

DOCKETED

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Response to California RFI:

**Contractor Training for Inflation Reduction Act
Residential Energy Rebate Programs**

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SEP 25, 2023

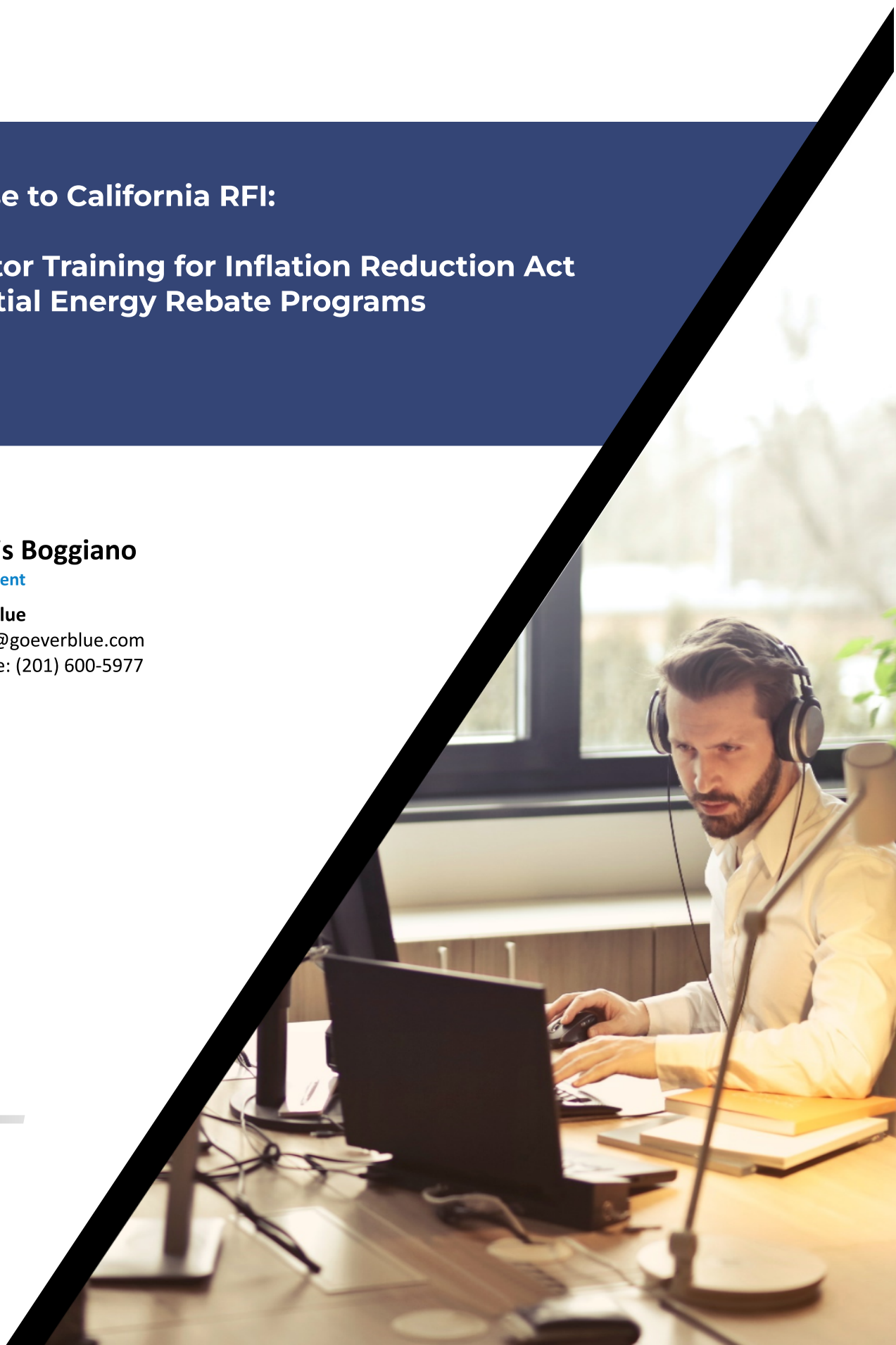


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Cover Letter

Everblue works with 15+ states to deliver both training for home performance contractors and/or software for managing application processes and industry credentials. We have been serving state governments and the home performance industry since 2008.

After reading the Contractor Training Grant (CTG) RFI, we believe there are two areas where we can help the California Energy Commission with respect to contractor training:

1. BPI & RESNET train (Everblue is an IREC Accredited training provider)
2. EverCert: Workforce Metrics & Tracking Software

We could help recruit individuals for training, track their journey through certification, and ultimately manage a single “qualified contractor list” for the state to determine who is eligible to perform work associated with rebates. While beyond the scope of this RFI, Everblue could also manage the rebate application process itself.

We'd love to answer any questions. Everblue is a Veteran Owned Business incorporated. You can reach me at chris@goeverblue.com or 201-600-5977.



Chris Boggiano

President

Everblue

States Working With Everblue

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Responses to RFI Questions

1. Please provide information on available state and federal residential energy contractor training and similar programs in California, including a list of organizations currently providing training, credentialing, and/or wrap around services. Please include references on:

a. Residential (single-family and multifamily) and commercial energy auditor availability and readiness;

Everblue:

- IREC Accredited
- Building Performance Institute (BPI) Training Provider & Test Center
- Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) Training Provider
- Conducts in-person training classes nationwide
- Currently works with 15+ state governments
- Wrote the CTG application template that DOE is providing to SEOs

b. Available skills assessment reports for existing education and training programs, such as on new energy technologies, latest best practices, or newly launching programs.

Please see the attached dataset with an analysis of qualified contractors with relevant BPI or RESNET certifications.

2. If IRA Contractor Training funds are used to supplement existing workforce development programs in California, which programs are most closely aligned with the goals of the IRA Contractor Training Program?

Everblue has worked with CA-based non-profit [Emerald Cities](#) to train individuals from the Southern California Regional Energy Network (SoCalREN)'s Green Path Careers (GPC) program.

The GPC program helps Opportunity Youth — 18 years and over who are homeless, nearing homelessness, transitioning from foster care to independent living, justice impacted, low income or otherwise at risk for hardship — work toward rewarding careers in the sustainable economy by teaching them the life and employment skills required to succeed in the high-growth energy efficiency industry.

3. What gaps in existing workforce development programs in California can be addressed through the IRA Contractor Training Program? What is the current supply of qualified skilled energy efficiency workers compared to the projected future demand?

Our analysis shows that California currently has 132 individuals qualified, skilled energy efficiency workers and will need 2312 to meet projected demand from HOMES & HEAR.

Please see the attached data table with Everblue's analysis for CA along with other states and territories. We created this dataset for DOE and NREL and expect they will share it with SEOs in the coming weeks.

4. What certifications should be funded through contractor training for residential energy rebate programs in California to support the purpose of this funding and lead to good-quality jobs? As stated in the guidance from the U.S. Department of Energy on this topic: good-quality jobs are jobs that pay sustaining wages with wage progression, benefits, access to paid leave, opportunities for career advancement through training and education, adequate staffing, safety and health protections, nondiscriminatory and harassment-free workplaces that promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) and, to the strongest extent possible, a platform for worker voice that supports all workers and ensures fair pay and safe working conditions.

BPI's Building Analyst - Professional (BA-P) credential from an IREC Accredited training provider is our top recommendation. An individual can earn the BA-P credential relatively quickly (weeks) without any prior work experience. Eliminating prior work experience requirements also eliminates the greatest barrier to diverse workforce entrants.

Further, an individual who earns the BA-P credential would also earn at least two other “stacked” credentials at the same time, one of which requires a “field” exam but not a written test. This increases access to an important industry credential for individuals who do not perform well on written exams due to anxiety, language, or other socioeconomic barriers.

The second credential that we recommend is RESNET’s Home Energy Rating System (HERS) Rater certification. While RESNET HERS Raters are typically oriented toward new residential housing construction via the Energy Star for Homes Program, the credential covers many of the same principles that are required for success in home electrification and energy efficiency retrofits.

These credentials can easily be stacked on top of, or alongside, other industry credentials. For example, licensed HVAC, electrical, and plumbing professionals could earn either of the above credentials in as little as a week’s time. This would be a low cost way to dramatically increase the trade’s awareness of building science and home energy performance concepts.

5. What data is available to demonstrate that the proposed certifications in your response to Question 4 align with the skills and needs of California, meet energy workforce demands, and prepare that workforce to deliver energy efficiency, electrification, and clean energy improvements?

BPI’s BA-P and RESNET HERS Rater are the only two credentials with any relevant prior data for the type of work associated with HOMES and HEAR. BPI’s credentials have been required by DOE as part of every state’s Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) for years. Importantly, DOE requires WAP programs use IREC Accredited Training providers to ensure high quality training.

Likewise, RESNET HERS Raters are the backbone of the EPA’s Energy Star for Homes program. RESNET is also a DOE-approved Home Certification Organization (HCO)

6. What performance metrics and numerical targets should California use to measure impact throughout the 48-month period of performance of DOE funding sought by the CEC to provide contractor training for the IRA residential energy rebate programs?

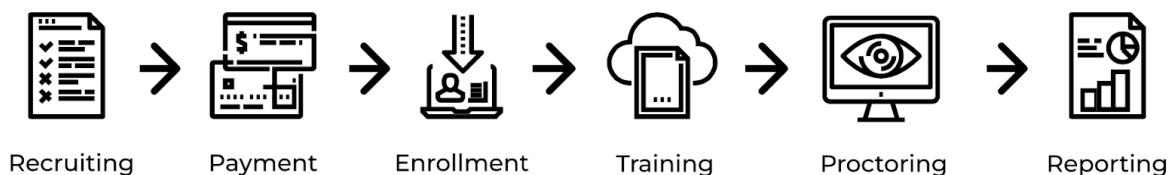
Everblue's EverCert software can provide complete end-to-end metrics and tracking on a number of variables that are important to DOE including:

- DEI and demographic metrics for outreach, enrollment, completion, and contractor performance.
- Relationships between certification holders (individuals) and contracting companies performing rebate work.
- Contractor performance based on credentials held and source(s) of training.
- Rebate funding per contractor relative to demographic, DEI, and Justice40 metrics.

Importantly, EverCert would also provide a single “qualified contractor list” that would be updated daily, visible to the public (for homeowners searching for contractors), and integrate via API with any adjacent rebate processing software to determine contractor eligibility prior to issuance of a rebate coupon.

Here is a very simplistic overview of the process EverCert can manage.

EverCert



Please contact chris@goeverblue.com if you would like an EverCert demo.

7. In the Community Benefits Plan required as part of the CEC application for DOE funding for contractor training for IRA residential energy rebate programs, how should the program ensure the delivery of measurable community and jobs benefits, and: 1) support meaningful community and labor engagement; (2) invest in America’s workforce; (3) advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; and (4) contribute to President Biden’s goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits from certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities under the Justice40 Initiative.

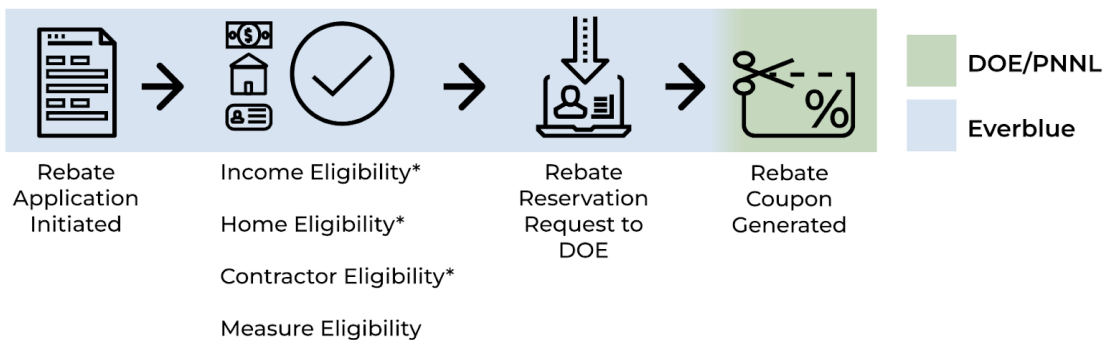
Please see the attached draft CTG application template that Everblue wrote for DOE. The template breaks out each of these items as specified in DOE’s Administrative and Legal Requirements Document (ALRD).

8. Input on other topics welcomed.

While beyond the scope of this RFI, Everblue’s EverForms software is fully capable of processing rebates. If desired, we would be happy to give a demo of EverForms, as we’ve built it out in accordance with DOE and PNNL specifications.

EverForms is specifically designed to integrate with adjacent software systems (PNNL, income verification, etc), automate manual tasks to speed up processing, and provide transparency on rebate status to all interested parties (homeowners, tenants, contractors, state staff, etc). Please contact chris@goeverblue.com if you would like an EverForms demo.

EverForms



* EverForms supports both 3rd party integrations or document review required for validation

Inflation Reduction Act Services

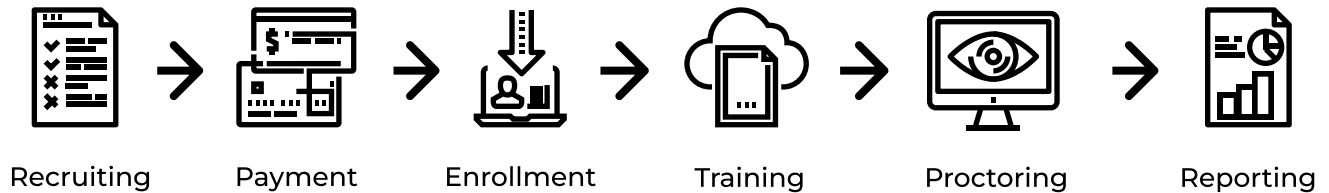
Workforce Development Hub

1. Training Provider

- IREC Accredited Training Provider
- Operates Nationwide in All 50 States
- BPI, RESNET, and Solar
- In Person & Online (including Micro-Badges)

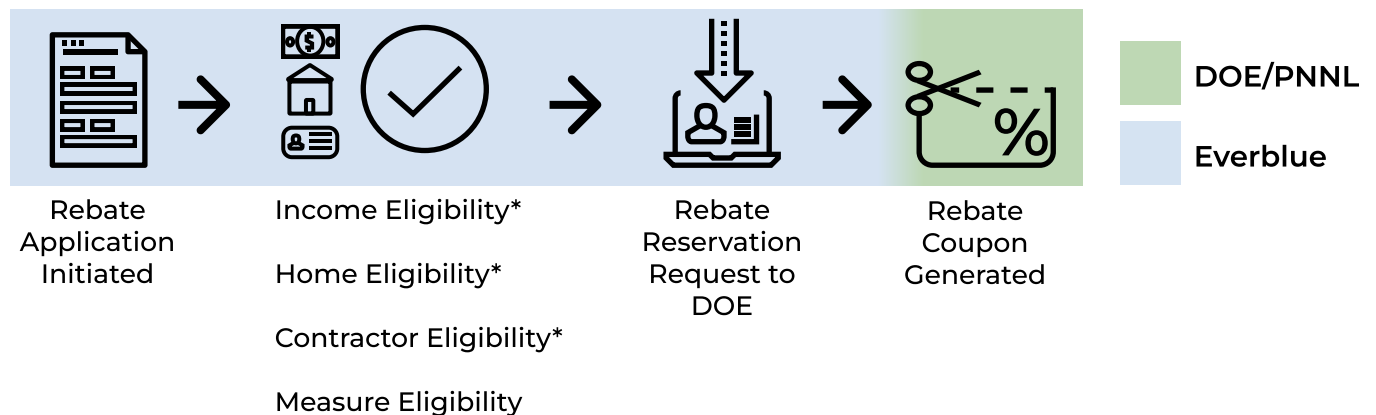
2. Workforce Metrics & Tracking Software

EverCert



3. Rebate Processing Software

EverForms



* EverForms supports both 3rd party integrations or document review required for validation