

ORIGINAL



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS OF PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

**RFQ 24-05**

July 1, 2024



PROPOSED TO:

**LOUISIANA PUBLIC  
SERVICE COMMISSION**

602 North Fifth Street (Galvez Building)  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

PROPOSED BY:

**APTIM ENVIRONMENTAL &  
INFRASTRUCTURE, LLC**

1200 Brickyard Lane, Suite 202  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

026540

APTIM marked specific pages "Confidential" pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, Rule 12.1. These pages are trade secret, proprietary, or confidential information, and shall be kept confidential and shall be exempt from public disclosure.

# Cover Letter

July 1, 2024

Kimberly N. O'Brian  
Kathryn H. Bowman  
Louisiana Public Service Commission  
602 North Fifth Street (Galvez Building)  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

**SUBJECT:** Request for Proposals of Program Administrator

Dear Ms. O'Brian and Ms. Bowman,

APTIM Environmental & Infrastructure, LLC (APTIM), together with our partners, VEIC and CSRS, LLC, appreciates the opportunity to present our proposal and qualifications to serve as Program Administrator (PA) to design and administer the statewide energy efficiency program for the state of Louisiana for the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC). The APTIM Team brings several unique elements which make it the ideal candidate to lead this important program:



**Local Team:** APTIM and CSRS are both Louisiana-based with 16 offices in the state, covering nearly every LPSC district. We have almost 500 employees in Louisiana, including 17 staff dedicated just to energy efficiency program administration. Our Project Director, Michelle Krueger, has more than 13 years of experience leading energy efficiency and resiliency programs in Louisiana and has deep connections to key stakeholders in the state, such as utilities and advocacy groups.



**Experience administering statewide programs:** The APTIM Team brings decades of experience delivering energy efficiency programs across eight states and the District of Columbia, including three programs funded by system benefit charges. An example of our work is Focus on Energy, which covers over 100 utilities and, annually, has delivered energy efficiency services to nearly 1,000,000 residential and 3,900 business customers. Since being selected as Program Administrator for Focus on Energy in 2011, APTIM has assisted with three quad plans, totaling more than \$1.1 billion in rate payer funds and 5.6 billion kWh and 208 million therms in net energy savings.



**Ability to ensure a smooth transition:** As mentioned in our RFP response, APTIM has been successfully serving as Third Party Administrator (TPA) for Entergy Louisiana's (ELL) energy efficiency programs since 2018. Given this experience, we have a unique understanding of what will be required to migrate these existing programs to new implementers. We also bring the expertise and existing protocols for rebidding entire statewide portfolios from the statewide programs we administer.



**Record of performance:** We have helped ELL exceed portfolio savings goals each year since assuming our role, while ending under budget annually. In 2023, savings reached 117% of our combined goal across the two ELL territories, our sixth straight year of exceeding program savings goals. In aggregate, the efficiency programs we administer in Louisiana have saved rate payers in the state nearly 700 million kWh. Focus on Energy, which we administer on behalf of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, has won 68 industry awards for its impact and innovative ways of reaching underserved households and was deemed the most cost-effective program in the country by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, as announced in [WisBusiness News](#).



**Understanding how to braid funds:** In addition to administering two of the most admired and successful utility-led statewide programs in the country (Focus on Energy and Efficiency Vermont), the APTIM Team is assisting more than five states with their IRA-funded Home Energy Rebate (HER) Programs, including in Vermont and Wisconsin, where the utility and federal funded programs will be intertwined. In addition to an understanding and expertise with federal funds, the APTIM Team brings unrivaled experience in securing and managing philanthropic funding to support energy efficiency programs, particularly for low-income communities, renters, and rural communities.



**Focus on disadvantaged communities:** Last year, more than 33% of our budget as PA for both ELL and Entergy New Orleans (ENO) went to local and diverse contractors, with 18% of ENO projects undertaken by trade allies with diverse supplier certifications. And, since 2020, 47% of VEIC's energy efficiency implementation efforts across the statewide program in Vermont have directly benefited vulnerable communities.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to present our qualifications and look forward to further discussions about this important role.

Sincerely,

APTIM Environmental & Infrastructure, LLC

Greg Coffman  
Senior Vice President

## Table of Contents

Cover Letter.....	i
Proposal/Response.....	1
A. Overall Approach to the Transition of a new statewide EE Program.....	2
Question A1.....	2
Question A2.....	3
Question A3.....	4
Question A4.....	4
Question A5.....	5
Question A6.....	6
Question A7.....	8
Question A8.....	8
Question A9.....	9
Question A10.....	10
Question A11.....	11
Question A12.....	12
Question A13.....	13
B. Organizational and Management Capabilities .....	14
Question B1.....	14
Question B2.....	16
Question B3.....	17
Question B4.....	18
Question B5.....	19
Question B6.....	20
Question B7.....	20
C. Approach to Administrative Functions .....	21
Question C1.....	21
Question C2.....	21
Question C3.....	22
Question C4.....	23
Question C5.....	23
Question C6.....	24
Question C7.....	25
D. Approach to Technical and Customer Support Functions.....	25
Question D1.....	25
Question D2.....	26
Question D3.....	27
Question D5.....	29
E. Cost Proposal .....	30
Question E1.....	30
Question E2.....	30
Question E3.....	30
Question E4.....	30

# Proposal/Response



APTIM, which is headquartered in Baton Rouge, LA, is a for-profit professional solutions firm specializing in environmental, energy transition, sustainability, resilience, and infrastructure solutions. APTIM is ranked in the Top 20 Program Management Firms by ENR.com, a prominent industry trade group. APTIM has over 325 professionals across 12 offices in Louisiana.

APTIM is an industry leader for delivering rebate programs focused on energy efficiency, renewable energy, electrification, and transportation decarbonization. We have nearly two decades of experience managing statewide energy rebate programs, including the Focus on Energy program in Wisconsin, as well as Louisiana’s and Missouri’s Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant and State Energy Programs (EECBG/SEP) and e-mobility programs in Colorado. APTIM brings expertise in grant administration and serves broad, statewide geographies, with a focus on equity and inclusion. Many of our programs include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure these programs equitably serve all areas.

The APTIM Team, which includes our partners VEIC and CSRS, brings unrivaled experience, expertise, and a history of serving Louisiana communities.

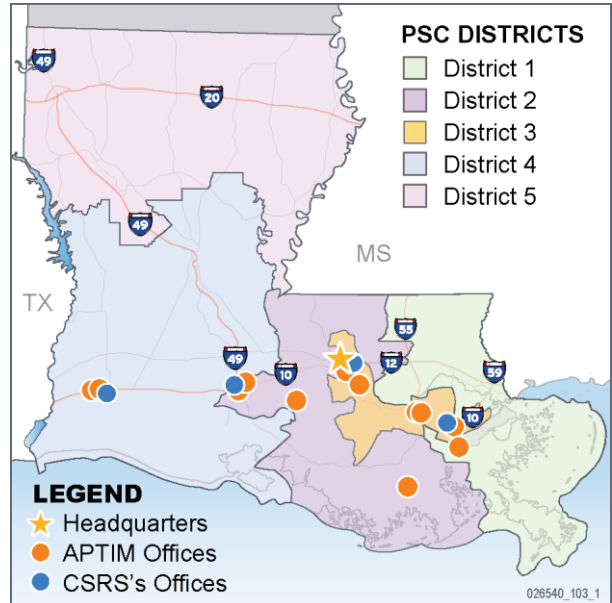


Figure 1. The APTIM Team LA office locations.

<b>8 STATES AND DC</b> PLANNING AND ADMINISTERING STATEWIDE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS		<b>\$100M+</b> IN REBATES ADMINISTERED ANNUALLY	
<b>150,000+</b> Multifamily/Manufactured Housing Units Served	<b>690M+ kWh</b> IN ENERGY SAVINGS FOR LOUISIANA HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES	<b>\$70B+</b> Managed Federal Funds <b>\$1.5B+</b> Managed Energy Efficiency Funds	<b>50+</b> Years Delivering Energy Efficiency Programs
<b>70+</b> YEARS SERVING LOUISIANA STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	<b>475+</b> Employees in Louisiana	026540_101_1	



**VEIC** is a **woman-led nonprofit** with a majority-female board and a national leader in third-party program implementation and administration, offering over 25 consecutive years of applied program administration experience in energy efficiency programs for states with a wide range of public policy goals. VEIC adapts program offerings to meet local goals. VEIC's experience started in 2001, when it was contracted by the Vermont Public Service Commission to administer [Efficiency Vermont](#), the nation's first statewide energy efficiency program. Since 2011, VEIC also administers [Efficiency Smart](#), for municipal utilities part of American Municipal Power in the Midwest, and the [DC Sustainable Energy Utility](#) (DCSEU), a comprehensive, energy efficiency and solar program portfolio with emphasis on supporting low income customers and communities. VEIC also plays critical program planning and design roles on the third-party teams for the APTIM-led [Focus on Energy](#) (statewide efficiency in Wisconsin), [Hawai'i Energy](#) (statewide efficiency), [TECH Clean California](#) (statewide heat pump program), and [CalNEXT](#) (California's emerging electric technologies program). Across VEIC's three utility-scale program portfolios, program participants have seen \$5 billion in savings, generating 36 million megawatt-hours (MWh) and 63 million MMBtus in lifetime energy savings.

**CSRS** CSRS, LLC is a Louisiana-based firm that has successfully collaborated with clients for over 40 years, bringing an innovative mindset and robust management skills to every project. Headquartered in Baton Rouge, with more than 150 employees located throughout the state, CSRS has managed more than \$13B in federally funded projects to support communities, state agencies and community-based organizations across Louisiana, including Louisiana Housing Corporation and the Louisiana Public Service Commission.

## **A. Overall Approach to the Transition of a new statewide EE Program**

### **Question A1.**

Our vision is to develop a program that works for all of Louisiana's communities, Commission districts, and rate payers, with a particular emphasis on under-served segments, such as renters and low-income customers. We also envision a program nationally recognized for its innovation, branding, and cost effectiveness in which the participating utilities see great value for them and their customers, a positive customer experience, and offerings that have meaningful economic impact for the communities they serve. We will initially focus all efforts on a smooth transition to implementation of a new portfolio of programs that meet all defined objectives and sets the state for long-term success.

A key element of the next four years is creating a solid base that can support future growth. Creating this base means: 1) *Building upon the success of the Quick Start Programs, with continued participation and satisfaction among the trade allies and rate payers;* 2) *Creating popular and impactful programs for utilities lacking programs currently;* 3) *Developing a program brand that creates momentum for program growth;* and 4) *Enhancing participation and impact among under-served communities.*

To realize this vision, a transition plan that ensures a seamless transition from the present offerings (or initiation of programs where none exist) is vital. The plan will include thoughtful integration of stakeholder priorities with industry best practices, demographic analysis, and an overarching roll-out strategy. The APTIM Team will work to define the needs within each district, starting with the LPSC and including community-based organizations, participating utilities, existing Program Implementers (PI), trade allies and others. Listening and understanding is crucial, as is transparency. The APTIM Team will provide relevant stakeholders opportunities to review and provide feedback on strategies, progress, and schedules along the way – from planning, through transition and program implementation.

For example, a detailed marketing roll-out, particularly for the new statewide brand, will certainly be a high-engagement topic to carefully craft and review with statewide stakeholders. Equally important will be a proactive and intentional communications plan and a “listening tour” across the trade ally network to ensure their buy-in to the statewide portfolio and transition process from day one.

After the successful launch of programs, the APTIM Team will continue work proactively with stakeholders and market actors to ensure the new programs are meeting or exceeding their objectives. We will maintain the open communication channels to continuously gather feedback while surveying the market for opportunities to innovate and further improve the portfolio in subsequent years.

The APTIM Team brings significant experience leading the smooth transition of large, complex program portfolios and growing them to deliver more success, innovation, equity, and cost-effectiveness. In 2011, APTIM assumed the role of Administrator for Wisconsin’s Focus on Energy statewide utility program. Despite the challenges in transitioning an entire portfolio of programs from the previous administrator, initiating RFPs for each program, and negotiating contracts with many implementers, the program exceeded its verified savings goals, achieving 110% of plan and was deemed the most cost-effective program in the country<sup>1</sup>. This was accomplished while maintaining strong customer satisfaction levels (9.4 out of 10) and meeting equity across utility territories, locales, and income levels.

#### **Question A2.**

Our overall approach is to ensure we create a portfolio of programs that serves all Louisiana communities. We will start by conducting an inventory of current measures, including savings, costs, incentive levels, participation rates, etc. We will then document what measures are missing that other states and innovative programs utilize and can pass the TRC cost effectiveness tests. Next, we will evaluate the key measures driving program activity now and explore potential program additions to support missed measures and opportunities. Lastly, we will consider undertaking an energy burden study to ensure communities with high energy burden will have priority support within the new PA framework.

---

<sup>1</sup> By Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

We also recognize the importance of serving legacy programs and groups often under-represented in programs – areas where our partners, CSRS and VEIC, bring significant experience, connections, and innovative approaches. CSRS will lead the public entities program given their deep connections to state and local governments and agencies and to community-based organizations throughout Louisiana. CSRS will work with the Commissioners, staff and implementers to recruit exceptional projects and employ a transparent scoring rubric developed in conjunction with each Commissioner's offices to evaluate these applications and identify the best uses of funds, with final input and approval from Commissioners for projects in their districts. VEIC will bring their experience working with low-income households, rental properties and rural communities to ensure our programs emphasize these elements and create KPIs for implementers to measure their performance in serving these critical segments. VEIC will also assist with Program Design and Management, particularly around designing the model portfolio, which can meet all of the priorities, and will play a pivotal role in the initial program designs.

### **Question A3.**

Once we have completed our review of the historical programs, measures, and results, and benchmarked the existing portfolios against best practices and innovative models seen throughout the industry, the APTIM Team will develop a model set of programs and do a bottom-up measure build to determine potential savings and needed budgets. During this process, the APTIM Team will focus on ensuring the program designs match Phase II priorities around low income, rental properties, and rural communities. We also expect to layer in avenues to leverage external funds, such as from the IRA's Home Energy Rebate Program, given our Team's deep familiarity with these programs and how to braid them with utility-led statewide programs. We expect to complete this analysis in the first 90 days.

During our review, we will meet with LPSC staff bi-weekly, or as needed, to brief them on our findings and then present a draft plan for LPSC staff to review once completed. Once we have incorporated staff comments, we will present the analysis to the LPSC for their review and comment. We expect to complete this process annually, to ensure program budgets, plans and priorities match the LPSC's goals and needs. We also expect to conduct in-person and virtual stakeholder engagement programs to gather input from communities, community-based institutions, state agencies, advocacy groups, and trade allies.

### **Question A4.**

Stakeholder engagement is critical for effective management of the statewide program. The APTIM Team expects to pursue several avenues to coordinate with the broad set of interested parties to gain their insights, perspectives, and buy-in. First is the LPSC and LPSC Staff. We expect to hold bi-weekly meetings with staff throughout the program, as done with all of our projects, unless more frequent meetings are needed. To facilitate more routine communication, we will utilize project management software, such as JIRA, to ensure proper communication and ensure tasks remain on track. We also will provide monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting about our progress, issues encountered, and any complaints logged by customers.



To facilitate appropriate communication with the EM&V Contractor, we will establish an EM&V working group that will meet monthly. This standing meeting allows for coordination between the APTIM Team and EM&V Contractor to discuss saving methodologies and evaluation requirements for new and custom project types. We have found that a *parallel path* approach (EM&V team reviewing select project samplings in parallel with APTIM Team) is key to a good working relationship with the EM&V contractor. We will gather their input continually on new measures and anticipated savings opportunities and share drafts of new programs and innovative approaches for comment. This process extends to the financial auditor since our experience is that monthly meetings, together with a dedicated audit planning meeting early in the new fiscal year, are critical for a smooth and clean audit process.

Equally critical, we will have dedicated staff and Working Groups for other key stakeholders, such as for utilities, Trade Allies, and key industry groups, such as homebuilders, workforce development organizations, housing agencies and the State Energy Office. We expect these groups, including the Energy Efficiency Working Group, will meet quarterly so we can brief them on plans, gain their insights, and ensure appropriate channels of communication.

We will collaborate with our subcontractor partners and PIs to better understand their internal processes so we can have an effective working relationship where we together serve in a consultant capacity—striving for a “best practice” approach. Based on our positive experience as a PA coordinating with PIs on program strategy and operations, we foresee an opportunity to develop templates to obtain consistent information from PIs and create a PI Operating Plan focused on delivery methodology to ensure all parties are following the same procedures to collect, quantify and report data.

Lastly, as mentioned above, we will hold in-person and virtual listening events to be sure all parties have a chance to comment on the approach, program design, and priorities of the plans and on-going programs.

#### **Question A5.**

As discussed, the APTIM Team brings unrivaled experience managing statewide energy efficiency programs for utilities, public service commissions, and state energy offices. In each case, our primary role has been to design these programs for cost effectiveness and the ability to reach underserved communities and support key policy objectives, such as fostering rural economies. In each case, there was a focus on innovation. For instance, Focus on Energy has maintained several dedicated funding pools to support innovation, whether for implementing new program models and outreach strategies, making equity investments in promising technologies, underwriting research on innovative measures, or supporting innovative rural programs, such as one that targeted increasing broadband access. To manage these investments, we developed an award-winning stage/gate process that we will bring to Louisiana’s program.

We also bring the unique experience of leading a statewide program in California focused on highlighting novel programs for Demand Response and Emerging Technologies in which we

have evaluated nearly 120 different approaches, programs, and technologies. We believe these programs offer a number of ideas on how to leverage distributors for heat pump participation, create ways to gain savings from small commercial HVAC tune-ups, and through monitoring-based commissioning.

To maximize impact, our team will assess the market maturity or saturation of a technology or service, along with customer and market barriers, with an emphasis on equitable access. This strategy optimizes program and portfolio performance and grows with the evolution of customer and client needs while meeting performance targets. We will monitor changes in economic conditions, product and workforce availability, community demographics, stakeholder priorities, policy, and technological innovation for possible disruptions to the market—whether cyclical, systemic, or opportunistic—and will quickly and collaboratively respond to them.

For this program, our Team will focus solely on administration tasks and will not be pursuing any implementation of programs in the statewide portfolio. We believe the RFPs will have more robust participation by other vendors and be seen as more fairly evaluated if the PA does not seek to compete with potential PIs; we also fear PIs may elect to not bid if they feel the process could be biased in favor of the Administrator. We also believe pursuing implementation could have the appearance of impropriety by the public.

**Question A6.**

The APTIM Team has numerous successes in all areas. We highlight two examples in each.

Program	Outcomes
<b>a. Public Entities</b>	
Wisconsin PSC, Focus on Energy: Schools & Government Program (WI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Program focused on serving public schools and governmental agencies throughout Wisconsin</li> <li>▶ 53.2M kWh and 2.1M therms saved in 2023 across 463 unique participants</li> <li>▶ 2.30 Cost/Benefit (TRC)</li> </ul>
Louisiana Dept of Natural Resources, Empower LA State Buildings Program (LA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Encouraged the development, implementation, and deployment of cost-effective energy efficiency projects within state buildings</li> <li>▶ \$24.5M in federal funds awarded</li> <li>▶ 253M kWh in annual energy savings</li> <li>▶ Created jobs for 189 FTEs</li> </ul>
<b>b. Low-Income Customers</b>	
Entergy Louisiana, Entergy Solutions Louisiana (LA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Income Qualified program funding has increased by 260% in the past three years</li> <li>▶ The Manufactured Homes offering has served over 12,000 mobile homes in more than 150 communities, saving 14 million kWh annually for these customers</li> </ul>
Vermont DPS, Efficiency Vermont: Midstream Heat Pump Program (VT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Introduced low-income bonus to improve accessibility and supported installation of nearly 55,000 ductless mini-split heat pumps since 2015</li> <li>▶ 10-fold increase in annual installations in 7 years, with 98% post-evaluation savings realization rate</li> </ul>

Program	Outcomes
<b>c. Rental Properties</b>	
Entergy Louisiana, Entergy Solutions Louisiana (LA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Multifamily Solutions program (which includes rental properties) has assisted apartment properties in all 5 LPSC Districts and has increased kWh savings over 200% in four years</li> <li>▶ Due to its strong performance in 2023, achieving almost double the savings planned within budget for the EGS territory by Q3, the program was expanded for 2024</li> </ul>
DC Department of Energy and the Environment, DC Sustainable Energy Utility (DC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ In FY2023, program served 2,800 tenants across 17 multifamily affordable buildings with either energy efficiency upgrades to their buildings</li> <li>▶ At the beginning of 2024, the program had a pipeline of 93 buildings</li> </ul>
<b>d. Commercial Customers</b>	
Wisconsin PSC, Focus on Energy: Business & Industry Program (WI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Program offers custom and prescriptive incentives touching nearly 1,500 customers in 2023</li> <li>▶ 111.8M kWh and 3.6M therm verified net energy savings in 2023, with 30+% to rural ZIP codes</li> <li>▶ 2.80 Cost/Benefit (TRC)</li> </ul>
Entergy Louisiana, Entergy Solutions Louisiana (LA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Large C&amp;I Solutions offering achieved 129% of the energy savings goal in 2023, saving 18.6 million kWh for commercial customers</li> <li>▶ Higher Ed Retro-Commissioning Program contributed over \$350,000 to 5 schools, saved 5.8 million kWh in 2023 and is working with 5 new schools in 2024</li> </ul>
<b>e. Industrial Customers</b>	
Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Energize Missouri Industry Program (SEP Funds) (MO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Statewide program funded through federal grants to the State Energy Office in Missouri</li> <li>▶ \$7.3M in federal funds awarded to eligible projects</li> <li>▶ 85.3M kWh saved; &gt;200M kWh in additional savings identified</li> <li>▶ 72 FTEs created</li> </ul>
Louisiana Dept of Natural Resources, Renewable Energy Program (LA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ \$7M in federal funding awarded to 4 industrial customers through competitive process</li> <li>▶ 315K MMBTU in energy production</li> </ul>
<b>f. Gas Utilities</b>	
Washington Gas, Energy Efficiency Programs (DC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Designed energy efficiency program for low- and limited-income residents of affordable multi-family housing in the District of Columbia</li> <li>▶ Implemented the 18-month project to serve 26 properties and 3,300 participating residents</li> </ul>
Columbia Gas, Energy Efficiency Program (OH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Worked with local communities to encourage energy efficiency among hard-to-reach customers and communities</li> <li>▶ Between 2015-2020, all 9 participating communities successfully met and exceeded their energy efficiency goals</li> <li>▶ Communities received \$130,000 in additional grant funds to support gas reduction in community buildings</li> </ul>
<b>g. Investor-Owned Utilities</b>	
Entergy Louisiana, Entergy Solutions Louisiana (LA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Program has exceeded savings goals 6 straight years (in every program year APTIM has served as PA)</li> <li>▶ 20% reduction of non-incentive cost per kWh compared to 2023 budget (\$0.058/kWh vs. \$0.072/kWh)</li> <li>▶ Program delivery costs (budget/kWh) lowest in LA among IOU programs</li> </ul>

Program	Outcomes
Wisconsin PSC, Focus on Energy (WI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ APTIM has administered the Focus on Energy program for than a decade</li> <li>▶ Program serves 16 IOUs (6 electric only, 4 gas only and 6 dual)</li> <li>▶ APTIM has managed more than\$1B in ratepayer funds since becoming the Administrator</li> <li>▶ 376.7M kWh saved in 2023; 24.2M therm saved in 2023</li> </ul>
<b>h. Co-ops/Municipals</b>	
Wisconsin PSC, Focus on Energy (WI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ This statewide program serves 90+ Co-ops and Municipals</li> <li>▶ Designated stakeholder engagement staff who manage the partnerships with IOUs and separately with municipals/co-ops</li> <li>▶ 90.4M kWh in gross annual kWh savings in 2023</li> </ul>
American Municipal Power, Efficiency Smart (OH, DE, MI, PA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Obtain energy savings for 65+ AMP member municipal utilities</li> <li>▶ 97,000 residential and C&amp;I customers saved \$320M and 3.7M MWh in lifetime savings</li> <li>▶ Saved utilities over \$210M over the lifetime of the installed products and reduced summer peak demand by 42.8 MW</li> </ul>

**Question A7.**

The APTIM Team is adept at managing equity across utilities within statewide programs, having successfully done so for more than a decade in Wisconsin, and more than two decades in Vermont, and have used KPIs to effectively track and incentivize the required equity. A key element is leveraging the robust tracking capabilities of our IT system, APTracks. This system is used currently to track spending across the two Entergy Louisiana territories, EGSL and ELL, and ensure budgets, spending, and savings are segregated as required. We anticipate using this effective system for the utilities covered by this program.

We also expect that we will have some measures that cover both gas and electric savings, such as from air sealing and HVAC upgrades or from retro-commissioning. In those cases, savings will be determined for each fuel and assigned to the specific utility covered, so a single measure may benefit multiple utilities’ programs. We also are very familiar with managing rules around fuel switching, since Wisconsin’s rules, like Louisiana’s, prohibits the practice.

**Question A8.**

**Continuous Improvement**

The APTIM Team has an established Continuous Improvement Program (**Figure 2**) that has been proven and enhanced through implementation on tens of thousands of projects over the last 30 years. It provides the framework for planning, implementing, and assessing project obstacle to continuously improve The APTIM Team’s performance and project success.

Elements of The APTIM Team’s Continuous Improvement Program include:

- ▶ Quality Management Plan
- ▶ Health and Safety Plan
- ▶ Document QA/QC
- ▶ Field Method QA/QC
- ▶ Inspections and Audits
- ▶ Identification and Implementation of Best Practices

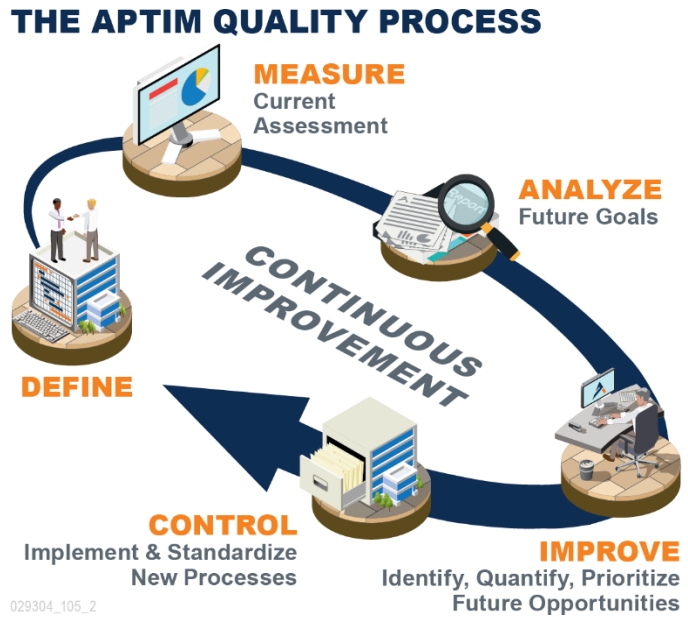
To ensure quality and gain efficiencies, we have learned that several types of software systems are critical. First are project management and documentation tools such as JIRA, Wrike and Formstack that allow teams to coordinate more effectively, maintain document control, and track progress towards agreed upon goals and timelines, as well as make it easier for customers to submit their applications online. We have found these IT platforms are particularly important for managing marketing approvals and EM&V processes. Next are tools for in-field and desk reviews of incentive requests and project savings. Of particular importance is our tracking system, APTracks, that will have savings levels pre-configured and has well defined API protocols to synch with front-end systems used by PIs for scheduling, home assessments, and direct install projects. These systems will ensure we have near real-time connections to data and communications with key stakeholders, including LPSC staff and be better able to represent the LPSC to external parties.

APTracks has been used to streamline payment processing for customers and contractors in Louisiana programs. Following APTracks QA/QC steps, payment batches are automated to assign correct account coding to each program offering and compose personalized program branded payment letters to accompany program incentive checks. These personalized payment letters are created with an APTracks integration with PowerBI. The APTIM Team has also utilized deep GIS capabilities to map APTracks project participation to evaluate saturation when compared to census level data, LPSC District boundaries and utility service territories.

To effectively represent the LPSC, we will ensure LPSC staff knows early on about upcoming meetings where we will represent the Commission and be sure to review talking points and public presentations and to provide materials at least three business days ahead to allow proper time for review. These upcoming events will be a standing item on the bi-weekly meetings with staff.

**Question A9.**

Examples of KPIs the APTIM Team may use include the following. This list will be updated, based on the program’s final, defined objectives and priorities. KPIs will be utilized to



**Figure 2** The APTIM Team's Continuous Improvement Process.

consistently assess status of the program, identify successes, challenges, and priorities for improvement.

#### Leading KPIs

**Marketing Performance:** # of new user visits to program website; # of social medial likes, reactions and/or impressions.

**Program Performance:** # of new and returning customer applications in a period; # of trade allies in total and signing up in a given period; attendance rates at trade ally trainings and program information sessions.

#### Lagging KPIs

**Program Performance:** KWh and therms in the pipeline weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually; average project size by sector and program (kWh, therms, \$); average simple payback of projects; customer satisfaction scores; trade ally satisfaction scores; distribution of projects, rebates, energy savings, etc. across multiple, objective-related factors such as districts, income levels, geographic areas (ZIP codes, rural vs. urban, etc.); project throughput rates (application through verification); measure type distribution by program, sector and portfolio; realization rates by program.

#### **Question A10.**

The APTIM Team will develop multiple documents that will clearly define and establish how the program operates and is administered. We will base these on similar documents developed for other statewide program clients and customize them based on the Phase II rules and our deep knowledge of the Louisiana market. These documents will evolve over the life of the program under strict change control policies that manage and communicate updates as needed. Key examples include:

**Program Administration Policy, Policies and Procedures Manual:** Defines roles, responsibilities, standards, requirements, rules, and definitions across the full scope of the program. Includes stakeholder responsibilities; ethics, information security, confidentiality, and service standards; accounting requirements, record maintenance, compliance, travel, and expense requirements; IT systems, software, and various other definitions; program rules related to eligible customers, measures, approaches, and customers.

**Program Operations Manual:** Sets consistent standards for implementers of programs within the statewide portfolio. The document includes detailed guidance for marketing and communications; program management; incentive processing; trade ally engagement; efficiency measure management; quality assurance and evaluation; and other program delivery topics such as regular program reporting cadences, templates, and expectations.

**Statewide Program Strategy Outline:** A summary of key objectives across the statewide program, detailing the programs planned for each portfolio year, budgets, and participation targets as well as key tactics, strategies, and campaigns to achieve success in each district, program, and customer segment.

**Budget Cycle Plan (Program Implementation Plan Filing):** Establishes program designs, budgets, savings goals, and delivery strategies for the program cycle.

**Program Budgets, Savings Goals, and Forecasts:** Sets parameters at the program level to ensure energy savings goals will be met.

**Marketing, Outreach, Trade Ally Engagement and Education Plan:** Develops strategies, tactics, and timing for external communications to support both program- and portfolio-level efforts.

**Annual Reports:** The APTIM Team will provide the LPSC with Annual Reports including outlined items in the Phase II rules by April 1st each year, including the SARP workbook.

**Trade Ally Reporting:** The APTIM Team will be responsible for providing trade ally contractor reporting regarding submitted, approved, and paid projects across all utilities and LPSC districts as trade ally contractors may be submitting project applications to multiple program implementers in different utility territories. The APTIM Team will provide this contractor benefit in the form of a Trade Ally Portal which will allow registered trade allies to view and export their cumulative project lists in an Excel spreadsheet for maximum flexibility for use within each trade ally reconciliation process.

Expected checkpoints include:

**Meetings:** The APTIM Team will provide bi-weekly meetings for LPSC staff or adjust according to the frequency requested by Commissioners and their staff teams. Web-based dashboards can be created and shared with Commissioners and staff to provide daily updates on program performance between meetings and reporting requirements.

**Energy Efficiency Working Group (EEWG) Facilitation:** The Commission will establish the EEWG and the APTIM Team will assist in facilitating the first meeting prior to July 1, 2025. The APTIM Team will also facilitate the EEWG annual report to the Commission.

#### **Question A11.**

A core role for the LPSC staff will be to provide direction and input as well as approval to the annual and quad planning. They will also provide oversight via review and debrief of quarterly and annual reporting provided by the PA as well as the EM&V reports.

- ▶ Prior to each budget cycle, the APTIM Team will meet with each Commissioner and their staff to verify specific goals important to each Commissioner so that they may be prioritized within the final proposed Energy Efficiency program.
- ▶ At the start of each quad, the APTIM Team will submit by May 1, the year prior to the quad start, the Budget Cycle Plans which will be publicly available for all stakeholders to provide feedback including the utilities and commission staff.
- ▶ When necessary, the APTIM Team will prepare and submit updated annual plans for the Commission to approve, including detailed revisions by June 1. The LPSC will then be responsible for approvals by the November Business and Executive Session of that year. These will be filed in the docket but should reflect limited changes.

- ▶ The APTIM Team will provide annual program reporting to the Commission for review and feedback by April 1<sup>st</sup> and will provide debrief meetings to answer any questions and address any issues that arise from the reporting.
- ▶ Utilities will provide feedback and input on marketing plans in their region and overall marketing approaches to ensure alignment with their vision and to provide insight into their unique customer base and history.
- ▶ The LPSC will be responsible to establish the EEWG including the identification of participants and The APTIM Team will help by seeking participation of appropriate parties and helping to administer the EEWG.
- ▶ LPSC staff will notify The APTIM Team of opt-out industrial customers by April 5, 2025, as the Phase II rules state April 1st as the opt-out deadline.
- ▶ Utilities will need to provide monthly reporting to the APTIM Team regarding revenues collected by EER and the APTIM Team will provide monthly reporting to each participating utility regarding program spend according to program offering, customer class and LPSC district, ensuring revenues collected by utility are being utilized for the benefit of that utility's customers.
- ▶ The APTIM Team will host an initial data summit with participating utilities and LPSC staff during the planning period. The data summit will serve to understand each participating utilities' capacity to provide customer data to the PA. Utility data requirements and format will be finalized following the data summit.
- ▶ Utilities will provide initial customer lists to the APTIM Team by June 2025 for: confirming customer service addresses (premise ID), customer contact information for program launch and marketing, and residential vs non-residential customer profile. Continued updated customer lists should be provided on a quarterly basis for each participating utility beginning in January 2026.
- ▶ The APTIM Team will provide payment batches to each utility on a weekly basis identifying payee, payee address, offering and measure details, and incentive total. The APTIM Team may also provide co-branded payment letters, with Statewide Energy Efficiency program name/logo along with the Utility name/logo in order to aid customer understanding of the payment provided. Co-branded payment letters will be developed in coordination with participating utilities. We feel that weekly payment batching is important to reduce the time customers and trade ally contractors wait for incentive payment by a respective utility once project work is complete.

### **Question A12.**

Given the APTIM Team's experience in designing programs to effectively braid utility-led programs and IRA funded Home Energy Rebate programs for six states and the District of Columbia, including for two statewide utility-led programs (WI and VT), this team is uniquely qualified to ensure federal funds are leverage effectively. We have found several elements to be most critical. First, making sure that our tracking system can effectively tie into the system being used for the Home Energy Rebate Programs to allow a seamless transfer of data. Since our



system is built on Microsoft Dynamics, there are a set of existing APIs that will effectively allow for these data transfers. Second, we will have questions in our incentive applications asking for information about any other incentives used and have explicit language in our terms and conditions with trade allies and customers the potential penalties of not disclosing all incentives used on projects, including no longer being able to claim incentives from the statewide program in the future.

The APTIM Team also has an enviable track record of garnering outside funds for supporting energy efficiency programs and projects. The APTIM Team was able to secure funds from the Joyce and MacArthur Foundations to support work on braiding federal weatherization, CDBG, and low-income tax credit funding with the Focus on Energy incentives to great success. The APTIM Team has also been instrumental in helping Beauregard Electric secure more than one hundred million dollars from the federal government to assist in hurricane recovery, and we expect our expertise in sourcing and managing federal funds will allow our Team to expand these services to other funding streams, such as from the grid modernization work being undertaken by Together LA. We have already had preliminary discussions about how to ensure these “lighthouse” projects undertake energy efficiency as part of their resiliency efforts and how to use these places of worship as voices to encourage their members to take similar actions in their homes and businesses. VEIC also worked with the state of VT to utilize a portion of the federal flood relief funds to incentive customers to replace flood damaged equipment with energy efficient technologies and weatherization measures and CSRS has helped numerous local Louisiana communities obtain federal funds for mission critical infrastructure projects, such as work with Louisiana Housing Corp.

**Question A13.**

Client/Reference Contact	Project Summary
Entergy Louisiana Heather LeBlanc, Program Manager hgabler@entergy.com; 225.763.5128	Entergy Solutions Louisiana (APTIM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Serve as Third-Party Administrator and Implementer of the Energy Efficiency program</li> <li>▶ Consistently exceed energy savings goals while remaining under budget</li> </ul>
Vermont Department of Public Service Kelly Launder, Assistant Director, Efficiency and Energy Resources Division Kelly.Launder@vermont.gov; 802.828.4039	Efficiency Vermont (VEIC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Design and implement a comprehensive portfolio of efficiency programs for the nation's first statewide energy efficiency utility</li> <li>▶ Procure federal funding to augment programs (\$110+M for efficiency and weatherization programs since 2020)</li> </ul>
Beauregard Electric Cooperative (BECI) Ashley Mazilly, VP, Finance & Corporate Services amazilly@beci.org; 337.462.8379	Grant Management Services (APTIM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Assisted rural LA co-op in securing federal funds to rebuild after hurricanes</li> <li>▶ Assisted in securing \$101.3M in federal reimbursement claims</li> <li>▶ Achieved four-fold level of recovery than originally forecasted by BECI</li> </ul>

## B. Organizational and Management Capabilities

### Question B1.

Our organizational structure reflects an emphasis on accountability and responsibility and a focus on the areas we believe are most critical for program success: 1) Program Marketing: Reflects the need to launch a new brand and reach customers previously un- or under-served; 2) Tracking System: We will need to create a robust tracking system and invest in program management software, such as JIRA and Wrike; 3) Data Analytics: There will be a strong emphasis on initial portfolio design, targeting where savings are greatest, monitoring progress towards goal, and determining if we are reaching under-served segments; 4) Utility and Stakeholder Engagement: We know from experience that each utility, and utility type, will need a dedicated resource, as will the broad set of stakeholders, from the LPSC. to community groups and advocates, to trade allies.

The APTIM Team is fortunate to have its core team assembled and ready to begin immediately. Resumes for the key personnel are provided as an Appendix. The organizational structure below reflects the key personnel and roles needed to achieve program success, and may include others as needed and identified during program design phase.

## TEAM ORGANIZATION

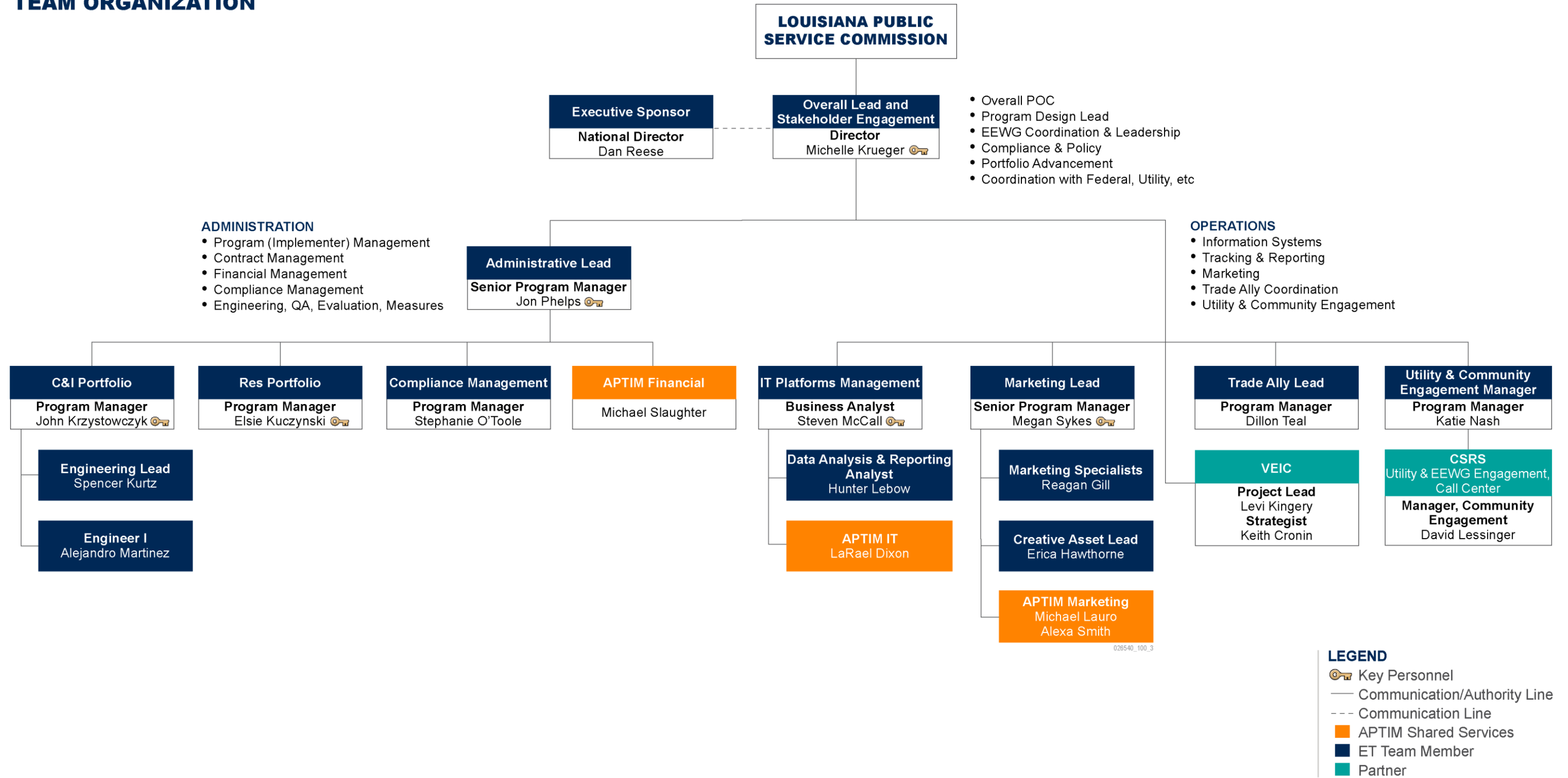


Figure 3. Organizational Chart.

**Question B2.**

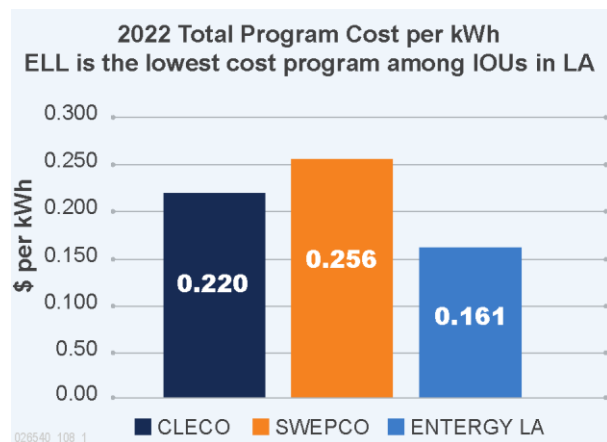
The APTIM Team brings several unique competencies that differentiate us from competitors. First and foremost are our deep connections to Louisiana communities. APTIM has been headquartered in Louisiana for more than 30 years, and together with our partners, we have nearly 500 staff and maintain 16 offices throughout the state, including in 4 out of 5 LPSC districts. We also operate a call center in Louisiana, capable of handling hundreds of thousands of calls, as done for the GOHSEP program.

In addition, we have a local team in place and ready to go. Our Project Director has been leading energy efficiency and resiliency programs in the State for more than 13 years and has deep connections to the key stakeholders here already. Our Team members have been working with the LPSC for 3 years, so we bring an intimate knowledge of how to effectively work with Commissioners and Staff.

The APTIM Team brings 50+ years of collective experience designing and administering statewide energy efficiency programs, including transitioning entire portfolios, as will be required here. Based on 2022 data, ELL’s program, administered by APTIM, cost is lower than the other state IOUs as shown in **Figure 4**. We have developed award winning statewide brands, executed innovative and effective marketing campaigns, and already have crafted potential brand ideas to present to the LPSC.

The programs we manage bridge electric and gas utilities, cover hundreds of IOUs, municipal and co-ops, and stretch from urban to rural areas. We understand what is required to serve every utility and community type and how to ensure the unique needs of each are met effectively – and have successfully met the KPIs set up to ensure equity in the programs. But most critically, these programs have consistently met or exceeded their savings, cost effectiveness, and customer satisfaction goals – even being deemed the most cost effective in the country by Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. No other team comes close to this level of experience or success.

The APTIM Team also brings an enviable record of serving disadvantaged communities. Our work with low-income households includes dedicated programs for rental units and low-income multi-family housing. Our Team member, VEIC, is a nationally recognized leader in serving these communities and in developing innovative, award-winning programs to ensure everyone benefits from these critical energy efficiency programs.



**Figure 4. Cost Per kWh of LA's IOUs.**

**Question B3.**

The APTIM Team has designed numerous energy efficiency programs to achieve cycle-based and annual savings, customer satisfaction, cost benefit, rural market participation, and utility equity, goals, while remaining within budget. Efforts have included program designs for entire portfolios of programs for Focus on Energy, Efficiency Vermont, ENO, and ELL, for state-led energy efficiency programs, as well as for individual programs for many utilities across the country, such as Southern California Edison and Washington Gas. These programs have included mature programs that the APTIM Team was asked to assume from other implementers, as well as dozens of pilots and new programs designed and developed by the APTIM Team.

We envision building upon the success and popularity of the Quick Start programs. The existing Quick Start programs have been successful for over nine years, and we see a number of overlapping programs which provide a common base upon which to build, such as those serving low-income households, multi-family properties, and small and large commercial customers. We will augment these programs with pilots we know to be successful in the State, such as programs targeting manufactured housing, agri-businesses, and new construction.

Our holistic approach to designing programs for the statewide program means leveraging these previous successes to allow the programs to launch quickly and achieve savings goals most efficiently. For customers of the co-ops or smaller utilities that have previously not participated in the Quick Start programs, these programs will still contain measures that allow for simple lighting upgrades or appliance rebates that Quick Start customers utilized in the early years of those programs. We also will cultivate a trade ally base capable of serving all Louisianans and help those who have been successfully participating in Quick Start programs to expand into new areas. Given our existing tiered model, we know which contractors offer the most promise in reaching these new areas effectively.



Including economic impacts, Focus on Energy generated

**\$4.44 in benefits for every \$1.00 invested**

in its 2019-2022 portfolio

026540\_105\_1

**RELATIONSHIP TO TRADE ALLIES**

Trade allies such as contractors and vendors, were highly effective partners in marketing the nonresidential offerings throughout the quadrennium. Most nonresidential participants heard about Focus on Energy offerings from trade allies and nonresidential customers across the state were most likely to cite installation contractors as a trusted source of information.

**Over 60% of Trade Allies** reported a growth in their business after partnering with Focus on Energy



026540\_107\_1

Our budgeting process will begin with a bottom-up measure build that will determine the exact formula to achieve savings goals and budgets needed to attain them. We will then review this plan to ensure the measures are most appropriate for under-served communities and segments, such as low income, renters, and rural areas. As savings goals, measure levels, and incentive amounts are set, we will then determine the number of projects needed for each utility territory and each LPSC District. This process will ensure appropriate equity, cost effectiveness, and customer participation.

#### **Question B4.**

The APTIM Team has robust procurement policies and procedures in place to ensure our partners and subcontractors are of the highest caliber with the requisite experience, whether that is for implementing a program, providing digital support services for website enhancements, or providing research for pilot program development. We also are deeply familiar with the need to ensure all contractors who have a budget in excess of \$50,000 annually engage in RFP or RFQ processes before being selecting as a subcontractor or PI and have procedures in place to manage this process and ensure adherence to the requirements.

Due to our experience with Focus on Energy, which has rebid its entire portfolio several times under our direction, we have a well-developed procurement process. The APTIM Team applies a rigorous pre-qualification process for all our subcontractors, PIs, and trade allies (partners collectively). Support services provided by these key partners will be seamless and transparent to the LPSC, and the point of contact for all contractual and field activities will always be the APTIM Team Project Director. Our partner management process will consist of robust communications; compliance with bid documents; schedule control; maintenance of licenses and permits; compliance with safety requirements and the contract; adherence to purchase order and design specifications; invoice tracking and prompt payment, and certification of performance/work approval. The APTIM Team will utilize APTracks 3.0's contractor management system to track participating contractors, subcontractors, and PIs within the programs.

A key lesson learned from our experience is to assign a well-qualified procurement lead, recommended to be the Senior Program Manager who will be handling Administrative Management, who ensures procurement policies and bid evaluation procedures are scrupulously observed and leads a bid evaluation team. The bid evaluation team is comprised of the APTIM Team staff, the LPSC staff and utility representatives. The procurement lead provides IT security and confidentiality training to all staff and the bid evaluators participating in the RFP process. Typically, the RFP procurement cycle is approximately six months long, beginning with (1) planning, (2) developing and drafting a solid RFP, (3) seeking client approval for the RFP, (4) coordinating with the client and utilities to identify bid evaluation committee members, (5) training the procurement and bid evaluation committee on policy and procedures, (6) reviewing bid proposals, scoring them and selecting candidate to interview, (7) interviews, and finally, (8) selecting a successful bidder and entering contract negotiations. All is tightly

controlled to protect the integrity of the procurement process to prevent any bid challenges from an unsuccessful bidder.

Once we have appropriately selected the vendor, the APTIM Team utilizes KPIs and contract terms and conditions to ensure appropriate performance. We envision moving all PIs to a heavily performance-based pay system as done successfully with Focus on Energy once the programs have been fully implemented – likely in program year 2. This contract structure ensures the PIs will be appropriately focused on critical performance elements, such as savings, cost effectiveness, customer satisfaction, and reaching under-served communities.

#### **Question B5.**

Strong and consistent data management and analysis will be the key element to track performance and ensure the programs meet their goals, whether related to savings targets, social equity, or reaching under-served markets, all while remaining within budget. Central to the APTIM Team's administration and implementation strategies is a reliance on data to offer early warnings about needed course corrections. The APTIM Team has developed numerous dashboards to track progress towards goals and to highlight programs that may be behind plan. This dashboard is highlighted in detail in Section C.

Data is also core to our marketing efforts, which will help drive participation into programs that may be experiencing lower participation. The APTIM Team uses the data to better understand how best to reach customers, particularly, under-served ones, and to understand where measures, and coupling of measures, may be most effective.

In addition to data management, another key to managing large, sophisticated statewide energy efficiency programs is development of standard operating procedures, clear organizational structures, and a common set of goals. These program standards, and applicable KPIs, will then roll down through the APTIM Team's administration and to our partners to ensure consistent program delivery and focus.

Reports about our progress and results will be provided to the LPSC on a quarterly and annual basis to document activities, accomplishments, problems, and performance. Due to the APTracks dashboard, reporting updates are available real-time to the LPSC through their dashboard access, in addition to the regular cadence of established reporting. Key metrics will be decided upon with the LPSC and reported on quarterly and annually cumulating in the quadrennial goals. Proposed KPIs are discussed in detail in section A9 and E2.

Section C details our approach to administrative functions, to ensure data integrity while maintaining timely, excellent customer service. It outlines overall QA/QC, quality control of the program's TRM aligned energy savings estimates, and our data management approach. Steps to ensure the integrity of engineering and energy savings estimates will include the TRM and work paper review process, engineering desk reviews, coordination with the evaluator for data collection and measure verification and a review of sample projects.

Foundational to the APTIM Team's QA/QC approach is to establish and document the governing principles, standards, procedures, plans, policies, and performance evaluation metrics. Without formal written operational procedures, the program risks inconsistency across implementers leading to inconsistent data and implementation. These governing documents may include the implementer contracts, operating manual, trade ally code of conduct, marketing plan, branding guide, and TRM.

Strong data protection and a consistent program file management approach will allow for the review, audit, and direct handoff of customer and program data as needed. Regulatory compliance is reviewed annually as part of our process manual reviews. Using our efficient QA/QC approach we have achieved consistently high realization rates in evaluation and maintained a low frequency of compliance audit findings.

**Question B6.**

APTIM can meet standard insurance requirements. We have included a certificate of insurance showing our current levels of coverage in the Appendix 1.

**Question B7.**

With revenues of over \$1 billion per annum, significant positive cash balances and access to additional borrowings through our credit facilities, APTIM has the financial wherewithal to support the proposed activities. APTIM is not involved in any prior or current bankruptcy proceedings.

Appendix 2 provides three years of audited financial statements.



## C. Approach to Administrative Functions

### Question C1.

Fundamental to identifying problems early on and instituting course corrections is the development of a rigorous Project Management Plan. This Plan will outline the processes for risk identification mitigation and change management. In addition, the Team will follow our well-developed processes around implementing and executing a five-step risk management process. The APTIM Team will maintain a project Risk Register to identify, assess, respond, and control potential risks to the project and coordinate with LPSC to ensure that project-related risk information is communicated properly and timely to ensure a successful project.

### RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS



Figure 5 APTIM Risk Management Process.

With respect to communicating escalating risk issues, threats to the project will be reported immediately to leadership when they occur or are discovered. If PA leadership concludes that the risk is valid based on the project’s Risk Register, LPSC will be notified immediately, and a conference call or meeting will be scheduled to discuss solutions. All potential impacts to the project, whether high, medium, or low, will be reviewed during project status meetings between the APTIM Team and LPSC.

### Question C2.

The APTIM Team will establish an umbrella resolution process that is fair, expedient, and transparent, and one that is consistent with LPSC’s existing policies and procedures. Below is the APTIM Team’s recommended resolution process specific to the implementation of the Program.

When any staff person receives a customer complaint, concern, and warranty complaint, either in-person, via telephone, or in writing, the staff will be instructed to be responsive and give the person their full attention, avoid negative body language or tone of voice. The staff person will then refer the complaint to the APTIM Team’s Portfolio Managers and document the complaint in the APTIM Team’s complaint tracking system. The APTIM Team’s Portfolio Manager will be charged with daily monitoring of the complaints system. Complaints will be categorized into one of three tiers; Tier 1 complaint can be handled by the Portfolio Program Manager; Tier 2 will be

escalated to the APTIM Team's Senior Program Manager and Tier 3 will be escalated to LPSC's Program Manager. In all cases, the APTIM Team's Portfolio Program Manager will gather all information necessary to investigate the complaint. Each complaint will be resolved as quick as possible and receive a written response within 15 days of its entry. The written response will be vetted by the Program Manager, as well as LPSC and/or its designated representatives, as requested. The date of response will be added to the log and a copy of the letter will be uploaded to a complaints storage folder as designated by LPSC. From time to time, the APTIM Team may recommend to LPSC that a written response is not prudent in a particular case. In those instances, the Portfolio Manager will note such decision in the log.

### **Question C3.**

The APTIM Team has extensive experience tracking organization, financial and measure level data for both individual projects and for programs. APTIM has developed and maintains its own proprietary software system, APTracks, which we use to administer numerous programs including Energy New Orleans, Energy Louisiana, and the City and County of Denver's Home Energy Rebate program. This system tracks customer level data, trade ally information, measures, savings, budgets, and spending. At its core, APTracks provides a simple user interface for data entry, process flows, and measure details specifically tailored to the program design, automated workflow queues that alert program stakeholders to action items, and powerful reporting modules.

Due to developing our platform, we can adopt on-the-fly improvements or revisions to APTracks, allowing it to be an invaluable evaluation tool that has earned high praise from ENO's Program Evaluator, with users noting it as a best-in-class DSM tracking system. Improvements have included the functionality to automate QA/QC of entered data and archive rebate paperwork. APTracks'capabilities allow for importing of utility level data, used for Entergy's programs, and for the stacking and braiding of incentives with utility funding in Denver.

Built on the Microsoft Dynamics 365 platform, APTracks brings all the benefits of the actively supported and widely deployed cloud-based Dynamics platform, including:

- ▶ Scalable, cloud-based platform that provides access to data through web-enabled devices
- ▶ Cloud platform secured by Microsoft Azure Security
- ▶ Native integration with the Microsoft Office suite and access to third-party integrations
- ▶ Microsoft Office-like feel that reduces the user learning curve and increases interaction
- ▶ Active support and ongoing investment and development from Microsoft

APTracks provides real-time access for all authorized users via a secure web portal. Each user (staff, subcontractors, PI, evaluator, LPSC) is granted access to the system through unique, role-based user accounts allowing insights into relevant program aspects and keeping the sharing of data restricted. Each user's access rights define their ability to view and edit APTracks data.

**Data Security:** APTracks is hosted on Microsoft’s Azure cloud platform and benefits from Microsoft’s comprehensive, industry-leading cloud security suite. APTIM’s corporate IT team administers the implementation and operation of security tools within APTracks. As a contractor for the Department of Defense, Federal agencies, and other clients with sensitive data, APTIM’s IT team is well versed in strategies, tools, and protocols to secure access to confidential data. To the extent possible, APTIM endeavors to transfer and store all program data within the security umbrella of the Azure platform. Transmission or storage of data outside the Azure platform will be strictly limited and will be encrypted, whether in transit or at-rest. APTracks has capabilities to import and export data through multiple secure channels, including API integration or secure file transfer protocol.

#### **Question C4.**

APTIM intends to leverage our existing, proprietary tracking system used successfully for the Louisiana programs. We have explored using third party systems but have found them lacking and often unworkable – typically after great cost, time expended, and wasted effort. We believe using APTracks offers the most cost-effective path forward for this transition. While the system will not be transferable, all measure and savings data, customer information, trade ally contacts and history, will be transferred either to the new PA or to the LPSC. We have seen that it is the data transfer capabilities, and having a system robust enough to be able to data export, which is most important to program transitions.

#### **Question C5.**

The APTIM Team has been responsible for producing Program Plans and Annual Reports on every program administered and implemented by our team members. This includes statewide planning and annual reporting for Focus on Energy’s programs since 2011 and Efficiency Vermont since 2001, and for Entergy Energy New Orleans and Louisiana since 2017 and 2018, respectively. We have experienced marketing and program staff in-house who lead these efforts, including 17 located in Louisiana. We also have developed innovative reporting, such as the Impact Report for the City and County of Denver’s Home Energy Rebate Program, which documents annual results, but also the challenges and opportunities for increasing participation among hard-to-reach residents and contractors.

The data feeding into the reporting framework will be managed on the APTracks platform. Project documentation will be processed by supporting operations team and loaded into our proprietary APTracks software platform to enable detailed tracking, reporting and record keeping. APTracks integrates the capabilities of Microsoft’s PowerBI platform to provide powerful reporting and visualization capabilities for quarterly and annual reporting. These reports will also be generated for in-house use, and using our PowerBI dashboard reporting, can easily generate ad-hoc reports as needed for LPSC inquiries. In addition to providing clear, consistent reporting the APTracks system is designed to provide access and clear data tracking and history to the EM&V contractors and audit teams.

Our team of analysts, supported by data and reporting from the APTracks platform, will continually assess trends for participation lapses and inequity of participation amongst customers and trade allies. Thoughtful analysis coupled with real-time data are key tools used daily to provide the program management team with recommendations for prioritizing and addressing program issues.

To monitor program results real time and ensure successful programs, APTIM manages a Trade Ally Portal that provides trade allies with status updates on their projects, program communications, up-to-date applications and communication channels with program staff, as well as opportunities to submit project applications that help to automate and quicken incentive processing time and allow for effective, yet quick, QA/QC by PA staff. This has been seen to reduce turnaround time and possible transcription errors.

Appendix 3 provides samples of reporting produced in previous work with programs and jurisdictions.

### **Question C6.**

The APTIM Team has demonstrated a strong capability to implement and manage effective QA processes for energy efficiency programs. We have achieved consistently high realization rates in evaluations and maintained a very low frequency of compliance audit findings across billions of dollars in program expenditures. The APTIM Team has develop and honed these processes over decades and successfully employed them across tens of millions of energy efficiency incentive requests and program implementer invoice reviews. We will bring these tried-and-true QA protocols to Louisiana's program.

The APTIM Team's suggested QA procedures will include application reviews, training assessment reviews, stakeholder surveys, customer surveys, and any additional areas where data needs to be reviewed. The foundation of our QA/QC approach is to establish and document the governing principles, standards, procedures, plans, policies, and performance evaluation metrics.

We will collaborate with our subcontractors and PI partners and any other local program stakeholders to better understand their internal processes so we can have an effective working relationship where we serve in a consultant capacity—striving for a “best practice” approach.

During Program operation, the APTIM Team staff will continuously monitor Program work processes and products to ensure they comply with guidelines in program documentation. Should any quality issues arise during program operations, the APTIM Team will work directly with the responsible party to address the immediate impacts of the issue and ensure that the underlying cause has been identified and addressed to prevent future occurrence. The APTIM Team will update program documentation as appropriate and notify other program staff and contractors of lessons learned.

In cases where financial and/or compliance audits reveal that a stakeholder is underperforming, the APTIM Team will coordinate with the stakeholder to identify the root cause and take steps to

confirm their understanding of the relevant operational procedures. In this situation, the APTIM Team will monitor the stakeholder and review performance quarterly to assure all financial and compliance issues have been resolved.

For oversight on PIs, the APTIM Team will monitor spending to budgets, energy savings realized, utility equity, reaching under-served communities and segments, customer satisfaction and complaint resolution. We have found these metrics to be most critical to achieve program success and high customer satisfaction. A final list of metrics will be determined through conversations with LPSC.

**Question C7.**

Our standard process for QA/QC is multi-faceted. For trade allies, we have tiered requirements to ensure savings are verified, quality standards are met, and safety of occupants and staff are never compromised. All incentives will be reviewed by PIs, with specific rules around field inspections. First, we will require all prescriptive projects above \$10,000 to have an onsite review by implementers. We also will require all custom projects to have onsite review. Second, we will require that the first five projects completed by a trade ally (and 5% of additional projects - randomly selected) have on-site verification.

We will also monitor customer satisfaction with trade allies through post participation surveys and monitor disputes and dispute resolution of customer complaints. To ensure trade allies follow our processes and to ensure transparency of our evaluation, we will assign a rating to each (Platinum, Gold, and Silver) based upon their success in recruiting projects, delivering savings, and customer satisfaction. We also use this rating to decide whom to assign to projects when a customer submits an incentive pre-application without a TA denoted. This process provides further incentives for TAs to perform well and to required standards.



For incentive reviews undertaken by PA staff, we will set tiered review requirements. All prescriptive requests above \$5k will be reviewed; all custom requests will be reviewed; and then 10% of prescriptive projects below \$5k will be reviewed randomly each month by our staff.

**D. Approach to Technical and Customer Support Functions**

**Question D1.**

As PA for Focus on Energy, we have a dedicated Utility Engagement team that liaisons with 107 Wisconsin utilities—comprised of IOUs, Municipals and Co-ops—participating in Focus on Energy. The team identifies and provides resources to help utilities effectively engage with their

customers on energy saving opportunities. In addition, the team leads initiatives that allow utilities to leverage the Program to enhance and expand upon the utilities' own services and programs. Through this decade long experience, the APTIM Team has developed a strong expertise in understanding how to engage and effectively coordinate with utilities of all sizes and complexity. We envision a dedicated FTE and team to coordinate across the IOUs, the gas utilities, municipals, and co-ops.

Response B5 and the QA/QC responses in Section C detail our approach to ensure work is performed satisfactorily and to high standards. PI Contracts, as used in the ENO and ELL program administration, Identify scope of work, terms of engagement, budgets, performance bonuses/penalties, milestone deliverables and energy savings goals. The Operating Manual will be a governing document that applies to all and that provides clear guidelines and eligibility requirements. The manual will provide program overviews, eligibility, process for participation, documentation requirements and reporting and evaluation requirements.

To facilitate payments, we will utilize our proprietary tracking system, APTracks, to allow for proper review of all incentive requests and PI invoices. As described in question C7, incentive review processes will be based upon the size, type (custom vs. prescriptive) and through random selection of an appropriate sample. All PI invoices will be thoroughly reviewed for accuracy, whether billings appear appropriate for work performed, billing rates conform to contract limits, and whether expenses adhere to program rules. Those incentives and invoices that are acceptable will be approved and sent to the appropriate party for payment, whether the utilities or another party, such as the Fiscal Agent. Since becoming the Focus PA, APTIM has achieved nearly spotless compliance audits, with no findings related to program spending, billing, or program accounting.

#### **Question D2.**

The APTIM Team is uniquely qualified to lead the statewide marketing efforts. APTIM led the development of rebranding and messaging for the Focus on Energy program across the state of Wisconsin which included developing a revamped website and tag line. Locally, APTIM led the rebranding for both ENO and ELL energy efficiency programs following Entergy's brand update in 2022. Additionally, APTIM's social media team has penetrated the social media markets by increasing reach by more than 357% for Instagram, 9% for Facebook and 23% for YouTube. Thanks to these efforts, Focus on Energy has exceeded its quad savings targets for every quad since APTIM assumed the PA role (see Appendix 9 for list of marketing awards won by the programs the APTIM Team administers).

We recognize several key marketing elements will include developing a new brand and brand standards for this Program as well as offering creative ways to co-brand with the utility partners, particularly during the initial 18 months of program launch. To engage the utility partners, we experienced success by providing templates for utilities to use on inserts, as well covering costs of these inserts can be invaluable, especially for the smaller co-ops. We also understand the importance and opportunities presented by the array of marketing and advertising tactics, from

social media to print to events. We have found that a key element for marketing as one voice with utilities is to include all the participating utilities logos on the website, but also to provide each with its own page to show the impacts on their territories.

We recognize that an important facet of the marketing plan will be reaching rural customers, low-income households, and renters. The APTIM Team has broad experience serving all customer types, with a particular focus on disadvantaged sectors. In 2023, we launched a platinum award winning, public awareness campaign that targeted low-income areas by overlaying census tract zip code information with marketing and advertising tactics. The campaign resulted in over 10 million impressions. We expect to tailor our messaging to each type of under-served community, knowing that all require nuanced approaches for engagement. We see value in working with community-based groups and local institutions and governmental agencies, given the success these approaches have shown across our programs. To replicate this success, we envision continuing our relationship with Melara Enterprises, a local multi-media marketing firm, whom we have successfully worked with for many years.

As part of the marketing effort, we will design, develop, and launch a program website, which will include an online store to allow e-commerce, as done with every program we administer. Our expectation is that this will be one program we RFP during the planning phase, with a focus on ease of use, breadth of products, and customer satisfaction.

APTIM Team has designed a range of sample naming and logo branding options - examples of this process can be found within Appendix 9. **Figure 6** shows an example of one of the brands we have worked to concept and could possibly further develop. In partnership with key stakeholders and the LPSC, we plan to create and refine the logo and brand based on feedback. It's important this is a collaborative process in which all key stakeholders approve of brand and program naming. The final phases will include brand identity development, launch and implementation. It is in those phases that we plan to create brand guidelines, typography, color palette, and visual elements along with a launch strategy and plan to ensure consistent brand representation across the State. Long-term plans to monitor and measure the brand's success will be included within implementation plans and adjustments will be made as needed.



**Figure 6. Example name and logo.**

### **Question D3.**

The APTIM Team has experience managing training for customers and trade allies across multiple statewide programs. Each year, we assist nearly 1,000 participants across nearly 100 different trainings and handle all facets of these programs from designing the annual training plan and goals, to securing the speakers and managing registration (including co-pays where necessary). We also take care to evaluate results post-training, particularly for EM&V, which can lead to additional savings, as seen with Focus on Energy.

Our experience with training matches our expertise in managing trade ally networks. The programs we manage touch more than 5,000 trade allies and we have direct experience

transitioning trade allies from statewide and utility-led energy efficiency programs. To complement their training, the Trade Ally Code of Conduct will ensure terms and conditions are clearly defined for trade allies and in alignment between the PA, LPSC and utility expectations.

The APTIM Team's approach to training extends beyond technical training needs to include energy efficiency sales tactics and training opportunities, financing options, workforce development and expansion, entrepreneurial development, and how to obtain external certifications, such as around diverse business status.

As part of workforce development training in Louisiana we have educated high school students about paths to careers in related trades, including placing apprentices in ENO projects. As part of our education focused approach, we are excited about a growing partnership with LSU to leverage the expertise in its Industrial Assessment Center (IAC) and with the community college network.

We believe a critical step in transitioning existing trade ally networks is to ensure an ease of transition, such as by making program requirements consistent with existing Quick Start programs; allowing them to co-brand with the new program; encouraging the best performing ones to expand into the new territories; and creating awards for trade allies who quickly adapt to the new requirements.

#### **Question D4.**

As Energy Efficiency PA, the APTIM Team will work hand-in-hand with the Evaluation Team in the TRM update process and development. We will play an oversight role on the implementation side and ensure that the updating processes align with overall program designs. The Evaluation Team, however, is responsible for reviewing and verifying the methods used for estimating energy savings in the proposed revisions.

Based on our experience and capability, we propose to conduct an initial measure review to inventory savings and participation rates and identify gaps in measure offerings. The team will then coordinate with the EM&V Contractor, the EEWG and LPSC staff to add new measures to the program while developing best practices for estimating savings.

As PA, we would ensure all review requests are coordinated and tracked effectively using the project task management tool. The tracking process would include capturing essential details related to the update requests, the implementation process, outcomes, and any lessons learned. These steps are crucial to consistently improve future TRM updates.

Ultimately, the APTIM Team, as the PA, ensures standards are met, the TRM is continually updated to reflect the best practices and that it remains a trusted resource for those involved in the energy efficiency programs in Louisiana.

Regarding our experience, as the Focus on Energy PA, APTIM serves as facilitator coordinating TRM-related updates. We help to organize and mediate discussions between implementing staff (who may propose new measures or revisions), the evaluation team (who ensure the rigor and



validity of energy-saving calculations), and the Wisconsin PSC staff (who provide oversight and final approval). This process is intricate, as it requires a fine balance between ensuring the greatest efficiency outcomes and maintaining a practical, implementable set of standards.

Our partner, VEIC manages stakeholder relationships and is a facilitator for multi-party TRM development. They produced the first nationally recognized TRM in 2000 for Vermont and have maintained and updated the TRM since. VEIC does the same for its Efficiency Smart and DCSEU TRMs, and has developed and updated TRMs for Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, and the mid-Atlantic region. Most of these TRMs contain gas and electric efficiency measures. VEIC's projects have involved the coordination of 45 annual meetings for technical advisory committees, working groups, and strategic oversight committees—resulting in recommendations supported by robust documentation, including many income-eligible measures.

### **Question D5.**

The APTIM Team has maintained several call centers in Louisiana, whether related to the energy efficiency programs or for state-led efforts, such as for disaster recovery. These call centers utilize advanced Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems. These systems play prerecorded messages in multiple languages and allow callers to access information without a live agent, especially useful during peak times. Thanks to this technology, these call centers have successfully handled more than 370,000 inbound and 230,000 outbound calls.

The call center will be available Monday through Friday, from 8-5 CT and staffed by representatives knowledgeable in energy efficiency program design, administration, delivery, and conservation measures. In addition to a dedicated toll-free line, there will also be a dedicated email account, which will be actively monitored to ensure all inquiries are responded to within one business day.

These same lessons learned in consolidating scripts and customer service best practices developed across our other statewide programs will be leveraged here, such as having strong connections to the PI call centers and strict KPIs for PIs on response times and escalation of problems.

Thanks to these strong protocols, the Call Center performance metrics the APTIM Team has achieved in Wisconsin are enviable:

- ▶ Number of calls: 58,533
- ▶ Average call handling time: 2 minutes
- ▶ Average wait time: 8 seconds
- ▶ Voicemail Processing: 100% returned within one business day

To ensure a similar level of success, we will leverage existing scripts, escalation processes, and KPIs as used with the Focus on Energy program.

## E. Cost Proposal

### Question E1.

The budget table is provided as Appendix 4, and Appendix 5 presents our hourly rate schedule. We have provided our best estimate of the administrative budget needed to achieve the stated goals, including developing a draft measure build to determine the resources needed to meet the identified savings targets. However, if the budget and resource demands greatly exceed expected levels and the new needs are outside of APTIM's control, we request a conversation about how to balance the budget with revised expectations.

### Question E2.

APTIM proposes utilizing the 10% at-risk fee structure. The KPIs underlying this at-risk portion would cover four priorities – savings achievement, LPSC Territory equity, customer satisfaction, and reaching identified under-served communities. As required, savings achievement represents 7% of the at-risk revenue and the remaining 3% split evenly among the other three elements. For savings, we propose 1.5% each for residential kWh and ccf and 1.5% each for commercial kWh and ccf goal attainment and 0.5% for meeting savings goals for each utility type (IOU & Municipal/Co-Op). The remaining 3% will be as follows: 1% for achieving pro-rata share of spending in each LPSC territory; 1% for Customer Satisfaction above 7 /10 as determined by a third party, with 0.5% for residential and business customers respectively; and 1% for reaching under-served segments, with the specific KPI to be determined after an initial study and to be mutually agreed upon by the LPSC.

### Question E3.

The proposed budget reflects the combined experience of APTIM's Team across eight statewide programs. We believe the key risks are:

1. The base budget may not be adequate to reach the savings targets, especially if under-served markets are prioritized. We believe the base budget is at least several million dollars too low to achieve all goals from energy savings, to serving disadvantaged communities, to launching new programs and serving new territories.
2. Launching programs for the disparate, small co-ops may require more resources than are available from each individual entity. We are also concerned that costs to reach small numbers of customers in these areas could exceed the budgets available from the smaller entities. We believe managing these budgets as a single fund could be advantageous.
3. While external resources from federally funded programs could assist in reaching low-income households, renters, and rural communities and reaching faith-based projects and community centers ("lighthouses"), there are fewer resources available to serve small commercial customers in the retail, service, and agri-business sectors. Reaching these customers, particularly, those served by small utilities, could be a challenge with the available budgets.

### Question E4.

See Appendix 6 for preferred terms.