

BIDDER QUESTIONS FOR CEE'S HPW MARKET RESEARCH RFP

Data collection and sampling

1. *Does MN CEE have sample size or other requirements for any data collection for this study, such as 90/10 confidence/precision for tracking MPIs?*

For particular activities (like the installer survey), it would be ideal to have 90/10 confidence/precision, but we recognize this is not possible for activities with smaller target populations. 90/10 confidence/precision is not expected for data collection that involves interviews due to small sample sizes (e.g. manufacturers), even if those inform MPIs. We don't have specific sample size requirements and each market actor has different population sizes, however we would want a reasonable sample for each market actor type so that we can deduce reasonable conclusions.

2. *Will CEE facilitate introductions to manufacturers, builders, installers, or industry associations to support recruitment?*

We are able to do warm handoffs for some entities (e.g. manufacturers we are working with). However, in other cases, we cannot do that, or it may be more appropriate for us not to do a handoff so as not to bias information (e.g. installers).

3. *What contact information is included on the lists you have available? Approximately what percentage include an email address? Phone number?*

We have robust contact information for ~460 installers, which is inclusive of business details (e.g. website, address) and direct contact info. We have at least one phone number available for almost all installer contacts and at least one email available for about 2/3 of them.

We have much shorter lists available for other market actors (i.e. less than 50 contacts per market actor). We have business details (e.g. website, address) for most of these entities and some form of direct contact info (email or phone) for about 1/3 of manufacturers, 3/4 of builders, and a handful of distributors. We may be able to point the contractor to other organizations or contacts for list building, but we would look to the contractor for building out each of these samples more fully.

4. *Do you have any contact information for market share experts that you can share?*

We can offer several suggestions, though we would expect the subcontractor to also research and inform appropriate market share experts.

5. How many unique companies are included in the small list of manufacturer contacts?

We have a list of 20-30 manufacturers that sell into MN. We do not have contacts for all of these, but have some.

6. What job titles are included in the contact lists you have for manufacturers, installers, builders, and distributors?

We generally do not have job titles available for any of our contacts across market actors.

Scope and definitions

7. How does CEE define “High-Performance Windows (HPW)” for this study?

For the purposes of this study and WWH initiative efforts, we define high-performance windows as those with a U-Factor at or below 0.22, which is typically equivalent to ENERGY STAR Northern Climate Zone Prescriptive windows and usually achieved using triple-pane glazing.

8. What is MN CEE's definition of incremental cost for HPWs? Please specify the comparison/baseline technologies (including any relevant installation details) against which HPW incremental costs should be compared.

Incremental cost is the added cost to go from a “business as usual” new double pane window to a triple-pane window. A “Business as usual” double pane is a code minimum new construction window, most typically a double pane window with argon gas, and one low-emissivity coating (such as “LoE-272 or LoE-366”). We can talk about other specs and comparison points with the selected contractor.

9. Does the research include commercial windows also or residential only? What about residential-style windows that are installed on a commercial property, e.g., a dentist's office or a small office building? Which building types is MN CEE interested in learning about as part of this study (strictly single family homes, also multifamily buildings, etc.)? What building types must be included in new construction and retrofit?

At this time, we are interested in all residential style windows in Minnesota, regardless of building type. This includes both new construction and retrofit applications. Primarily this will entail single-family homes, but we are interested in learning about both single- and multifamily building types (our multifamily focus is mainly on 1-3 story homes, but if possible, we have interest in residential windows sold into light commercial or “commercial multifamily” of 4+ stories).

10. *Given the emphasis on new construction, does CEE have specific research questions it wants addressed or hypotheses CEE is interested in testing?*

We have a number of MPI-related research questions outlined around market actor awareness, opinions, and use of HPW. We are interested to see if these have changed at all from our initial market characterization report, though some information collected will be baseline data. We also have research questions around the percentage of HPW in the current building stock, in new home sales, and in window replacement/retrofit, and are interested in seeing how those percentages compare.

11. *Which specific MPIs is MN CEE interested in tracking for this report? Are there required MPIs that must be updated as part of this work?*

A full table of MPIs to address will be provided to the selected contractor. Standard MPIs are typically around market awareness, opinions, promotion of the technology, and best practices.

12. *Are there prior State of the Market reports, MPI benchmarks, or historical data that we should align with?*

This would be the first full State of the Market report, however there is a Market Characterization report and a Market Insights report on windows contractors that would be a part of a document review. CEE will provide a full table of MPIs to be addressed and their historic data from past research efforts as appropriate.

Reporting

13. *Would you like us to provide resumes (of our key staff or of everyone proposed), and if so, would in an appendix be acceptable?*

You are welcome to provide resumes of key staff in an appendix, but it is not required.

14. *Who is the primary audience for the public State of the Market report?*

The State of the Market report is used in a variety of ways with different audiences:

- Evaluating our impact; audience: our third-party evaluator, the State, and our funding utilities and stakeholders
- Providing key market insights to our team to inform internal strategy, audience; internal windows team
- Providing the market with key insights, audience; market actors such as manufacturers, distributors, installers

Market share

15. *Should market share be estimated by units sold, revenue, shipments, or another metric?*

Market share estimates should be based on units sold.

16. *Manufacturers may be unwilling to divulge sales, market share, and/or pricing information that will end up in a public report, even if the information is de-identified in the report and data are treated as confidential. Is it possible to provide market share estimates and potentially incremental cost estimates in a non-public deliverable to MN CEE? Is manufacturer-level reporting intended to be public, or limited to the confidential memo?*

The manufacturer-level reporting is not intended to be public as we know this is sensitive data. It will not be featured on our website like the State of the Market. The manufacturer-level memo will, however, likely need to be shared with our third-party evaluator to verify our savings calculations.

17. *Are there expectations for specific formats beyond the report and memo?*

We would like a presentation to our team, so slides would be anticipated and useful. We may also elect to use these slides with external audiences.

18. *What level of precision is expected for manufacturer-level market share estimates? Does CEE have existing sales, shipment, or program participation data that can support triangulation?*

We recognize this is a challenging endeavor and that high levels of precision may not be possible. We ultimately need defensible estimates that can be used to calculate statewide sales data. At this time, we do not have existing sales data we can provide; however, we do have new construction installation data, which accounts for a large portion of the market, as well as some coarse shipment data by climate zone.

Contract

19. *Would CEE please confirm that it intends to award a Time and Materials (T&M) contract as a result of this solicitation?*

CEE is open to both T&M with a not-to-exceed amount, and deliverable-based contracting; whatever would be preferable for the contractor.

20. *Would CEE please confirm that the award contemplated by the Windows Market Research RFP will be a contract for the procurement of goods or services as defined in 2 CFR § 200.331(b)(1)-(5)? Further,*

would CEE confirm that the selected bidder will not be deemed to be a Subrecipient as defined in 2 CFR § 200.331(a)(1)-(5)?

N/A as this is not a federally-funded project.

Timeline and budget

21. Is the March–December 2026 timeline fixed, and are there required interim deliverables?

There is a bit of wiggle room at the very end of the contract, but there are two main considerations for this timeline:

1. Market actors are notoriously challenging to get ahold of, and we want to make sure we are avoiding their busiest seasons. For windows contractors for example, this is the summer months, so we want to launch ahead of the summer.
2. We are trying to stagger multiple research efforts across our portfolio; all of which need to be complete by March 2027 for reporting.

We anticipate a presentation to our team before reporting to align on conclusions, recommendations, etc. It may be helpful to have this after each market actor, or at the end, depending on staggering of data collection and preferences of the contractor.

1. What is the anticipated budget range for this project? Are optional market actor research tasks expected to be priced separately?

We would prefer not to provide a budget estimate but rather see what methodologies and budgets firms propose. If there are more or less expensive methodologies that you would feel comfortable proposing to accomplish the research goals, we would welcome a menu of options or budget ranges for different approaches. Please do price optional market actor research tasks separately.