



Bringing Efficiency to Light<sup>SM</sup>

## **Request for Information**

Services to Support and Manage the DLC Solid-State Lighting  
Application Review Process and Qualified Products List

June 17, 2019

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# 1.0 Introduction

The DesignLights Consortium (DLC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to accelerating the widespread adoption of high-performing commercial lighting solutions. The DLC promotes high-quality, energy-efficient lighting products in collaboration with utilities, energy efficiency program members, manufacturers, lighting designers, and federal, state, and local entities. Through these partnerships, the DLC establishes product quality specifications, facilitates thought leadership, and provides information, education, tools and technical expertise.

## 1.1 DLC Mission

The DLC mission is to drive efficient lighting by defining quality, facilitating thought leadership, and delivering tools and resources to the lighting market through open dialogue and collaboration.

## 1.2 DLC Platforms

### **Solid-State Lighting (SSL) Luminaires – The Qualified Products List (QPL)**

The DLC Qualified Products List (QPL) is our core program and the leading public resource of high quality, high efficiency LED products for the commercial sector. The QPL currently lists over 400,000 products from more than 2,500 manufacturers in 60+ Primary Use Designations. These qualified products meet strict performance requirements for light output, efficacy, color metrics and reliability. For DLC utility members, the DLC QPL is essential in finding high-performing, highly efficient products, which are critical to the success of any energy efficiency program. To manufacturers of commercial LED products, the DLC seal of approval and inclusion on the QPL enhances product credibility and strengthens their competitive advantage in the market.

### **The Role of the QPL**

The DLC plays a critical role in advancing commercial adoption of solid-state lighting (SSL) and controls technology by differentiating quality products for utility energy efficiency program and end users across the U.S. and Canada.

Since 2010, the DLC has maintained a list of commercial SSL lighting products meeting certain quality and performance criteria (DLC qualified products). This list, the SSL Qualified Product List, or QPL, is used by member utility incentive program administrators in 35 U.S. states and five Canadian provinces as the basis of product eligibility for energy efficiency incentives.

The DLC SSL Technical Requirements Table (TRT) is a set of performance criteria that is organized into seven main categories that are currently subdivided into 31 General Application types with two tiers of performance requirements: Standard and Premium. There are specific minimum thresholds for performance for light output, efficacy, color quality, and reliability set for each tier. These General Applications are further subdivided into 96 Primary Use Designations that have specific zonal lumen density requirements and additional “specialty” use types for luminaire categories.

As the commercial SSL market has experienced dramatic growth in recent years, the DLC has continually evolved to meet the needs of the market. There are several ways the DLC implements the QPL to effectively enable this growth in the SSL market: (1) periodically updating technical requirements for QPL listing; (2) ensuring that lighting performance does not come at the expense of efficacy; (3) expanding product categories to facilitate



new SSL applications; (4) phasing out lower-performing and outdated products; and (5) encouraging innovation and identifying market leaders by offering a Premium tier QPL listing.

By differentiating quality commercial SSL products for the market, the DLC serves a wide variety of stakeholders including utility efficiency program administrators, lighting product manufacturers, lighting designers, specifiers, and end users.

## 1.3 DLC Primary Stakeholders

### Utility & Energy Efficiency Program Administrators (Members)

Utility and energy efficiency programs use the DLC resources to identify high-performing, credible products to include in their rebate programs. The DLC eliminates the administrative hassle associated with vetting individual products—saving programs significant time, money, and resources. Utilities and energy efficiency programs pay an annual membership fee to access and use the DLC resources and data, as well as influence the development of new tools and existing resources. The DLC makes strategic decisions on policy and Technical Requirements development based on member needs. For example, new product categories are developed by member request.

Value to members include:

- Qualified Products Lists (QPLs), which reflect the needs of program administrators to support savings goals and promote quality products for their customers.
- The QPL eliminates the administrative hassle associated with vetting individual products—saving significant time, money, and resources.
- A ready-made list of high-performing, credible products that member staff can confidently include in their programs.
- Opportunities to collaborate with other industry stakeholders and influence product development through input on the Technical Requirements and at events such as the annual DLC Stakeholder Meeting.
- Open access to technical experts who are always available to answer questions.
- Cutting-edge thought leadership, insight to innovation, and market trends.
- Practical tools and resources.
- Latest industry news and events.

### Commercial Lighting Manufacturers

Manufacturers apply for product qualification, pay application review fees, and after robust review by the DLC, qualifying products are listed on the QPL. Listing on the QPL provides manufacturers with distinct competitive advantages as the QPL acts as the leading resource for efficiency program administrators and procurement agents to distinguish high performing products and is a go to resource for procurement agents and government agencies.

In some cases, LED product distributors may private label an Original Equipment Manufacturer's (OEM) products and apply for DLC qualification under their own brand name. The DLC interacts with private labelers in the same way as with manufacturers; an application fee is charged (if applicable) and the product can be listed under the private labeler's name. Manufacturers and private label product distributors are encouraged to provide feedback on policy and Technical Requirements development through the open stakeholder input process.



Manufacturers are a critical stakeholder group for the DLC and provide input and feedback on the DLC's policy and Technical Requirements development efforts. This allows the DLC to stay informed about market trends and technology developments.

The DLC gives manufacturers a voice in the shaping of efficient lighting specifications and programs. Other value adds for manufacturers include:

- Access to the multi-billion-dollar energy efficiency program market.
- Qualified Products List's 'verification of performance', a clear point of differentiation versus competitors.
- Opportunities to collaborate with other industry stakeholders and influence the specification development process.
- Open access to technical experts who are always available to answer questions.
- Cutting-edge thought leadership, insight to utility programs and market trends.

### **Additional Stakeholders**

*Testing Laboratories:* Testing laboratories provide supporting documentation to manufacturers that is necessary in order to apply for DLC qualification. In some cases, laboratories submit applications to the DLC on behalf of manufacturers and manage the process for them. With each revision to the Technical Requirements to raise the bar on product performance, re-testing of products may be required. The DLC relies on accredited laboratories to test products to accepted industry testing procedures and standards and relies on them to report performance. Testing laboratories provide valuable feedback on impacts of DLC policies and are always encouraged to provide feedback on policy and Technical Requirement development, just like manufacturers.

*Lighting Designers, Distributors, Specifiers, Contractors:* Lighting designers, distributors, specifiers and contractors often use the QPL as a tool to search for products that may be eligible for rebates in efficiency programs. Distributors use the QPL to make sure that the products they stock are DLC listed, and to verify performance information to align with midstream programs. The DLC has recently worked to build closer relationships with lighting designers to address concerns over design being limited by efficiency programs requiring DLC qualified products and has included lighting designers on its Industry Advisory Committee in order to gain their input and field their expertise.

## **1.4 RFI Purpose**

The purpose of this RFI is for the DLC to solicit ideas and identify interested and qualified potential contractors to manage the application processing for the SSL QPL and reporting to the DLC. The DLC is seeking strategic partnerships that bring expertise, business strategy, and proven, sophisticated business systems to grow and evolve with the newly independent organization.

The DLC encourages respondents to submit proposals for all scopes of work, including ideas on best practices and new technology in managing a high-volume application processing and review program.

This is a very detailed RFI which includes multiple references and links to the current policies and process. This detail is for the reviewer to get a sense of the existing procedures, but we are looking for potential new ideas and solutions for improvement.



## 1.5 Intent of RFI

Prospective software and application processing vendors (“Respondents”) are strongly encouraged to respond to this RFI. Respondent information will also be used to update and enhance the business case and requirements for a new SSL application processing and QPL management vendor. Respondent input is greatly appreciated.

This is not a solicitation for quotations, bids or proposals. No contract award will result from this RFI. The DLC may contact Respondents, at its sole discretion, for additional information following the RFI, including product demonstrations, presentations, or interviews. The DLC shall not be obligated to contact any Respondent, to purchase goods or services related to this RFI from any Respondent, or to use the content of any response in a future RFP.

The DLC anticipates scheduling presentations with Respondents that meet a reasonable level of responsiveness to the RFI and offer products and services consistent with the scope to obtain further insight. However, the DLC is not obligated to hold vendor presentations or to conduct meetings with all vendors who respond.

Response to this RFI is NOT mandatory to be considered for any future solicitation for any services. The DLC will determine, in its sole discretion, whether to proceed with a solicitation following the RFI. It is entirely the Respondent’s responsibility to remain informed of the DLC’s issuance of any future solicitations. The DLC assumes no liability for failure of Respondents to obtain and respond to any such solicitation.

## 1.6 Preferred Respondent Qualifications

A single firm or a team of firms under a single primary contractor may submit bids to the eventual RFP. Successful contractor teams should show proficiency in at least the following areas:

- **Project Management.** Possess knowledge, skills, tools, systems, and experience to manage the Technical Requirements for the DLC QPL. Demonstrated success with well-defined and documented processes.
- **Data Management Experience.** Including data collection, utilization, visualization, reporting, and analytics competencies.
- **Communication.** Demonstrate excellent communication skills—written and verbal. This includes personal communication (written and oral), presentations before groups, preparation of visual aids, use of electronic media (e.g., webinars), etc.
- **Financial Management.** Demonstrate the capability and skills necessary to manage project budget and provide regular and complete reports and invoices to meet the project tasks.
- **File/Data Storage.** Real time access to modified application files.
- **Systems.** The DLC currently uses the following systems for daily operations: the DLC’s Application Management System (AMS), Bill.com Systems, Kintone, BOX, Microsoft Outlook, Windows Platform.
  - *Application Management System (AMS):* E-commerce-based processing and invoicing system for SSL QPL applications and invoicing.
  - *Bill.com:* Web-based invoicing and payment system.
  - *Kintone:* CRM tool with custom workflows and data management of surveillance program information.



- *BOX*: Cloud content management and file sharing service for program related files.

***Use of other software or IT solutions should be proposed. These solutions should be demonstrated to the DLC to understand their capability and potential for compatibility with the current system in the RFI responses. Submitters are encouraged to provide input on alternative process and system improvements in the RFI response. (Section 4.6)***

The below are not required, but are desirable qualifications for vendors:

- Key staff members demonstrating **expertise in lighting technology and practices**, deep knowledge of the lighting market and communities, and in energy systems and practices in commercial buildings.
- **Lighting Certification**. Project team with staff who are Lighting Certified by the NCQLP (National Council on Qualifications for the Lighting Professions).
- **Utility and Government Efficiency Programs**. Demonstrate knowledge of and experience in ratepayer-funded energy efficiency programs, in particular for the commercial, institutional, and industrial sectors, and of relevant programs offered by the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Natural Resources Canada.
- **Lighting Technology and Industry**. Demonstrate expertise in commercial lighting, equipment, system design economics, and performance, especially solid-state lighting. Demonstrate a strong working knowledge of the lighting industry (i.e., manufacturing, distribution, industry associations), including the impacts of solid-state lighting on product development and market introduction.
  - Awareness of other specifications, legislation, and industry committee activities including IES, NEMA, ANSI, DOE, ENERGY STAR, Zhaga, Connected Lighting Alliance and others.

## 1.7 Desired IT Capabilities

1. **Data Access**. The vendor should be able to provide a data dump of the DLC's entire database on a daily basis to DLC-controlled servers. The intent of this process is to ensure that the DLC has full access to all data generated and managed by the DLC at all times.
2. **Reporting**. The system should have advanced reporting capabilities so that DLC users can create ad-hoc reports by creating custom queries and selecting any parameter available in the database.
3. **APIs**. The current system has custom APIs which are accessible by the DLC's paid customers. The new system should be able to support API endpoints to access any data in the database using Restful APIs in JSON format.
4. **Redundancy/Reliability/Availability**. System should be available 24/7 as DLC users are spread across international time zones, from China to North America and Canada. The system should be able to run with minimum failures/down time. The current vendor supports an SLA of 99.9% up time.
5. **Performance/Load**. The system should be able to handle 10,000 concurrent users with the screen response (page load) time of less than two seconds for any page in the system.
6. **Standard Support**. Vendor should have a support team accessible to the DLC 9am -5pm Eastern Standard Time to address functionality or database design-related questions and also to report bugs and address timely bug resolution.

**7. Training/Documentation.** Vendor should be able to provide detailed documentation on every aspect of system functionality available to the DLC and should be able to train DLC staff on functionality within the support contract.

**8. Custom Support.**

- a. Vendor should be able to execute on a data migration project by providing staffing to perform requirements analysis, technical documentation, coding/scripting as necessary, and testing and project management capabilities to migrate from the current DLC system to the new system.
- b. Vendor should be able to make minor customizations to the platform based on DLC needs.

**9. Analytics capabilities.** The system should support web user accessible advance analytics capabilities which allows the web users of the DLC to run complex queries on real time product data. There are over 600,000 products in DLC's product table and current database.

*Use of other software or IT solutions should be proposed. These solutions should be demonstrated to the DLC to understand their capability and potential for compatibility with the current system in the RFI responses. Submitters are encouraged to provide input on alternative process and system improvements in the RFI response. (Section 4.6)*

## 2.0 Scope Overview

Contractor shall, in a timely and responsive manner, provide application management services for DLC SSL and QPL with a software tool which can support the following functionality:

- The [DLC QPL application process](#) results in products listed on the QPL.
- Products are submitted in the AMS by an applicant with an application form and supporting documentation. The [application form](#) contains fields that must be completed by the applicant and must indicate the application type ([Single Products](#), [Family Groupings](#), [Private Label](#), and [Update](#)). *(The DLC currently uses an Application Management System (AMS) for processing and invoicing all SSL QPL and controls applications. This system is an end-to-end process system for the submittal, tracking, payment, and approval of applications from manufacturers. This system shares the same database as the DLC QPL.)*
- The manufacturer pays [application fees](#) for each type of application which vary based on the number of products listed and number of documents that need to be reviewed. These fees currently consider the level of effort and efficiencies of scale associated with review of each type of application.
- The SSL QPL application review process is the verification and careful review of relevant data from LM-79 reports, LM-80 reports, ISTMT reports, ISTMT driver reports, and other documentation and data as required by the Technical Requirements.
  - Attention to detail and ability to provide consistent, transparent service is critical to the review process.
  - This contractor will be responsible for verifying integrity of information represented by the manufacturer.

Contractor shall also be able to meet the following requirements:

- Have an understanding of the DLC [Technical Requirements Table](#), [category-specific requirements](#), [policies](#), and [application process](#). The contractor will be responsible for most communication with manufacturers with respect to the application process and QPL.
- Be responsible for customer service and technical support to manufacturers interested in submitting applications, understanding the policies and requirements, looking for assistance in developing testing plans, specific questions about the status of their applications, and any other questions related to listing products on the QPL.
  - The contractor will also provide necessary support to manufacturers prior to and during the submission and review process to ensure they understand DLC specifications and review processes, such as the [manufacturer's guide](#) and/or tutorials.
- Must maintain an email address that allows for prompt responses and superior customer service on a myriad of inquiries related to the QPL.
  - Interactions with stakeholders include over 100 emails and phone calls per month.
- Ability to analyze QPL activity and provide observations (feedback loop) of activity and impact of proposed changes on QPL.
- Identify and address logo violations and manufacturer and product misrepresentations that come in through application submittals or other forms of notification.



- Provide a continuous feedback loop to the DLC on issues with applications, products, manufacturers, or emerging trends that should be addressed.
- Monitor testing laboratory qualifications to ensure that labs are current in their accreditation.
- Identify opportunities for continuous improvement and efficiencies in the system process.
- Provide a monthly report, as directed, to accompany the fee for services and regular updates to the DLC.
- Coordinate with technical support team as needed.

The requirements associated with the RFI will be identified by three (3) proposed tasks, which provide more detail on the RFI Scope.

- **Task 1:** SSL Application Processing
- **Task 2:** Program Coordination/Application Streamlining
- **Task 3:** Brand Integrity/Logo

## 2.1 Task 1: SSL Application Processing

The application processing component is comprised of work to manage the flow of applications submitted to the DLC by lighting manufacturers and their agents. This work includes processing, tracking, and organizing applications diligently to ensure timely and accurate evaluation, listing of products, and maintenance of the listed products. Performance of this component is described below:

1. Under this task, Contractor shall process every SSL application submitted for qualification according to the terms outlined in Section 2.1. This includes maintaining quality assurance and quality control procedures and responding to associated inquiries according to the terms. It is a high priority that the contractor provides exceptional customer service and technical support for manufacturers and stakeholders and ensures a productive and pleasant experience for them throughout the application process.
  - a. As directed by the DLC, Contractor will **revise and enhance the application process** and related documentation required of manufacturers and will revise and enhance the application submission, review, and approval process for SSL applications.
  - b. **Check e-mail inbox and DLC application module (AMS)** at least twice daily for new submissions and assign to a reviewer within one business day of receipt.
  - c. **Create and manage a stand-alone phone line and call center staffing** specifically for DLC application processing that is dedicated to providing exceptional customer service while maintaining open communication channels with manufacturers and the DLC.
  - d. Contractor shall, at their own expense, **institute and maintain a customer service training program for all review staff**, including initial training provided by an external training organization.
  - e. **Implement and maintain a quality management system** with quality control and quality assurance activities, including:
    - i. Maintaining appropriate documentation for QA/QC activities that address processing time, review accuracy, financial diligence, and process for addressing applicant satisfaction.

Documentation of updated versions of QA/QC plans, activities, outcome reports, and metrics shall be stored in shared file location (Box).

- f. Provide appropriate training**, including:
  - i. Ensuring training materials for new hires are up-to-date with requirements and policies.
  - ii. Ensuring staff are appropriately trained on technical or policy changes within reasonable timeframes as agreed to between the DLC Technical Manager and Contractor.
  - iii. Contractor shall provide a copy of application training materials.
  - iv. Peer review. Conduct re-reviews of previously-processed applications for internal auditing purposes.
- g. Perform regular QPL data value checks.** This includes checking the QPL once each week to ensure data values are within acceptable bounds as agreed upon with the DLC.
- h. Process and review all submitted SSL applications.**
  - i. The Application Management System (AMS) shall automatically acknowledge receipt of application and materials provided by submitter and by displaying the submitted materials within the submitted documents and notify contractor of submitted applications. *All applications must be opened and assigned within one business day.*
  - ii. Contractor will implement initial and comprehensive review of application form and documentation within timeframes based on the published [review timeframes](#) by application type.
  - iii. Initial reviews shall include determining category eligibility and determining whether all supporting documentation has been provided and sufficiently completed. Initial reviews do not include detailed evaluation of test reports or verification of performance against category specifications. This is done in the comprehensive review. *Initial review outcome shall be communicated to the submitter through the messaging feature in the AMS.*
  - iv. Upon receiving confirmation of payment, contractor shall conduct a comprehensive review of all documentation, including performance testing and supporting documentation, and communicate outcome to submitter within [timeframes](#) defined by [application type](#). *A “complete application” below shall be defined as an application that contains all required testing and supporting documentation, and for which confirmation of payment of application fees has been received.*
- i. Provide necessary support to manufacturers** during submission and review process to assure they understand DLC requirements and the review process for SSL applications. Communications should be helpful and clearly indicate what information the submitter needs to provide for a specific issue.
- j. Maintain clear and proper application instructions.** Contractor shall work with the DLC to keep these instructions and documents current, accurate, and accessible.
  - i. Maintain, through ongoing updates and review, documentation that will provide ongoing understanding and clarity around the QPL and product review process. Contractor shall work with DLC to keep these documents current, accurate, and accessible in real time.

## 2.2 Task 2: Program Coordination/Application Streamlining

### Technical and Policy Coordination and Implementation

**1. At the DLC's request and approval, coordinate with DLC on technical and policy activities, including:**

- a. Escalation of policy interpretations, clarification, and exceptions that arise from the application process.
- b. Review and provide feedback at any stage of technical and policy expansions or revisions to identify potential impacts on application processing and suggest appropriate modifications.
  - i. Contractor shall identify application materials, website content, database fields, or guidance to be developed or updated at the approval of the DLC.
  - ii. Contractor shall identify and communicate to the DLC potential impact (of policy changes or new developments) on application volumes, processing times or other operational implications.
  - iii. At the request and approval of the DLC, Contractor shall develop or update applications and supporting materials as required to implement policy or process revisions.
- c. Forward questions and comments received about recent technical and policy changes, SSL application concerns, SSL application review specific requests, and other DLC program items to the DLC.
- d. At the direction and approval of the DLC, assist with educating or answering questions from the technical support contractor about the application process.

**2. Application Streamlining and Process Efficiency Support Upon Request:**

- a. Participate in discussions and provide feedback when requested about proposals for streamlining the application process, product update program, and alternative fee structures.
- b. Provide the DLC with input and background regarding potential policy impacts and interconnectivity of any changes.
- c. Assist with developing communications and presentations on streamlined process to stakeholders.
- d. Provide support for planning application process improvements and cost reductions for the internal application process.
- e. Work with the DLC to define efficiency and cost reduction goals and establish metrics and milestones to evaluate progress as part of the application process revision.

**3. Industry Management Support:**

- a. As requested and approved, Contractor will provide relevant background information on accounts, including product lines, application issues, and account specific nuances and exceptions.
- b. Participate in higher-level meetings with manufacturers as directed and approved by the DLC.
- c. Provide key account status or trend information for applications or products as requested.

#### 4. Program Outreach Coordination:

- a. As directed and approved by the DLC, assist the DLC in developing or implementing content regarding application submission and review process for newsletters, member webinars, and the DLC website.
- b. Provide outreach support recommendations, and work with the DLC as directed to develop educational tools and resources to inform manufacturers and industry stakeholders on existing policies, upcoming proposals, and changes to policies.

#### 5. Administrative Coordination:

- a. Provide a weekly status report and meet with the DLC bi-weekly to review status of all activities under application processing and program coordination and support.
- b. Participate in reporting of SSL-related statistics and summaries, based on DLC-provided reporting format and reporting requirements.
  - i. This can include:
    1. Performance metrics
      - Phone access
      - Customer service
      - Application processing timelines
      - Application/product volumes
      - Financial performance
      - Messaging response times
      - QA/QC checks
      - QPL accuracy
    2. Program activities
      - Application issues
      - Stakeholder interactions
      - Correspondence summaries
      - Lessons learned

### 2.3 Task 3: Brand Integrity & Logo Compliance

Under this task area, Contractor will help promote and protect the recognition and value of the DLC brand and support proper manufacturer use of the DLC logo and brand, as well as provide general tracking and support for the Surveillance Testing program at the request and approval of DLC Program Compliance Manager.

#### 1. Brand Integrity and Logo Compliance:

- a. Direct all manufacturer inquiries regarding access to DLC logos to DLC staff or provide appropriate access to DLC logos to manufacturers at the DLC's direction.

- b. Inform the DLC of any known unauthorized and inappropriate use of the DLC logos and brand outside of normal application reviews. Tracking sheet with logo violation issues identified to be maintained in shared file accessible to the DLC and DLC legal team.
- c. At the DLC’s direction and approval, investigate and follow up on logo infractions to help ensure compliance with the DLC Logo Use Guidelines.
  - i. Contractor shall provide updates on these investigations to the DLC Program Compliance Manager via updated tracking sheet.
  - ii. Escalate complaints or egregious logo violations to the DLC Program Compliance Manager for discussion and approval of further action to be taken.
- d. As requested and approved, identify to the DLC any changes to DLC Logo Guidelines and open logo infractions.
  - i. Participate in monthly logo compliance meetings to discuss open issues and opportunities for improvement to policy or process.
- e. In the normal flow of business and transactions, identify potential DLC member recruits by monitoring DLC logo and QPL use, informing the DLC of non-member efficiency programs using DLC resources, and forwarding to the DLC inquiries and leads about potential new DLC members.

**2. Surveillance Testing Program Support:**

- a. Maintain tracking of unusual application activity that raises concerns for integrity of product performance data.
- b. As requested and approved, provide analysis of the QPL database and product application information.
- c. As requested and approved, provide support for identification of related product connections for product selection and delisting purposes.
- d. As requested and approved, assist the DLC with refining and implementing the delisting process. This work may include utilizing the Kintone system.

## 2.4 DLC Metrics

The below application volume metrics are provided to assist Respondents in determining support of tasks identified in RFI scope.

Applications Submitted by Type					
	Standard	Family	Private Label	Update	Total
<b>2018 Total</b>	<b>4450</b>	<b>1214</b>	<b>2587</b>	<b>1148</b>	<b>9399</b>

## 3.0 Instructions to Respondent

### 3.1 Timeline

DLC anticipates following the schedule below:

Event	Date and Time
Release RFI	June 17, 2019
RFI response deadline	July 19, 2019
Follow up with selected respondents for clarification or product demonstrations	July 31, 2019

After reviewing Responses, the DLC reserves the right to contact some or all Respondents to clarify information presented in the Response(s) or to have the Respondent demonstrate software functionality.

### 3.2 Contact

This RFI is issued by Efficiency Forward, Inc. DBA DesignLights Consortium. Stephen White, Director of Administration and Finance, will function as the sole point of contact during this process.

**Stephen White**

*Director of Administration and Finance (DLC)*

[swhite@designlights.org](mailto:swhite@designlights.org)

O: 781-538-6425 Ext. 197

Respondents may submit questions about this RFI via email to Stephen White.

Respondent submissions to the RFI must be received via email to both contacts below prior to the RFI Responses Due deadline:

**Stephen White**

*Director of Administration and Finance (DLC)*

[swhite@designlights.org](mailto:swhite@designlights.org)

and

**Bernadette Boudreaux**

*Technical Operations Manager (DLC)*

[bboudreaux@designlights.org](mailto:bboudreaux@designlights.org)



### 3.3 Submission of Response

Responses to this RFI are due no later than the above deadline and time identified in Section 3.1 (Timeline). The Respondent remains solely responsible for ensuring that its response is received at the time, date, and method specified.

- Responses to this RFI must be submitted to the identified contacts by **email ONLY**. Email should be addressed to the contacts in Section 3.2 with the subject line titled, “RFI”. Attach one (1) electronic copy of all files in either Microsoft Word/Microsoft Excel or in PDF format (please make sure that the response is word-searchable).
- A confirmation of receipt will be sent to those who submit proposals on time.
- Late submittals will be rejected.
- Respondents are not required to submit print copies of their proposals.
- Respondents are allowed to offer solutions/responses to all parts of the RFI or portions of the RFI that are applicable to the Respondent’s business model or expertise.
  - For example, if a Respondent only wants to offer software solutions, this will be acceptable.
- The DLC reserves the right to reject as non-responsive any proposals that do not contain the information requested in this RFI.
- The DLC is not liable for any costs incurred by any person or firm responding to this RFI or participating in interviews.

Section 4 outlines the Response format intended to obtain organizational and reference information from all Respondents.

### 3.4 RFI Responses Property of the DLC

All materials submitted in response to this RFI become the property of the DLC.

## 4.0 Response

Respondents are requested to provide a concise yet complete description of the Respondent's approach and capabilities for satisfying the required services outlined in this RFI. In addition, Respondents are encouraged to proactively present additional information and responses, not specifically requested, that help demonstrate understanding of this project's objectives and needs as well as Respondent's creativity, experience, and/or expertise.

Respondents shall include the following Sections in their Response, referencing the same numbering system as used in this Section. The information provided in this Section will address the specific Response item and be informative and concise.

### 4.1 Title and Transmittal

**4.1.1 Title Page or Cover.** The title page or cover must include the RFI title, the RFI due date and time, and the Respondent name and address.

**4.1.2 Table of Contents.** Each Response shall be submitted with a table of contents that clearly identifies and denotes the location of each Section and Sub-Section of the Response. Additionally, the table of contents should clearly identify and denote the location of all Attachments to the Response.

**4.1.3 Transmittal Letter.** The Response must provide a written transmittal of the Response in the form of a standard business letter. The transmittal letter shall include the following items:

- Legal entity name of the Respondent
- Brief description of how the Respondent meets any of the preferred Respondent qualifications
- Name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address of the Respondent's contact person
- Signature of a company official empowered to represent the Respondent

### 4.2 Executive Summary

In the Executive Summary, the Respondent should condense and highlight the contents of the Response in such a way as to provide the DLC with a broad understanding of its product(s) and/or implementation services. This section of the Response is intended to provide a clear and concise understanding of key aspects of the Response as follows:

- Narrative summary of the Respondent's understanding of the RFI and its ability to provide the solution and/or implementation services as outlined in this RFI.
- Summary of the solution and services recommended in response to the RFI and why those products and/or services represent a "best value" solution.

- Discussion of why the Respondent is qualified to provide the solution and/or services presented, including an overview of prior relevant experiences and product or industry alliances, certifications and/or accreditations.

**Maximum length should be no more than 3 pages.**

### 4.3 Statement of Qualifications

1. The DLC is soliciting Responses from qualified firms that are in the business of providing services as described in this RFI. The Respondent should present information about its organization, highlighting its applicable qualifications and experience, including:
  - Brief overview of business operations
  - Summarize the breadth and depth of the Respondent’s **relevant** experience.

**Maximum length should be no more than 2 pages.**

2. Provide three public or private client references that would be willing to be interviewed by the DLC regarding experiences with your services. The following reference information should be provided:
  - a. Organization name
  - b. Organization description
  - c. Reference contact information
    - Name
    - Mailing address
    - Phone
    - Email
  - d. Referenced project beginning/end dates
  - e. Brief summary of the referenced engagement, including description of contract scope and results achieved
3. Describe your familiarity with the DLC requirements and business processes.

**Maximum length should be no more than 3 pages.**

### 4.4 Narrative Regarding Services

1. **Contract Management Methodology.** Describe your firm’s project and contract management methodology. Include in the description your methodology’s adherence to project management standards and distinguishing features of the methodology that have contributed to project success.
2. **Staffing.** Describe the approach to staffing. Address the use of on-site vs. off-site and full-time vs. part-time resources and how those resources are coordinated to work effectively with the DLC team. If offshore resources are a part of your approach, explain the expected benefits as well as the processes used to manage and maintain security of access to DLC data and the quality of remote work.



3. **Roles.** Describe the roles and positions that would be provided by the firm and those required of the DLC. Please estimate the number of full-time positions to be required for the firm and the skill sets that the staff should have.
4. **Training.** Describe your approach to training the team and maintaining high quality service delivery in accordance with a contract expectation.
5. **Quality Assurance.** Describe your approach to managing the quality of work, process adherence, staff performance, and metrics.
6. **Desired IT Capabilities.** Describe your approach to desired IT capabilities listed in Section 1.7 and describe any alternative solutions or recommendations.

***The DLC does not wish to unduly constrain its options for implementation. Respondents are invited to present innovative or alternative solutions that could be beneficial to the DLC.***

## 4.5 Narrative on Tasks

This section should describe your approach to managing the details identified in the below tasks and describe any alternative solutions or recommendations based on the firm's capabilities.

- **Task 1:** SSL Application Processing
- **Task 2:** Program Coordination/Application Streamlining
- **Task 3:** Brand Integrity/Logo

## 4.6 Additional Topics for All Respondents

1. **Pre-Implementation Activities.** Describe any suggested activities that the DLC could complete prior to the start of the implementation project that would accelerate or facilitate the implementation effort.
2. **RFI Contents.** Understanding that an RFI is issued as part of an RFP and procurement, and would, by nature, be a more comprehensive document, describe any additional information Respondents would like to see in an RFP that would allow a more comprehensive and accurate response to the RFP.
3. **Alternative Software Solutions.** These are software tools or IT solutions that can be demonstrated to the DLC to support the RFI scope.
4. **Alternative Implementation Solutions.** These are implementation guidelines or processes that can be demonstrated to the DLC to support the RFI scope.

## 5.0 Attachments

### 5.1 Current Application Processing Overview

- Application is submitted by Manufacturer through the DLC website using a standard excel template(s).
- The Application is auto-verified based on completion of specific fields and formatting of data.
- An Application record is created and product data and supporting documents are saved in the AMS.
- Application team is alerted via email that a new Application is pending review.
- Application team logs into the AMS and performs an initial review of the product data and support documents to ensure that the product submitted fits into an eligible category, all required documents are uploaded, and that there are no outstanding eligibility issues pending. For details on additional documentation requirements, see application instructions for [Single Products](#), [Family Groupings](#), and [Private Label applications](#).
  - Private Label and Family Grouping application initial reviews must be completed within five business days of submission. Standard application initial reviews must be completed within two business days of submission.
  - Within these time frames, the reviewer is responsible for contacting the manufacturer with questions to resolve issues, notification of ineligibility, or application fee information.
- If the initial review passes, then a flag is created to generate an invoice.
- An email is sent to the Manufacturer with invoice details and a link to pay.
- Application system processes the payment to the DLC in the form of Credit Card, purchase order, or check.
- Once payment is received by the DLC, Application team is notified, and the Application can be assigned to a Reviewer to complete the comprehensive review including:
  - Complete review of the application to verify that the product complies with all Technical Requirements and policies.
  - Verification of the values included in the application using the supporting testing and other documents uploaded to the AMS.
    - Communicate with the manufacturer to obtain any missing information or clarification.
  - Private Label applications must be completed within five business days. Standard and Family Grouping applications must be completed within ten business days.
- Reviewer can post questions to the Manufacturer through the AMS messaging system. Questions will be sent via email and are also available on the DLC website in a Manufacturer portal.
- The Manufacturer portal will allow Manufacturers to track Applications, review product data, make payments, and update contact information.
- Reviewer will add information into the products database based on research and supporting documents.

- Once the review process is complete, Application team will publish products, allowing them to be viewed on the DLC website's QPL. Manufacturer and the DLC will be alerted that an Application has been closed.

***The DLC does not wish to unduly constrain its options for implementation. Respondents are invited to present innovative or alternative solutions that could be beneficial to the DLC and the application process.***

## 5.2 Manufacturers Guide

This document is a technical guide for lighting equipment manufacturers seeking to place their products on the DLC Commercial LED luminaires Qualified Products List (QPL). Manufacturers should review and understand the entire document and linked files before submitting an application to the DLC.

Respondents are encouraged to review this guide to gain a better understanding of the DLC SSL program and application process.

This Manufacturer's Guide includes instructions and details on the following topics:

- Application submissions
- Approved testing laboratories and requirements
- Frequently asked questions
- Logo-use guidelines

[https://www.designlights.org/default/assets/File/SSL/DLC\\_Manufacturer's\\_Guide\\_5-10-2019.pdf](https://www.designlights.org/default/assets/File/SSL/DLC_Manufacturer's_Guide_5-10-2019.pdf)