

CEE Response to ASHP RFP Bidder Questions

TASK SPECIFIC

Task 2A: Contractor survey

1. *Does the list of 1800 contractors that could be provided to vendors include only residential contractors or residential and commercial contractors both? If it is a mixed list, what is the approximate proportion of res contractors within that 1800? What contact information (phone, email, address, etc.) do you have for this group?*

The list of contractors that would be provided to vendors is derived from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry's list of contractors with mechanical bonds, which includes name, address, phone number, and email. The list includes both residential and commercial contractors, but it does not distinguish between the two types. When it was used for 2024 survey efforts, 110 respondents completed or partially completed the survey, and 91 of these (83%) were primarily residential contractors. We will be launching this survey in conjunction with the commercial contractor survey, so participants will self-select which sector they work on most often to get the appropriate question set.

2. *Will contact information for previous contractor study participants be provided so they are not sampled again for the 2026 study?*

Currently, we are anticipating past participants would still be eligible for this survey. The previous survey will have been conducted two years prior, and we imagine some contractors will have shifted thoughts and opinions. We are open to discussions around this.

3. *For the contractor survey, should bidders assume the full contractor list (approximately 1,800 contractors based on the 2024 list) will be provided to the selected contractor and will define the sample frame, regardless of current ASHP activity level or geographic focus?*

This is correct.

Task 2B: Preferred Contractor Network interviews

1. *What contact methods (phone, email, address, etc.) do you have for this group?*

We have name, email, and at least one phone number for all 75 PCN contractors.

Task 2C: Customer survey

1. *Which utility partners will provide customer lists and in what format? Do you have an estimate for the size of that list (e.g. 600 customers; 800? 1200?)*

We plan to work in partnership with utilities on this task. Some utilities will share contact lists for us to use, and others prefer to send the survey themselves.

Outreach with utilities is ongoing and participation by each utility has not yet been confirmed, so we cannot provide specific estimates of contacts.

Task 2D: Homeowner survey

1. *Will CEE provide the sample frame and contact list, or should bidders assume the selected contractor will be responsible for purchasing a sample for this research (e.g., panel or list-based)?*

For this task, the vendor will be responsible for the sample frame.

2. *For the general household survey, does CEE have a panel provider they have worked with before and would recommend?*

No, we do not. The previous homeowner work was conducted by BIT and they procured the panel responses.

3. *For the general household survey, does CEE have a previous survey to provide for consistency of MPI tracking, or should the vendor plan for development of a new pulse survey for this task?*

We will have some questions that we will want to ask the same way, however, the previous survey was more around message testing and we wouldn't require that level of effort or length of survey this time around.

Task 2E: Manufacturer and distributor interviews

1. *Does CEE have contact information for any manufacturers or distributors or should we plan on developing the entire sample?*

We have contact information for a decent portion of the market that we can provide.

- 2. Are there any eligibility criteria CEE would like bidders to apply when defining the sample frame (e.g., current ASHP sales presence in Minnesota, involvement in centrally ducted dual-fuel ASHP systems, prior engagement with CEE initiatives, or geographic coverage)?*

We anticipate base eligibility criteria being that contractors are present in MN, but additional criteria for sample development can be discussed further with the selected contractor.

- 3. Will contact information for previous distributor and manufacturer study participants be provided so they are not sampled again for the 2026 study?*

We did not include manufacturers in the previous State of the Market Report, and given the small pool of distributors operating in Minnesota, it would not be practical to exclude past participants. Additionally, we would anticipate changes to the businesses that we would want to capture, so we would want similar businesses included in year-over-year studies.

SAMPLING, DATA COLLECTION, AND MPIS

- 1. What are the expected sample sizes or target completes for contractor, customer, and homeowner surveys?*

For particular activities (like the contractor and customer surveys), it would be ideal to have 90/10 confidence/precision, but we recognize this is not possible for activities with smaller target populations. We don't have specific sample size requirements for the three market actors mentioned, but our last efforts garnered about 100 contractors, 700 customers, and 1400 homeowners in MN. Each group has different population sizes; however, we would want a reasonable sample for each market actor type so that we can deduce reasonable conclusions.

- 2. Are there any specific quota cells to fill within audiences? Rural vs Urban, Zip Codes, Age of home, Income, etc.?*

No specific quotas for customers or contractors as those lists will be preset. For homeowners, it would be great to ensure geographic and income representation.

- 3. Are incentives expected or allowed for contractors, customers, homeowners, manufacturers, or distributors? Do you anticipate providing incentives to improve response rates for a) the contractor survey and b) manufacturer and distributor interviews? We assume that*

appropriate incentives should be included in the budget for the Preferred Contractor Network interviews, customer survey, and homeowner survey. If incentives were used in the past, please could you provide the incentive amounts that were used?

Incentives were provided to contractor (\$50 Target or Amazon gift card), customer (\$20-\$25 Target or Amazon gift card), and homeowner (built into the panel cost) respondents in 2024 survey efforts. Manufacturers were not included in the previous State of the Market Report, and distributors were included more informally, so incentives were not provided; we have historically offered these actors incentives amounts ranging from \$50-\$200 depending on the time commitment and anticipate doing the same for this research.

- 4. Would CEE be able to provide the list of ASHP MPIs to prospective bidders? What prior MPI measures must remain unchanged for trend tracking?*

Standard MPIs are typically around market awareness, opinions, promotion of the technology, and best practices. Previous MPIs for ASHPs are available to review in our [ASHP Energy Savings and Market Evaluation Plan](#); an updated table of MPIs to address will be provided to the selected contractor.

- 5. Are there any alternative language needs in the survey process?*

No alternative language needs are necessary for the survey process.

ANALYSIS AND CROSS TABS

- 1. Approximately how many cross tabs can be expected as part of the Analysis Process?*

For the **customer survey (Task 2C)**, we will want to allot for at least 6 crosstabs: by year, by geography, by utility, by fuel type, by income, and by whether their contractor engaged with the ASHP Collaborative or not. Not all of these will need to be included in the final report for all items, but we found each of them to have useful trends for certain items in the past report.

For the **contractor survey (Task 2A)**, we will want at least 3 crosstabs: by geography, by interaction with the ASHP Collaborative, by experience.

For the **homeowner survey (Task 2D)**, we will want at least 3 crosstabs: by geography, by income, and another TBD.

2. *Does CEE want/require significance testing between past and new work on comparable items?*

Possibly. This is not a requirement but could be interesting if budget allows.

3. *Are there preferred statistical testing standards for cross tabs?*

No; depending on the method and ultimate sample size, the standards may vary.

4. *Should the analysis focus exclusively on Minnesota-specific market dynamics, or include comparisons to or insights from other regions?*

Although we imagine there could be value in comparing or contextualizing Minnesota results to other Midwestern or cold-climate regions, the primary goal of this research is to understand recent changes in the ASHP market in Minnesota.

5. *Does CEE expect the study to include quantitative estimates of market size, adoption, or segmentation, or should the effort focus primarily on qualitative insights from market actors?*

We are always looking at ways to corroborate market size and share, but that is not the focus for this study. We expect this to be a mixed-method study, with surveys yielding more quantitative insights and interviews yielding more qualitative insights. These will be focused more on our MPIs rather than market estimations, though there will be a few things that we would like better estimates for that will inform savings calculations (e.g. fuel type in homes, typical contractor set points, etc.) Although we do not anticipate statistical significance from quantitative results, we do expect them to be practically significant and useful for data-driven decision-making.

REPORTING

1. *What design support, if any, will CEE provide for the reports in Task 3?*

CEE will provide back-end marketing and communications support to help finalize all Task 3 reports. The subcontractor will be provided with a branded template for both the State of the Market and utility-specific reports and should follow established visual guidelines, including use of set styles, fonts, color palette, and overall layout. The State of the Market Report will undergo copy editing for clarity, consistency, and alignment with brand standards, as well as final visual formatting. Some light copyediting and formatting will be provided for the utility-specific reports.

2. *What level of design/layout is expected for the public-facing final report?*

The subcontractor will be provided with a branded template to use when developing the State of the Market Report, ensuring alignment with our visual identity from the outset. CEE's team will then apply final design touches and formatting to prepare the document for distribution.

3. *Are there accessibility or branding requirements for final deliverables?*

Yes, there are both branding and accessibility expectations for the final deliverables.

From a branding perspective, the subcontractor will be provided with a branded template and should follow established visual guidelines, including use of set styles, fonts, color palette, and overall layout. This ensures consistency with CEE's visual identity. CEE's marketing and communications team will conduct a final review of all deliverables and apply any necessary adjustments to ensure full alignment before distribution.

From an accessibility standpoint, all documents should follow basic accessibility best practices, including following the clear heading structure and alt text for images. CEE will conduct a final accessibility check as part of the review process.

4. *Task 3B mentions three reports for individual utilities and one report compiling and comparing results between multiple utilities. Is the report comparing between multiple utilities the same as the State of the Market report for Task 3A or separate (i.e., will the State of the Market report include crosstabs by utility?)*

The report comparing multiple utilities is a separate deliverable from the State of the Market Report.

5. *How many utility-specific reports should be assumed for pricing?*

We anticipate four utility-specific reports (three reports for individual utilities and one report comparing results across three utilities) will be needed, although the final number may change depending on how many utilities are willing to offer our survey this year. Any change in the number of reports requested will be discussed with the selected vendor before being agreed to.

As additional context, the utility-specific reports are intended to be summary reports of the larger State of the Market Report focused on each utility's

individual customer base. In the past, these reports have been 15-20 pages and primarily entailed data tables and light commentary about the utility's specific respondent distribution, system characteristics, heat pump installation decisions and processes, heat pump impacts, and customer heat pump experience. Crucially, these reports were developed from a base template that required only minor adjustments for utility individualization, making each report's development quick and efficient.

6. *Are there any alternative language needs in the reporting process?*

No alternative language needs are necessary for either the State of the Market or utility reports.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMIN

1. *Is it accurate that the ASHP State of the Market Report was previously developed in-house, with the support of contracted researchers? Is this the first time that CEE is hiring a contractor to manage and conduct this work?*

The prior ASHP State of the Market Report was primarily conducted in-house, although analysis of the contractor and customer survey results were subbed out to a research firm. Given the success of this approach, we are interested in comparing two budget options:

1. The contractor conducts data collection, analysis, and reporting for all market actors (Tasks 2A-E)

2. The contractor conducts **interview** data collection (Tasks 2B&E) and CEE staff conduct **survey** data collection or subcontract those tasks directly with a survey house/specialized firm (Tasks 2A, 2C, and 2D). Per this approach, the contractor would review the survey instruments, but survey programming, outreach, and likely analysis would be managed by CEE staff or another subcontractor, with raw data or analysis outputs being provided to the contractor for incorporation in reporting alongside interview data.

2. *If CEE conducts the primary data collection for surveys, will CEE provide the raw data to the contractor for analysis? Or does CEE*

anticipate conducting the analysis and sharing a summary with the contractor?

If CEE conducts primary data collection for surveys, raw survey data will be provided to the contractor for incorporation in analysis and reporting. However, we would also consider subcontracting directly with another survey specialist vendor for survey completion and analysis and could share that analysis with the contractor for report writing.

3. Will CEE provide the prior State of the Market report and utility reports before proposal submission?

The prior ASHP State of the Market Report is available on our [website](#). Given the sensitivity of customer information and our partner relationships, prior utility reports will not be shared before proposal submission, but will be made available to the selected contractor.

4. Section 7.1 of the Master Contract specifies a \$2,000,000 Cyber Liability insurance requirement. Would CEE consider a waiver of this requirement? It is a high cost for a small business to incur.

If selected to move forward, insurance requirements can be negotiated.

BUDGET

1. Does CEE have a target budget range or budget cap for this project to help align scope and level of effort?

We would prefer not to provide a budget range or cap 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 each market actor research task separately.** Additionally, to manage budget constraints CEE is considering conducting portions of the survey work in-house or directly contracting with subs and providing research analysis back to primary vendor for inclusion in the final report.

TIMELINE

1. Could CEE please consider extending the RFP deadline from 5/18 to 5/25? The question responses will influence our decision to bid, but

would not be received until 5/6 which provides only 8 days to develop a proposal.

With 5/25 being a holiday, we were hoping to have the RFP due before the long weekend, but we recognize responses take considerable time, and **we could extend until 5/27**. However, we are not able to flex our back-end timelines to meet our regulatory deadlines, so an extra week here means one less week at another point. **It will be imperative to have an expedient contracting process.**