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MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

COMM-*CARD02-20250520*

Conservation Applied Research and Development Grant Program Perform Field study or Demonstration, Conduct Market or Saturation Study, or Produce a White Paper~~, or Research Data Centers~~

Date Issued: *Tuesday, May 20, 2025*
Date Notice of Intent Due: *Tuesday, June 24, 2025*
Date Proposals Due: ~~*Wednesday, October 29, 2025*~~ *Wednesday, November 5, 2025*

Updated: October 17, 2025

The following are changes to the RFP:

- Revised Attachment 3-1: CARD Budget Template

Updated: August 11, 2025

The following are changes to the RFP:

- Updating the title of the RFP
- Removing Funding Topic D from consideration
- Extending important dates in the RFP timeline

Changes can be found in the following sections:

- Section III: Funding Topics
- Section IV: Questions
- Section VI: Competitive Priorities
- Section X: Timeline

Note: Changes to language in the pre-existing RFP will use ~~strike through~~ for deletions and underlining for insertions.

Minnesota's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The State of Minnesota is committed to diversity and inclusion in its public procurement process. The goal is to ensure that those providing goods and services to the State are representative of our Minnesota communities and include businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. Creating broader opportunities for historically under-represented groups provides for additional options and greater competition in the marketplace, creates stronger relationships and engagement within our communities, and fosters economic development and equality.

To further this commitment, the Department of Administration operates a program for Minnesota-based small businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. For additional information on this program, or to determine eligibility, please call 651-296-2600 or go to www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/mn02001.htm.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

COMM-*CARD02-20250520*

Conservation Applied Research and Development Grant Program
Perform Field study or Demonstration,
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or Produce a White Paper~~, or Research Data Centers~~

I. Grant Overview

The Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources ("Department") seeks proposals from organizations or individuals interested in applied research and development projects that serve to accelerate the development and adoption of new energy efficient technologies and program strategies in Minnesota. The information obtained from this effort is intended to inform electric and natural gas utility Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) program development.

Background

The Next Generation Energy Act of 2007 (NGEA 2007)[1] established energy conservation as a primary resource for meeting Minnesota's energy needs while reducing greenhouse gases and other harmful emissions. The Minnesota legislature also determined "that cost-effective energy savings should be procured systematically and aggressively in order to reduce utility costs for businesses and residents, improve the competitiveness and profitability of businesses, create more energy-related jobs, reduce the economic burden of fuel imports, and reduce pollution and emissions that cause climate change. Therefore, it is the energy policy of the state of Minnesota to achieve annual energy savings equal to at least 2.5 percent of annual retail energy sales of electricity and natural gas through cost-effective energy conservation improvement programs and rate design, energy efficiency achieved by energy consumers without direct utility involvement, energy codes and appliance standards, programs designed to transform the market or change consumer behavior, energy savings resulting from efficiency improvements to the utility infrastructure and system, and other efforts to promote energy efficiency and energy conservation."[2]

To help achieve Minnesota's energy savings goals on a sustained basis, NGEA 2007 created a Conservation Applied Research and Development (CARD) Grant Program, funded through utility assessments. The purpose of the CARD Grant Program is to "identify new technologies or strategies to maximize energy savings, improve effectiveness of energy conservation programs, or document carbon dioxide reductions from energy conservation programs."[3]

On May 25, 2021, the Energy Conservation and Optimization Act (ECO Act) was signed into law by Governor Tim Walz.[4] The ECO Act primarily serves to modernize what was the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) to provide a more holistic approach to energy efficiency programming. Notable highlights of the ECO Act include:

- Providing participating electric and natural gas utilities the opportunity to optimize energy use and delivery through the inclusion of load management[5] and efficient fuel-switching programs.[6]

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[1] Laws of Minnesota 2007, Chapter 136, SF145.

[2] Minnesota Statutes 216B.2401.

[3] Minnesota Statutes, 216B.241, Subdivision 1e.

[4] https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF164&type=bill&version=2&session=ls92&session_year=2021&session_number=0

[5] See Minn. Stat. § 216B.241, subd. 13.

[6] See Minn. Stat. § 216B.2403, subd. 8.

- Raising the energy savings goals for the state's electric investor-owned utilities (IOUs).[7]
- More than doubling the low-income spending requirement for all IOUs.[8]
- Providing greater planning flexibility for participating municipal and cooperative utilities.[9]
- Including activities to improve energy efficiency for public schools.[10]

The Conservation Improvement Program has been renamed as the "Energy Conservation and Optimization" (ECO) program to better reflect the multifaceted nature and focus of these programs brought about by the passage of the ECO Act. As such, the new nomenclature is used throughout this RFP.

ECO is a utility-administered program with regulatory oversight provided by the Department. Utility ECO programs promote energy-efficient technologies and practices by providing rebates, marketing, and technical assistance to utility customers. ECO programs help Minnesota households and businesses lower their energy costs by using electricity and natural gas more efficiently. The Department reviews and approves utility ECO regulatory filings to ensure that energy savings are calculated accurately, statutory requirements are met, and programs meet cost-effectiveness standards.

II. Priorities in Grantmaking

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making. Policy 08-02 establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

The Department attempts to prioritize equity and the ECO-related needs of diverse and underserved populations in the planning of CARD funding topics and the funding of CARD research. Responders to this RFP are encouraged to consider those needs in their research project ideas. Wherever possible Responders should consider projects, or incorporate elements or approaches into their projects, which enhance access to energy savings for ratepayers who are typically unable to access them due to institutional barriers (such as the high cost of technologies, misaligned ownership structures, poverty, racism, lack of awareness, etc.), and thereby reduce the energy burden for such ratepayers.

III. Funding Topics

~~Four~~ Three (~~4~~3) funding topics have been identified for this RFP:

- **Funding Topic A**: Perform a field study or demonstration of innovative technology, or innovative technology-based approach.
- **Funding Topic B**: Conduct a market or saturation study to determine efficiency potential and/or market characteristics, or to assess the acceptance, presence and/or penetration of specific technologies, appliances, equipment, or efficiency measures.
- **Funding Topic C**: Produce a white paper addressing an innovative approach to a problem, underutilized opportunity, or promising strategy related to a market, technology or population.
- ~~**Funding Topic D:** Carry out a research and development project to maximize energy savings and/or load flexibility and management opportunities of data centers.~~

[7] Minn. Stat. § 216B.241, subd. 1c(b).

[8] Minn. Stat. § 216B.241, subd. 7(a).

[9] Minn. Stat. § 216B.2403, subd. 3.

[10] See Minn. Stat. §§ 216B.2403, subd 3(j) and 216B.241, subd. 2(i).

The Department will award grants based on proposals that respond to one of these ~~four~~ three funding topics. Individual proposals will be evaluated only within a single funding topic, and all proposals must indicate the funding topic to which the proposal is responding. If a proposal addresses more than one funding topic, the Responder[11] should indicate the primary funding topic to which the proposal is responding. The Department reserves the right to reassign an NOI or proposal to a different funding topic if the Department determines that the NOI or proposal would be better suited to a different funding topic.

There is no predetermined allocation of funding amounts among the ~~four~~ three funding topics. However, Funding Topic C ~~and white paper or similar study approaches proposed within Funding Topic D have~~ has a maximum funding of $70,000 for each proposed white paper.

The Department reserves the right to cancel this solicitation or to not fund one or more of the funding topics if it is the State's best interest.

Addendum 1 Explanation

The data center bill[12] was signed into law after the publication of this CARD RFP, which exempts data centers with a load of 100 megawatts or greater from ECO. Applied research and development projects that would have informed ECO programs for larger data centers were primarily of interest to the Department through Funding Topic D. **Therefore, the Department has determined it is not in the State's best interest to proceed with Funding Topic D. Funding Topic D is removed from this RFP.**

Description of Funding Topic A

Perform field study or demonstration of innovative technology, or innovative technology-based approach.

Background

New technologies may have been developed which are in a pre- or early commercial phase and have the potential to deliver significant energy and carbon savings to utilities and their customers, or technologies related to newly allowed energy optimization measures may need investigation. For some of these technologies, implementation may be hampered by the fact that savings, cost-effectiveness, reliability, customer acceptance, or other issues have not been assessed or demonstrated in actual applications or demonstrated in climates similar to Minnesota's. However, further investigations through field tests or demonstrations in Minnesota may be needed to evaluate and validate these technologies, as well as to establish diagnostic tools and protocols that can be replicated.

Testing and validation of these new technologies or technology-based approaches in actual applications is a Department priority for assisting utilities in meeting their energy-savings goal. Field studies and demonstrations are needed to quantify the electric, natural gas, and carbon savings and impacts from new technologies and approaches as well as to determine applicability, costs, and market acceptance. In addition, these field studies and demonstrations should examine the replicability, statewide energy and carbon savings potential, and cost-effectiveness of these technologies or approaches.

Any innovative energy efficiency technology or technology-based approach may qualify. However, the primary intention is to study the viability of a specific technology or approach for inclusion in ECO and not to support product development. As a result, the Department is most interested in independent evaluations of

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[11] The term Responder as used in the RFP is defined as the primary individual or entity submitting a proposal in response to this RFP and who will lead the research project and direct the activities of all other team members if applicable. All other collaborating individuals or entities are project partner subcontractors to the Responder.

[12] https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF16&version=latest&session_year=2025&session_number=1

technologies or technology-based approaches rather than those conducted by the product manufacturer or vendor. In addition, field research in Minnesota that collaborates with national or regional research efforts is encouraged under Funding Topic A, particularly those related to consumer-owned utilities (COUs), as long as the CARD-funded portion of the effort directly benefits utilities in Minnesota.

In this context, “innovative” should encompass original, creative or advanced devices or methods, not those that are already proven, widely available and supported in the marketplace. It does not include technologies that are only in the prototype stage of development or are not yet ready for commercialization. Examples of previously funded CARD projects which fit in the field studies or demonstrations funding topic include:

- Packaged Terminal Air Conditioner Replacement Field Study
- Measuring the Savings from Smart Thermostats Installed in Minnesota Homes.
- Field Demonstration of ASHRAE Guideline 36-2018 High-Performance Sequences of Operation for HVAC Systems
- Optimizing the New Generation of Grocery Refrigeration Equipment
- Energy Efficiency Potential of Nanofluids

Search Area of Interest “Energy Data and Reports”, Topics “Conservation Improvement Program” within Commerce Actions and Regulatory Documents Search[13] to access published CARD final reports, or the “Research since 2020” through the Department’s Applied Research & Development webpage[14] to access a list of projects funded since 2020, and webinars or other final deliverables for completed projects since 2020.

Note: Technologies or technology-based approaches that have already been adequately field tested or demonstrated in Minnesota, or that have been field tested in a similar climate for which results can be easily transferred to Minnesota, will not be funded under Funding Topic A.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of Funding Topic A is to develop and conduct field studies or demonstrations of new technologies or new technology-based approaches that have near-term commercial potential in Minnesota to meet as many of the following objectives as possible:

1. Measure energy use in baseline conditions.
2. Measure energy and carbon savings, and estimate potential for energy use and carbon reductions if fully applied in Minnesota.
3. Develop and/or evaluate diagnostic tools and protocols.
4. Determine cost and incremental cost.
5. Establish cost-effectiveness.
6. Evaluate customer acceptance and ease of implementation.
7. Assess operation and maintenance issues, if applicable.
8. Judge reliability.
9. Consider the potential for inclusion as prescriptive or custom ECO measure in the Technical Reference Manual (TRM) including incentive options.

Additional objectives not listed above should be included by the Responder as appropriate.

[13] https://www.cards.commerce.state.mn.us/

[14] https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/conserving-energy/applied-research-development/project-list.jsp

Description of Funding Topic B

Conduct a market or saturation study to determine efficiency potential and/or market characteristics, or to assess the acceptance, presence and/or penetration of specific technologies, appliances, equipment, or efficiency measures.

Background

Utility ECO program administrators, implementers and the Department need unbiased and up-to-date market analysis and penetration data to make informed decisions about ECO programs. It is often useful to conduct a market study prior to field testing, demonstrating, or piloting a specific newly introduced or newly allowed technology or approach to determine applicability, understand market barriers, identify market channels and/or estimate energy savings opportunities for that technology or approach in Minnesota. Similarly, it is frequently useful to characterize the existing state of specific market sectors, building types, equipment, technologies, attitudes, behaviors, or other market aspects to establish a baseline and/or to measure changes in a baseline due to the impacts of ECO programs, codes and standards, price fluctuations and other market forces. Market saturation studies can further help establish baselines or changes in baselines related to the penetration of specific appliances, equipment, or efficiency measures in a specific market sector (e.g., residential, commercial), and serve as useful data inputs for assessing statewide energy efficiency potential, or for guiding utilities toward or away from specific ECO measures.

Examples of previously funded CARD projects which fit in Funding Topic B include:

- Right-Sizing Water Distribution Pipes and Water Heating Systems to Save Energy and Reduce Building Costs
- How Smart Do Intelligent Buildings Need to Be?
- Revealing New Strategic Market Opportunities for High-Performance Envelope Retrofits
- Industrial Process Electrification Through Air Source Heat Pump Adoption for Process Loads
- Strategic Decarbonization for Larger Utility Customers

Search Area of Interest “Energy Data and Reports”, Topics “Conservation Improvement Program” within Commerce Actions and Regulatory Documents Search[15] to access published CARD final reports, or the “Research since 2020” through the Department’s Applied Research & Development webpage[16] to access a list of projects funded since 2020, and webinars or other final deliverables for completed projects since 2020.

Note: Market or penetration studies covering issues, characterizations, opportunities, or strategies that have already been adequately researched in Minnesota recently will ***not*** be funded under Funding Topic B**.**

Goal and Objectives

The goal of Funding Topic B is to conduct an energy savings market study to meet at least one (and preferably most) of the following objectives:

1. Establish the technical, economic and achievable efficiency potential of a specific technology or segment of the market.
2. Determine the applicability for a specific technology or approach in Minnesota.
3. Understand the market barriers and/or identify market channels for a specific technology or approach in Minnesota.
4. Ascertain energy savings opportunities and/or estimate potential for carbon reductions for a specific technology or approach in Minnesota.

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[15] https://www.cards.commerce.state.mn.us/

[16] https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/conserving-energy/applied-research-development/project-list.jsp

5. Determine the penetration of specific appliances, equipment, or efficiency measures in one or more market sector.
6. Establish a base-case reference for the development of future utility energy efficiency programs in Minnesota.

Additional objectives not listed above should be included by the Responder as appropriate.

In addition, state-wide studies proposed in Funding Topic B should break down the results by utility service territory within the state. For investor-owned utilities (IOUs) and larger consumer-owned utilities (COUs) it should ideally report results as close to individual service territories as practical; for smaller COUs it can report aggregate results by logical groupings.

Description of Funding Topic C

Produce a white paper addressing an innovative approach to a problem, underutilized opportunity, or promising strategy related to a market, technology or population.

Background

White papers examining specific technological or market problems, underutilized or newly allowed opportunities, underserved populations, and promising strategies can fill gaps in understanding specific issues that might not require the time and expense of a full-fledged research effort. Some examples might include (but are not limited to):

- Identifying the reasons why a unique or noteworthy technology or market opportunity in Minnesota is underutilized or is not reaching underserved populations or communities.
- Examining known barriers to a specific technology or in a specific market or population to identify the best approaches for overcoming them.
- Analyzing existing research on a promising technology or market strategy to determine its likely applicability, estimate potential energy and carbon savings in Minnesota, and/or gather additional data helpful in ascertaining whether or not a field study or in-depth market research is necessary or worthwhile.
- Investigating what other states or jurisdictions are doing related to a technology, strategy, approach, methodology or program that might be applied to Minnesota.
- Characterizing a specific Minnesota industry or business type to establish possible approaches for reducing energy use and carbon emissions through ECO.

White papers examining specific ECO policy issues will also be considered under Funding Topic C assuming the examination focuses on potential policy updates or revisions that are likely to contribute to the State's energy savings goal. The Department will also consider proposals that create a tool, database, reference material, or other resources that is likely to lead to greater adoption of an underutilized opportunity, or promising strategy or newly allowed measure, or to reach an underserved market.

The **maximum amount available for this Funding Topic is $70,000** per proposed White Paper.

Examples of previously funded CARD projects which fit in Funding Topic C include:

- Advancing and Optimizing Electric Vehicle Adoption in Minnesota through Utility Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Programs
- Analysis of New or Modified Energy Efficiency Programs to Increase Energy Savings of Underserved Populations.
- Project Overcoat: Investigation of a process for affordable high-performance enclosure upgrades for multifamily buildings.

- Pay-For-Performance: A Development Tool to Incentivize Ongoing Building Performance.
- The Electrified Frontier: Exploring Stakeholder Views on the Emerging Intersection of Electrification, Efficiency and De-carbonization.

Search Area of Interest "Energy Data and Reports", Topics "Conservation Improvement Program" within Commerce Actions and Regulatory Documents Search[17] to access published CARD final reports, or the "Research since 2020" through the Department's Applied Research & Development webpage[18] to access a list of projects funded since 2020, and webinars or other final deliverables for completed projects since 2020.

Note: White papers covering technological or market problems, opportunities, or strategies that have already been adequately researched in Minnesota recently will ***not*** be funded under Funding Topic C.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of Funding Topic C is to produce a white paper that thoroughly examines a specific technological or market problem, underutilized opportunity, or promising strategy that has the potential to make a significant contribution to the energy-savings goal directly through utility ECO programs, or indirectly through energy codes, consumer behavioral changes, efficiency improvements to utility infrastructure, or other efforts to promote energy efficiency and conservation.

The objectives of the specific white papers will vary. In some cases, a white paper may be the best way to move a technology or approach to implementation within utility ECO portfolios. In other cases, it may be what is required to determine whether a technology or strategy is even applicable in Minnesota, or to define the parameters of applicability. In still other cases, it may help establish whether further research is warranted, and if warranted, what that research should consist of. Or it may provide more than one of these elements, or something different. As a result, proposals should provide background information that describes the Responder's understanding of the current context and identify the most appropriate objectives for the subject matter of the proposal.

~~Description of Funding Topic D~~

~~Carry out a research and development project to maximize energy savings and/or load flexibility and management opportunities of data centers.~~

~~Background~~

~~Research and development projects are needed to advise Utility ECO program administrators, implementers and the Department on how to maximize energy savings and/or load flexibility[19] and management opportunities of new and existing data centers in Minnesota. The increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) is driving data center development nationally, significantly increasing energy demand. Data centers, particularly those with AI workloads, could consume up to 5% more of the U.S. electricity supply before the end of the decade, potentially requiring 9% of the U.S. electricity supply by 2030.[20] In Minnesota, Great River Energy is anticipating having to provide 1,000 megawatts of power and Xcel is anticipating having to provide 1,300 megawatts of power to data~~

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[17] https://www.cards.commerce.state.mn.us/

[18] https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/conserving-energy/applied-research-development/project-list.jsp

[19] E.g., Norris, Tyler et al., "Rethinking Load Growth: Assessing the Potential for Integration of Large Flexible Loads in US Power Systems." (Duke, 2025), Webinar Presentation, pg 13, https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/sites/default/files/documents/rethinking-load-growth-webinar-presentation.pdf .

[20] "Powering Intelligence: Analyzing Artificial Intelligence and Data Center Energy Consumption." *Electric Power Research Institute* (2024): https://www.epri.com/research/products/3002028905 .

~~centers within the next decade or less.[21] Energy inefficient data center development could result in energy reliability challenges, higher costs, and inhibit achievement of sustainability goals and requirements.[22] The development and effective implementation of ECO programs to ensure data centers in Minnesota maximize energy savings and/or load flexibility and management opportunities provides benefits to a wide variety of stakeholders.~~

~~Data centers can be defined as "facilities whose primary purpose is the storage, management, and processing of digital data via interconnection and operation of information technology and network telecommunications equipment, including all related facilities and infrastructure for power distribution, environmental control, cooling, and security." Data mining facilities are defined within Minn. Stat. 216B.2401, Subd 3a. As "all buildings, structures, equipment, and installations at a single site where electricity is used primarily by computers to process transactions involving digital currency that is not issued by a central authority." Data mining facilities are distinct from data centers and should not be studied as part of this Funding Topic.~~

~~The **maximum amount available for this Funding Topic for a white paper study or similar study approach to that is $70,000** per proposed project. If another study approach is used within this Funding Topic, there is no maximum amount stipulated.~~

~~Examples of previously funded CARD projects which primarily focused on data centers include:~~

- ~~Small Embedded Data Center Program Pilot~~
- ~~Liquid Cooling of Data Center Servers~~
- ~~Energy Conservation Potential at Minnesota Data Centers~~

~~Search Area of Interest "Energy Data and Reports", Topics "Conservation Improvement Program" within Commerce Actions and Regulatory Documents Search[23] to access published CARD final reports, or the "Research since 2020" through the Department's Applied Research & Development webpage[24] to access a list of projects funded since 2020, and webinars or other final deliverables for completed projects since 2020.~~

~~**Note:** While the study approaches in Funding Topic D could be the same as Funding Topics A, B, and C, where the subject matter primarily (or exclusively) focuses on data centers, it should be submitted under Funding Topic D. Follow the instructions under Section IV. Questions in this RFP to submit a question to the Department using the process outlined for further clarification as needed.~~

~~*Goal and Objectives*~~

~~The goal of Funding Topic D is to carry out a research and development project – which could use the study approach of a white paper, market study, field study, or other study approach - that provides insight into the strategy, market, and/or technology critical pathway(s) in ECO to optimize Minnesota data center energy use, particularly through load management, and must meet at least one (and preferably more) of the following objectives:~~

1. ~~Examine known barriers to and/or determine the applicability of a specific technology/approach or in a specific market or population to identify the best approaches for overcoming them.~~

~~[21] Orenstein, Walker. "Minnesota data centers power needs could be staggering". *Star Tribune*, January 10. 2025. https://www.startribune.com/mega-data-centers-are-coming-to-minnesota-their-power-needs-are-staggering/601204129.~~

~~[22] Wang Esram, Nora et al. "Future-Proof AI Data Centers, Grid Reliability, and Affordable Energy: Recommendations for States". *American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy* (2025): https://www.aceee.org/white-paper/2025/04/future-proof-ai-data-centers-grid-reliability-and-affordable-energy.~~

~~[23] https://www.cards.commerce.state.mn.us/~~

~~[24] https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/conserving-energy/applied-research-development/project-list.jsp~~

2. ~~Analyze existing research on a promising technology or market strategy to determine its likely applicability, estimate potential energy and carbon savings in Minnesota, cost effectiveness, and/or gather additional data helpful in ascertaining whether or not a field study or in-depth market research is necessary or worthwhile.~~
3. ~~Investigate what other states or jurisdictions are doing related to a technology, strategy, approach, methodology or program that might be applied to Minnesota, particularly to augment or enhance where there are gaps in ECO programs.~~[25]
4. ~~Characterize current ECO programs applicable, and the best way to move a technology or approach to implementation within utility ECO portfolios.~~
5. ~~Identify the reason(s) why a unique or noteworthy existing program, technology or market opportunity in Minnesota is underutilized, or is not reaching underserved populations or communities.~~
6. ~~Characterize Minnesota's industry now and how it is anticipated to develop to establish possible approaches for reducing energy use and carbon emissions through ECO.~~
7. ~~Establish the technical, economic and achievable efficiency potential of a specific high potential or promising technology or segment of the market.~~
8. ~~Identify market channels for a specific technology or approach in Minnesota.~~
9. ~~Establish a base-case reference for the development of future utility energy efficiency programs in Minnesota.~~
10. ~~Evaluate customer acceptance and ease of implementation, or assess operation and maintenance issues, if applicable.~~
11. ~~Measure energy and carbon savings, and estimate potential for energy use and carbon reductions if fully applied in Minnesota.~~
12. ~~Consider the potential for inclusion as prescriptive or custom ECO measure in the Technical Reference Manual (TRM) including incentive options.~~

~~Additional objectives not listed above should be included by the Responder as appropriate.~~

Note: Follow the instructions under Section IV. Questions in this RFP to submit a question to the Department using the process outlined for further clarification as needed. While some crossover may occur (e.g. a white paper may contain elements of a field, market or saturation study), if the *primary* purpose of the project is to:

- Assess savings, cost-effectiveness and/or operational issues of a new technology or approach in-depth, it should be submitted to Funding Topic A
- Determine efficiency potential and/or market characteristics in-depth, or to comprehensively assess the presence and/or penetration of specific appliances, equipment or efficiency measures, it should be submitted to Funding Topic B.
- Cover technological or market problems, opportunities, or strategies, it should be submitted under Funding Topic C.
- ~~Carry out a research and development project focused on data centers, regardless of the study approach, it should be submitted under Funding Topic D.~~

Additional Information and Requirements

Project Timelines

Projects complying with the maximum duration given in **Table 1** will be considered for each funding topic in this RFP.

[25] "EPRI: DC Flex," Electric Power Research Institute, https://dcflex.epri.com/.

Table *1*. Project Timelines

Funding Topic	Description	Maximum Duration
A	Perform Field study or demonstration of Innovative Technology, or Innovative Technology-based Approach	36 months
B	Conduct Market Study to Determine Efficiency Potential and/or Market Characteristics	24 months
C	Produce a White Paper Addressing an Innovative Approach to a Problem, Underutilized Opportunity, or Promising Strategy related to a Market or Technology.	18 months
~~D~~	~~Carry out research and development project to maximize energy savings and/or load flexibility opportunities and management of data centers~~	~~18 months*~~

The Department is interested in projects that can be completed within the timeline proposed. Further, the Department is interested in projects with both short and long timelines within these limits. **Short timelines are especially encouraged** for ~~Funding Topic D* as well as other~~ topics or issues with urgency or for which a long-time lag would render project results less applicable or relevant for Minnesota ECO programs.

Scope of Work

The scope of work for any proposed research project should be responsive to the selected funding topic as outlined in this RFP but will necessarily be unique to the specific research planned. As a result, the number and type of tasks and subtasks included in the scope of work will vary and should be detailed in the full proposal in response to this RFP.

In addition, Responders will need to consider the time and budget necessary for ***three required tasks – one first and two final***:

- **FIRST TASK: Conduct Kickoff Meeting and Launch Project.** The purpose of this task is to ensure shared understanding between project team and State and allow for any foreseeable issues to be addressed early, avoiding future rework and delays.
    - Conduct a kick-off meeting at the beginning of the project with at least the State's Authorized Representative to review the project's relationship with ECO, review a detailed breakdown of project work structure to ensure a shared understanding of the project and allow for any foreseeable issues to be addressed early, avoiding future rework and delays. Grantees will develop and submit a clear and comprehensive slide deck in format agreed to by the State's Authorized Representative for the kick-off meeting presentation.
    - Develop a summary of the data planned to be collected within the project that will be delivered in the beginning of the project outlining the anticipated data to be collected.
    - Develop building participant agreement, as applicable.

- **SECOND-TO-LAST TASK: Produce and Submit Final Deliverables and Disseminate Results**. The purpose of this task is to produce final documents, presentations, data, data management plan and other materials on time and in accessible formats that:
    - Describe the project process, summarize its outcomes, and outline recommendations.
    - Can be published, distributed and otherwise disseminated broadly to ECO stakeholders in Minnesota.
    - Are available publicly for reference and future analysis and use.

For details on the expected final deliverables see the next subsection of the RFP, Deliverables.

- **LAST TASK: Manage Reporting and Invoicing**. The purpose of this task is to ensure that the research project is completed on time with a successful outcome. Requirements of this task include:
    - Conduct in-person, video or phone project update conferences at least quarterly, or as often as requested, with the Department's Authorized Representative, to apprise the Department on project progress, accomplishments, milestone activities and results to date.
    - Communicating with the Department's Authorized Representative as often as necessary, or at the request of the Department, to discuss issues that require more immediate attention and action, such as schedule deviations, scope of work modifications, concerns related to the project's progress, budget issues or questions, and any other topic that might require a dialogue regarding the best way to proceed.
    - Submitting monthly status reports, invoices and budget documents to the Department for the preceding month's activities and expenses.
    - Submitting task and final deliverables by deadlines.
    - Submitting the final invoice (with supporting documentation) upon completion of the project

Deliverables

The specific subject and outcomes of individual research projects will vary according to the selected funding topic and the proposed scope of work. Exact deliverables will vary accordingly. It is recommended that projects include draft sections of the final report as deliverables for tasks as appropriate before the second-to-last task throughout the project. Nevertheless, the Department has certain expectations regarding deliverables for:

- Projects that investigate a technology or product.
- Final deliverables on all projects.

Expected Deliverables for Projects Investigating a Technology or Product

For research projects that investigate a technology or product, the Department is particularly interested in outcomes that contribute to our understanding of these three aspects of readiness relevant to the Minnesota ECO program:[26]

1. Market and commercial readiness – supply chain maturity, product availability, presence of market failures, and lack of market maturity.
2. Performance readiness – energy savings viability and fitness for use.
3. Program readiness - cost effectiveness, program delivery and interventions, and a risk assessment of technical, market, program and regulatory risk.

The ideal outcomes of a project addressing a technology or product would permit the researchers to rate the technology or product on ***all three aspects***. Where that is not possible, the project outcomes should result in at least a significant clarification of one of more of these aspects.

Expected Deliverables for All Projects

The selected grantees are expected to deliver the following final deliverables for all funded research projects:[27]

1. **Report**. Grantees selected for funding will submit a written final report (or white paper) in MS Word format. The report must include (but is not limited to) an introduction, the study's methodology and

[26] These aspects follow the classification and definitions of the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) for rating emerging technology readiness.

[27] A grantee may propose that a specific, listed final deliverable is not applicable to their project, and if the Department agrees, it will not be required as a project deliverable.

process, analysis and results, discussion of the results and recommendations, and all relevant supporting documentation. Recommendations will incorporate those that are specific to the development of new utility ECO programs related to the results from the investigation and, if warranted, recommendations related to policy issues if any, as well as implications for further research that might be required, and/or barriers that need to be overcome before implementation can proceed. In addition, the report must address the objectives outlined under the goal for the funding topic the project was submitted under to contribute to our understanding of specific technology, approach or market readiness.

The report must also include an executive summary (and/or policy brief if relevant). The written report must be clear, well-organized, and easily understandable by state and utility staff, as well as legislators and the general public.

2. **Fact Sheet(s) and/or Infographic(s) and/or Post-Project Article**. Grantees selected for funding will deliver one or more factsheet(s) on the project results suitable as handouts for stakeholders at meetings and other events and/or one or more one-page infographic(s) on the results of the study which use eye-catching, engaging visuals (e.g., graphics, illustrations, pictures, charts, graphs, diagrams, images), and minimal text to quickly and clearly communicate an easy-to-understand overview of the topic, and/or a post-project article of the project results for publication by the Department. The Department will work with the selected grantee on the exact content and format of the factsheet(s) and/or infographic(s). The factsheet(s) and/or infographic(s) must be clear, well-organized, and easily understandable by state and utility staff as well as legislators and the general public.
3. **Presentation(s) and/or Webinar(s)**. Grantees selected for funding will conduct one general webinar or other general presentation disseminating the results of the study, of which the audience is utilities, ECO stakeholders and the Department, unless the Department agrees that a different dissemination method is more appropriate. The exact details of the presentation/webinar are to be determined in consultation with the Department. This presentation/webinar must include a written script and must be recorded (unless the Department agrees that a recording is not warranted). If the selected grantee organizes and records the presentation/webinar, the grantee must provide the recording with closed captioning in compliance with ADA requirements so that the Department can post the presentation/webinar on its website. Additional presentations/webinars may be conducted as appropriate and by mutual agreement.
4. **TRM Documentation**. Grantees selected for funding will consider, in consultation with the Department, whether any of the findings of the study merit documentation in Minnesota's Technical Reference Manual (TRM), and if appropriate produce the documentation. A presentation to the TRM Advisory Committee may also be required.
5. **Data Summary and Documentation**. Grantees selected for funding will at least provide a summary of the data collected within the project. When requested by the Department, a supplemental deliverable will be a copy of the raw data collected as part of this research, provided in an electronic form and format that could be utilized for further analysis by the Department if desired. (Note: this data must be supplied in such a way that ensures there will not be individually identifiable information considered private or confidential.)
6. **Working Paper(s)**. The Department may request copies of any and all working papers and supporting materials relevant to conducting the funded research, such as background reports, survey instruments, data sources, data summaries, modeling inputs, modeling parameters, preliminary and final analyses, notes, and any other related records and/or resources used or referenced.
7. **Other**. As applicable, the Department encourages Responders to propose additional deliverables (either task-specific or final) that add value and are relevant to the objective of the study.

Product Quality

Responders should be aware that the final report, newsletter article, fact sheet/infographic, and webinar/presentation are the main published documents/resources from CARD-funded projects that are readily available to stakeholders. As a result, it is critical that all these materials and their contents be of the highest quality. Responders who are not completely confident of their writing skills are strongly urged to retain the services of a technical writer and/or professional editor. Further, responders should consider how to coordinate with their communications staff or retain the services needed to deliver graphics or refine final deliverables to support their communication. Final deliverables must also conform to the requirements of Minnesota's Plain Language Initiative, and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for materials posted on a public website. The Department reserves the right to reject and withhold payment for any final written work product that is not grammatically correct, does not conform to the requirements of the state's Plain Language Initiative, does not use Standard English, and/or does not meet the State's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for documents.[28] For more information on CARD final reports, including plain language and ADA compliance guidance, review the Final Report Guidance document under "Final Report Guidance" the Department's Applied Research and Development webpage[29]

IV. Questions

The Department welcomes questions from Responders. All questions about the RFP are to be submitted by email to:

energy.contracts@state.mn.us
Division of Energy Resources
Minnesota Department of Commerce

Other Department personnel are **NOT** authorized to discuss this RFP with Responders. Contact regarding this RFP with other Department personnel could result in disqualification.

All questions regarding this RFP must be received no later than **5:00 p.m. Central Time on** ~~**Wednesday, September 10, 2025**~~ **Wednesday, October 8, 2025**. Please note the section and page number of the RFP that the question is regarding.

Responses to questions will be posted to the RFP page of the Department's website at https://mn.gov/commerce/business/rfp.jsp, responses will not be provided to questions individually. Interested parties who download the RFP from the Department's Request for Proposals site, will receive a notice when responses are posted.

V. Eligibility and Qualifications

Eligible Responders may be an individual, or a public or private entity that meets the minimum qualifications as outlined in this section. This includes but is not limited to: any person; any municipality or other governmental or political subdivision, or any other public agency; any public or private corporation, any partnership, firm, association, or other organization; any receiver, trustee, assignee, agent, or other legal representative of any of the foregoing; or any other legal entity.

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[28] For more information on ADA compliance, the State of Minnesota Information Technology (MNIT) has resources available on its Making Electronic Documents Accessible, web page (http://mn.gov/mnit/programs/accessibility/electronic-documents.jsp).

[29] https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/conserving-energy/applied-research-development/

Minimum and Preferred Qualifications, Skills and Experience

Minimum and preferred qualifications, skills and experience are outlined in **Table 2**, and should be demonstrated in previous work conducted by, and past experience of, the organizations and individuals who make up the Responder's team. **Table 2** is organized by three areas of proficiencies:

- Basic
- Technical
- As applicable to proposed research project

Table 2. Minimum and Preferred Qualifications, Skills and Experience

Area	#	Qualifications, Skills or Experience	Minimum	Preferred
BASIC	1.	Understanding of utility-based energy conservation programs and policies	Familiarity with utility-based energy conservation programs in any state or jurisdiction	Excellent understanding of utility-based conservation programs, ideally from direct experience working with ECO programs, policies and/or utilities in Minnesota
		Ability to work with the Department and ECO administrators across Minnesota	Some experience of successful collaboration with utility conservation program administrators and regulators in any state or jurisdiction	Proven track record of successful collaboration with Minnesota utility program administrators and with the Minnesota Department of Commerce
	2.	Oral and written communication skills	Very good level of communication skill, as evidenced by writing sample(s) and relevant past experience in creating work products similar to the ones required in the project	Exceptional written and oral communication skills, as demonstrated by first-rate writing sample(s) and considerable evidence of creating superior work products similar to the ones required in the project
	3.	Ability to meet deadlines and produce high quality deliverables	Proven track-record of meeting deadlines and producing required deliverables	Exceptional track-record of meeting or exceeding deadlines and producing outstanding deliverables.
TECHNICAL	1.	Knowledge of application of the broad range of energy conservation measures (technologies, weatherization, energy management, behavior, etc.) in utility energy efficiency programs	Some relevant experience with energy conservation measures and their application in utility programs and portfolios	Comprehensive knowledge of energy conservation measures, ideally from direct experience in implementing ECO programs in Minnesota, and/or researching technologies/strategies for application in Minnesota ECO
	2.	Research and analytical capabilities, including an ability to organize, manage and analyze data	Experience with past projects that required research and analytical skills; evidence of	Vast experience with past projects that required research and analytical skills; proven track-record of deep competence and well-demonstrated

			adequate capabilities in the organization, management and analysis of data	proficiencies in organizing, managing and analyzing data, particularly in research projects of the type being proposed
	3.	Experience in conducting studies similar to the one proposed with generally dependable results	Some experience with studies similar to one proposed; demonstrated technical proficiency adequate for topic of proposed study	Expertise in conducting many studies similar to the one proposed, exceptional track-record of producing dependable results in those studies, and a strong technical proficiency in the specific topic of the proposed study; could be considered a national expert
	4.	Familiarity with the standard models used for analysis of energy efficiency, cost-effectiveness, efficiency potential, and carbon savings	Basic comprehension of the standard models, including a solid understanding of the pros and cons of various approaches	Exceptional comprehension of wide range of models, and an outstanding understanding of pros and cons of various approaches; could be considered a national expert
AS APPLICABLE TO PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT	1.	As applicable to the proposed study, experience in conducting literature searches	Previous experience in conducting literature searches	Robust and frequent previous experience in conducting literature searches, ideally on topics related to the topic of the proposed research
	2.	As applicable to the proposed study, familiarity with designing and conducting surveys, interviews, and assessments	Previous experience in designing survey instruments, interview questionnaires, and assessment forms similar to the requirements of the proposed study; evidence of adequate skills required to conduct the surveys, interviews and assessments required in the proposed study	High level of expertise in designing survey instruments, interview questionnaires, and assessment forms for a multitude of purposes; superior proficiency in conducting surveys, interviews and assessments in a variety of applications
	3.	As relevant to the proposed study, skills in engineering, statistics, analyses and investigative principles and their application to the proposed study	Evidence of adequate skills required to conduct the engineering, statistics, analyses and investigations required in the proposed study	High level of engineering, statistical, analytical and investigative proficiency as amply demonstrated by prior work, as well as an excellent understanding of the application of those principles to the proposed study
	4.	If field research is part of the proposed study, experience in the design	Some experience with previous field research projects, including a basic understanding of	Exceptional track-record of extensive field research experience, including an outstanding understanding of instrumentation, data collection

		and execution of field research projects	instrumentation, data collection methods, recruitment, and quality control procedures required in the specific proposed study	methods, recruitment, and quality control procedures required for a variety of different types of field research and the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches
	5.	As applicable to the proposed study, the ability to collaborate with diverse groups of multi-sector stakeholders	Evidence of past experience working with diverse groups of multi-sector stakeholders	Well-demonstrated proficiency in collaborating successfully with diverse groups of multi-sector ECO stakeholders
	6.	As applicable to the proposed study, skill in facilitating meetings	Previous experience in facilitating successful meetings.	Considerable previous experience in facilitating meetings with high-level of proficiency and demonstrated successful outcomes, ideally facilitating meetings on topics directly related to ECO issues

VI. Competitive Priorities

~~The Department encourages Responders to propose CARD project ideas of which the subject matter primarily (or exclusively) focuses on energy savings and/or load flexibility and management opportunities of Minnesota data centers within funding topic D.~~

~~Further, p~~Pursuant to changes in statute relating to the passage of the Minnesota 2021 Energy Conservation and Optimization Act (ECO), the Department ~~also~~ encourages Responders to propose CARD project ideas under one of the identified funding topics in newly allowed research areas building on past research as applicable, such as how Minnesota utilities and other stakeholders should optimize the potential for load growth through ECO; continuing to develop methodologies and overcome barriers for incorporation of electric vehicles into ECO; investigating the key technologies or enabling technologies needed to support efficient fuel switching within Minnesota, strategies to support efficient fuel switching consumer and contractor adoption, and/or verify key or enabling technology implementation in Minnesota; investigating how ECO funds can be braided or stacked with other funding sources, incentives and/or tax credits to support contractors and accelerate consumer access and adoption of ECO programs or incentivized technologies; exploring bill impacts from electrification (in particular for low-income or disadvantaged customers); conducting field studies or demonstrations of innovative or new applications of technologies, such as heat pumps, promising for Minnesota's climate and marketplace, including investigation of additional retrofit options, further optimization, reduction in system installation complexity (if applicable), and integration with other technologies to enhance benefits; etc.

Last, project ideas in customary CARD research areas under one of the identified funding topics continue to be of interest to the Department, particularly conducting field studies, demonstrations, market and/or saturation studies of the high potential energy savings technologies or approaches in the most recent potential study[30].

Collaboration

[30] Nelson et al. "Minnesota Energy Efficiency Potential Study: 2020–2029," *Center for Energy and Environment* (2018): https://www.mncee.org/minnesota-potential-study.

Responders are **encouraged to seek appropriate collaborators and/or partners as necessary** to deliver the requisite proficiency and capacity to successfully complete their proposed project. In addition, collaborations that include diverse populations are encouraged.

VII. RFP Process

For consideration in this funding round, the Responder **must follow the specified deadlines, process and format** outlined in this RFP.

Responders may respond to any or all funding topics. There are no restrictions on the number of projects a Responder may submit for consideration by the Department under one funding topic as long as they are ***unique*** and not simply variations of the same project.

This grant solicitation will follow a **two-stage selection process:**

- **Stage 1: Notice of intent (NOI) to propose a CARD Grant project**
- **Stage 2: Submission of full proposal application for a CARD Grant**

Only Responders who have submitted an NOI (Stage1) will be eligible to submit a full proposal (Stage 2). The purpose, content, submission instructions and screening/evaluation criteria for each of these stages are detailed in the two sections that follow.

It is the sole responsibility of each Responder to ensure that their NOIs or full proposal are delivered according to the instructions and by the deadlines in this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions may result in the disqualification of any non-complying NOI or proposal.

After the Department reviews NOIs and/or proposals, the Department may reach out to responders for clarification of specific NOIs or specific proposals. If a Responder is contacted with a clarification request, the Responder should respond within 5 business days. If the Responder does not respond within 5 business days, NOIs and proposals will be evaluated as submitted by the respective NOI or proposal deadline.

All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by the Responder. The State reserves the right to accept or reject any and all NOIs or proposals.

Stage One: Notice of Intent (NOI) Submission

NOI Overview and Purpose

Stage 1 is the Notice of intent (NOI) to propose a CARD Grant project. **Only Responders who have submitted an NOI will be eligible to submit a full proposal (Stage 2)**.

The purpose of Stage 1 is to obtain an adequate, high-level summary of a research project idea so that it can be screened to ensure that it:

- Is clear, organized and understandable in its responses to the NOI questions.
- Has a compelling project goal and relevant objectives to those outlined in this RFP that are beneficial to pursue relative to utility ECO programs.
- Is investigating issues and/or research questions that are applicable to utility ECO programs and of primary importance.
- Has outlined a scope of work that is appropriate and effective for addressing the identified issues, including activities that have strong value.
- Is a research idea that is justified for funding under CARD at this time.

- Is a research idea that is ready, risks are identified, and risk mitigation strategies are effective in overcoming issues.
- Meets the general eligibility requirements for funding under State statute.
- Has acceptable timing in that proceeding with the funding is not dependent on the availability of forthcoming data, results from related research, or future policy decisions that won't be accomplished by the time the proposed project would start.

The screening of each submitted NOI will be done blind with regards to the identity of the Responder. For this RFP, representatives from Minnesota utilities and Department staff will participate in the NOI screening to provide feedback on submitted NOI's. As a result, ***Responders should not contact utilities or Department staff to discuss potential project ideas*** they are thinking of submitting for the NOI process.

At the close of Stage 1 the Department will send a notification to each Responder who submitted an NOI. These notifications will encourage a subset of NOI Responders to submit a full proposal on their project idea. Other Responders will be discouraged from submitting a full proposal.

A Responder who receives a "discouraged" notification may still submit a full proposal. The Department will review all submitted full proposals. However, by discouraging the submission of a full proposal, the Department intends to convey its lack of interest in the proposed research project given ECO priorities at this time and/or the ineligibility of the project for CARD funding. The NOI process is aimed at saving the Responder the time and expense of preparing a proposal that is unlikely to be selected for funding in this RFP cycle. This process also informs the Department of the number and types of proposals anticipated to assist with assembling appropriate evaluation teams.

NOI Content

The NOI submission consists of the following sections:

A. Project Categories
B. Project Details

There are multiple questions in each of these sections. The NOI should be concise but address each of the subjects clearly and completely. A disordered or confusing NOI may result in a notification discouraging the Responder to submit a full proposal because the project idea cannot be properly evaluated.

NOI Submission Instructions

A Notice of intent (NOI) ***must*** be submitted online using the Department's grant submission portal. Steps to submitting a successful NOI are:

1. **Create an Account on the grant portal.** GrantVantage (https://mnseo.gvgrantcloud.com/account/Announcement) is the link to the grant portal. To submit an NOI in response to this RFP, you must first create an account in the grant portal, unless you have previously created an account. For the application process, ***only one account and one user*** can be created per company/organization. All submissions need to go through that one user account and person. Note: A responder may submit more than one NOI in response to this RFP. A GrantVantage User Guide, **Exhibit B GrantVantage Responder User Guide**, is available on the Department's Request for Proposals Webpage (https://mn.gov/commerce/business/rfp.jsp).
2. **Complete the NOI form in the submission portal.** Log into your account with the user credentials you created in Step 1. View the NOI form and respond to all applicable questions in the form.

3. **Enter Key Project Personnel.** As you finish your application, and verify it is 100% complete, you will be asked to identify key personnel and provide their contact information. This information will be made blind to evaluators during Stage 1 evaluations. Please complete this as follows:
   - Authorized Certifying Official: This is the person authorized to sign the attestations and contracts.
   - Project Director/Manager: This is the person who is overseeing this application and in charge of complying with the program requirements. This will be the person the Department will contact for any questions related to this application for which there may be a deadline to respond. (This may be the same as the Project Director/Manager.)
   - Project Manager/Coordinator: This is the person who is assembling this application and would be managing the project. (This may be the same as Project Director/Manager.)
   - Compliance/Fiscal Officer: This is the person who will create a Supplier ID in the State's Supplier Portal: [Overview for Vendors / Minnesota Office of State Procurement (mn.gov)](). This is the State's vendor system through which you would receive your incentive payment. This person will also know if you currently have a Vendor ID.
4. **Submit NOI by Due Date**: All NOIs must be submitted in the grant portal by **Tuesday, June 24, 2025,** at 5:00 p.m. CT.

Please take note of the following recommendations:

Prepare. Read the user guide with instruction on how to begin, complete, and submit an application. Familiarize yourself with the grant portal and NOI form well before the NOI is due to make sure you are well-prepared and familiar with form and the system.

Allow adequate time to complete the NOI form. The NOI form is short, but the questions require thought and precision. A recommended approach is for Responders to draft a Word document with the responses to each question, including any preferred formatting. When ready, copy and paste your responses into the NOI form in the grant portal. Responders may save an in-process NOI in the grant portal as often as desired and come back to it later to revise or add to it. However, once the NOI has been submitted in the grant portal, it may not be revised or updated. Responders may request correction(s) to an initial submission up to 72 hours before the deadline. In that case, responders should email energy.contracts@state.mn.us as soon as possible to return the proposal for resubmission.

Submit finalized NOI at least two hours ahead of deadline. It is ***strongly*** recommended that you submit your finalized NOI at least two hours before the deadline to ensure sufficient time for the technical assistance team to respond to any technical system errors reported with the actual submission. Because the grant portal is a cloud-based application, multiple Responders attempting to simultaneously submit an NOI in the grant portal right before the deadline may slow the process for each Responder. In addition, due to the variance of Responder internet speeds, NOIs will take time to process. If you submit your application minutes before the deadline, the announcement may close in the middle of processing your application (i.e., while the "Processing" indicator is still active). If this occurs, the Department will not receive your NOI.

Responders who encounter what they believe are technical system errors must report to the GrantVantage Support desk (ResponderSupport@grantvantage.com) ***at least two hours prior to submission deadline*** with screenshots and a summary explanation. Examples of events that are NOT considered "Technical System Errors" are:

- Failure to follow RFP instructions.
- Failure to follow application instructions.
- Local internet challenges at the time of submission on deadline day.
- Unable to see final application "Submit" button.
- Forgot Username or password credentials.

- Security locked out of system resulting from forgetting password – too many wrong attempts.
- Failure to notify GrantVantage Support Desk (ResponderSupport@grantvantage.com) 2 hours prior to deadline.

The following NOIs will not be considered:

- NOIs submitted after the deadline.
- Emailed NOIs (except in extenuating circumstances at the sole discretion of the Department).
- Mailed NOIs.
- Faxed NOIs.
- NOIs submitted too close to the deadline so that the RFP closes in the middle of the Responder's submission (i.e., while the "Processing" indicator is still active).

NOI Screening

The Department will perform an independent assessment of each NOI received in the submission platform. Each NOI will be screened for content and rated using the questions outlined in **Table 3**, including input from representatives of Minnesota utilities. This screening will be done blind with regards to the identity of the Responder.

Table 2. Screening Questions for Notice of Intent

PART I. Strengths and Weakness of NOI Research Project Idea	0 Very Weak	1 Weak	2 Neutral/ Unsure2	3 Strong	4 Very Strong4
Rate Project Goal & Intended Objectives 1. Is the research goal clear and understandable? 2. Is the research goal compelling? 3. Are the intended research objectives clear and understandable? 4. Are the intended research objectives in alignment with the objectives specified in the RFP under the selected funding topic?	-	-	-	-	-
Rate Project Overview 1. Does the project description in the overview clearly describe the research project idea so that you can understand what the project entails? 2. Does the project description in the overview include a summary of the specific issues and/or research question(s) that would be addressed in the project?	-	-	-	-	-
Rate Project Intended Scope of Work 1. Is the scope of work summarized clearly so that it is understandable? 2. How appropriate and effective are the specifics of the work plan for addressing each of the issues or research questions raised in the project overview?	-	-	-	-	-

PART I. Strengths and Weakness of NOI Research Project Idea	0 Very Weak	1 Weak	2 Neutral/ Unsure2	3 Strong	4 Very Strong4
3. How valuable and effective are the planned activities in the scope of work such as: data to be measured or collected and how; strategies for generating the research sample or identifying field sites; plans for stakeholder engagement; anticipated outcomes and deliverables; and any other pertinent details related to tasks in the intended scope of work?					
Rate the Project Readiness, Risks and Issue Resolution 1. Is the response to readiness, risks and issue resolution summarized clearly so that they are understandable? 2. Is the research project idea ready to execute? 3. Were the potential project risks comprehensively addressed? 4. How effective are the risk mitigation and issue resolution strategies to support the project to achieve the project goals, objectives, overview, and scope of work?					
Rate Project Justification 1. Is the outlined research project idea relevant and applicable to Minnesota utility ECO programs, and is it important at this time? 2. How significant would the outlined research project idea and its anticipated results be to advancing energy efficiency in Minnesota generally, and more specifically in helping utilities to achieve their energy savings goal? 3. How essential is the need of the outlined research project idea for CARD funding? Specifically, how innovative, time critical and original (not duplicative of past projects) is this research? 4. Does the project idea include any elements or approaches intended to enhance access to energy savings for ratepayers who are typically unable to access them due to institutional barriers?	-	-	-	-	-
Rate Project Timeline 1. Does the timeline meet the requirements in the RFP? 2. Does the timeline seem reasonable for the scope of work outlined? 3. Is the project well-timed to meet the current needs of utility ECO programs?	-	-	-	-	-

PART II. General Eligibility of NOI Research Project Idea	FAIL	PASS
1. Does the research project idea meet eligibility requirements for funding under the state statue which created CARD? (Minnesota Statutes, 216B.241, Subdivision 1e.)[31]?	-	-
2. Does the research project idea have acceptable timing in that proceeding with funding is not dependent on the availability of forthcoming data, results from related research not yet delivered, or future policy decisions?	-	-

PART III. Recommendation	NO	YES
Based on your complete review and rating of this NOI, should this Responder be encouraged to submit a full proposal based on this research project idea, or not?	-	-

This NOI screening will determine whether the Responder is encouraged or discouraged to submit their NOI project idea to the Department in a full proposal (Stage 2).

- If a Responder passes the NOI screening, they will receive a notification encouraging them to submit a full proposal.
- If a Responder does not pass the NOI screening, they will receive a notification discouraging them from submitting a full proposal

A consensus determination of “FAIL” on either of the PART II questions will automatically result in a notification to “discourage” submission of a full proposal as the project idea did not meet the minimum eligibility for funding. If the project idea fails on question #2, it may be an idea that could be resubmitted in response to a subsequent CARD RFP when the timing is no longer an issue. If the project idea fails on question #1, resubmission would result in another fail unless it is modified to meet eligibility for funding in accordance with state statute.

The Department may include general comments related solely to that Responder’s individual NOI as part of the encourage/discourage notification. These comments may help a Responder understand the reason(s) an NOI was not encouraged to full proposal or provide feedback and suggestions for a project idea that is encouraged to full proposal.

Stage Two: Full Proposal Application Submission

Full Proposal Content

Stage 2 is submission of a full proposal application for a CARD Grant. This application will not be available on the submission portal until the NOI process is complete and the “encourage full proposal application” letters have been sent to Stage 1 Responders. Stage 1 applications that do not receive an “encourage full proposal application” may still complete a full application. However, ***only*** Responders who have submitted an NOI (Stage 1) will be eligible to submit a full proposal (Stage 2). While minor differences are acceptable, and responsiveness to general comments related to the individual NOI notification is appropriate, the project submitted in the full proposal stage must be essentially the same as the project described in the NOI (Stage 1) or it will be deemed disqualified.

The proposal application should be succinct and to the point but address each of the subjects clearly and completely. A disordered or confusing proposal will result in a lower evaluation score.

[31] https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/216B.241

The full proposal should be submitted in the same funding topic selected in the NOI. However, occasionally a justifiable reason for switching funding topics may become obvious as a project idea is more fully developed. If this situation arises between the NOI and the full proposal, the Responder should submit a question as outlined in Section IV. Questions in this RFP to ***gain the Department's approval for a switch in funding topics***. Changing funding topics without approval may result in your proposal being disqualified.

Full Proposal Submission Instructions

An application ***must*** be submitted online using the Department's RFP grant submission portal. As the steps to submit in the online grant portal are the same for the full proposal as the NOI, please review the NOI Submission Instructions on pages 21-22 above for details on submission steps for the full proposal. See the following for additional instructions on the full proposal submission:

1. **Responder Name.** When completing the full proposal, you will be asked for names and contact information for people, or roles, pertaining to your project. These people, and the roles they have in your application, are the following:
    - Organization Name
    - Project Name
    - Responder
    - Delegate
2. Enter in your application ID from the NOI submission.
3. Do not change funding topics if you have not obtained pre-approval from the Department. If the Department approves a funding topic switch, indicate that new approved funding topic in the full proposal application form.
4. Confirm key project personnel and their contact information has not changed. This information should be the same or similar to your Stage 1 response, and it will be viewable for Stage 2 evaluation. Please complete this as follows:
    - Authorized Certifying Official: This is the person authorized to sign the attestations and contracts.
    - Project Director/Manager: This is the person who is overseeing this application and in charge of complying with the program requirements. This will be the person the Department will contact for any questions related to this application for which there may be a deadline to respond. (This may be the same as the Project Director/Manager.)
    - Project Manager/Coordinator: This is the person who is assembling this application and would be managing the project. (This may be the same as Project Director/Manager.)
      Compliance/Fiscal Officer: This is the person who will create a Supplier ID in the State's Supplier Portal: Overview for Vendors / Minnesota Office of State Procurement (mn.gov). This is the State's vendor system through which you would receive your incentive payment. This person will also know if you currently have a Vendor ID.
5. **Application Due Date**: This application(s) must be submitted in the submission portal by ~~***Wednesday, October 29th***~~ ***Wednesday, November 5 by 5:00 p.m. CT.*** The following will ***not*** be considered:
    - Proposals submitted after the deadline
    - Emailed proposals (except in extenuating circumstances at the sole discretion of the Department)
    - Mailed proposals
    - Faxed proposals

VIII. Grant Application List of Questions

There are seven (7) sections of a full proposal application:

1. Project Goal, Question, Objectives and Justification

Section one of your proposal is for Project Goal, Question, Objectives and Justification and is a narrative. Your narrative should include 1.a-1.c below. Uploaded file types should be pdf, doc, docx.

a) **Project Goal**: The overall project goal should not have changed significantly from the NOI to the full proposal since the project should essentially be the same. However, if warranted, you may update the project goal somewhat to more accurately reflect slight shifts in focus that may have occurred between the initial NOI submission and this full proposal application, especially if the updates strengthen the intent of the project and/or reflect feedback you received as a result of the NOI screening.

b) **Research Project Question and Objectives:** Enumerate the project's research question and objectives within the overall research goal identified above. Include your primary research question and any applicable objectives that are outlined in the RFP under the description of your selected funding topic.

c) **Research Project Background, and Justification:** Provide a context for this project by discussing pertinent background that indicates the need for the proposed research at this time. Summarize previous related studies or market data, if available, and briefly review the outcomes, contributions and/or limitations of those previous efforts.
   i) Describe any unresolved issue(s) related to your research subject and clearly identify which of those issues your proposed research would address.
   ii) Discuss why/how addressing the issue(s) identified for inclusion in your research is important generally and in particular to helping Minnesota utilities meet their savings goals.
   iii) Explain why a good use of CARD funds would be your proposed research on this subject.

2. Project Impact

Section two of your proposal is for Project Impact and is a completed Attachment 1 CARD Savings Grid Table Template spreadsheet and narrative. Responders should complete and submit **Attachment 1 CARD Savings Grid Table Template spreadsheet**. Your completed Attachment 1 CARD Savings Grid Table Template spreadsheet should include 2.a.i-iii below, and uploaded file types for the Attachment 1 CARD Savings Grid Table Template spreadsheet should be xls or xlsx. Your narrative should include 2.a.iv - 2.c below, and uploaded file types should be pdf, doc, docx.

A functional copy of the saving grid table Attachment 1 CARD Savings Grid Table Template spreadsheet can be downloaded from within the Department's online submission portal.

a. Each proposal must include an estimate of how the technology, approach, measure, strategy, design or market aspect proposed for investigation or development will likely contribute to the State's energy-savings goal.

Figure 1 is a screenshot of the energy savings estimate grid table, which can be referenced when reading the instructions outlined in this Attachment.

Figure *1*. Illustration of the Energy Savings Estimate Grid Table

SAVINGS ESTIMATE GRID	Range for Total Number of Discrete Instances ▼	Low Savings Estimate per Instance Units	Most Likely Savings Estimate per Units	High Savings Estimate per Instance Units
Range of Savings Estimate per Discrete Instance ▶		50	75	100
Low Estimate of Total Instances (Item)	1,000	50,000	75,000	100,000
Most Likely Estimate of Total Instances (Item)	2,000	100,000	150,000	200,000
High Estimate of Total Instances (Item)	3,000	150,000	225,000	300,000

Estimates of energy conservation potential must include these four (2.a.1-2.a.iv) points:

i) **<u>An estimate of the anticipated range of the energy savings</u>** (low, most likely, and high) for each discrete instance of the technology, approach, measure, strategy, design or market aspect under investigation or development in the proposal. Be sure to include the appropriate units of measure (e.g. CCF, kWh, MBtu. etc.) for your estimate in the savings grid table. These should be ***energy units***, not dollar amounts. These estimates should ideally be based on the range of savings from published lab studies, field studies of similar technology or program types, etc. found in the research literature or else reasonable engineering estimates. In cases where the results include more than one fuel type, produce a savings grid for each fuel type as a supplemental document and combine the results of these individual grids in a summary savings grid placed in the narrative; for the combined grid use Btu, MBtu, or MMBtu as the units. For reference regarding the range of low, most likely and high:

- The **most likely savings estimate** should correspond to what the Responder believes will be the typical or average savings the technology, approach, measure, strategy, design or market aspect under investigation or development is expected to achieve given the typical application.
- The **low savings estimate** should correspond to what the Responder believes will be the minimal savings the technology, approach, measure, strategy, design or market aspect under investigation or development is expected to achieve in each application with an especially poor potential.
- The **high savings estimate** should correspond to what the Responder believes will be the maximum savings the technology, approach, measure, strategy, design or market aspect under investigation or development is expected to achieve in each application with an especially good potential.

ii) **<u>An estimate of the anticipated range of the number of discrete instances</u>** (low, most likely, and high) in which this technology, approach, measure, strategy, design or market aspect might reasonably be applied in Minnesota. Be sure to include the appropriate term for the “item” of discrete instances you are counting. This item could be a specific piece of equipment (e.g., condensing boiler, RTU, new control, LED lamps); a strategy or package of strategies (e.g., tune-ups, commissioning, behavioral measures); a building type in which a strategy or package of measures will be applied (e.g., buildings generally, single-family residences, motels, multifamily buildings, data centers); or something else. For reference, what constitutes the “high” estimate should be comparable to what is often defined as the “achievable” potential (as a subset of the economic potential), or the maximum adoption that is realistically achievable assuming the most aggressive, fully-funded program scenario possible,[32] Values for the "most likely" and "low" estimates should be percentages of the "high" number that correspond to different program potential scenarios, with appropriate justification as documented in #4. For reference, standard definitions of technical, economic, achievable and program potentials are: [32]

- **Technical potential** is the theoretical maximum amount of energy use that could be displaced by efficiency, disregarding all non-engineering constraints such as cost-effectiveness and the willingness of end-users to adopt the efficiency measures. It is often estimated as a "snapshot" in time assuming immediate implementation of all technologically feasible energy saving measures, with additional efficiency opportunities assumed as they arise from activities such as new construction.
- **Economic potential** refers to the subset of the technical potential that is economically cost-effective as compared to conventional supply-side energy resources. Both technical and economic potential are theoretical numbers that assume immediate implementation of efficiency measures, with no regard for the gradual "ramping up" process of real-life programs. In addition, they ignore market barriers to ensuring actual implementation of efficiency. Finally, they only consider the costs of efficiency measures themselves, ignoring any programmatic costs (e.g., marketing, analysis, administration) that would be necessary to capture them.
- **Achievable potential** is the amount of energy use that efficiency can realistically be expected to displace assuming the most aggressive program scenario possible (e.g., providing end-users with payments for the entire incremental cost of more efficiency equipment). This is often referred to as maximum achievable potential. Achievable potential takes into account real-world barriers to convincing end-users to adopt efficiency measures, the non-measure costs of delivering programs (for administration, marketing, tracking systems, monitoring and evaluation, etc.), and the capability of programs and administrators to ramp up program activity over time.
- **Program potential** refers to the efficiency potential possible given specific program funding levels and designs. Often, program potential studies are referred to as "achievable" in contrast to "maximum achievable." In effect, they estimate the achievable potential from a given set of programs and funding. Program potential studies can consider scenarios ranging from a single program to a full portfolio of programs. A typical potential study may report a range of results based on different program funding levels.

iii) **<u>An estimate of the total potential impact ranges</u>** from applying this technology, approach, measure, strategy, design or market aspect state-wide by multiplying the results of points 1 and 2 above.

Your narrative should include:

iv) **<u>A brief description of the rationale and methodology</u>** used to prepare the estimates in points 1 and 2. Please make your explanation of assumptions and process as transparent as possible and include any conversion factors. Define an estimated time period for expected achievement of the potential. If possible, include in the description an overall statement of the approximate savings as a percent of overall energy use (e.g., "this technology has the potential to save roughly x% of the total heating energy in a typical home"). Be sure to indicate the sources of all the data used in creating the estimates. In cases where data on building types and characteristics are needed as a

[32]National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency, 2007. "Guide for Conducting Energy Efficiency Potential Studies." Prepared by Philip Mosenthal and Jeffrey Loiter, Optimal Energy, Inc. Study is available on [EPA's website](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/potential_guide_0.pdf) (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/potential_guide_0.pdf).

reference, the Department suggests using [CBECS](https://www.eia.gov/consumption/commercial/) (https://www.eia.gov/consumption/commercial/) or [RBECS](http://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/) (http://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/) as a source unless the Responder has access to data they believe is more accurate and/or more Minnesota-specific. Supplemental documents may be attached if appropriate, especially in cases where the one-page limit does not allow complete transparency regarding assumptions, behind-the-scenes calculations, rationale, source material, etc. This might include more detailed descriptions of the methodology, spreadsheets, individual savings grid tables used to create a summary savings grid table in the proposal narrative (e.g., in the case of expected savings from multiple fuels), reference lists, and/or other papers or documentation pertinent to the estimate.

b. **Applicability and Transferability of Project Results:**

   i) How applicable the technology, approach, measure, strategy, design or market aspect proposed for investigation or development is to ECO programs in Minnesota overall.
   ii) How quickly the outcome(s) of your proposed research could be directly transferred to utility ECO programs in Minnesota for conservation goal achievement, and/or would have the ability to inform existing or future utility ECO activities.
   iii) Whether additional steps will likely be required before the outcome(s) of your proposed research can be effectively applied to ECO programs in Minnesota and what those steps potentially entail, including complexity and feasibility.
   iv) For research projects that investigate a technology or product, how project outcomes are expected to contribute to our understanding of the three aspects of readiness discussed in the RFP.
   v) If applicable, discuss any elements or approaches in your research project idea that enhance access to energy savings for ratepayers who are typically unable to access them due to institutional barriers, thereby reducing the energy burden for such ratepayers.

c. **Non-Energy Impacts:** Specify any non-energy impacts (positive and/or negative) that are expected to result from the outcome(s) of the proposal, including monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits and other quantifiable metrics (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions). This could include impacts to utilities, utility customers, the environment, or society as a whole.

3. Project Scope of Work and Timeline

Section three of your proposal is for Scope of Work and Timeline, and is a completed Attachment 2 CARD Scope of Work Template document and timeline in graphical format such as a Gantt chart. Responders should complete and submit **Attachment 2 CARD Scope of Work Template** document**.** Your completed Attachment 2 CARD Scope of Work Template document should include 3.a-3.c below, and uploaded file types should be pdf, doc, docx. Your timeline should include 3.d below and uploaded file types should be pdf, doc, docx, xls or xlsx.

A functional copy of the Attachment 2 CARD Scope of Work Template document can be downloaded from within the Department's online submission portal. Attachment 2 CARD Scope of Work Template document is a MS Word template that is formatted for a scope of work (SOW) for the proposal. **Table 4** below, is an illustration of the SOW Template.

The Project SOW is your opportunity to describe and provide the scope of work for how you propose to successfully complete a research project on the subject identified within your selected funding topic to address the issues you raised as important. Before completing the details of your research project, review the RFP for a description of what each funding topic entails, and additional information on the project timeline, scope of work, final deliverables and product quality.

a) Within your scope of work, thoroughly describe the work plan for each task, subtask and deliverable as outlined below:

i. List a concise title for each task, arranged in logical order.
ii. State overall objective for each task.
iii. Identify the discrete subtasks needed to accomplish task, arranged in logical order.
iv. Specify and briefly describe the activities that will occur within each subtask. As applicable, include details of the research plan described in “Research Plan Specifics” below.
v. Identify task-specific deliverable(s). Draft of a final report section is preferred as appropriate, though other milestone items could include: background materials; list of sites considered/selected; draft/finalized research plan; collected data; preliminary analyses; etc.

b) **Research Plan Specifics:** As applicable to each of the tasks and subtasks you outline, clearly describe the research plan in terms of the approaches, methodologies, procedures, processes, etc. that would apply to that task. Include as appropriate an overview of the methodologies for controlling variables, selecting a sample, successfully recruiting and maintaining field sites, identifying and collecting data, conducting statistical analyses, implementing outreach, engaging stakeholders, etc. If applicable identify any data privacy or data management needs within the task or subtask, and describe plans to handle them. Explain these items in adequate detail to give an evaluator an understanding so that your research plan can be fairly considered, but avoid unnecessary minutiae. If your research project is funded, the specifics of the research plan will likely need to be finalized and approved as an early step in the scope of work.

c) Each scope of work is ***required*** to have the following three tasks – first task and two second to last and last tasks:

i) **First Task: Conduct Kickoff Meeting and Launch Project.** The purpose of this task is to ensure shared understanding between project team and State and allow for any foreseeable issues to be addressed early, avoiding future rework and delays. Details can be found in RFP.
ii) Second-to Last Task– Produce and Submit Final Deliverables and Disseminate Results The purpose of this task is to produce final documents, presentations, data, and other materials on time and in accessible formats. Details can be found in RFP.

Note: The Responder needs to allow an adequate period in the timeline to write the draft final report, to allow the Department to review and supply feedback on the draft report, to complete revisions based on the Department’s feedback and to provide the revised final report that is ADA compliant to the Department for final review and approval. This process typically takes approximately 3 months, but in the case of complicated projects or projects with complex supplemental deliverables or multiple reviewers, it can take longer. Other activities related to the dissemination of the project results (e.g., webinars) may occur during this same time period.

iii) Last Task– Manage Reporting and Invoicing on Project. Details of the work plan for this task can be found in RFP.

Table 4. Example Cropped Scope of Work Template

Task	Description	Completion Date
3	**Description Topic Overview**	mm/dd/yyyy
Task Objective: [When applicable, enter task objective, otherwise delete]		
3.1	List sub-task detail here	mm/dd/yyyy
3.2		
3.3	Lines are Hidden: To ADD more rows hit enter at end of THIS row (outside table edge)	
3.4	X - To delete row right click at X then click ‘delete cells” and ‘delete entire row’	
Deliverable(s):		
•	[if there are no task-specific deliverables, say “None” so that it is perfectly clear]	
4	**Description Topic Overview**	mm/dd/yyyy
Task Objective: [When applicable, enter task objective, otherwise delete]		
4.1	List sub-task detail here	mm/dd/yyyy
4.2	Lines are Hidden: To ADD more rows hit enter at end of THIS row (outside table edge)	

Task	Description	Completion Date
4.3	X - To delete row right click at X then click ‘delete cells” and ‘delete entire row’ Deliverable(s): • [if there are no task-specific deliverables, say “None” so that it is perfectly clear]	

d) **Project Timeline:** Upload a schedule for the project that estimates the time each identified tasks and subtasks will take to accomplish. Note milestones and deliverable dates. The timeline must be within the maximum timelines indicated in **Table 1** for your selected funding topic and should be in a graphical format such as a Gantt chart.

4. Overall Approach/Project Risk Assessment

Section four of your proposal is for Overall Approach/Project Risk Assessment and is a narrative, as well as optional letters of support. Your narrative should include 4.a below. Uploaded file types should be pdf, doc, docx.

a) The Overall Approach/Project Risk Assessment should describe:

i) What your overarching strategy is and why your overall approach is the most effective to respond to the research goal and achieve the objectives of your project?
ii) What elements do you consider critical to the success of the research, elements which you intend to prioritize?
iii) What risks and potential challenges do you see in completing this research and what are your plans for overcoming or mitigating those risks and/or challenges?
iv) Your overall management style to successfully oversee and execute the research project for timely transfer into ECO, as well as ensure delivery of timely and high-quality results and deliverables.
v) If applicable identify any data privacy, management, or access concerns in performing this task, and describe plans to handle them.

- **Data Privacy and Access**: The Responder ***must*** identify any data privacy[33], management, or access concerns that might come up with the proposed project and how the Responder plans to handle them. In addition, if the proposal relies on working with customer or building data that the Responder does not have direct access to (such as utility data), the Responder should describe in their proposal their strategy for accessing data, managing it appropriately, and (if awarded a grant contract) will need to demonstrate ***during the grant negotiation*** process (prior to the grant contract being fully executed) that they can successfully obtain access to the data through whichever entity does retain the data.

b) Letters of support for your proposed project are optional and therefore ***not required***. However, if applicable, you may upload letters of support from any individual or entity that believes the proposed research project is worthwhile, and/or that the results will be valuable to ECO programs in Minnesota. Further, it will likely be valuable to include letters of support from organizations or individuals that will be a primary audience or participant in the project, such as field sites within a project proposed for funding topic A. No discussion of the credentials of project supporters is required. (Note: Letters of support from project supporters ***must not be sent directly*** to anyone at the Department, but should be uploaded into this application form. They should be addressed to “The CARD Evaluation Team” and reference the specific RFP and project to which it applies.)

[33] Review Minnesota’s data classifications and identify data that is proposed to be collected within your project that may not be classified as public: https://mn.gov/admin/data-practices/data/classification/.

5. Project Team

Section five of your proposal is for Project Team and is a narrative as well as letter(s) of commitment for project partners, if applicable. Your narrative should include a-g below, and letters of commitment should be included per h below. Uploaded file types should be pdf, doc, docx.

Your proposal should illustrate the experience of the organization(s) that make up the project team, and demonstrate that the specific staff on the project team possess the necessary skills for the successful execution of the proposal. This is your opportunity to explain how you would meet the RFP requirements of Eligibility and Qualifications, which details the minimum and preferred qualifications, skills and experience of the Responder's team.

NOTE:

- **Proprietary Technology**: If the Responder is responsible for providing measurable results of the application of its own proprietary technology or product, all appropriate tasks in the proposed project ***must include*** either an independent third-party partner to conduct those measurements or verification of procedures and results by an independent third-party partner.
- **Use the following definitions of team members:**
  - **Responder:** primary individual or entity who is submitting the proposal in response to this RFP and who is responsible for managing the project and all subcontractors.
  - **Project Partner:** subcontractor to the Responder who collaborates on the study with the Responder and/or delivers a major component of work for the study and/or provides matching funds or in-kind contributions.

a) Overview of Responder and Responder's Team: Provide an overview of the Responder and the Responder's team. This overview should give evaluators a high-level summary of who the team is and the how it will collaborate. To accomplish this, provide the following information:

i) Name of Responder and each organization or entity that will be a project partner and/or associate on the study.
ii) Few sentences of history/background on the Responder organization and that of each project partner, focusing on background that is most relevant to the needs of your proposed research project.
iii) Brief description of the primary role(s) and responsibilities of the Responder and each project partner as part of the team, including a high-level explanation of how the team will be coordinated and managed overall.

b) Team Composition: Detail the composition of the ***key*** team members (i.e. individuals) who will work on the project.

i) Identify each key team member, and indicate the organization affiliation of each key team
ii) Describe the overall role(s) each identified key team member will play, including which team member will perform (or manage) the completion of each of the tasks outlined in the Responder's scope of work (by subtask if necessary). If more than one key staff will be assigned to a task or subtask, include a clear description and delineation of roles and responsibilities for each team member within that task or subtask.
iii) Provide a brief sentence or two on the expertise each key team member brings to the study, focusing on specific skills, abilities and experience that will enable that team member to successfully complete the assigned task(s) and/or subtask(s).
iv) **Optional Staff Resumes:** If desired, upload a file containing individual resumes/Curriculum Vitas (CVs) that reflect qualifications/experience of key personnel who will be working on the proposed project if funded. However, these must be limited to no more than two (2) pages per key person and should augment what is said in this section of the application, not substitute for it.

c) Team Qualifications, Skills and Experience Related to the "Basic" Area of Proficiency

The RFP outlines the minimum and preferred proficiencies in a "basic" area. In response to those four outlined proficiencies, indicate if your team meets minimum or preferred proficiencies and detail the qualifications, skills and experience of your team as it relates to their:

i) Understanding of utility-based energy conservation programs and policies.
ii) Ability to work with the Department and ECO administrators across Minnesota.
iii) Oral and written communication skills.
iv) Ability to meet deadlines and produce high quality deliverables.

In the detail, feel free to cite specific organizations and individuals in the team as appropriate to focus on exact competencies, abilities and/or knowledge that are relevant to the required qualification.

d) Team Qualifications, Skills and Experience Related to the "Technical" Area of Proficiency

The RFP outlines the minimum and preferred proficiencies in a "technical" area. In response to those four outlined proficiencies, indicate if your team meets minimum or preferred proficiencies and detail the qualifications, skills and experience of your team as it relates to their:

i) Knowledge of the application of the broad range of energy conservation measures (technologies, weatherization, energy management, behavior, etc.) in utility energy efficiency programs.
ii) Research and analytical capabilities, including an ability to organize, manage and analyze data.
iii) Experience in conducting studies similar to the one proposed with generally dependable results.
iv) Familiarity with the standard models used for analysis of energy efficiency, cost-effectiveness, efficiency potential, and carbon savings.

In the detail, feel free to cite specific organizations and individuals in the team as appropriate to focus on exact competencies, abilities and/or knowledge that are relevant to the required qualification.

e) Team Qualifications, Skills and Experience Related to the "As-Applicable" Area of Proficiency

The RFP outlines the minimum and preferred proficiencies in an area "as-applicable" to the specific proposed research project. In response to those six outlined proficiencies, indicate if your team meets minimum or preferred proficiencies and detail the applicable qualifications, skills and experience of your team as it relates to their:

i) Experience in conducting literature searches.
ii) Familiarity with designing and conducting surveys, interviews, and assessments.
iii) Skills in engineering, economic and statistical principles and their application to the proposed study.
iv) Experience in the design and execution of field research projects.
v) Ability to collaborate with diverse groups of multi-sector stakeholders.
vi) Skill in facilitating meetings.

In the detail, feel free to cite specific organizations and individuals in the team as appropriate to focus on exact competencies, abilities and/or knowledge that are relevant to the required qualification.

f) Previous Project Summaries

In the same document, summarize two specific examples of prior studies that the Responder and/or project partner(s) have managed or worked on. At least one of these projects should have a similar scope to the specific proposed research project, and ideally both should be similar.

Studies or projects completed for the Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources **should not be listed** as examples or used as references as the Department is already familiar with that work. Instead, studies or projects completed for other clients should be provided.

Include the following information for each of the two examples:

- Study name
- Client name
- Client reference (name, title and contact information)
- Study duration
- Brief study description, including the specific role of any team member who worked on it.

g) Writing Sample

Upload a writing sample. Ideally this sample will be associated with one of the projects summarized in the response to the previous question, otherwise from a similar past project. The sample must be for a project completed by the Responder or a project partner, and ideally completed by some of the same key staff who are assigned to work on the proposed research project.

h) Letters of Commitment from Project Partners

When applicable per the following, you ***must*** upload letters of commitment from:

1. Project partners (i.e. subcontractors) indicating commitment to the Responder's proposed research project covering specific staff, time and for any matching funds or in-kind donations (if included in the budget).
2. From any other entity indicating commitment to the Responder's proposed research project for any matching funds or in-kind donations (if included in the budget).

6. Project Budget

Section six of your proposal is for the Project Budget. Responders should complete and submit **Revised Attachment 3-1 CARD Budget Template spreadsheet** as well as narrative for indirect costs per 6.a below, as applicable. Your project budget should address the "Detailed Budget Table Instructions" below. Uploaded file types should be xls or xlsx.

Revised Attachment 3-1 CARD Budget Template spreadsheet is a functional form to enter a budget for the proposal, as well as an example budget for reference. **Figure 2** is an illustration of the budget spreadsheet which can be referenced when reading the instructions outlined in this section.

Detailed Budget Table Instructions

In the budget spreadsheet, the **Responder** is the one primary entity who is submitting the proposal in response to this RFP and includes individuals who are official employees of the Responder. All **other project partners who provide work to this project are considered Subcontractors**. The Department will award the grant to the Responder, who in turn is responsible for reimbursing any project subcontractors.

In the budget spreadsheet Responders should:

- Provide a breakdown of cost by task identified in the Scope of Work.
- Provide a breakdown of cost by category. Indicate the anticipated hours for personnel and for other project costs using expense types to reflect activities required to complete each of the tasks. Expense types listed in red in the budget spreadsheet are given as examples of the areas in which expenses might be incurred; expenses are neither required in nor limited to these particular types. In the Responder's actual budget these items should be deleted and replaced as needed with actual expense types relevant to your proposal.
- Include as a line item in the Budget Table for ***each of the expense types you intend to bill the State*** for if you are awarded this grant contract (for example, travel, materials, supplies, license agreements, etc.). The submitted budget spreadsheet will be the basis for creating a budget exhibit in the actual grant contract. Invoicing to the State will be based on the type of expenses identified in this spreadsheet.

a) If indirect costs is one of the line items in the budget spreadsheet, the Responder should include as part of the proposal: 1) a brief explanation of typically what is included in the indirect costs; 2) the organization's indirect percentage rate; and 3) an explanation of what the current rate is based on (including how it was calculated, when this rate came into effect, and when it was last reviewed and by whom).

Figure 2: Illustration of Budget Spreadsheet

BUDGET TABLE			Task 1 Kick-off		Task 2 Data		...->	Task 7 Deliverables		Task 8 Reporting/Invoicing		PROJECT TOTALS	
Type of Expense	Hourly Rate	% Time by Staff	Hours	Dollars	Hours	Dollars		Hours	Dollars	Hours	Dollars	Hours	Dollars
RESPONDER													
Labor Person 1	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 2	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 3	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 4	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 5	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 6	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 7	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 8	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 9	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 10	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Travel							...						$0
Equipment							...						$0
Materials & Supplies							...						$0
License Agreement							...						$0
Other Expense							...						$0
Responder Subtotals:		**0.0%**	0.0	$0	0.0	$0		0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
SUBCONTRACTOR(S)													
Labor Subcontract 1	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Travel Subcontract 1							...						$0
Equip. Subcontract 1							...						$0
X Subcontract 1							...						$0
Labor Subcontract 2	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Travel Subcontract 2							...						$0
Equip. Subcontract 2							...						$0
X Subcontract 2							...						$0
Labor Subcontract 3	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Travel Subcontract 3							...						$0
Equip. Subcontract 3							...						$0
X Subcontract 3							...						$0
Labor Subcontract 4	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0	...		$0		$0	0.0	$0
Travel Subcontract 4							...						$0
Equip. Subcontract 4							...						$0
X Subcontract 4							...->						$0
Subcontractor Subtotals:		**0.0%**	0.0	$0	0.0	$0		0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Totals for Individual Tasks & for Project:			0.0	$0	0.0	$0		0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
% of Total Hours by Task:			0.0%		0.0%			0.0%		0.0%			
% of Total Dollars by Task:				0.0%		0.0%			0.0%		0.0%		

Detailed Budget Table Instructions:

- **Column 1:** Identify types of expenses by Responder and Subcontractor including:
  - Names of key personnel at the Responder who will be assigned to the project;
  - Expenses for Responder (for example, travel, equipment, supplies, etc.);
  - Names of subcontractors who will be working on the project; and
  - Expenses for subcontractors (for example, travel, equipment, supplies, etc.) working on the project.
- **Column 2:** Indicate hourly rate for each individual person working on the project.

- **Column 3:** The percent of total project time that each person is committed to the project is calculated automatically in the budget spreadsheet.
- **Task Columns:** Each task in the scope of work ***must*** be estimated separately in the budget spreadsheet. For each set of task columns (including any additional tasks you are proposing), enter the number of hours by task for each person working on that task; dollar amounts for personnel are then calculated automatically. For other expenses (for example, travel, equipment, supplies, etc.) enter the dollar amounts directly, again by task.
- **Final Two Columns:** The budget spreadsheet automatically sums the hours and dollar amounts across all tasks for each expense type.
- **Lightly Shaded Rows:** The budget spreadsheet **a**utomatically subtotals the Responder and the Subcontractor costs by task.
- **Dark Shaded cells:** Leave blank.
- **Row 3rd from the Bottom:** The budget spreadsheet automatically totals hours and costs for each individual task and for the project overall (final two columns).
- **Row 2nd from Bottom:** The budget spreadsheet automatically calculates the percent of total hours by individual task.
- **Bottom Row:** The budget spreadsheet automatically calculates the percent of total dollars by individual task.

Additional Notes:

- The selected grantee will be reimbursed for travel and subsistence expenses in the same manner and in no greater amount than provided in the current Commissioner's Plan.
- The Department does not make regular payments based upon the passage of time; it pays only for services performed or work delivered after the work is accomplished.
- Expenses cannot be incurred until a grant contract is fully executed and effective.
- All prices provided in the proposal budget ***must*** be valid for the length of the contract, if awarded.
- Proposal budgets do ***not*** meet the definition of trade secret in Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. § 13.37.
- At its discretion, the State may perform an appropriate cost and pricing analysis of a Responder's proposal, including an audit of the reasonableness of any Proposal.

7. Diversity and Inclusion

Section seven of the proposal is for Diversity and Inclusion and is a narrative. Your narrative should address 7.A below. Uploaded file types should be pdf, doc, docx.

The State of Minnesota's Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. Diverse populations include: Racial and ethnic communities, including American Indians, LGBTQI communities, Disability status, Veterans and Geographic diversity within and across Minnesota — including greater MN, urban/metro.

The goal of this section is to invite the Responder and project partners with significant contribution to the proposed project to share current or future efforts on diversity and inclusion (D&I).[34] If any of these identified issues/questions do not apply, please indicate that in the narrative. The narrative you provide is intended to capture both:

[34] The definition of "significant contribution" will vary depending on the number and type of project partners and could include partners who are receiving anywhere from 25% to 50% of the project budget. As a result, the Responder should use their best judgement in deciding when to include information on the diversity efforts of project partners.

- Opportunities this specific grant proposal might provide to serve diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities, or who have been underserved by past CARD grant funding; and
- Current and planned diversity and inclusion practices of the primary Responder and significant project partners.

A) Respond to each of the following questions:

   i) If awarded, list any diverse or underserved populations the outcomes of this proposed project would serve and describe how those populations would be served.
   ii) Describe any potential efforts you might be able to make to better serve diverse or underserved populations through future CARD projects and/or their outcomes.
   iii) Do you have equity, diversity, and inclusion embedded into the mission statement, values and/or strategic plan of your organization? If yes, describe. If no, describe any plans you might have to do so.
   iv) Does your organization offer professional development on diversity, inclusion and equity training to staff and leadership? If no, describe any plans you might have to do so.
   v) Do your organization's contracting practices promote diversity and inclusion (e.g. in hiring subcontractors)? If yes, describe how. If no, describe any plans you might have to do so.

Summary of Full Proposal Submission

The documents referenced below should be submitted to complete a full application unless otherwise indicated as optional or if applicable. Completed versions must be uploaded into the Department's cloud-based submission portal as part of the full proposal. Fillable versions of **all three of the template attachments** may be downloaded directly from the Department Request for Proposals Website. Attachment 2 CARD Scope of Work Template and Exhibit C: CARD Final Deliverables Deadline Calculator may be updated when the "Notification of Encourage/Discourage to Full Proposal" occurs.

NOTE: *Submission portal will accept up to 10 document uploads per section. If needed, you may combine your responses within a section into one or more pdf or word docs.*

Section 1.	1.a.-1.c. Narrative response as a pdf, doc or docx.
Section 2.	2.a.i-iii. Completed **Attachment 1 CARD Savings Grid Table Template** as xls or xlsx. 2.a.iv - 2.c. Narrative response as a pdf, doc or docx.
Section 3.	3.a-3.c Completed **Attachment 2 CARD Scope of Work Template** as pdf, doc or docx. 3.d Timeline as pdf, doc, docx, xls or xlsx
Section 4.	4.a Narrative response as pdf, doc or docx. 4.b Letters of Support (optional) as pdf, doc or docx.
Section 5.	5.a.-f. Narrative response as a pdf, doc or docx. 5.b.iv Staff Resumes (optional) as pdf, doc or docx. 5.g Writing Sample as a pdf, doc, or docx. 5.h Letters of Commitment from Project Partners (if applicable)
Section 6.	Completed **Revised Attachment 3-1 CARD Budget Template** as xls or xlsx. 6.a Narrative response as a pdf, doc or docx
Section 7.	7.a. Narrative response as a pdf, doc, or docx.

IX. Full Proposal Evaluation and Scoring

All responses received by the deadline will be evaluated by representatives of the Department of Commerce. A 100-point set of metrics will be used to create the final evaluation recommendation.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following evaluation criteria within **Table 7** below:

Table 7. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposal Section	**Weighted Criteria**	**Total Possible Score**
1	**Project Goal, Question, Objectives and Justification** 1. RFP Grant Application List of Questions instructions for the section were followed 2. Alignment of proposed research with ECO intent, goals and priorities 3. Clarity, applicability, usefulness of project goal to utility ECO programs in Minnesota 4. Consistency of objectives in focusing on achieving the overall identified goal, and suitability of objectives for achieving that goal 5. Inclusion of applicable objectives outlined in the RFP for this funding topic 6. Adequacy of background and context to justify need for this research at this time 7. Significance of unresolved question and issues the research will address, in particular for helping Minnesota utilities meet their savings goals 7. Adequacy of reasons given for expenditure of CARD funds to support research	*15*
2	**Project Impact** 1. RFP Grant Application List of Questions instructions for the section were followed 2. Estimated energy potential of research subject being investigated, studied, or developed, and the likely contribution to utility energy-saving goal 3. Speed or additional steps required with which outcomes of the study could be directly transferred to utility ECO programs or would have ability to inform existing or future utility ECO activities. Complexity and feasibility of transference 4. For research projects that investigate a technology or product, expected contribution of project outcomes to our understanding of the three aspects of readiness discussed in the RFP (i.e., market and commercial readiness, performance readiness, and program readiness 5. If applicable, effectiveness at reducing energy burden of elements or approaches intended to enhance access to energy savings for ratepayers who are typically unable to access them due to institutional barriers 6. Potential non-energy impacts (beneficial and/or detrimental)	*15*
3	**Scope of Work and Timeline** 1. RFP Grant Application List of Questions instructions for the section were followed <u>SOW:</u> 1. Appropriateness and clarity of tasks and task objectives achieve project goal and objectives 2. Effectiveness of identified subtasks under each task for achieving task objective	*20*

	3. Adequacy of task-specific deliverables 4. Clarity and logic of scope of work 5. Feasibility, rigor and effectiveness of scope of work Final Deliverables and Dissemination Task 1. Suitability of general approach for producing and submitting final deliverables 2. Value of any unique processes or perspectives to the general approach 3. If applicable, benefit of any additional recommended dissemination activities 4. If applicable, benefit of any additional proposed final deliverables Timeline 1. Feasibility of the task and subtask deadlines, and whether the timeline is within maximum duration allowed for the funding topic	
4	**Overall Approach/Project Risk Assessment** 1. RFP Grant Application List of Questions instructions for the section were followed. 2. Clarity and logic of overall approach 3. Likelihood of approach and identified priority elements to result in successful achievement of project goal and objectives 4. Risks or challenges comprehensively identified 5. Likelihood of approach to successfully overcome risks or mitigate identified challenges 6. Suitability of overall management style to successfully oversee proposed research project that results into a timely transfer into ECO 7. Likelihood of ensuring high quality results and timeliness due to proposed processes and procedures 8. If applicable, appropriateness of processes for handling data privacy, accessing data, or data management 9. If applicable, presence and/or strength of letters of support for the project	*10*
5	**Project Team** 1. RFP Grant Application List of Questions instructions for the section were followed 2. Relevance and strength of the overall team, individual member deployment, and how it will collaborate 3. Alignment of demonstrated qualifications, skills and experience of the team to the minimum or preferred qualifications, skills and experience as outlined in the RFP related to basic, technical and as-applicable proficiencies 4. Relevance of the proposed research project to previous projects conducted by the team 5. Success of writing sample at communicating clearly, following a logical organizational structure, and providing clear and useful graphics 6. As applicable, letter of commitment from each project partner	*20*
6	**Budget** 1. RFP Grant Application List of Questions instructions for the section were followed 2. Value and practicality of budget overall for proposed scope of work	*15*

	3. Appropriateness of allocation of funds within budget for specific tasks and subtasks 4. Appropriateness of distribution of staff resources and good alignment of staff experience with specific responsibilities in the scope of work 5. Value of project outcome(s) compared to amount of funding requested 6. Value of matching funds, if applicable	
7	**Diversity and Inclusion** 1. RFP Grant Application List of Questions instructions for the section were followed 2. Overall effort to provide genuine response to D&I questions 3. Level of consideration and thoughtfulness given to questions about serving D&I populations through research and development projects and including D&I stakeholders in planning research and development projects 4. Degree of candor regarding inclusion of D&I in mission, values, strategic plans and contracting practices	*5*
	Total Score	**100**

X. Timeline

Table 8 below represents important deadlines in the RFP timeline. All times given in this RFP are Central Prevailing Time.

Table 8. RFP Timeline

RFP Issued	Tuesday, May 20, 2025
Notice of Intent to Propose Due (Stage 1)	**Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**
Notification of Encourage/Discourage to Full Proposal	~~Wednesday, September 3, 2025~~ Wednesday, September 17, 2025
Final Day to Submit Questions about RFP	~~Wednesday, September 10, 2025~~ Wednesday, October 8, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
Final Responses to Questions Posted	~~Wednesday, September 24, 2025~~ Friday, October 17, 2025
CARD Full Grant Proposal Due (Stage 2)	**~~Wednesday, October 29, 2025~~** **Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**
Notification of Funding Decisions	Tuesday, December 23, 2025
Work on Contract Anticipated to Begin	March 2026

*Work under an individual grant contract cannot begin prior to the execution date of the grant contract. No costs may be incurred until a fully executed grant contract is in place.

XI. Notifications and Next Steps

The Department anticipates notifying responders of the recommendation for the award of a contract by Tuesday, **December 23, 2025.**

Selected Responders will need to negotiate contracts with the Department consistent with this RFP. A Pre-Award Risk Assessment must also be completed according to [Minn. Stat. § 16B.981](). The Department will send selected responders the required documents to complete, and return based on their type of organization. See Section XIII. General Requirements for a complete list of Pre-Award Risk Assessment documents.

This RFP does not obligate the Department to award a contract. In the event that negotiated terms cannot be reached, the Department reserves the right to terminate negotiations.

XII. Exhibits and Attachments

The following attachments are incorporated into this RFP and must be completed and submitted during Stage 2 for full grant proposals to be considered complete. No completed attachments are required during Stage 1.

- **Attachment 1: CARD Savings Grid Table Template**
- **Attachment 2: CARD Scope of Work Template**
- **Revised Attachment 3-1: CARD Budget Template**
- **Attachment 4: Exceptions Form**
- **Attachment 5: Conflict of Interest**

The following exhibits are incorporated into this RFP for reference.

- **Exhibit A: State of Minnesota Grant Contract Agreement Template**
- **Exhibit B: GrantVantage Responder User Guide**
- **Exhibit C: CARD Final Deliverables Deadline Calculator**

Please note that **Exhibit A** is the State of Minnesota Grant Contract Agreement Template**. Attachment 4: Exceptions Form** must be completed and submitted with the application if the Responder has any exceptions to the terms and conditions in the State of Minnesota Grant Contract Agreement Template. The Department is not obligated to consider exceptions to the Grant Contract Template if Attachment A is not completed and submitted.

XIII. General Requirements

A. Required financial and grantee capacity review

Minn. Stat. § 16B.981 requires that a pre-award risk assessment is conducted for grant awards of $50,000 or more.

All grantees as defined in Minn. Stat. § 16B.981 Subd. 1 (c) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial and capacity review prior to a grant award of $50,000 and higher. Minn. Stat. § 16B.981 Subd. 1 (c) includes non-profit organizations, political subdivisions, and for-profit business.

1. **Capacity Response:**
   History and/or ability of grantee to perform duties required of the grant, required of all responders. (Minn. Stat. § 16B.981 Subd. 2 (1))
2. **Felony Financial Certification:**
   No current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years, required of all responders. (Minn. Stat. § 16B.981 Subd. 2 (6))
3. **Evidence of good standing:**
   Filed and up-to-date with the Secretary of State. Required for nonprofit and for-profit potential grantees. Required of nonprofit and for-profit grantees. (Minn. Stat. § 16B.981 Subd. 2 (4))
4. **Nonprofit grantees as applicable**
   - Most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ
   - Most recent audited financial statement of a charitable organization which has received total revenue in excess of $750,000 for the 12 months of operations covered by the statement per Minn. Stat. § 309.53

- Most recent board-reviewed (or managing group if applicable) financial statements, description of internal controls over business expenditures and outcomes of grant funds, if awarded, and evidence of exemption

5. **For-profit Certification Disclosure and required documents**
   - Most recent federal and state tax returns:
     - If not in business long enough to have a tax return, description of internal controls over business expenditures and outcomes of grant funds, if awarded
   - Current financial statements
   - Certification that business is not under bankruptcy proceedings
   - Disclosure of any liens on assets

The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject an organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law.

Based on Minn. Stat. § 16B.981/Chapter 62 - MN Laws, Article 7, Section 11, Subd. 3-5 establishes the authority for a granting agency to:

- Provide or require enhanced grant oversight
- Request additional information from a potential grantee to determine whether there is a substantial risk that the potential grantee cannot or would not perform the required duties of the grant agreement.
  - The potential grantee has 30 business days to respond
- Develop a plan to address the risk or concerns identified
- Not award the grant.
  - The granting agency must provide notice of this determination to not award the grant to the grantee and the Commissioner of Administration.
  - The notice must include the following:
    - The reason for postponing/not awarding the grant
    - The timeline for the process for contesting the agency's decision

B. Conflicts of Interest

The Department will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to Responders and reviewers per Minn. Stat. § 16B.98 and Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making.

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a Grantee or Responder is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the Department due to competing duties or loyalties
- a Grantee's or Responder's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the Responders or Grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the Grant Contract.

C. Public Data

Per Minn. Stat. § 13.599

- Names and addresses of grant Responders will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. § 13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all Grant Contracts have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by the Minnesota Department of Commerce as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. § 13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all Grant Contracts have been fully executed).

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review at: Office of Grants Management Policies, Statutes, and Forms/Forms and FAQs tab

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking violations and traffic violations

D. Grant Payments

Per Policy 08-08 reimbursement is the preferred method for making grant payments. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. The State shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless the Department of Commerce has given the grantee a written extension.

E. Grant Monitoring

Minn. Stat. §16B.97 and Policy 08-10 Grant Monitoring require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants of $50,000 and higher
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants of $250,000 and higher
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of $50,000 and higher. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

F. Grantee Bidding Requirements:

[For Nongovernmental organizations and for-profit businesses]

Any grant-funded services and/or materials that are expected to cost:

- $100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- Between $25,000 and $99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids.
- Between $10,000 and $24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.

The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:

- State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List
- Metropolitan Council's Targeted Vendor list: Minnesota Unified Certification Program
- Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: Central Certification Program

The grantee must maintain:

- Written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.
- Support documentation of the purchasing and/or bidding process utilized to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation of verbal quotes or bids and justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN: Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information

For grant-funded projects that include construction work of $25,000 or more, prevailing wage rules apply per; Minn. Stat. §§177.41 through 177.44. These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

[For Municipalities]

Grantees that are municipalities must follow:

- The contracting and bidding requirements in the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law as defined in Minn. Stat. § 471.345
- The requirements of prevailing wage for grant-funded projects that include construction work of $25,000 or more, per Minn. Stat. §§ 177.41 through 177.44. These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN: Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information

G. Audits

Per Minn. Stat. § 16B.98 Subdivision 8, the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the Commissioner of Administration, the state granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant contract agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

H. Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination requirements for all Grantees:

1. The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or Responder for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or Responder for employment is qualified. Minn. Stat. § 363A.02. The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.
2. The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or Responder for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or Responder for

employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Minnesota Rules, part 5000.3500

3. The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

I. Voter Registration Requirement:

The Grantee will comply with Minn. Stat. § 201.162 by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

J. State of Minnesota Grant Contract Agreement Template

You should be aware of the State's standard contract terms and conditions in preparing your response. Template Draft of the State of Minnesota Grant Contract is attached for your reference (Exhibit A). Much of the language reflected in the contract is required by statute. If you take exception to any of the terms, conditions, or language in the contract, you must indicate those exceptions in your response to the RFP (Attachment 4: Exceptions Form); certain exceptions may result in your proposal being disqualified from further review and evaluation. Only those exceptions indicated in your response to the RFP will be available for discussion or negotiation.

ATTACHMENT 1

SAVINGS ESTIMATE GRID	Range for Total Number of Discrete Instances ▼	Low Savings Estimate per Instance Units	Most Likely Savings Estimate per Units	High Savings Estimate per Instance Units
Range of Savings Estimate per Discrete Instance ►		50	75	100
Low Estimate of Total Instances (Item)	1,000	50,000	75,000	100,000
Most Likely Estimate of Total Instances (Item)	2,000	100,000	150,000	200,000
High Estimate of Total Instances (Item)	3,000	150,000	225,000	300,000

Instructions:

Cells D2 - F2: Enter the correct units of measure for your proposed technology, measure or strategy. This ***must*** be a unit of energy (e.g. CCF, kWh, Mbtu, etc.), ***not*** dollars.

Cells D3 - F3: Replace numbers in red (green shading) with low, most likely and high savings-per-instance estimates for proposed technology/measure/strategy.

Cells B4 - B6: Enter the specific item being investigated and quantified in your proposed project. For example, it might be a specific piece of equipment (e.g. condensing boiler, RTU, new control, LED lamps); a strategy or package of strategies (e.g. tune-ups, commissioning, behavioral measures); a building type in which a strategy or package of measures will be applied (e.g. buildings generally, single-family residences, office buildings, motels, multifamily buildings, data centers); or something else.

Cells C4 - C6: Replace numbers in red (yellow shading) with low, most likely and high instance estimates for the item being investigated or quantified in the proposed project.

Cells D5 - F6: Numbers in black will multiply automatically.

Notes:

- For general guidance on what might constitute "low," "medium," and "high" estimates, see the RFP.
- Once the estimates for the proposed project have been entered into the table, the completed table can be copied and pasted into the proposal, but in order to do this the spreadsheet will need to be taken out of protected mode.

ATTACHMENT 2

Exhibit A

Grantee's Duties

A. Project Title: [Enter project title.]

B. Project Goal: [Provide written description of goal.]

C. The Grantee shall do all things necessary[, including partnering with subcontractors,] to complete the following tasks according to the following schedule:

Task Description	Completion Date
Task **Description**	**Completion Date**
1 (FIRST TASK) Conduct Kickoff Meeting and Launch Project	mm/dd/yyyy
Task Objective: Ensure shared understanding between project team and State and allow for any foreseeable issues to be addressed early, avoiding future rework and delays. 1.1 **Conduct kickoff meeting** with the State's Authorized Representative to review the project's relationship with ECO, review a detailed breakdown of project work structure to ensure a shared understanding of the project and allow for any foreseeable issues to be addressed early, avoiding future rework and delays. Share communications your organization is planning on the project, as applicable. 1.2 **Develop a data plan.** Summarize and document the data anticipated to be collected throughout the project in order to investigate the research goal. Incorporate feedback from the State's Authorized Representative to finalize. 1.3 [if applicable, otherwise delete] **Develop building participant agreement**. Incorporate feedback from the State's Authorized Representative to finalize. **Deliverable(s):** • Kick-off meeting presentation slide deck • Final Data plan • [if applicable, otherwise delete] Final building participant agreement	mm/dd/yyyy
2 Description Topic Overview	mm/dd/yyyy
Task Objective: [When applicable, enter task objective, otherwise delete] 2.1 List sub-task detail here 2.2 Lines are Hidden: To ADD more rows hit enter at end of THIS row (outside table edge) 2.3 X - To delete row right click at X then click 'delete cells" and 'delete entire row' Deliverable(s): • [if there are no task-specific deliverables, say "None" so that it is perfectly clear]	mm/dd/yyyy
3 Description Topic Overview	mm/dd/yyyy
Task Objective: [When applicable, enter task objective, otherwise delete 3.1 List sub-task detail here 3.2 3.3 Lines are Hidden: To ADD more rows hit enter at end of THIS row (outside table edge) 3.4 X - To delete row right click at X then click 'delete cells" and 'delete entire row' **Deliverable(s):** • [if there are no task-specific deliverables, say "None" so that it is perfectly clear]	mm/dd/yyyy
4 Description Topic Overview	mm/dd/yyyy
Task Objective: [When applicable, enter task objective, otherwise delete] 4.1 List sub-task detail here 4.2 4.3 Lines are Hidden: To ADD more rows hit enter at end of THIS row (outside table edge) 4.4 X - To delete row right click at X then click 'delete cells" and 'delete entire row'	mm/dd/yyyy

Task	Description	Completion Date
Deliverable(s): • [if there are no task-specific deliverables, say "None" so that it is perfectly clear]		
5	**Description Topic Overview**	mm/dd/yyyy
Task Objective: [When applicable, enter task objective, otherwise delete] 5.1 List sub-task detail here 5.2 5.3 Lines are Hidden: To ADD more rows hit enter at end of THIS row (outside table edge) 5.4 X - To delete row right click at X then click 'delete cells" and 'delete entire row' **Deliverable(s):** • [if there are no task-specific deliverables, say "None" so that it is perfectly clear]		 mm/dd/yyyy
6	**(SECOND-TO-LAST TASK) Produce and Submit Final Deliverables and Disseminate Results**	[Fill in SOW end date or last business day before if SOW end date is non-business day]
Task Objective: Produce documents, data, and other materials in accessible formats that: describe the project process, summarize its outcomes, and outline recommendations; can be published, distributed and otherwise disseminated broadly to ECO stakeholders in Minnesota; and are available publicly for reference and future analysis and use. 6.1 **Submit outline of final report** for review by State's Authorized Representative. 6.2 **Submit the DRAFT final report (or white paper)** for review by State's Authorized Representative. This document must use the standard format guidelines and template provided by the State, which includes a requirement for an executive summary (and/or if applicable Policy Brief) and recommendations specifically geared toward utility Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Program administrators, ECO service providers, and State ECO staff. The final report (or white paper) and all final written deliverables which are likely to be posted on Commerce's website must use plain language, be clear, well-organized and easily understandable, AND meet the State's ADA accessibility standards for written documents. (Note: Grantee shall consult with the project manager for guidance regarding which deliverables beyond the final report (or white paper) must comply with ADA standards.) 6.3 [If applicable include this deliverable, otherwise delete] **Submit documentation for inclusion of researched technology, technology-based approach or strategy in the State's Technical Reference Manual (TRM).** 6.4 **Submit the final data summary.** Make any updates needed to the final data plan submitted in Task 1 as a result of the data that was actually collected as a result of the project, as well as incorporate any information requested by the State's Authorized Representative. 6.5 Incorporate feedback from the State's Authorized Representative and **submit revised draft (or drafts) of the final report (or white paper), and DRAFT executive summary (and/or if**		6.1: [Fill in date at least 6 months before SOW end date] 6.2: [Fill in date at least 5 months before SOW end date] 6.3: [Fill in date at least 4 months before SOW end date] 6.4: [Fill in date at least 4 months before SOW end date] 6.5: [Fill in date at least 3.5

Task	Description	Completion Date
	applicable Policy Brief). The executive summary should be incorporated into the final report (or white paper) unless otherwise directed by the State, but should also be able to be a stand-alone document(s).	months before SOW end date]
6.6	**Submit DRAFT fact sheet(s) and/or infographic(s) and/or post-project article** summarizing key results of study targeting xxxxx.	[Fill in date at least 3 month before SOW end date]
6.7	Incorporate any final feedback from the State's Authorized Representative and **submit FINAL version of final report (or white paper), including executive summary (and/or if applicable the policy brief)** to the State.	[Fill in date at least 2 month before SOW end date]
6.8	Incorporate any feedback from the State's Authorized Representative and **submit FINAL fact sheet(s) and/or infographic(s)) and/or post-project article per previous subtask** suitable for publication or distribution to appropriate stakeholders.	[Fill in date at least 1.5 month before SOW end date]
6.9	[If applicable include this deliverable, otherwise delete] Attend follow-up meeting(s) with State staff and/or others designated by the State in order to present and discuss proposed or potential TRM addition(s) or revision(s).	[Fill in date at least 1.5 months before SOW end date]
6.10	**Conduct one (or more) presentation(s)/webinar(s)** of findings from the study for State staff utility representatives, and/or other stakeholders, the exact details to be determined in consultation with the State. 6.10.1 A DRAFT slide deck should be submitted to the State for review ***at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled webinar*** date. 6.10.2 A FINAL version of the slide deck incorporating feedback from the State's Authorized Representative should be submitted to the State ***at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled webinar date***. The slide deck must include the intended script for each slide in the notes section of that slide, and all slides must meet the State's ADA accessibility standards. The slide deck also must include introductory and wrap-up slides which will be provided by the State's R&D Program Administrator who will open and close the webinar. 6.10.3 The webinar must be recorded. If the webinar is recorded at the grantee's facility, the grantee must provide the State with an archive of the recorded webinar, or a link to the webinar on the grantee's website (or elsewhere) ***at least one (1) week prior to the contract end date***. The webinar recording should ideally include closed captions so that it meets ADA requirements. If the webinar recording does not include closed captions and will be posted on the State's website (as opposed to being linked to from the State's website), a separate written script in Word format must be provided to the State so that it can be posted with the webinar recording to meet ADA requirements.	[Fill in date at least 2 to 3 weeks before SOW end date]
6.11	[If applicable include this deliverable, otherwise delete] **Deliver copy of raw data and/or other project documentation/materials** that was collected as part of this research, provided in an electronic form and format that could be utilized for further analysis by the State if desired. (Note: this data must be supplied in a form that does not reveal personally identifiable information.)	[Fill in date at least one week before end date]

Task	Description	Completion Date
6.12	**Work with the State to publicize and distribute the final report, webinar and other project deliverables, and to perform additional dissemination tasks** as appropriate and by mutual agreement.	[Fill in SOW end date]
Deliverables:	• Final report (or white paper) outline • Fact sheet(s) and/or Infographic(s) and/or Post-Project Article(s) • Final report (or white paper) and executive summary (and/or if applicable the policy brief); • Slide deck and production of live video webinar; • Final data summary • Other? (E.g. TRM documentation and meeting(s); raw data and/or other project documentation/materials; presentation of project results to a Minnesota conference; etc.)	As specified above; otherwise [Fill in SOW end date]
7	**(LAST TASK) Reporting & Invoicing** (submit all reports/invoices via email by the 15th of each month following work completed.	Ongoing
Task Objective: To ensure that the project is completed on time with a successful outcome.		
7.1	Conduct in-person, video or phone project update conferences at least quarterly, or as often as requested, with the Department's Authorized Representative, to apprise the Department on project progress, accomplishments, milestone activities and results to date.	
7.2	Communicate with the Department's Authorized Representative as often as necessary, or at the request of the Department, to discuss issues that require more immediate attention and action, such as schedule deviations, scope of work modifications, concerns related to the project's progress, budget issues or questions, and any other topic that might require a dialogue regarding the best way to proceed.	Ongoing
7.3	On monthly basis submit: 7.3.1 Status reports to the State for the preceding month's work detailing progress made toward completing individual project tasks as well as any deviations from the project schedule. *Use template provided by State.* 7.3.2 Invoices and supporting documentation to the State for the preceding month's work completed within the project scope. *Use invoice template provided by State;* and 7.3.3 Budget overview for the preceding month's expenses and expenses to date using the details in Exhibit B.	xx/15/20xx – xx/15/20xx (mid-month after month of SOW end date)
7.4	Upon completion of the project, submit the final invoice, including supporting documentation.	[Fill-in end date of agreement]

D. Acknowledgements: Unless this requirement is waived in writing by the State, or the State agrees in writing that an alternate method is more appropriate (e.g. the use of only the Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources logo) all reports, summaries, slide shows, presentations, web-based materials related to project results and all promotional and informational materials distributed by or for the Grantee regarding this project shall contain language similar to the following statement:

> "This project was supported in part/whole by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources through the Conservation Applied Research and Development (CARD) program."

Ideally the acknowledgment should also contain the Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources logo.

REVISED ATTACHMENT 3-1: CARD Budget Template

CARD02-20250520 Budget Table

RESPONDER: ______________________________

Project Title: ______________________________

BUDGET TABLE Type of Expense	Hourly Rate	% Time by Staff	Task 1 Description				Task 2 Description				Task 3 Description				Task 4 Description			
RESPONDER LABOR			Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Labor Person 1	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 2	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 3	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 4	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 5	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 6	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 7	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 8	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 9	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 10	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 11	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Responder LABOR Totals:			0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
RESPONDER Travel																		
RESPONDER Equipment																		
RESPONDER Materials & Supplies*																		
License Agreement																		
Incentives																		
XXX																		
XXX																		
XXX																		
RESPONDER SUBTOTALS:				$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
SUBCONTRACTOR(S)			Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Labor Subcontract 1	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 1																		
Equip. Subcontract 1																		
X Subcontract 1																		
Labor Subcontract 2	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 2																		
Equip. Subcontract 2																		
X Subcontract 2																		
Labor Subcontract 3	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 3																		
Equip. Subcontract 3																		
X Subcontract 3																		
Labor Subcontract 4	$/hr	0.0%		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 4																		
Equip. Subcontract 4																		
X Subcontract 4																		
SUBCONTRACTOR(S) SUBTOTALS:			0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
BUDGET SUMMARIES			Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Grant versus Match Subtotals for Individual Tasks & for Project:			0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Totals for Individual Tasks & for Project:			0.0	$0			0.0	$0			0.0	$0			0.0	$0		
% of Total Dollars by Task:				0.0%				0.0%				0.0%				0.0%		
% of Total Hours by Task:				0.0%				0.0%				0.0%				0.0%		

BUDGET TABLE Type of Expense	Task 5 Description				Task 6 Description				Task 7 Description				Task 8 Description			
RESPONDER LABOR	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Labor Person 1		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 2		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 3		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 4		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 5		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 6		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 7		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 8		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 9		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 10		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 11		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Responder LABOR Totals:	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
RESPONDER Travel																
RESPONDER Equipment																
RESPONDER Materials & Supplies*																
License Agreement																
Incentives																
XXX																
XXX																
XXX																
RESPONDER SUBTOTALS:		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
SUBCONTRACTOR(S)	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Labor Subcontract 1		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 1																
Equip. Subcontract 1																
X Subcontract 1																
Labor Subcontract 2		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 2																
Equip. Subcontract 2																
X Subcontract 2																
Labor Subcontract 3		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 3																
Equip. Subcontract 3																
X Subcontract 3																
Labor Subcontract 4		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 4																
Equip. Subcontract 4																
X Subcontract 4																
SUBCONTRACTOR(S) SUBTOTALS:	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
BUDGET SUMMARIES	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Grant versus Match Subtotals for Individual Tasks & for Project:	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Totals for Individual Tasks & for Project:	0.0	$0			0.0	$0			0.0	$0			0.0	$0		
% of Total Dollars by Task:		0.0%				0.0%				0.0%				0.0%		
% of Total Hours by Task:		0.0%				0.0%				0.0%				0.0%		

BUDGET TABLE Type of Expense	Task 9 Description				Task 10 Description				Task 11 Final Deliverables				Task 12 Reporting & Invoicing			
RESPONDER LABOR	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Labor Person 1		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 2		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 3		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 4		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 5		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 6		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 7		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 8		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 9		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 10		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Labor Person 11		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Responder LABOR Totals:	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
RESPONDER Travel																
RESPONDER Equipment																
RESPONDER Materials & Supplies*																
License Agreement																
Incentives																
XXX																
XXX																
XXX																
RESPONDER SUBTOTALS:		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
SUBCONTRACTOR(S)	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Labor Subcontract 1		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 1																
Equip. Subcontract 1																
X Subcontract 1																
Labor Subcontract 2		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 2																
Equip. Subcontract 2																
X Subcontract 2																
Labor Subcontract 3		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 3																
Equip. Subcontract 3																
X Subcontract 3																
Labor Subcontract 4		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0		$0
Travel Subcontract 4																
Equip. Subcontract 4																
X Subcontract 4																
SUBCONTRACTOR(S) SUBTOTALS:	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
BUDGET SUMMARIES	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Grant versus Match Subtotals for Individual Tasks & for Project:	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Totals for Individual Tasks & for Project:	0.0	$0			0.0	$0			0.0	$0			0.0	$0		
% of Total Dollars by Task:		0.0%				0.0%				0.0%				0.0%		
% of Total Hours by Task:		0.0%				0.0%				0.0%				0.0%		

BUDGET TABLE Type of Expense	PROJECT TOTALS			
RESPONDER LABOR	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Labor Person 1	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 2	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 3	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 4	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 5	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 6	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 7	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 8	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 9	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 10	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Labor Person 11	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Responder LABOR Totals:	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
RESPONDER Travel		$0		$0
RESPONDER Equipment		$0		$0
RESPONDER Materials & Supplies*		$0		$0
License Agreement		$0		$0
Incentives		$0		$0
XXX		$0		$0
XXX		$0		$0
XXX		$0		$0
RESPONDER SUBTOTALS:		$0		$0
SUBCONTRACTOR(S)	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Labor Subcontract 1	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Travel Subcontract 1		$0		$0
Equip. Subcontract 1		$0		$0
X Subcontract 1		$0		$0
Labor Subcontract 2	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Travel Subcontract 2		$0		$0
Equip. Subcontract 2		$0		$0
X Subcontract 2		$0		$0
Labor Subcontract 3	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Travel Subcontract 3		$0		$0
Equip. Subcontract 3		$0		$0
X Subcontract 3		$0		$0
Labor Subcontract 4	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Travel Subcontract 4		$0		$0
Equip. Subcontract 4		$0		$0
X Subcontract 4		$0		$0
SUBCONTRACTOR(S) SUBTOTALS:	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
BUDGET SUMMARIES	Grant Hr	Grant $	Match Hr	Match $
Grant versus Match Subtotals for Individual Tasks & for Project:	0.0	$0	0.0	$0
Totals for Individual Tasks & for Project:	0.0	$0		

Crosscheck Percent Calculations

% Time by Staff:	0.0%
% of Total Dollars by Task:	0.0%
% of Total Hours by Task:	0.0%

Instructions (more detailed instructions for the budget can be found in the RFP)

ADD the name of the Responder and the title of the proposed project to the top of the spreadsheet.

RENAME the spreadsheet to include **YOUR NAME** at the beginning of the file name. For example, BestEnergyServ_CARD02-20250520_BudgetTable.xls or BES_CARD02-20250520_BudgetTable.xls

Column B: Identify types of expense for project by Responder and subcontractor(s). Items in red intended for instructional or informational purposes and should be replaced with actual expense types relevant to your proposal.

Column C: Indicate hourly rate for all personnel working on project.

Column D - Automatically calculates percent of total hours each staff person committed to project based on the number of hours you enter for that person.

Columns E, G, I, K, M, O, Q, S, U, W, Y, AA, AC, AE, AG, AI, AM, AO, AQ, AS, AU, AW, AY: Enter project hours (grant or match) by Task # for personnel identified in Column **B**, separating the amount requested in the grant proposal from the amount supplied through matching funds, if applicable.

Columns F, H, J, L, N, P, R, T, V, X, Z, AB, AD, AF, AH, AJ, AN, AP, AR, AT, AV, AX, AZ: Automatically calculates dollar amounts for personnel by Task#. Enter project costs for other expense types by Task #, separating the amount requested in the grant proposal from the amount supplied through matching funds, if applicable.

Rows 31 & 50 (dark orange and dark green shaded rows): Automatically subtotals the Responder (Row 31) and the subcontractor (Row 50) costs by task.

Row 53 (4th row from bottom): Automatically subtotals the total hours and dollars requested from the grant and the total hours and dollars of matching funds for each task (Columns E - AZ), and for the grant overall (Columns BA - BD).

Row 54 (3rd row from bottom): Automatically totals hours and dollars (grant request plus match) for each individual task (Columns E - AZ), and for the project overall (Columns BA - BD).

Row 55 (2nd row from bottom): Automatically calculates the % of total project dollars by task.

Row 56 (bottom) row: Automatically calculates the % of total project hours by task.

NOTES:

* If your project includes expenses for cellular or data services related to data collection at test sites, please put those costs under the "Materials and Supplies" category, not the "Equipment" category.

This spreadsheet is in protected mode by default to protect the formulas. It can be taken out of protected mode if needed (e.g. if you want to add or delete columns or rows).

Additional columns or rows can be added or deleted as needed (e.g. for additional tasks you are proposing, or for additional personnel or expense types), but formulas will need to be revised accordingly.

This table is set up based on estimating hours for personnel and dollar amounts for other expense; dollar amounts for personnel calculate automatically. The Responder may use dollar amounts for personnel if preferred, but then **must create a formula to calculate** the number of hours that dollar amount represents for each staff person based on their $/hr rate.

An example budget is displayed on the second tab of this spreadsheet

A copy of your Excel spreadsheet budget must be submitted with your proposal or the proposal will not be considered complete.

ATTACHMENT 4: Exceptions to Terms and Conditions Form

INSTRUCTIONS:
Responders must explicitly list all exceptions to State terms and conditions found in the sample contract, if any. Reference the actual number of the State's term and condition and page number for which an exception(s) is being taken. If no exceptions exist, state "NONE" specifically on the form below. Whether or not exceptions are taken, the Responder must sign and date this form and submit it as part of their Proposal. (*Add additional pages if necessary*.)

Responder Name:	
Term & Condition Number/Provision	**Explanation of Exception**

By signing this form, I acknowledge that the above named Responder accepts, without qualification, all terms and conditions stated in this RFP (including the sample contract) except those clearly outlined as exceptions above.

____________________ Signature
____________________ Title
____________________ Date

ATTACHMENT 5: Conflict of Interest Declaration

Minnesota state agencies **must** work to deliberately avoid actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest related to grant-making at both the individual and organizational levels. When a conflict of interest concerning state grant-making exists, transparency shall be the guiding principle in addressing it.

All actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest **must** be declared.

An **actual** conflict of interest occurs when a decision or action would be compromised without taking appropriate action to eliminate the conflict, such as when:

- A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the State due to competing duties or loyalties;
- A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties;
- A grantee or potential grantee has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors.

A **potential** conflict of interest is where such a situation as described above could arise in the future.

A **perceived** conflict of interest is any situation in which a reasonable third party would conclude that conflicting duties or loyalties exist.

For further information, refer to: Minn. Stat. 43A.38 (Code of Ethics for Employees in the Executive Branch, Minn. Stat. 10A.07 (Conflicts of Interest), Minn. Stat. 15.43 (Acceptance of Advantage by State Employee; Penalty), Minn. Stat. 16C.04 (Ethical Practices and Conflict of Interest), and Minn. Stat. 471.87 (Public Officers, Interest in Contract; Penalty).

Responder's Company/Organization Name:____

☐ There are no entities with which the above-named firm has a relationship that ***creates, or appears to create,*** a conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this request for proposals.

☐ The following is a list of entities with which the above-named firm has relationships that ***create, or appear to create***, a conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this request for proposals. For each entity listed below you must discuss the actual, potential or perceived conflict in a separate attachment.

No.	Name of Entity	Relationship
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Authorized Representative (Please Print):________________________________

Authorized Representative Signature:___________________________________ Date: _______________