**Regional Technical Forum**

**An Advisory Committee of the**

**Northwest Power and Conservation and Council**

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**Operations and Procedures Manual**

**May 15, 2014**

**Version 1.0**

The Regional Technical Forum (RTF) is chartered as an advisory committee of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council). Founded in 1999, the RTF is charged with developing consistent standards and protocols for verification and evaluation of energy savings used by electric utilities in the Pacific Northwest.

As an advisory committee of the Council, the RTF is subject to operating within the Charter of the Council and the Charter and By-Laws granted to the RTF by that body.

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# 1.0 Purpose

This Operations and Procedures manual describes how the activities, actions, decision-making and Council granted authorities are conducted by the RTF. This document serves to increase transparency and help ensure accountability of RTF actions and decisions.

# 2.0 RTF Organization, Roles and Terms

The operations and procedures outlined in this guide affect the RTF staff, voting and non-voting members of the RTF, the RTF Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), and RTF subcommittee participants. The RTF operates using a combination of in-house contract staff, volunteer subcommittee participation, and in-kind contributions from the Council. Multiple parties make-up the structure of the RTF and assist with the overall function and guidance of the group.

As an advisory body the RTF procedurally reports to the Council. The in-house RTF staff, manager, Chair and Vice Chair all assist and guide the RTF Voting Body with preparing technical analysis, explaining research, and helping draft recommendations to the Council. Additionally, the RTF manager, Chair and Vice-Chair prepare and bring forward policy related issues to the RTF PAC and assist with preparing recommendations to the Council regarding policy and governance issues of the RTF.

## 2.1 RTF Charter, Bylaws and Guidelines

The RTF acts as an advisory committee chartered by the Council. The Council approves the charter and bylaws under which the RTF operates. The charter and bylaws are updated on an as-needed basis and can be found on the RTF website: http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/Revised\_RTF\_Charter\_and\_Bylaws.pdf.

The RTF develops, maintains and adopts Unit Energy Savings Measures (UES) and Standard Protocols and may review Custom Measure Protocols or Impact Evaluations as requested using the *Operative* *Guidelines* posted on its web site: <http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/subcommittees/guidelines/>

RTF staff adhere to these *Guidelines* during the development, adoption and review of measures, protocols or review of custom measure protocols and impact evaluations. RTF staff track issues that arise related to the *Guidelines* and perform an annual update at the end of each calendar year.

## 2.2 RTF Staff

The RTF staff consists of contract staff, all serving one-year contracts with optional contract renewal dates possible. The maximum number of renewals without re-bidding is three times, set to coincide with RTF Member selection dates, which are also every three years. One Council staff is dedicated full time as the RTF Manager and overseas all contract staff. The RTF manager is also responsible for providing technical analysis and review of staff work products, helping to set meeting agendas, facilitating subcommittee discussions, tracking budget expenditures and work plan adherence, and serves as the liaison between RTF contract staff and the chair, vice Chair, RTF PAC, and the Council.

Additional Council staff provide in-kind services to the RTF in a part-time capacity. Those staff include the RTF chair, the vice-chair, the contracts administrator (Administrator) and an administrative assistant. In-kind contributions from the council include time to administer and manage contracts and prepare and host teleconference and in-person meetings. The function of the RTF chair and vice chair related to voting can be found in the RTF Charter and Bylaws on the RTF website.

Contract staff are technical and content experts and by agreement work principally for the RTF. Contract staff are competitively selected through a Request For Proposals (RFP) process for their unique and complimentary expertise. Contract staff selections are reviewed and approved by the Operations subcommittee and Council staff. Contracts for their work are included as part of the RTF approved work plan and budget.

## 2.3 Voting RTF members

As per the RTF Bylaws, the RTF is comprised of no fewer than twenty (20) and no more than thirty (30) members selected and appointed by the Council. All voting RTF members serve for three (3) calendar years following the date of notice by the Council. At the end of any three year term, a voting member may be re-appointed to subsequent terms if their technical abilities and skills continue to match the needs of the RTF.

Recommendations of nominees to the RTF are based on applicant areas of expertise, and RTF needs across multiple disciplines (program design, technology analysis, efficiency program management, and evaluation), markets (residential, commercial, industrial, utility infrastructure,) and technologies (industrial process, utility distribution, HVAC, etc.). Although geographic diversity is considered to help provide expertise in applicable efficiency implementation capabilities, technologies, or other unique considerations of those areas, member selection is not constituency based and RTF funding stakeholders are not automatically awarded a spot to serve as a voting member.

## A voting member contracting with the RTF to provide technical expertise to the RTF may, in some cases, receive compensation for time spent on RTF-related activities and for travel reimbursement. The Operations Subcommittee will approve these member contracts for compensation within the RTF’s approved budget.2.4 Ex Officio members

The RTF Charter also allows for state utility regulators from the region to be offered the opportunity to participate as Ex Officio, non-voting members of the RTF, or to serve as voting members at their discretion. Inclusion of Ex Officio members is intended to inform state regulatory bodies about RTF decisions by including regulators directly in the discussions.

## 2.5 Corresponding RTF members

Appointment of nominees to serve as a Corresponding Member of the RTF is conducted at the same time as nominations for RTF voting members, every three years. Corresponding member nominations are reviewed by RTF staff and recommended to the Council Power Division Director for approval based upon their expertise. There is no limit to corresponding member appointees. Corresponding members are an important aspect of the RTF as they are expected to engage with RTF matters on a regular basis and provide feedback, even if they are not permitted a vote. Contractors expecting to perform work for the RTF are often found to be corresponding members to avoid conflicts of interest with voting while still allowing their perspectives to be heard at meetings.

## 2.6 Operations Subcommittee

As per the [RTF Charter and Bylaws](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/Revised%20RTF%20Charter%20and%20Bylaws.pdf), the Operations Committee is made up of at least three non-staff RTF members in addition to RTF and Council staff that may support the subcommittee. Members are self nominated and appointed by the RTF Chair. The intent of membership is to have diverse representation of RTF members (BPA or member utilities, investor owned utilities, state regulators or other members). At the beginning of each three year member term, during the first quarter, the RTF requests member participation on the Operations Subcommittee.

As an authorized decision making group, the Operations Subcommittee is directed to acknowledge and authorize actions by RTF staff that are in conformance with the RTF approved Work Plan and Budget. In addition, they may form and recommend decisions for consideration by the entire RTF membership or the RTF PAC where larger policy context is being considered.

The Operations Subcommittee, reviews, helps prepare, and approves pending work of the RTF including, but not limited to:

* RTF meeting agendas
* RTF RFP’s
* RTF competitive bid selections
* Contract amendments
* Policies or positions for full RTF decision
* Forwarding of recommendations from the RTF to Council
* Selection of qualified consultants
* Nominations to either fill vacancies or re-appoint members to the RTF
* Budget, work plan and business plan review

## 2.7 Nomination and Appointment Schedule

In June of every third year (e.g. 2012, 2015, 2018…) all RTF members are notified of the termination of their appointment at the end of that calendar year. RTF staff prepares an RTF voting member solicitation for a new 3-year term which is reviewed and recommended for release by the RTF Operations Subcommittee in July of that calendar year. The RFP is published no later than August of the last year of RTF Member appointment.

The RFP requests nominees provide a cover letter of interest, expertise summary, current CV, and checklist of skills, knowledge and experience deemed applicable to the RTF. Nominee response to the RFP is due 30 days from the date of posting, usually by September of that year.

Prior to or during the RFP solicitation, the RTF may direct staff to solicit nominations to address technical, programmatic, or other expertise needs of the RTF in the coming years. Existing members may re-bid for continued membership, however no existing members are guaranteed a spot as a future voting member.

The RTF staff reviews and qualifies nominees for membership and proposes the list of voting and non-voting corresponding member nominees to the Operations Subcommittee for review and development of the RTF’s recommendation to the Council. Prior to recommending the final list to the Council, proposed nominees are reviewed with the executive director of the Council, the RTF chair, and the chair of the Council’s Power Committee. In October, and no later than November of the third year of RTF member appointment, the Council is presented with the RTF’s recommended nominees for appointment and asked to approve the membership. Members are notified of their appointment no later than December of the calendar year preceding their term of appointment. Those members who apply to become a voting member but are not ultimately selected are given the opportunity to become a corresponding member.

All Council appointments are contingent on the appointees signing the [RTF Conflict of Interest policy](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/RTF_Conflict_of_interest_policy.pdf) available on the RTF website and mailed to each member prior to the beginning of their term. No appointee may act in the capacity of an RTF member prior to the RTF chair receiving a signed Conflict of Interest Policy statement on file.

# 3.0 RTF Annual Budget and Business and Work Planning

## 3.1 Development of RTF Annual Business and Work Plans

The RTF operates on a multi-year funding cycle as secured by the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and a calendar year work plan and budget. The annual Business and Work Plan, including the budget, are recommended by the RTF to be approved by the Council in the last quarter of each year for the following calendar year.

Regional funding is by subscription and includes the Northwest’s investor and consumer owned utilities. The funding level for each subscriber is determined by the regionally agreed upon shares for funding the NW Energy Efficiency Alliance[[1]](#footnote-1).

The RTF work plan follows a format which includes nine primary categories that define the scope of work the RTF covers:

* New Measure Development
* Existing Measure Review and Updates
* Standardization of Technical Analysis
* Regional Coordination
* Research and Data Development
* Tools Development
* RTF Management
* RTF Member Support and Administration
* Website, Database Support, Conservation Tracking

The approved calendar year Budget, Business Plan and Work Plan are posted on the RTF web site for reference: <http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/workplan/>

## 3.2 Work Plan Progress Reporting

The RTF reviews progress on its annual work plans quarterly. A “dashboard” is used for reporting progress to the RTF PAC which displays metrics relating to percent completion of work; number of measures approved, reviewed, or developed; budget expenditures, and other progress relative to the work plan.

Each calendar year at the RTF’s June meeting a mid-year programming effort occurs in which staff reviews the current work plan and budget expenditures and provides a comparison between planned allocations and actual allocations. This information is presented to the Operations Subcommittee and to the RTF to provide a sense of what has been allocated so far and what is likely to be spent by the end of the year. If budget dollars are required to move across categories, or work plan items have been changed or removed, that information is presented in detail. Proposed changes in funding allocations are brought before the Operations Subcommittee and the RTF for approval prior to any changes being made. RTF staff will seek approval from the Council if changes in allocation are thought to be significant.

## 3.3 Business and Work Plan Development Schedule

The RTF develops its following year business and work plans throughout the preceding calendar year. Topics requiring the RTF’s attention or decisions needed in the upcoming year are collected and defined by RTF staff. The RTF members, RTF Operations Subcommittee, the Council and its staff, and the RTF PAC are invited to recommend topics for inclusion in the work plan. During the year, topics are retained by RTF staff for each of the general work plan categories. Following is the development schedule for formalizing draft plans and gaining an RTF recommendation for Council approval of the final business and work plans:

* Identifying following year work objectives Throughout the year
* Mid-year review of work plan progress June RTF meeting
* Draft work and business plan July – August
* Operations Subcommittee review August – September
* Draft plans for RTF and public review September
* Plans adopted by RTF October
* RTF plans recommended to Council October
* Plans approved by Council November

## 3.4 Work Plan Approval Process

Annual RTF budgets, Business and Work Plans are approved by the Council. The review and approval process follows these steps:

* The RTF Manager and staff propose a draft for the Chair and Vice chair to review, edit and comment on
* The RTF Operations Subcommittee reviews the edited draft and suggests changes or edits.
* The Operations Subcommittee recommends a Draft for RTF and public review for a period of 30 days. The public review copy is posted on the RTF’s web site and notice is sent to all RTF interested parties. Comments are submitted in writing through the web page.
* The comments from the RTF and public review are compiled and reviewed by RTF staff and proposed as indicated for inclusion in the reviewed draft plans for RTF decision.
* The Operations Subcommittee reviews the edited version and proposes its final version to submit to the RTF for a decision to recommend the plans to the Council.
* The RTF reviews and adopts the final version of the work plan and budget no later than its October meeting and prepares a recommendation of approval to the Council.
* The RTF PAC performs a parallel review of the plans and makes a recommendation for approval to the Council.
* The Council is provided the RTF Budget, Business and Work Plans no later than its October meeting of each calendar year.
* The Council approves the RTF Budget, Business and Work Plans at either its November or December meeting of each calendar year.

# 4.0 RTF Meetings

## 4.1 Scheduling

Each year in October, RTF staff publishes a draft schedule of meetings for the following calendar year. The draft schedule is developed for RTF member review and comment. The RTF traditionally meets the second or third Tuesday of each month with no fewer than 12 meetings scheduled per year. The meetings are scheduled whenever possible to avoid conflict with major regional or national events and the NW Power and Conservation Council monthly meetings.

Feedback from RTF members on the proposed schedule for the following year is considered and incorporated into the final proposed schedule presented at the December RTF meeting. RTF staff reserves the right to make changes to the meeting dates and number of total meetings throughout the calendar year as necessary. The schedule is posted on the RTF web site before the beginning of the next calendar year.

## 4.2 RTF Meeting Agendas

Agendas for upcoming meetings are published and posted to the RTF web site no later than ten (10) days prior to the scheduled meeting. The agendas are prepared by RTF staff and reviewed and approved by the Operations Subcommittee on a monthly basis. Agenda items that include presentations, analysis, UES measure workbooks or other documents requesting an RTF decision are posted no later than seven (7) days prior to the scheduled meeting in order to give members adequate time for review and familiarization.

## 4.3 RTF Meeting Minutes and Records

Meeting records include minutes, voting records, presentations and supporting documentation. Meeting minutes published for each meeting help document the agenda items presented, information shared, discussion, and final decisions of the RTF. A register of attending members (in person and by phone) and is included in the minutes of each meeting.

The minutes are reviewed and provided in final form by an outside contractor within 10 business days after the RTF meetings. Minutes are posted on the RTF web site for no fewer than fourteen (14) days prior to the following RTF meeting. Meeting minutes of the previous meeting are adopted by the RTF at the subsequent meeting after RTF review and discussion.

Staff review and editing of the minutes includes the following steps:

1. A dedicated editorial contractor publishes a first draft of the minutes from live note taking during the meeting.
2. RTF staff documents the specific language of decisions by the RTF independent of the editorial contractor’s minutes. The decision language is entered into a Decision Record document that is maintained by staff.
3. The decision language document and staff notes are provided to the editorial contractor for the first draft of the minutes where the specific decision language is compared, corrected and included.
4. The editorial contractor sends the draft minutes to the staff for final review. After staff review, the RTF Administrative Assistant posts the proposed minutes on the website in the agenda for approval at the next RTF meeting.

The entire permanent record of meetings, including all presentation data and approved meeting minutes, is kept on the RTF web site at: <http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/archive.asp>

## 4.4 Decisions

The RTF follows the guiding principles of Roberts Rules of Order for meeting management and decision making, as well as the adopted [RTF Charter and Bylaws](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/Revised%20RTF%20Charter%20and%20Bylaws.pdf) and the adopted [Conflicts of Interest Policy](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/RTF%20Conflict%20of%20interest%20policy.pdf) for voting.

Decisions at the RTF generally conform to the voting guidelines laid out by Robert’s Rules of Order. Motions of the RTF are either for adoption (measures, guidelines, protocols, agendas, minutes), acceptance (third party reports to the RTF), authorization (Staff actions, forwarding decision requests to Council, enter into contract negotiations or re-negotiations, expenditure under the budget) or advise (direct staff or contractor action) on behalf of the RTF.

Any RTF member, subcommittee or staff may prepare motion language in advance for RTF member proposal and an RTF member shall make any motions either verbally or in writing for RTF decision.

## 4.5 Post RTF Meeting Staff Responsibilities

In addition to duties associated with website updates of minutes and decisions, following each RTF meeting staff will incorporate comments received during the meeting and accepted in the final decision into the work products that they were the lead on. These work products will then be sent to the third party QC contractor for review, (as explained in Section 6.4) before they are marked as “final” on the RTF website.

Staff will also complete a [Small/Rural Utility Checklist](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/subcommittees/smallutilities/) for each UES or Standard Protocol adopted by the RTF to present to the Small/Rural Subcommittee at its next meeting. Staff are responsible for updating these checklists for work products that they have been the lead on if any changes are made between the Small/Rural Subcommittee meeting and the completion of the QC review.

# 5.0 RTF Work Management

The RTF Manager manages, prioritizes and tracks the work being conducted by RTF staff, contractors, RTF subcommittees, RTF, and Council staff providing support services to the RTF. The RTF Chair and Vice Chair oversee the RTF Manager’s work.

## 5.1 RTF Work Tracking

The RTF Manager assigns work and establishes the schedule for RTF staff and contractors to complete work and bring it before the RTF. Ongoing work of the RTF is tracked by staff using a shared online workbook. The workbook is accessible to all RTF staff for updating progress and tracking other administrative procedures and milestones in real-time. Staff are responsible for keeping the shared workbook up to date with items they have been assigned.

## 5.2 RTF Budget Tracking Workbooks

The RTF Manager and Administrator maintain the updated budget workbook and PAC dashboard, tracking the progress of committed and expended funds under the RTF approved budgets.

## 5.3 Work Prioritization

RTF staff attempts to prioritize their work according to the needs of the region and the availability of data. With the advent of sunset dates for all RTF measures, staff considers the need to bring these measures before the RTF prior to the sunset date. During the prior year of work plan development, staff determines which measures will sunset in the upcoming year to help assess timing, staff resources, and level of effort needed. Feedback from the RTF on non-sunsetting work plan items helps determine the priority of work done by staff and work solicited from outside consultants.

Each month the RTF staff reviews upcoming agenda items and their importance relative to the annual work plan. Prioritization of any single agenda item typically depends on several key factors that staff review to determine which items should be brought to the RTF at a particular time:

* Presentation material for meeting is sufficient (i.e. well founded) to bring before the RTF
* Recommendation from technical or research subcommittee has been developed
* Future agenda items are dependent on decisions related to other agenda items
* Overall work load of staff is already engaged in high priority tasks
* Presenter is availability and material is ready in the case of agenda items relying on outside entities
* Momentum from a previous meeting will keep agenda item from needing lengthy re-introduction to the RTF
* RTF has requested agenda item by a certain date
* Sunset dates of measures or protocols require a decision by a certain date

It is often the case that decisions from one meeting impact the agenda for the next meeting. RTF staff discusses the priority of moving agenda items, as well as any new priority items that may have emerged with the Operations Subcommittee during its monthly meeting. Using this process, the RTF attempts to complete work according to their pre-set work plan, but relies on the guidance of the Operations Subcommittee to allow for flexibility when needed.

## 5.4 RTF Staff Meetings

The RTF Staff meet weekly to update each other on work progress, track administrative procedures, project progress, new issues of importance, and to address technical or policy issues that need either staff, RTF, or Operations Subcommittee attention. Staff determines the readiness of agenda items for the next RTF meeting and helps identify issues for the Operations Subcommittee to review.

On the day before each monthly RTF meeting, staff meet with the chair and vice chair to discuss the upcoming agenda items and any known issues or areas for discussion.

## 5.5 Work Quality Control

RTF Staff conduct detailed technical data collection and analysis. In addition to the RTF manager’s review of work products, staff is requested to review each other’s work for consistency and accuracy whenever possible. After the adoption of a work product (UES measure workbook, Standard Protocol, Calculator, etc.) an independent third party contractor is sent the work product to ensure there are no calculation errors, misapplication of approved methodology, or source documentation errors. The Quality Control (QC) Contractor is required to be familiar with the RTF Guidelines and technical characteristics of UES Measure Assessment Workbooks. Final documentation of the QC review is sent back to RTF staff in the form of a review memo highlighting any errors discovered, changes that were made to the document, limitations of review, and further suggestions for improvement. If substantive errors are found during the QC review, the work product is brought back before the RTF for a decision on how to incorporate the deficiencies found.

# 6.0 Document Management

The RTF maintains a public record of all its deliberations and decisions on its web site. Documents not subject to RTF presentation are also archived on the Council servers and are subject to public records law disclosure. Those include e-mail memorandums, preliminary data analysis, documents submitted by contractors or those proposing to be contractors to the RTF, applications for RTF nomination as a member or corresponding member, and any statements of qualifications submitted for qualified consultant status. Information labeled “confidential” on each page may be held by the RTF as confidential to the extent allowed under Oregon law regarding public record.

## 6.1 Documentation Record

The RTF maintains a record of all meeting agendas, minutes and presentation material from all general RTF meetings and subcommittee meetings as well as approved UES measures and Standard Protocols on its web site. Interim drafts of materials deliberated by RTF subcommittees and supporting documents leading up to final RTF approval are also maintained on the relevant subcommittee web pages.

The RTF also maintains a library of resources used to develop measures and protocols. The [RTF Supporting Documents](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/measures/support/files/Default.asp) section of the web page contains the current and historical versions of supporting documents, standardized templates and data files. Many of the methods for estimating savings, documenting data sources, and conducting reviews using standard methods are contained within this section.

## 6.2 UES and Standard Protocol Documentation

All historic and currently approved UES measure workbooks and standard protocols, research plans (if applicable) and protocol calculators are kept on the RTF website. Each UES workbook and Standard Protocol is designated with a version number, posting date, category and status designation, and the date of the RTF approval. Historic workbooks are kept on the website for reference within each measure page.

# 7.0 Contracting

The RTF contracts for work using two processes, both of which align with Council procurement policy. The first method is a competitive bids process conducted through a formal Request For Proposals (RFP). The second is for Task Order contract work for an amount not to exceed $25,000 and is conducted through competitive bids requested by RTF staff from two or more pre-qualified consultants.

Projections for required RTF contract work is described in the RTF annual Business and Work Plans. The approved budget determines the purpose and estimate of cost for contracts that are likely to be entered into during any given calendar year using either competitive bid RFP’s or Task Order bids requested from pre-qualified consultants.

All RFP’s for RTF work are reviewed and approved for legal and contract conformity with Council policy, first by RTF staff and secondly by Council legal and finance staff.

Technical Scopes of Work and staff budget estimates for RFP’s and Task Orders are reviewed and approved by the RTF Operations Subcommittee for their conformance with the approved work plan and budget prior to being released for bid.

## 7.1 Qualified Consultants

Consultant pre-qualification is conducted through an open, ongoing solicitation of Statements of Qualifications (SOQ). These competitive bid requests are eligible for Task Order contracts not to exceed $25,000.

Consultant SOQ’s are reviewed as they are received by administrative and technical staff of the RTF. Consultants are selected for their relevant technical, policy or program experience and demonstrated expertise with work pertinent to RTF needs and objectives. Consultants are notified within 30 days of their selection or denial of inclusion on the Qualified Consultants list. The list of currently qualified consultants is published on the RTF web site: <http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/proposals/Default.htm>

## 7.2 Statements of Work (SOW)

RTF staff prepares a SOW based on work required to be completed as part of the approved business plan and work plan. The SOW is developed, documented, reviewed and issued in conformance to Council standards for procurement.

Typically SOW’s are developed by RTF staff during the last calendar month of the budget year to begin the schedule and pace for work of the RTF the following year.

The RTF Operations Subcommittee reviews SOW’s and expected budgets prior to release of any RFP. Statements of Work include the following information:

* Background for the work to be conducted
* General purpose and scope statement
* Relevant documents supporting or informing the work
* The specific tasks to be completed by the selected contractor
* Role the contractor will have with the RTF or it’s subcommittees
* The deliverable work products and schedule for delivery
* Communication schedule with the RTF on work progress
* The contract term and interim schedules
* Staff estimates of cost for specific work stated as a maximum expected bid

Tasks required to complete the scope of work are identified and staff estimates the hours and cost for each task. The cost estimates for specific work are based mainly on past contract expense experience and include estimates of contractor hours, material and travel costs. RTF staff review the SOW and cost estimate prior to presentation to the Operations Subcommittee for approval.

## 7.3 RFP Development and Solicitation Period

RFP’s are formatted to directly use elements from the Statement of Work (see Section 8.2). The Statement of Work accompanies the RFP published on the RTF webpage (<http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/proposals/Default.htm>).

The RFP includes:

* Details on submission date
* Format of submission or proposal
* How to propose questions regarding the RFP or SOW
* Submittal deadline, by date and time
* Staff estimated maximum cost
* RTF contact

The RFP’s are open for bid for no less than three weeks, with one month being the typical RFP solicitation period. The due date and time are indicated in the RFP and an email announcement is sent to a list of potential bidders with a link to the Statement of Work and RFP posted on the RTF website as well as a due date for proposals. Any contractor or consultant may request to be placed on the RFP notification list for RFP’s using the [Mailing List Form](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/maillist.asp) on the RTF website.

## 7.4 Questions on RFP’s

The RTF accepts written questions via e-mail regarding open RFP’s. The inquiry must be sent to the attention of the contact listed on the RFP. The contact staff determine if the draft response: 1) responds appropriately to the inquiry, and 2) if the inquiry and response require either Council legal or contract staff review before sending an RTF staff response to the party that inquired. RTF Staff respond within 24 hours of questions regarding RFP’s or SOW’s. That response includes either that the response has been reviewed and approved for release, or a notification of receipt and an expected time for legal and/or contract review and response if necessary. Answers to questions are posted publically on the RTF website under the specific RFP proposal page in the Questions and Answers section and remain there for the duration of the solicitation period.

## 7.5 Contractor Selection for Task Orders (≤ $25,000)

Qualified Consultant contractor proposals for work not exceeding $25,000 are selected by staff and approved by the Operations Subcommittee for work identified in the current approved operating budget. Contracts not exceeding $25,000 which are not included in the work plan, but where the RTF budget is adequate for approval may be either approved by the Operations Subcommittee or referred to the RTF for a decision.

## 7.6 Contractor Selection for RFP’s (>$25,000)

For work defined in the RTF work and business plan, the RTF Operations Committee typically conducts independent review of each proposal. No fewer than two RTF staff also review the proposals for RFP’s and the RTF manager may request RFP proposal review by any RTF member for technical or administrative reasons.

Reviewers score proposals from one (1) to ten (10) on a form for the following weighted criteria:

* Technical Approach (30%)
* Management Approach (10%)
* Team Qualifications (30%)
* Price (30%)

Notes by each reviewer are consolidated and the reviewing staff and RTF manager review and compare scores, discuss outlier or variant scores between reviewers, and agree on a proposed selection.

The RTF manager notifies the Operations Subcommittee of the proposed selection and once the Operations Subcommittee approves the contractor choice, the RTF Manager notifies all bidding contractors of the selection.

The RTF maintains scoring workbooks for each proposal as a record of the composite scores but does not release them to the public or to any of the bidders on the RFP. Additionally, although the winning contractor is publically announced to other bidders, details of each individual bid, including price, proposal strengths and weaknesses and timeline, are not discussed publically.

## 7.7 Contract Development and Management

Contracts are developed following the Council contract requirements and the SOW proposed under the RFP. The contract and SOW are forwarded to the selected contractor by the RTF Administrator. Typically, no more than ten (10) business days are provided for contract review and execution.

Once the contract is agreed upon, the RTF contract lead staff will meet with the contractor to coordinate a deliverable schedule and clarify implementation of the work. The contractors’ need for any RTF support is identified and any schedule for interim staff review or feedback is determined.

Contract amendments and extensions may be granted by the RTF so long as any proposed changes to the SOW, timeline, or budget are brought before the Operations Subcommittee. The RTF contract lead staff provides the necessary documentation for review and decision and the Operations Subcommittee determines if the SOW changes continue to meet the intent of the RFP and the RTF’s expectations for the work.

## 7.8 Sole Source Justification

In certain cases a sole source contract may be justifiable if the nature of the work requires it and one or more of the following conditions are true:

* Contractor is considered the predominant experts in the particular field of work being proposed
* Contractor has facilities, equipment or prior experience of a highly specialized nature that is exclusive and vital to the work being proposed

Note that the following reasons are not acceptable justification for sole sourcing per the Council’s contracting policy:

* A high degree of experience or expertise which is not exclusive to the contractor
* Low anticipated price
* Prior experience with the Council

Any sole sourced contract that is larger than the $25,000 limit for task orders must receive a recommendation from the Operations Subcommittee and the RTF PAC and ultimately be approved by the Council. For all sole sourced contracts larger than $25,000, a justification memo is prepared and kept with the contract as reference for audit purposes. For sole source justifications on task orders that are $25,000 or less, the Operations Subcommittee must review the RTF staff-provided reasoning and approve the selection of the sole source contract.

# 8.0 Subcommittees

The RTF conducts many of its deliberations using subcommittees of the RTF membership and other technical experts. There are standing subcommittees for work that is typically ongoing (e.g. Guidelines, Operations) as well as subcommittees that meet only several times for specific, technical reasons (eg. SEEM Calibration, Non-Res Lighting). A subcommittee may also be convened for a single meeting only to discuss a specific technical issue in more detail or to address a specific topic referred to committee through a motion by the RTF. These subcommittees meet to review and deliberate data, sources, and specific measure questions with the objective of forming a recommendation to the entire RTF on the subcommittee topic discussed.

## 8.1 Subcommittee Participants

The RTF maintains a list of Subcommittees that are designed to focus on the technical details of a measure or specification. Subcommittee meetings are held on an as-needed basis and are open to all who wish to attend. There is no limit to the number of participants on a particular subcommittee, and any participant can join as many subcommittee meetings as desired.

## 8.2 Membership

Aside from the Operations Subcommittee, RTF technical Subcommittees are open to any RTF member, corresponding member, contractor or technical experts with specific knowledge of the subcommittee’s topic. The lead RTF staff in charge of the subcommittee may invite outside experts for single presentations or to provide technical support throughout subcommittee deliberations. Participants are typically recruited through RTF general meeting requests, or through voting and corresponding member contacts depending on the subject matter to be discussed.

The Operations Subcommittee membership is limited to RTF Members and RTF Ex- Officio members and staff. Contractors are not allowed to participate in the Operations Subcommittee due to conflicts of interest concerns.

## 8.3 RTF Staff Role

The RTF manager appoints a staff lead and a support personto attend all subcommittee meetings. Other staff or members with technical expertise in the subcommittee topics may participate as well, however the staff lead and support person are in charge of agenda development, presentation materials, minutes taking, key issues, conformance with RTF Guidelines and development of other technical data, analysis or report research as requested by the subcommittee. Staff may also contact subcommittee members in advance of meetings to encourage participation and to determine if the member or their organization can provide specific technical procedural or other support to the subcommittee’s decision making.

## 8.4 Meeting Scheduling

In order to provide the broadest possible participation, RTF subcommittee meetings are held both in-person and through online web conferencing. The RTF administrative assistant polls subcommittee members to determine the best date and time to schedule meetings. An informal poll at any RTF meeting may also be used to schedule a future meeting. Typically meetings are scheduled and members noticed two weeks in advance of the meeting.

The RTF Operations subcommittee meets monthly within two weeks of each RTF meeting to review and approve the upcoming RTF meeting agenda as well as discuss any issues that have arisen since the last Operations subcommittee meeting.

## 8.5 Meeting Minutes and Materials

RTF staff, or a contractor assigned to facilitate that subcommittee’s work, keep notes of the issues, discussion, and resolution or additional needs of the subcommittee. Subcommittee notes and any other meeting presentation materials are posted on the RTF web page for the respective subcommittee. Meeting notes include the attendees, the agenda and any pertinent discussion notes.

## 8.6 Decisions and Recommendations to the RTF

The subcommittee’s purpose is to avoid requiring the full RTF to discuss highly technical issues in detail and to bring forth a well-developed recommendation to the full RTF when possible. However subcommittees do not need to reach consensus on technical issues to have items brought before the RTF. The subcommittee may make decisions to direct RTF staff or contractors to conduct further research or they may comment on documents to be used for RTF presentation by the subcommittee. If a consensus cannot be reached on an issue discussed at the meeting, the staff lead in charge of the subcommittee decides whether to continue to hold subcommittee meetings in an attempt to resolve the issue, or to bring it before the full RTF for a recommendation.

## 8.7 Small and Rural Utility Subcommittee

The RTF convenes the Small and Rural Utility Subcommittee at least quarterly to review the applicability and usefulness of the RTF’s work to that constituency. The subcommittee provides small and rural utility organizations with the opportunity to provide the RTF with information regarding their needs, priorities, measure types, delivery methods and to address other issues of importance related to RTF work. A specified budget and work plan is developed to support the needs of the small and rural utilities and is included in the overall RTF budget and work plan.

# 9.0 Public Outreach

The RTF maintains a list of interested parties who receive e-mail notices regarding its work, RFP’s or other solicitations for data requests.

## 9.1 Public Presentations

The RTF works with the Council to generate materials for presentations given across the region. The aim of these presentations is to let interested parties know who and what the RTF is, what its work consists of, how it benefits the region, what its budget process consists of, what the regions constituents get for their investment, how entities can participate in the RTF, and how they can request that the RTF take up projects of interest to them.

The purpose of these presentations is two-fold. First is to inform parties about the RTF and provide information specific to their request, and second is to provide an opportunity for input on RTF priorities and ways of doing business to improve the RTF’s service to the region.

RTF staff provides presentations at utility roundtables, large regional efficiency conferences and BPA energy summits or meetings that their member utilities attend. RTF staff is available to make these presentations, upon request at other venues as time and budget allow.

## 9.2 Public Publications

The RTF Quarterly Newsletter is a periodical that summarizes the RTFs work during the previous quarter. This Quarterly newsletter is sent to the Council, Council members and RTF Policy Advisory Committee and is made available at the monthly RTF meeting when published. The current issue, as well as all past issues are hosted on the RTF website under the [Quarterly Newsletter](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/newsletter/default.htm) link.

Each year in July the RTF develops an Annual Report which showcases the highlights from the past year, as well as provides a progress report on what has occurred during the first half of the current year. This annual report is developed by RTF staff, with support from the external editorial contractor used to develop RTF meeting minutes.

A draft version of the Annual Report is prepared by the editorial contractor and sent to the RTF manager for review. Once content is finalized, a Final-Draft version is sent over to the Council Public Affairs division for reworking into the Annual Report template. The RTF manager works with Public Affairs to iterate on content and layout. Once finalized, the report is printed for public distribution and hosted on the RTF Website under the [Quarterly Newsletter](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/newsletter/default.htm) Link. A schedule of the typical Annual Report is as follows:

* Middle of May: Finalize outline and assignments
* Beginning of June: Text sections due to editor
* Middle of June: Draft Annual Report; begin graphics
* Middle of June: Review comments due to editor
* End of June: Final text to graphic artist
* Beginning of July: Annual Report complete and printed
* Beginning of August: RTF staff present Annual Report to Council

# 10.0 Data Confidentiality

As the RTF is an advisory committee to the Council, a publically chartered non-profit organization, most documents and correspondence received or developed are public record and therefore subject to public records requests. However, the RTF (or Council, as appropriate) can enter into agreements that will protect commercially sensitive information that developers or program operators may wish the RTF to review and/or consider.

# 11. Measure Development, Review and Revision

RTF staff, RTF members, subcommittees, corresponding members, or any other interested party may develop a measure or presentation for RTF consideration. For measures, preparation of a draft Measure Assessment Workbook and presentation to RTF staff and/or subcommittee review is required prior to bringing the item forward to present at the full RTF. The RTF may accept unsolicited proposals for a new or revised measure at anytime using the online [Proposal Submission Form](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/proposalform) on the RTF website. Staff will determine the appropriateness of the proposal and if deemed applicable to bring to the attention of the RTF, will coordinate with a spot on a future agenda.

## 11.1 UES and Standard Protocol Measure Developers

RTF Staff, RTF Members, Corresponding Members and any other interested party who wishes to develop UES Measure workbooks or Standard Protocols may do so in conformance with the current adopted RTF [Operative *Guidelines*](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/subcommittees/Guidelines/).

## 11.2 Document Naming Convention

Uniform nomenclature is used on the RTF web page, on measure supporting documents, presentation titles and UES measure assessment workbooks to provide clear and consistent distinction between document versions. UES measure workbooks are named in specific order and include: market sector (e.g. Ind, Ag, Com, Res), market subsector (e.g. Grocery, Appliances, DHW), measure name (e.g. Display Case ECM, Ductless Heat Pumps, Clothes Washers), building type (eg. SF for Single Family, MF for Multi-Family), and a version number. Several techniques should be followed for consistent naming convention:

* Abbreviations of heat pump (HP), single family (SF), LED's and ECM's are acceptable as part the measure name and building type section
* Once measures are reviewed and approved by the RTF, staff will make the workbook version conform to the appropriate version and the date on the web page posting
* While under review by RTF Staff, an underscore and the initials of the staff lead should be added to the end of the file
* UES Workbooks and Standard Protocols should have the words “PROPOSED” after the workbook version number when being posted for presentation at the RTF. This will then be removed once the workbook, protocol, or calculator has gone through final QC review and is posted in the database of RTF measures on the website.

## 11.3 Presentations at the RTF

Materials subject to an RTF decision are posted to the RTF website for review no fewer than seven (7) days prior to the RTF meeting where they are scheduled for presentation. Work products that are not up for decision should be posted to the RTF website as soon as they are available, but no less than a day before the RTF meeting for review. A general presentation outline should be followed for each measure presentation to ensure that adequate information is given. RTF staff review proposal presentations and may modify them to conform to the RTF’s standards for presentations. This presentation template, maintained by staff and located on the RTF website, (<http://rtf.nwcouncil.org/measures/support/files/Default.asp>) is utilized to keep presentations focused on key issues that the RTF needs to discuss. Although RTF staff are typically the lead presenters of materials at meetings, support presenters will be used when extensive analysis has been done by an outside party. All presentations pertaining to RTF work products (UES measures, Standard Protocols, etc.) should be free of company and utility branding and logos.

The presentation format includes at a minimum:

* Measure Overview, listing current category, status, sunset date and reason for bringing before the RTF(and update if applicable).
* Measure history including subcommittee attendance (if applicable)
* Summary of updates and/or list of any recommendations from a recommendations memo and actions taken to address them
* Staff highlighted areas for RTF discussion
* Measure analysis and results (including research plan if applicable)
* RTF staff recommendation
* Draft proposed motion for RTF consideration

Several items may require a “first look” where a decision is not necessary but direction from the RTF on how to proceed is. Typically these are items where:

* There is substantial impact on programs region wide either for savings impact or applicability
* An RTF subcommittee does not provide a consensus recommendation
* RTF members request additional time for technical review by themselves or other technical experts
* Better data is pending and is determined to be necessary for a reliable measure analysis or specification

## 11.4 Measure Posting To the RTF Web Site

Once the RTF has approved a measure at its meeting, the RTF Staff or the contractor make any required amendments or updates based on the recommendation and/or motion of the RTF. Staff will post the work product to the website with a note to indicate “Currently undergoing QC review” and send the same file to the quality control contractor for review. A third party review is conducted on all RTF staff developed work products after the RTF has approved them. Once QC is complete, the final work product is posted to the website with a note indicating “QC review complete. Posting to the web site constitutes formal approval of a work product by the RTF.

## 11.5 Measure Review

RTF Staff and the quality control contractor review workbooks for general characteristics of completeness, accuracy, clarity, data source inclusion, conformance with RTF Operative *Guidelines*, and faithful application of approved RTF methodology. The following elements are reviewed for completeness:

* Measure description and summary are consistent with the RTF decision and measure naming convention is accurate
* Measure table is complete and reflects measure applications presented at the RTF meeting for adoption
* ProCost model has been run on workbook current data
* Measure input and output table is complete and links back to calculations are accurate and traceable
* Cited sources are well documented and where possible, links to the report or study cited are given
* All calculations and formulas have been checked for completeness and accuracy
* All summary data table used in the workbook are verified to reflect raw data not included in the workbook
* Any proprietary information is removed from the workbook and appropriately referenced or summarized

# 12.0 RTF TOOLS AND MODELS

Work products for the RTF typically rely on transparent and consistently formatted spreadsheet analyses. For certain work products however, tools other than the standard RTF workbooks are needed to perform specific functions.

## 12.1 Simplified Energy and Enthalpy Model (SEEM)

The RTF uses SEEM for estimation of residential savings using prototype residential single family and multifamily structures for the various climate zones in the region. SEEM is a single zone model designed to estimate the energy consumption of small-scale residential building structures. The model consists of an hourly thermal simulation and an hourly moisture (humidity) simulation that interacts with duct specifications, equipment, and weather parameters to calculate the annual heating and cooling energy requirements of the building. It is based on algorithms consistent with current American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), American Heating and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI), and International Organization for Standards (ISO) calculation standards.

As new regional consumption data becomes available, the RTF is tasked with periodically calibrating SEEM to real-world conditions. Once calibrated, SEEM is then used in accordance with the RTF Guidelines as the tool to estimate energy savings for a suite of heating/cooling and weatherization measures for residential structures.

## 12.2 ProCost

The RTF uses ProCost to review all efficiency measures in accordance with the Council’s benefit cost methodology. The model was developed to provide a method to characterize the costs and benefits of conservation programs so that they can be compared on an equal footing to other energy resource options including generation and other demand side resources. All of the costs and benefits that the Council agrees can be quantified and monetized are included in the model. Each measure that is evaluated at the RTF is run through ProCost to determine a final Total Resource Cost (TRC) and serves as a record of the RTF-approved savings, cost and life assumptions.

ProCost is maintained internally at the Council, and a small amount of budget is allocated each year in the work plan to provide updates to the model.

1. Northwestern’s contribution is fixed at $30,000. The RTF adjusts its work plan accordingly. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)