated into such central systems.

GHPs are a highly energy-efficient technology that have been used for several decades in Europe and Asia. GHPs are now expanding within North America through pilot utility programs, manufacturer networks, and support from industry groups. Like electric heat pumps, GHPs efficiently move heat from the ambient air to the interior of the building, resulting in more efficient natural gas solutions and broadened consumer choice.

The Program would like to test GHP technology in various system configurations, across relevant climate zones, and especially considering applicable regional utility rates in hotel and/or full-service restaurant applications, resulting in savings and performance data. The Program has prioritized three target building types based on Northwest Region commercial building stock data, forecasts, and optimized application of GHP technology: multifamily residences, lodging, and full-service

restaurants. The Program is currently field testing GHP technology at a multifamily site, but difficulties in site recruitment have led the Program team to explore performance and savings technology validation in the lab for hotel and full-service restaurant applications.

3 Objectives

The objective of this RFQ is to identify QPs experienced in performing CWHS testing. Applicants should have relevant data inputs of load profiles for commercial building types, particularly hotels and full-service restaurants. Applicants should also have the ability to test various configurations of central Domestic Hot Water (“DHW”) systems servicing load profiles that represent those of hotels and full-service restaurants, including tankless gas water heaters coupled with a GHP; tank gas water heaters coupled with a GHP; boilers coupled with a GHP, pumps, motors, valves, gauges, strainers, electrical, structural, condensate and communication; and single-pass/multipass systems.

Applicants may also consider explaining how they would assist in validating GHP technology in the target building types mentioned above and create best practice guidance for design, installation, and peak load distribution optimization to inform and accelerate wider adoption of GHP technology within the Northwest Region.

Each Applicant who meets these qualifications as determined by NEEA, in its sole discretion, will be designated as a “QP” and invited to bid on implementation support work for the Program. NEEA aims to solicit bids from QPs in the coming years via Limited Requests for Proposals and hopes to issue its first Limited Request for Proposals as early as Q2 2026. NEEA will continue to notify any QPs of opportunities for future work. QPs may also be shortlisted for other, future ACWH-related work (please see Section 6.1 for additional considerations).

3.1 Program/Initiative Objectives

A successful QP will possess the following characteristics:

- Ability to test CWHS in the lab, including the following variables:
 - Different ambient outdoor temperatures
 - Different load profiles
 - Different flow rates and water temperatures
 - Regional utility rates across the Northwest Region
 - Simulation of peak events
 - Controls integration and optimization
 - Space to accommodate different CWH equipment and system configurations
- Access to load profiles of different commercial building types, including:
 - Hotels
 - Motels
 - Full-Service Restaurants
- Expertise in designing CWHS
- Familiarity with gas absorption heat pump technology
- Familiarity with regular data collection and reporting at fixed intervals
- Demonstrated experience in successful project management, including:
 - Ability to meet with NEEA staff at regular intervals to provide updates
 - Ability to synthesize findings in a final PowerPoint presentation and technical report
 - Ability to provide optimization recommendations throughout project setup and testing

Preferred but not required experience includes:

- Experience testing GHP technology
- Ability to lab test commercial HVAC systems
- An intimate understanding of Northwest Region climate and building stock
- Familiarity or experience with dual-fuel testing

4 Submission Requirements for Qualifications

NEEA encourages potential Applicants with the following qualifications and expertise to submit the following information to NEEA:

- Designing central CWHS – Applicant’s Proposal should describe experience and qualifications in designing such systems.
- Lab testing central CWHS – Applicant’s Proposal should describe experience and qualifications for testing such systems.
- Experience working with manufacturers, manufacturing reps, and distributors in procuring equipment.
- Creation of final technical reports – Applicant’s Proposal should describe methodology for drafting technical reports and areas of inclusion.
- Synthesize technical learnings and recommendations – Applicant’s Proposal should describe Applicant’s approach to the following:
 - Developing final presentations for lab tests;
 - Capturing Applicant’s preferred approach to synthesizing learnings and technical recommendations for system design, installation, and optimization; and
 - How these approaches may differ based on building types, climate zones, and equipment configuration.

4.1 Submission Requirements

Applicant submission must include the following:

1. A **cover letter** containing an overview of Applicant’s organization, rationale as to why it is a good fit for future Projects, and expected team composition.
2. Up to date **resumes** of all anticipated team members expected to contribute to future Projects.
3. **Relevant vendor qualifications**, including at least three (3) case studies or links to at least three (3) case studies or other projects that demonstrate Applicant’s capabilities related to future Projects.
4. At least three (3) **references** for work conducted that is similar to Program/Initiative Objectives.
5. Documentation reflecting your organization’s **good financial standing**, e.g. a Dun & Bradstreet report.
6. Discussion of the Applicant’s **resource availability** so that NEEA can better understand and set appropriate expectations.

4.2 Approach and Methodology

NEEA recommends each Applicant structure its Proposal in the following manner:

1. Test Plan Design - Applicant will provide examples of CWHS test plans, including data collection, operating conditions, and test methodologies.
2. Equipment Requirements - Contractor will provide examples of test equipment that might be needed to test GHPs and other components of a CWHS.
3. Test Rig - Applicant will provide details of any test rigs they currently use for testing GHPs and other components of CWHS. If Applicant doesn't have a test rig for this type of testing, it will include evidence of experience developing test rigs.
4. Product Examples – Applicant will share a list of products that they have tested that are similar to GHPs or other components of CWHS.
5. Safety – Applicant will confirm their capability to test to ANSI Z21.40.4 and any other safety requirements required by relevant standards and conformity assessment organizations.

5 RFQ Schedule and Considerations

Applicant must submit one (1) electronic copy of its Proposal by 5:00 p.m. PST of the business day identified in the Schedule below to NEEA's RFQ Point of Contact. NEEA may alter or adjust the Schedule in its sole discretion, without further notice.

5.1 RFQ Schedule

January 14, 2026	Deadline to submit questions
January 21, 2026	Answers to questions e-mailed back
February 5, 2026	RFQs due
February 16, 2026	Limited RFP to be distributed

5.2 RFQ Point of Contact

All correspondence, included but not limited to, questions and submissions shall be directed to:

Jack Davidson
Senior Program Coordinator
E-mail: JDavidson@neea.org

6 Selection Criteria and Insurance Requirements

6.1 RFQ Scoring and Evaluation

Applicants will be considered in terms of the overall responsiveness to the RFQ (i.e., how well Applicant addresses all Program/Initiative Objectives), including but not limited to:

1. Responsiveness to the RFQ Submission Requirements.
2. Applicant's relevant experiences.
3. Demonstrated capability to execute similar work for other organizations.
4. Experience and qualifications of the individuals specifically proposed to execute and manage the project.
5. Overall value for expenditure.

Applicant's Proposal will be evaluated by NEEA and, potentially, others with the perspective and knowledge needed to make this important decision, as determined by NEEA in its sole discretion. NEEA treats all Proposals as confidential.

NEEA is under no obligation to pre-qualify or provide future contracted work to any Applicant responding to this RFQ, nor is there any obligation or intent implied to reimburse any Applicant for the cost of preparing a proposal in response to this RFQ. Moreover, Applicants have no right or expectation to obtain prequalification or any future contracted work absent a subsequent written contract, agreed to by NEEA and the contracted party in writing.