

# MEMO

## CONSULTANT TEAM

**TO:** Energy Efficiency Council  
**FROM:** EEC Consultant Team & Office of Energy Resources  
**DATE:** August 15, 2024  
**RE:** Council Budget Allocation



### SUMMARY

The Consultant Team (C-Team) and the Office of Energy Resources provide the following write-ups and cost estimates for items included in the Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council’s (herein “the Council” or “Energy Efficiency Council”) 2025 budget proposal. The table below summarizes the Energy Efficiency Council’s (EEC) proposed budget for each category, with a full description of what each item is, how its costs were estimated, and why it is within the Council’s statutory authority included in the remainder of the memo.

Budget Category	Page	2025 Proposed Budget
Consultant Services	2	\$717,025
Legal Services	3	\$75,000
Annual Report and Misc. Printing & Distribution	4	\$500
Council Travel and Education & Advancement	5	\$900
Public Education <sup>1</sup>	6	\$166,250
Energy Expo Sponsorship	8	\$20,000
EEC Website	9	\$500
Market Potential Study	10	TBD

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<sup>1</sup> This category includes two items – the EE & Climate Public Awareness Campaign and the URI Cooperative Extension Proposal.

## CONSULTANT SERVICES

### DESCRIPTION

The Council is comprised of fifteen appointed members that represent the interests of various constituencies in the State of Rhode Island including homeowners, renters, large and small businesses, municipalities, and nonprofits. To fulfill its legislated obligations and responsibilities, the Council issues competitive procurements for consultant services. Such consultants provide the Council with relevant subject-matter expertise, technical analysis, regulatory support, and administrative assistance.

The incumbent EEC Consultants organize their work to support the Council in its legislated responsibilities within the following task areas:

- Energy Efficiency Program Planning and Implementation Oversight
- System Reliability Procurement
- Regulatory Proceedings
- Council Sponsored Meetings and Materials
- Research, Analysis, and Other Council Support
- Administrative

### BUDGET PROPOSAL

In determining the proposed budget for Consultant services, the Council reviewed annual spending over the past couple of years, forecasted spending through the end of the current year, and considered factors that went into previously approved consultant services budgets and scopes of work. The Council approved a budget of \$817,500 for work in 2024, which represented a \$100,000 increase over the Council's approved budget for consultant services in 2023. The primary driver of this increase was expected costs associated with consultant team's support of OER's procurement process for a new program administrator. While this process is ongoing and some of these costs have materialized, the Consultant Team does not expect at this time that it will need the same incremental budget to support any future support. Rather, the Consultant Team expects that it would likely be able to support any additional work in this area within its previously approved budget of \$717,500.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The following statute(s) related to the Council's purposes, powers, and/or duties are included as reference for why the Council feels this budget item is within its purview.

- According to [§ 42-140.1-6](#) (b), the Council has the powers *"To adopt [and] amend bylaws, to establish committees, to elect and/or appoint officers and agents, and to engage consultants and professional services as necessary and appropriate to fulfill its purposes."*

## LEGAL SERVICES

### DESCRIPTION

In order to fulfil the Council's statutory responsibilities, legal representation is required in order to fully participate in all relevant Public Utilities Commission docket proceedings. Legal services are also required to advise the Council on Council Business, procurements, and other matters as deemed appropriate to fulfill the Council's statutory obligations.

### BUDGET PROPOSAL

The Council's budget proposal is based on Council legal spend actuals for the previous two calendar years. The Council's 2022's legal budget expense was \$66,849.67 and 2023's legal budget expense was \$62,209.42. Legal expenses and services can vary year-to-year based on a number of factors and Council activities, and the number and length of docket hearings and proceedings in a year.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The following statute(s) related to the Council's purposes, powers, and/or duties are included as reference for why the Council feels this budget item is within its purview.

- According to [§ 42-140.1-5](#) (d), The Council shall have the power to *“Participate in proceedings of the public utilities commission that pertain to the purposes of the council, including but not limited to proceedings regarding least-cost procurement as provided for in § 39-1-27.7.”*
- According to [§ 42-140.1-5](#) (g), The Council shall have the power to *“Consider such other matters as it may deem appropriate to the fulfillment of its purposes, and may advise the governor, the general assembly, other parties, and the public with regard to matters pertaining to its purposes and duties, which advice may include findings and recommendations.*
- According to [§ 42-140.1-6](#) (b), In order to effectuate its power and duties, the Council has the power to *“Adopt amend bylaws, to establish committees, to elect and/or appoint officers and agents, and to engage consultants and professional services as necessary and appropriate to fulfill its purposes.”*

## ANNUAL REPORT AND MISCELLANEOUS PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION

### DESCRIPTION

At the June meeting, the Council decided not to print full copies of the Annual Report in 2025. Instead, it directed the C-Team to design and print a high-level pamphlet like the City of Providence's Climate Justice Plan Executive Summary. The Education Committee also decided not to print full copies in 2024.

### BUDGET PROPOSAL

Based on a quote from the printer used in 2023, a \$500 allocation is recommended to cover the printing of around 300 pamphlets. This would reduce the printing budget by \$2,500.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The following statute related to the Council's purposes, powers, and/or duties are included as reference for why the Council feels this budget item is within its purview.

- According to [§ 42-140.1-5](#) (c), the Council has the power to: *"Submit to the joint committee on energy an annual report on/or before April 15 of each year, commencing in 2008, regarding the activities of the council, its assessment of energy issues, the status of system reliability, energy efficiency and conservation procurement and its recommendations regarding any improvements which might be necessary or desirable."*

## COUNCIL TRAVEL AND EDUCATION AND ADVANCEMENT

### DESCRIPTION

This category combines two budget items:

- 1) **Council Travel** – This item covers stipends available to Councilors for travel to and from monthly meetings, which they are required to attend in person.
- 2) **Councilor Learning, Education, and Advancement Discussion (LEAD) Sessions** – LEAD Sessions are public meetings held outside of monthly Council meetings, where Councilors can dive deeper into learning and discussion on key topics that warrant additional attention. This item covers the logistical costs of organizing two LEAD Sessions per year, including space rental and catering service.

### BUDGET PROPOSAL

The draft 2025 budget proposes to maintain the same level of funding for this category as in 2022-2024, which is an allocation of \$900 for both items. In these years, about \$350-\$400 has been spent from this category, which primarily consists of LEAD Session expenses. While Councilors do not typically take advantage of the travel stipends, it is advisable to reserve a small amount for this option in case that changes.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The following statutes related to the Council's purposes, powers, and/or duties are included as reference for why the Council feels this budget item is within its purview.

- In accordance with [§ 42-140.1-4](#) (e), *“the members of the council shall not be compensated for their service but shall be reimbursed for their actual expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties. The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to the executive secretary/executive director.”*
- In accordance with [§ 42-140.1-3](#) (b), the Council's purposes include: *“(1) Evaluate and make recommendations, including, but not limited to, plans and programs, with regard to the optimization of energy efficiency, energy conservation, energy resource development; and the development of a plan for least-cost procurement for Rhode Island; and (2) Provide consistent, comprehensive, informed and publicly accountable stake-holder involvement in energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resource management; and (3) Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programs to achieve energy efficiency, energy conservation, and diversification of energy resources.”*

## PUBLIC EDUCATION - EE & CLIMATE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

### DESCRIPTION

As the least cost clean energy resource, energy efficiency plays a foundational role in addressing climate change and achieving Rhode Island's clean energy goals. It is, therefore, critical that the public understand the value of efficiency and take action to participate in available programs.

In 2024, the Council solicited professional services to develop and deliver a public awareness campaign that promotes the benefits of energy efficiency in the context of climate mitigation. A project team consisting of the selected vendor, the C-Team, OER and two Council members meets biweekly. The EEC Education Committee also provides ongoing input during its monthly meetings. The campaign is currently on track to launch in September and run through December. The Council could choose to continue this work in 2025 to extend the campaign's duration and impact.

Activities could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Evaluate key performance indicators, assess tactics to date, and adapt strategy as needed
- Continue implementation of comprehensive marketing campaign, potentially expanding into additional media platforms
- Integrate campaign with other relevant Council sponsored initiatives (e.g. Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice)

### BUDGET PROPOSAL

The EEC Education Committee has recommended a 2025 budget allocation of \$75,000 for this effort. By comparison, the 2024 allocation was \$85,000. This recommendation assumes a slightly lower level of effort on upfront strategy (e.g. market research, audience identification, message development) since that work will have been largely completed in 2024.

The Council would have the option to renew the current contract with PivotPath for up to two additional one-year periods or go out to bid to potentially select a new vendor for the continuation of this campaign. Extending the current contract would minimize gaps in implementation, allowing seamless continuation of this initiative.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The following statute related to the Council's purposes, powers, and/or duties are included as reference for why the Council feels this budget item is within its purview.

- In accordance with [§ 42-140.1-3](#) (b)(4), one of the Council's purposes is to *"Promote public understanding of energy issues and of ways in which energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resource diversification and management can be effectuated."*

## PUBLIC EDUCATION - URI COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROPOSAL

### DESCRIPTION

The Council is currently contracted with the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI CE) for the implementation of 2024 public events to promote energy efficiency, including the [Plugged Into Energy Research \(PIER\) Lecture Series](#) and the [Health Equity Zone \(HEZ\) Learning Community Events](#). URI's work is guided and overseen by the EEC Education Committee.

URI CE has submitted a [Public Education Event Planning & Outreach Proposal](#) for 2025, consisting of an expanded scope that would build on current work aimed at making energy efficiency more accessible to historically underserved segments. Despite increased attention and conversation around energy equity, Rhode Island's income eligible efficiency programs continue to suffer from nonparticipation due to a plethora of factors, such as pre-weatherization barriers and access issues. As an initial action, URI proposes to establish an *"Efficient Housing for All" Community of Practice* to function as a forum for issue identification and analysis, idea exchange, and solutions related to nonparticipation in income eligible efficiency programs. Additional tasks described in the proposal would build on this foundation.

### BUDGET PROPOSAL

The total proposal cost is \$91,250, with the following amounts for each task:

#### **Task 1 (\$70,250) – Community of Practice**

- Convene & facilitate *"Efficient Housing for All" Community of Practice (CoP)*
- Design & deploy educational training tool informed by CoP
- Develop pilot Energy Coach Program targeting income eligible customers
- Coordinate with related efforts & entities to maximize collective impact

#### **Task 2 (\$21,000) – Energy Lecture Series**

- Plan, host & evaluate three fall lectures themed around *"Efficiency for All"*
- Provide venue for information sharing & discussion among academic community, industry professionals & public

Please see the complete proposal for additional detail.

The current 2024 agreement with URI CE is a one-year extension of the original contract for work conducted in 2023. The Council would have the option to renew the current contract with URI CE for one additional one-year period or go out to bid to potentially select a new vendor for the continuation of this work. Extending the current contract would minimize gaps in implementation, allowing seamless continuation of this initiative.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The following statute(s) related to the Council's purposes, powers, and/or duties are included as reference for why the Council feels this budget item is within its purview.

- In accordance with [§ 42-140.1-3 \(b\)\(4\)](#), one of the Council's purposes is to *"Promote public understanding of energy issues and of ways in which energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resource diversification and management can be effectuated."*

## ENERGY EXPO SPONSORSHIP

### DESCRIPTION

In order to promote public understanding of energy issues and of ways in which energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resource diversification and management can be effectuated, the Energy Efficiency Council has been a partner for the Rhode Island Builders Association's annual Home Show and Energy Expo since 2014. This event and trade show attracts over 15,000 attendees each year and provides an opportunity for the Council and related energy professionals to promote energy efficiency programs and opportunities directly to Rhode Island residents and industry professionals.

### BUDGET PROPOSAL

The total cost of the Energy Expo at the 2024 Rhode Island Builders Association (RIBA) Rhode Island Home Show was \$80,000. In 2024, this cost was split evenly between Rhode Island Energy and the Energy Efficiency Council. This included the following services as detailed by RIBA:

1. RIBA will recruit, manage and coordinate energy-related exhibitors and label them as exhibiting firms on the main show floor.
2. The RIBA management team will also coordinate needed assets and information to assist with the creation of the Expo.
3. Premier concourse space at the entrance of the convention center main floor.
4. Inclusion in verbal and visual assets associated with show's overall 100k plus media / marketing campaign – including but not limited to TV, Radio, print, web, social, press, etc.
5. Dedicated TV and Radio interviews
6. Dedicated Web pages
7. Complimentary tables on concourse for energy related groups and information
8. Floor stickers to call out each energy related vendors
9. Show signage
10. 4,000 advance tickets to the show
11. Coordinated and customized content for the show program
12. A major energy related project for RI's career and tech students involving energy training and housing will be created and coordinated. Schools will be engaged in a chosen energy project and will have it displayed and manned in the Energy concourse at the show.

Through discussions held at Council meetings throughout 2024, the Council made the decision to reduce their financial support for the Home Show and Energy Expo to \$20,000.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The following statute(s) related to the Council's purposes, powers, and/or duties are included as reference for why the Council feels this budget item is within its purview.

- In accordance with [§ 42-140.1-3](#) (b)(4), one of the Council's purposes is to *"Promote public understanding of energy issues and of ways in which energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resource diversification and management can be effectuated."*



## EEC WEBSITE

### DESCRIPTION

The Council maintains a website – with support from the Consultant Team and OER – that helps the public find information about the Council, energy efficiency programming and policies, and how to participate in public meetings and activities. The Council posts their meeting materials to this website for public access and the website serves as a repository for energy-efficiency resources, studies and reports.

### BUDGET PROPOSAL

The 2025 budget allocation proposal is based on actual expenses from previous years from WordPress for website hosting and management services. In 2023, the website costs were \$300. In 2024, the Council completed a website redesign and migration to a new domain. The allocation is to maintain the new website and ensure that the pre-existing domain name can still redirect users to the new page.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The following statute(s) related to the Council’s purposes, powers, and/or duties are included as reference for why the Council feels this budget item is within its purview.

- According to [§ 42-140.1-3 \(b\)](#), The Council has the power to “Provide consistent, comprehensive, informed and publicly accountable stake-holder involvement in energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resource management and promote public understanding of energy issues and of ways in which energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resource diversification and management can be effectuated.”
- According to [§ 42-140.1-6 \(b\)](#), The Council has the powers “To adopt amend bylaws, to establish committees, to elect and/or appoint officers and agents, and to engage consultants and professional services as necessary and appropriate to fulfill its purposes.”

## MARKET POTENTIAL STUDY (2027-2032)

### DESCRIPTION

The Market Potential Study (MPS) is a high-level assessment of electric, natural gas, and delivered fuel savings opportunities in the State of Rhode Island over a defined period that aligns with development of Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plans. Historically, this study has quantified cost-effective savings opportunities for areas such as energy efficiency, electric demand response, combined heat and power, and customer-sited rooftop solar photovoltaic generation. In addition to these objectives, the MPS can also support resource planning, program planning, and state policy.

### BUDGET PROPOSAL

The Council last conducted a full MPS in 2019-2020 which covered a six-year period from 2021-2026 and was used to inform the development of the Council's Three Year Least-Cost Procurement Report and Targets as well as the Company's 2021-2023 and 2024-2026 Energy Efficiency Three-Year Plan's. The Council's C-Team, which conducts these types of studies in other jurisdictions, estimates a total budget in the range of \$300,000 - \$600,000, and the last full MPS came in at about \$530,000. Given the relative high cost and the length of time required to complete such a study (approximately six to twelve months, depending on scope and complexity), the Council may consider allocating some portion of funds to begin this work in 2025 so that it may be used to inform Three-Year Least Cost Procurement Targets (typically filed in March of preceding year) and the Company's ensuing Three Year Plan.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The following statute(s) related to the Council's purposes, powers, and/or duties are included as reference for why the Council feels this budget item is within its purview.

- In accordance with [§ 42-140.1-3](#) (b)(1), one of the Council's purposes is to *"Evaluate and make recommendations, including, but not limited to, plans and programs, with regard to the optimization of energy efficiency, energy conservation, energy resource development; and the development of a plan for least-cost procurement for Rhode Island."*
- Chapter 2 of the Least Cost Procurement Standards (updated in 2023) states that the "Three-Year Least-Cost Procurement Report and Targets (Report) shall serve as guidance for Least-Cost Procurement proposed by the distribution company over the following three years".