Slipstream Group, Inc.

Manufacturer and Retailer Cooperative Promotions on Energy Efficient Home Products

Promotional Period:

January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2029

Proposal Release Date:

November 3, 2026

Proposal Due:

December 1, 2026

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1 Introduction

Slipstream is pleased to announce the competitive 2027 Residential Retail Request for Proposal (RFP). We invite manufacturers and retailers of qualified products to submit proposals for a regionwide consumer awareness campaign, and markdown promotion from January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2029, in the state of Minnesota.

1.1 About Slipstream

Slipstream creates, tests, delivers and scales the next generation of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs that move us farther, faster toward a clean energy economy. Slipstream partners with utilities, local and state governments, Native Nations, community-based organizations, regulatory agencies and more to inspire new solutions to big energy challenges. Since 1980, Slipstream has demonstrated "what's next" in programs and technologies and is an established and trusted trailblazer in the industry. Whether we're in the field monitoring energy savings from the newest technologies, partnering with community-based organizations to serve hard-to-reach markets, inspiring building professionals to adopt low-energy design approaches, or financing thousands of clean energy projects, Slipstream has the knowledge, people and resources to help meet challenging clean energy goals.

1.1.1 Slipstream's Mission

Slipstream Mission: Accelerating climate solutions. For Everyone.

We champion and deliver innovative energy initiatives that produce enduring economic and environmental benefits for all. We strive to achieve our mission through the work we do for our clients and are committed to improving the sustainability of our own business practices. Slipstream offers solutions to produce tangible and measurable results for our clients, customers, and partners. Our mission drives our strategies, programs, and products; the markets we engage; and the people we work with and hire as a nonprofit.

2 Scope of Project

The primary goals of the Residential Retail Program include:

- Increase customer awareness, adoption, and household penetration of qualified energy-efficient products.
- Execute comprehensive promotional strategies that maximize cost-effective energy and water savings while increasing sales and visibility of qualified products.
- Expand the availability, accessibility, and selection of qualified energy-efficient products within participating retail channels.
- Establish competitive consumer price points for qualified products through point-of-sale incentives and retailer participation.
- Reduce residential energy and water consumption through increased adoption of qualified products, helping customers lower utility costs.

- Improve home comfort by promoting products that enhance lighting quality, temperature regulation, humidity control, and ventilation.
- Enhance indoor air quality and healthier living environments through improved moisture management, ventilation, and air filtration.
- Increase access to cost-effective energy-efficiency solutions that improve home performance and provide long-term customer value.
- Deliver environmental benefits by reducing energy demand, conserving water resources, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions.
- Support long-term consumer behavior change through education, awareness, and engagement related to energy-efficient products and practices.

2.1 Key Dates

Table 1. Key Dates and Milestones

Milestone	Due Date
RFP Issued	11/03/2026
Written Questions Due	11/10/2026
Answers to Questions Posted to Website	11/13/2026
Proposal Due*	12/01/2026
RFP Scoring Complete	12/04/2026
Award Notifications	12/16/2026*

*Proposals must be submitted via email to: retailpartners@slipstreaminc.org.

*Timing of contracts will be dependent on DER approval of utility DSM filings

2.2 Promotion Participation Requirements

2.2.1 Eligible Products

The following products are eligible for participation in the program. While the ENERGY STAR® designation requirement has been removed for certain lighting products, eligible lighting products must meet minimum performance requirements of 15,000 hours rated life and 45 lumens per watt.

Lighting Products

- General Service Lamps (GSL) - A19, PAR30, and PAR lamps
- TLEDs
- Grow lights
- Shop lights
- Under-cabinet/undercounter fixtures
- Holiday lights
- LED strip lights (indoor and outdoor)
- Desk lamps
- Outdoor fixtures

Smart Home Products

- Smart plugs

- Smart switches
- Smart power strips

Water-Saving Products

- Kitchen aerators
- Bathroom aerators
- Showerheads
- Handheld showerheads

Home Performance and Comfort Products

- Window film
- Bath fans
- Dehumidifiers
- Pipe wrap insulation
- Air purifiers

Note: Slipstream retains the right to remove, suspend, or exclude any product from the program at any time, for any reason, including independent third-party test results. Manufacturers may propose replacement products for consideration, but Slipstream is not obligated to approve or accept them.

- All products must be offered at a competitive retail price prior to the application of program incentives to ensure maximum value for utility sponsor customers.
- Incentive-adjusted pricing must remain in effect for the duration of the incentive allocation period and while the product remains on the Slipstream-approved product list.
- Incentive reimbursements will only be provided for qualifying products sold with the advertised customer incentive applied at the point of purchase.
- All products must maintain the program's minimum energy-efficiency qualification requirements throughout their participation in the program.
- All promotional materials, advertising, signage, and customer-facing communications must receive prior approval from Slipstream and the applicable utility sponsor.
- Approved marketing materials must include:
    - The utility sponsor's logo (logos provided by Slipstream).
    - The statement: **"Offer valid while supplies last."**
    - Any additional disclaimers or program language required by Slipstream or the utility sponsor.
    - Self-funded promotions are encouraged when utility sponsor advertising funds are not being utilized, provided all program requirements and guidelines outlined herein are followed.
    - All promotional materials must comply with the applicable utility sponsor's brand identity guidelines. Retailers and manufacturers are encouraged to provide support for the development, production, and distribution of point-of-purchase (POP) materials.
- Approved signage and promotional materials must be displayed and maintained in retail locations throughout the entire promotional period.

- Retailers and/or manufacturer representatives are encouraged to provide merchandising support to ensure promotional materials are installed and maintained in prominent, high-visibility locations within participating stores.
    - Program incentives must be provided to customers as an instant discount at the point of purchase (POP) through a retail price markdown.
    - Proposals that include mail-in rebate, reward, or reimbursement programs will not be considered.
    - At a minimum, participating retailers or manufacturers must submit monthly invoices and Point-of-Sale (POS) sales reports electronically via email.
    - Incentive allocation tracking (allocated units less units sold) must be maintained at the individual store level and reported to Slipstream on a weekly or monthly basis, as requested. Final monthly sales data must be submitted no later than the 15th day of the following month.
    - Participating retailers must promptly communicate with store personnel when incentive allocations have been exhausted. Products sold in excess of approved incentive allocations will not be eligible for reimbursement by the utility sponsor.
- Any manufacturer order forms intended for use by independent retailers must be submitted to Slipstream for review and approval no later than thirty (30) days prior to the start of the promotion to ensure accuracy and compliance with program requirements.

2.3 Program Duration

Promotional program start dates may vary by state, utility sponsor, retailer, and product category, as determined by Slipstream during the development and execution of individual master agreements and implementation plans.

The overall Residential Retail Incentive Program term will commence on **January 1, 2027**, and continue through **December 31, 2029**. Specific promotional periods, product offerings, incentive levels, and participating retailers may vary throughout the program term based on market conditions, utility sponsor requirements, budget availability, and program performance.

3 Type of Proposal Requested

Slipstream is accepting proposals for **point-of-purchase (POP) markdown programs only**. Proposals that utilize mail-in rebates, rewards, or other post-purchase incentive mechanisms will not be considered.

All respondents must provide a comprehensive description of the proposed promotion, including details regarding the promotional approach, participating retailers, proposed incentive levels, and the products included in the promotion.

Respondents must also provide a complete product listing for all proposed measures. Product information shall be submitted using **Appendix C: Product Store Workbook**. All required fields within the workbook must be completed, including, but not limited to:

- Product category and description
- Manufacturer and model number
- Retail store(s) and location(s)
- Pre-incentive retail price
- Proposed customer incentive amount
- Estimated sales volume
- Total incentive funding requested from the utility sponsor

Incomplete submissions or workbooks with missing required fields may be deemed non-responsive and may not be considered for program participation.

4 Summary of Proposal Preferences

Preference will be given to proposals which:

- Feature non-traditional, hard-to-reach distribution channels (i.e., rural, drugstores, grocery, convenience, etc.).
- Include strong marketing and retail support from manufacturers and/or retailers (see Marketing Plan for Promotion section).
- Create retail and marketing plans that support the purchase of energy efficient home products.
- Promote lasting behavior change by educating customers and sales associates about:
- Lighting technology features and benefits.
- Establish a strong commitment to deliver products, documentation, and sales data in a timely manner.
- Confirm retailers or manufacturers will comply with monthly invoices, sales data requirements, and reporting deadlines.
- Include a quality assurance process to exclude ineligible purchases that exceed the unit limits listed in Section 6.

5 Program Details

Respondents may apply for third-party funding to reduce the retail purchase price of eligible energy-efficient home products. Eligible products are identified in Section 2.2.1, Eligible Products.

Slipstream requires all incentives to be delivered through a **point-of-sale (POS) markdown** that provides an immediate discount to the customer at the time of purchase. The POS markdown is the only approved promotional mechanism under this program.

The program prohibits coupon offers, mail-in rebates, rebate cards, rewards programs, and all other post-purchase incentives.

5.1 Product Markdown Incentives Promotion Description

Respondents shall apply for product markdown incentives by proposing the maximum quantity of each eligible product and the corresponding reimbursement amount requested for each product, as outlined in **Section 7: Sponsor Incentive Guidelines**.

Incentive reimbursements for qualified products will be provided at **100% of the approved incentive amount**, contingent upon the receipt of complete, accurate, and timely Point-of-Sale (POS) sales data and any other required supporting documentation.

Detailed reporting requirements and data submission procedures will be defined in the agreement between Slipstream, the retailer, and/or the manufacturer. At a minimum, respondents must submit sales data monthly for the previous month's sales activity using the required reporting format.

Proposals should include the following:

- Product markdown incentive requests for eligible products offered in the identified states and ZIP codes included in this solicitation.
- Proposed incentive amounts and estimated sales volumes for each eligible product.
- Point-of-purchase (POP) materials and promotional signage incorporating applicable utility sponsor names and/or logos.
- A description of the proposed marketing and promotional strategy used to support product sales and customer awareness.
- Any retailer or manufacturer support being provided to enhance the promotion.
- Information regarding available retailer cooperative advertising opportunities, if applicable.

Slipstream reserves the right to approve, modify, or reject proposed product quantities, incentive amounts, promotional materials, and marketing strategies based on program goals, budget availability, cost-effectiveness, and utility sponsor requirements.

6 Monthly POS Reporting and Invoicing

6.1 Required

Proposals must include sample POS reports and invoices. These reports are due monthly and must be submitted electronically no later than the 15th day of the month following the reporting period. POS reports and corresponding invoices must:

- Be separated by state and product category.
- Contain matching date ranges that are clearly identified on both the POS report and invoice.

- POS reports must include, at a minimum:
    - Store number
    - Store name and address
    - Manufacturer model number
    - Retailer model number (if applicable)
    - Product description
    - Units sold
    - Package quantity
    - Incentive amount per unit
    - Total incentive requested by product
    - Total incentive requested by package
    - Total incentive requested
    - Total retail sales
    - Reporting period date range

- Before submitting sales data and invoices to Slipstream, participating retailers must exclude product returns and exchanges and reconcile all adjustments.
- Once approved, the product mix, packaging, and quantities may be changed only with Slipstream's prior written approval.
- Proposals must include a quality assurance process designed to identify and prevent customer purchases that exceed program-established purchase limits.

Table 2. Product Quantity Limits

Lighting Products	Qty Limits
General Service Lamps (GSL) - A19, PAR30, and PAR lamps	12
Smart Bulbs	12
TLEDs	12
Grow lights	12
Shop lights	12
Under-cabinet/undercounter fixtures	12
Holiday lights	12
LED strip lights (indoor and outdoor)	12
Desk lamps	4
Outdoor fixtures	12
Smart Home Products	
Smart plugs	12
Smart switches	12
Smart power strips	6
Water-Saving Products	
Kitchen aerators	8
Bathroom aerators	8

Showerheads	4
Handheld showerheads	4
Home Performance & Comfort Products	
Window film	25
Bath fans	4
Dehumidifiers	4
Pipe wrap insulation	4
Air purifiers	6

6.2 Desired

Submit complete, accurate, and reconciled Point-of-Sale (POS) sales data and corresponding invoices to Slipstream no later than the 15th day of the month following the applicable reporting period. POS sales data and invoices must reconcile, contain matching reporting periods, and accurately support the incentive reimbursement amount requested.

7 Maximum Sponsor Incentives Funded Per Bulb

The sponsor incentive guidelines below identify the maximum incentive amounts available for eligible products offered through point-of-sale markdown and instant rebate promotions.

Table 3. Product Rebate Ranges

Lighting Products	Rebate Range
General Service Lamps (GSL) and non-GSL service lamps (A19, PAR30, and PAR lamps)	$1-$3
Smart Bulbs	$2-$6
TLEDs	$5-$10
Grow lights	$10-$20
Shop lights	$10-$15
Under-cabinet/undercounter, Indoor Fixtures	$10-$15
Holiday lights	$3-$6
LED strip lights (indoor and outdoor)	$10-$25
Desk lamps	$5-$10
Outdoor fixtures	$10-$15
Smart Home Products	
Smart plugs	$4.50-$6
Smart switches	$4-$6
Smart power strips	$10-$15
Water-Saving Products	
Kitchen aerators	$1.50-$3
Bathroom aerators	$1.50-$3
Showerheads	$5-$10
Handheld showerheads	$5-$10

Home Performance & Comfort Products	
Window film	$2-$5
Bath fans	$5-$15
Dehumidifiers	$15-$50
Pipe wrap insulation	$2-$5
Air purifiers	$15-$50

Note: Slipstream reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to adjust proposed incentive amounts based on the incentives requested by respondents, overall program objectives, cost-effectiveness considerations, available funding, and the competitiveness of the retail price offered for the eligible product. Preference may be given to proposals that maximize customer value through lower incentive requests and competitive retail pricing.

Incentive amounts may also be negotiated at the time of award at the program, product category, or individual product level. Requests for incentive amounts that exceed the guidelines identified herein will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Respondents requesting incentive levels above the published guidelines must provide sufficient justification, including but not limited to:

- Expected customer adoption and sales impacts.
- Market barriers being addressed.
- Product costs and pricing considerations.
- Incremental energy and/or water savings.
- Unique distribution, marketing, or customer engagement strategies.
- Other factors demonstrating the need for a higher incentive level and the overall value to the program.

8 Marketing Plan for Promotion

Manufacturers and retailers are encouraged to include the following marketing activities in the marketing portion of their proposals and how they will:

- Enhance visibility of Slipstream's energy efficient home products POP within retail stores.
- Provide planograms and/or describe promotional product placement, such as end caps, pallets, and front-end displays.
- Reinforce sponsor recognition by using provided POP materials or develop approved, unique materials.
- Support Slipstream's efforts to educate consumers and sales associates about the benefits,
- application, and usage of qualified products.
- Describe opportunities for cooperative advertising such as tabs/inserts, newspaper advertising, radio, newsletters, direct mail, etc.

9 General Proposal Requirements

To be considered for participation, each proposal package must be submitted by the specified deadline and include the following:

- A complete proposal response, including all required forms, attachments, and supporting documentation.
- A current and accurate store listing that includes, at a minimum, the store number, store name, street address, city, state, and ZIP code for each participating location. Store listings must identify only participating locations and exclude non-participating stores. Post office boxes will not be accepted as valid store addresses. Refer to **Appendix A: Master ZIP Code List**.
- A completed and signed **Proposal Cover Sheet, Checklist, and Signature Form (Appendix B).**
- A statement confirming the respondent's agreement to obtain all permits, licenses, and approvals required by law and to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, regulations, and ordinances relevant to the program.
- For independent hardware, grocery, and similar retail channels, submissions must be organized and reported separately by:
    - Store type;
    - Retailer or banner name; and/or
    - Buying group affiliation (e.g., Ace Hardware, True Value, Do it Best, United Hardware, and other buying groups).
    - Independent retailers not affiliated with a buying group must be identified and submitted separately.
- Sample Point-of-Sale (POS) sales reports and invoice formats demonstrating the respondent's ability to meet program reporting requirements.
- A description of the respondent's quality assurance process, including procedures for preventing and identifying transactions that exceed program purchase limits.
- Completed **Appendix C: Product Store Workbook** with all required product, pricing, incentive, and store information.

10 Proposal Selections and Award Process

10.1 Preliminary Evaluation

Slipstream reserves the right and has the sole discretion to make multiple awards, reject all proposals, to accept or reject any or all the items in the proposal, and award the contract in whole or in part as it is deemed by Slipstream to be in the best interest of the program. Slipstream may also negotiate any of the details of proposals prior to contracting.

Proposal selection will be made by Slipstream in its sole discretion. Moreover, proposal selection is the sole responsibility of Slipstream. Submitted proposals will be reviewed by Slipstream to determine if all general proposal requirements are met. Failure to meet all such requirements may result in rejection of the proposal.

In the event respondents do not meet one or more of the requirements, Slipstream reserves the right to continue the evaluation of any proposals submitted and to select the proposal which most closely meets the requirements specified in this RFP.

10.2 Notification of Intent to Award

All respondents will be notified via email of Slipstream's intent to award the contract(s) because of this RFP.

Award notification will include respondent scores upon request. Copies of proposals are not available for public inspection.

10.3 Confidentiality

Subject to litigation or other legal disclosure and/or audit requirements, Slipstream will not disclose information submitted in response to this RFP.

10.4 Waiver of Claims

Respondent waives any right it may have to bring any claim, whether in damages or equity, against Slipstream or any of their respective employees, directors, officers, agents, or contractors, with respect to any matter arising out of any process associated with this RFP.

10.5 Conflicts of Interest

Respondents must avoid conflicts of interest. "Conflict of Interest" means a situation where a respondent's interest, or what can be perceived to be a respondent's interest, is, or appears to be, at odds or not aligned with the best interests of the program, Slipstream, or their customers or contractors.

A Conflict of Interest can result when a respondent is involved in multiple interests, one of which could possibly affect a respondent's judgments, decisions, motivations, recommendations, or actions on projects, tasks, or assignments. A Conflict of Interest can also arise where a respondent has a conflicting incentive or the appearance of a conflicting incentive, financial or otherwise that could reasonably call into question the independence of the respondent's judgments, decisions, motivations, recommendations, or actions. A Conflict of Interest may result from other factors as well.

10.6 Right to Appeal

Respondents may file an appeal if: 1) there is clear evidence of a procedural irregularity in the RFP process as outlined within this document; or 2) there is clear evidence supporting a lack of competitiveness affecting the integrity of the RFP process. All other requests to appeal will be

rejected (including, but not limited to, any appeal challenging Slipstream's exercise of its discretion, the relative weight of the evaluation criteria, the formula for assigning points in making an award determination, etc.). Respondents shall bear their own costs incurred from an appeal.

Respondents may appeal an award decision by sending a written appeal within five business days of receipt of notification of Slipstream's intent to award. The appeal must specify the basis of the appeal and provide all evidence to support such basis; include the signer's name; include a mailing address; include a daytime telephone number; and be submitted to:

Slipstream
Attn: Tim Mathison
431 Catalyst Way
Madison WI 53719

Or email Tim Mathison at: tmathison@slipstreaminc.org

A Slipstream appeals committee will initially review the appeal to determine if it qualifies and it provides sufficient specific facts to support the appeal.

If the request for an appeal review is denied because it does not meet one of the steps of the appeal stated above, the respondent will have one additional opportunity to file an amended request within five days of receipt of the Notice of Denial. If the amended request is denied, the respondent will have no further administrative recourse.

If the appeal is accepted, it will be reviewed by the Slipstream appeals committee, and comprised of persons who were not directly associated with the evaluation of the proposals. Slipstream appeals committee members will include, but will not be limited to, the Slipstream Procurement Manager, the applicable Slipstream Program Portfolio Director, and one other Slipstream employee who is not directly associated with the evaluation of the proposals.

Following review and investigation, the Slipstream appeals committee will submit its recommendations to the applicable Program Director for final review and approval. Within 10 business days from receipt of the appeal, the Slipstream appeals committee will issue a final written decision. Following the final decision of the Slipstream appeals committee, there will be no additional consideration of the subject appeal.

A respondent that fails to file an appeal within the time limits established above will be deemed to have waived its right to be heard by the Slipstream appeals committee.

10.7 Terms and Conditions

Contractor must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Slipstream.

10.8 Submitting Proposal and Deadline

Respondent must submit a complete electronic proposal for acceptance by December 1, 2026; 11:59p.m. CDT to: RetailPartners@Slipstreaminc.org. Faxed and mailed proposals will not be accepted.

Please insert "2027 Residential Home Retail Program RFP" in the subject line. Respondents will not be reimbursed for any expense associated with the preparation of a proposal. Proposals will be evaluated by Slipstream, in its sole discretion, based on the evaluation criteria stated above. Slipstream may select one or more respondent(s) and/or proposal(s) but reserves the right not to select any respondent or proposal and to negotiate with selected respondent(s).

10.9 Questions

Questions regarding this solicitation must be made via e-mail to retailpartners@slipstreaminc.org and submitted by December 1, 2026. No questions delivered in any other fashion will be answered. Answers to the questions will be attached to the original RFP posted to the website at https://slipstreaminc.org/opportunities/rfp/2025-lighting-request-proposal after the question due date referenced above.

Proposals must include all appendices for all manufacturer and retail partners. The completed Appendix materials should clearly identify each party's responsibilities, retail store locations participating in each targeted state, and the support each team member will contribute. Proposals may include other documentation; Slipstream may disregard any proposal that does not have the application or other materials completed. Both the manufacturer and retail partner must add their signatures to the proposal indicating approval of the information submitted and willingness to participate with the submitting partner in the event funding is awarded. Proposals submitted without a retail partner approval will be disqualified from consideration.

Slipstream may choose to work with multiple manufacturer and retailer partners at our discretion. These are only estimates and projections, Slipstream reserves the right to change the channel allocation, bulbs, and incentive amounts or reduce/terminate programs.

11 Items Needed for Bid Submission

- ☐ Appendix A: 2026 Master Zip Code List
- ☐ Appendix B: Proposal Cover Sheet, Checklist, and Signature Form
  - Ensure there are both retailer and manufacturer signatures. Bids will not be accepted without both.
- ☐ Appendix C: Product Store Workbook
  - Separate file required for each retail/manufacturer submission