

The Arkus Signal

RFPS AND GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS WORTH PURSUING

CONTRACTS EDITION

MONDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

ISSUE 01 / PRINT EDITION

CONTRACTS & PAID PROJECT WORK

The launch party ends. Who fixes the login?

Energy Trust of Oregon wants about 20 online lessons and someone to keep the learning system working. Its \$300,000 ceiling covers the courses and an initial two-year contract.



The lesson people see depends on the work behind the screen.
AI-generated illustration; not a photograph of this project.

Making a useful course is one job. Keeping it accessible, tracking progress and helping people use it is another. Energy Trust is asking for both.

Inside: eight opportunities, from learning design to leadership, property advice, coaching and research. Some are contracts; others are lists of providers a buyer may hire later.

PARTNERSHIP DESK / ARKUS INNOVATION STUDIOS

Pursue it
with Arkus.

Have a call in mind? Let’s talk about the team it needs.

Arkus leads as prime
We lead the bid and coordinate the team. ↗

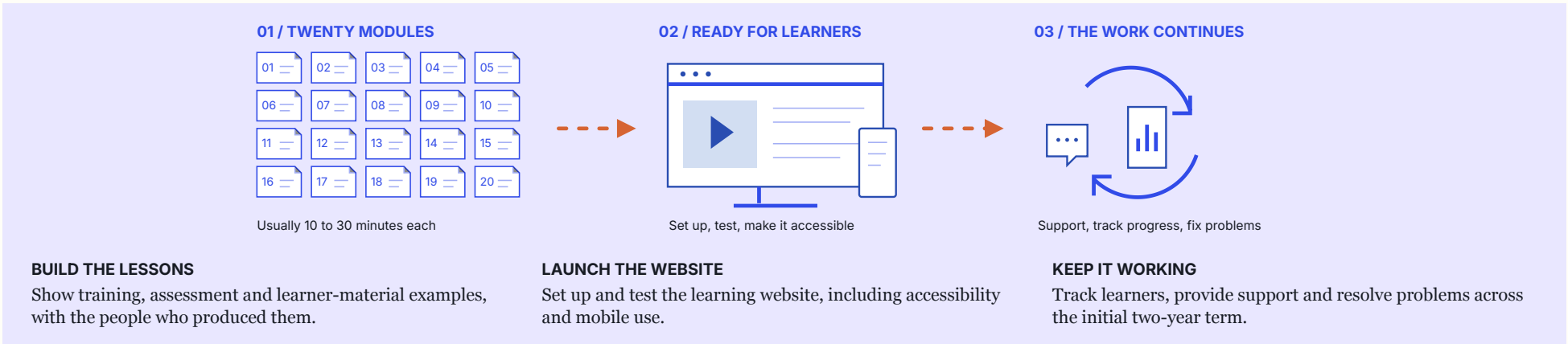
Arkus joins your team
Bring us in for part of the work as a subcontractor. ↗

First, we check whether the call allows that arrangement.

Email: nadia@arkusinnovationstudios.com

INSIDE THE ENERGY TRUST CONTRACT

The course is only the beginning.



Our grouping of the requested work, not the buyer's schedule or scoring formula. Questions and notice of plans to bid: 29 September. Final proposal: 30 October, 5 p.m. PDT. [Read the official call ↗](#)

NEW / OREGON BUYER

1 min read · Deadline in 47 days (as of 13 Sep)

Twenty lessons won’t run themselves

Energy Trust of Oregon’s \$300,000 ceiling covers about 20 online lessons and the system behind them. The initial contract runs from January 2027 through December 2028.

Energy Trust · LMS and instructional design



The lesson people see depends on the work behind the screen.
AI-generated illustration; not a photograph of this project.

A well-made lesson still needs a working way to reach the learner. Energy Trust of Oregon is buying both: about 20 online lessons, usually 10 to 30 minutes long, and the setup and administration of the platform that delivers them. The courses must suit adults, be accessible and work on mobile devices.

The initial contract runs from January 2027 through December 2028, with a \$300,000 ceiling. Applicants must show training examples and learner materials, the team’s résumés, a schedule, and a budget identifying the tasks and the people doing them.

The final proposal is due October 30 at 5 p.m. PDT. Questions and notice that you intend to bid are due September 29. There is already a question to raise: the public page points to an online form while the PDF describes email submission. Reporting instructions also differ. Energy Trust needs to confirm the instructions in writing; answers are scheduled for October 13.

THE OPPORTUNITY

\$300,000 ceiling

For the initial two-year contract

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

30 OCT

5 p.m. PDT

Deadline in 47 days (as of 13 Sep)

Before you start

Course designers or consultants who can teach adults, make learning accessible and run the online system that delivers it. Questions and notice that you intend to bid are due September 29. The online form and PDF give different submission and reporting instructions; ask the buyer to confirm them in writing.

[Official call & application details ↗](#)

[View the application form ↗](#)

[Talk to Arkus about this opportunity ↗](#)

NEW / WASHINGTON BUYER

1 min read · Deadline in 23 days (as of 13 Sep)

What happens after the staff survey?

The Port of Seattle wants to hear from about 2,600 employees, then put the findings to work. The public notice sets a \$300,000 ceiling.

Port of Seattle · Employee engagement survey



A staff survey can bring overlooked experiences into view.
AI-generated illustration; not a photograph of this project.

There is a familiar fate for an employee survey: people take the time to answer, a report appears, and the daily frustrations carry on. The Port of Seattle is seeking a consultant to do more with the answers. Its new call covers surveys for roughly 2,600 employees, analysis of what shapes their experience at work, and clear recommendations for managers and senior leaders.

The assignment also includes helping Port staff find ways to check whether later actions are making a difference. The Port’s listing describes work beginning in early 2027 and ending in late 2032. Its estimated range is \$250,000 to \$300,000; the public announcement states a \$300,000 maximum.

Proposals close October 6. Confirm the time before planning a submission: the public announcement says noon, while the Port portal displayed 4 p.m. without naming a timezone during our review. Questions close September 18. A September 10 conference has already passed, and the notice does not say whether attendance was required. The next useful step is the official portal and clarification from the buyer, especially before investing in a proposal.

THE OPPORTUNITY

\$300,000 ceiling

\$250k-\$300k estimated contract value

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

06 OCT

Time conflict: noon / 4 p.m.; confirm

Deadline in 23 days (as of 13 Sep)

Before you start

Employee research teams who can design surveys, explain the findings to managers and help an organization check whether its response is working. Questions close September 18. Confirm the October 6 cutoff and whether the September 10 conference was compulsory. Sign in to register your interest and ask questions.

[Official call & application details ↗](#)

[Talk to Arkus about this opportunity ↗](#)

CLOSING SOON / WASHINGTON BUYER

1 min read · Deadline in 1 day (as of 13 Sep)

Different jobs need different lessons

Puget Sound Clean Air Agency wants practical training for managers and staff. Proposals for RFP 2027-001 close at noon on September 14.

Puget Sound Clean Air Agency · Staff skills training



Teams can practise how to plan work and adapt when circumstances change.
AI-generated illustration; not a photograph of this project.

Good training earns its place when the next piece of work goes better. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency is looking for experienced people or organizations to design and teach a group curriculum about planning projects, improving how work gets done, and adjusting when circumstances change. Managers and staff will receive different levels of training, so a single presentation for everyone is unlikely to tell the whole story.

This is the shortest runway in the register. Written proposals are due at noon on Monday, September 14, this edition’s print date. The live notice still marks the competition open. It publishes no budget and does not name a timezone, so confirm the cutoff with the agency before relying on a calendar reminder.

The practical detail is in the official packet and its four appendices. Anyone downloading the documents is responsible for sending contact details to the agency to receive changes or additional information. Its general instructions allow electronic proposals as Word, Excel or PDF email attachments, but reject zipped files. Open the call, check the current instructions, and make sure the required materials are ready before deciding there is still time to compete.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Budget unstated

No amount in the live public notice

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

14 SEP

Noon · timezone needs confirmation

Deadline in 1 day (as of 13 Sep)

Before you start Trainers and consultants who can teach practical project planning and better ways of working to both managers and staff. Deadline is today. Register contact details with the RFP coordinator to receive changes, and review the proposal packet and appendices before sending.

Official call & application details ↗

[Talk to Arkus about this opportunity ↗](#)

CLOSING SOON / OREGON BUYER

1 min read · Deadline in 5 days (as of 13 Sep)

One \$200,000 budget. More than one adviser.

Energy Trust’s annual business and leadership budget is shared across providers and services. Applications close September 18; a place on the list promises no assignments.

Energy Trust · Business & leadership list



A useful planning session leaves people with choices they can act on.
AI-generated illustration; not a photograph of this project.

Energy Trust wants advisers it can turn to for questions about running a nonprofit: how it is led and overseen, leadership training, group discussions, strategy and business planning. It is building a list of firms for possible future work. Qualifications, experience, price and small-business status will help determine who makes that list.

The \$200,000 annual budget covers multiple providers and services. A successful application puts a firm in consideration for assignments; it does not give that firm a share of the budget or promise what it will earn.

Applications close September 18 at 5 p.m., making this one of the nearest final deadlines in the edition. The document says “PST” even though daylight-saving time is in effect. The buyer needs to confirm the intended cutoff.

THE OPPORTUNITY

\$200k per year

Shared across providers; no guaranteed share

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

18 SEP

5 p.m., labeled “PST”

Deadline in 5 days (as of 13 Sep)

Before you start Firms that help nonprofits with governance, leadership training, facilitated discussions, strategy and business planning. The buyer considers qualifications, experience, price and small-business status. Accepted firms join a list for possible future assignments; work is not guaranteed.

Official call & application details ↗

[Talk to Arkus about this opportunity ↗](#)

CLOSING SOON / WASHINGTON BUYER

1 min read · Deadline in 11 days (as of 13 Sep)

Bring your expertise. And your calendar.

Longview wants executive and real-estate advice, generally on site one or two days a week. It anticipates about 40 to 50 hours weekly over an initial eight months.

Port of Longview · Executive & real-estate advice



Property advice takes the work beyond the meeting room. AI-generated illustration; not a photograph of this project.

For this Longview assignment, availability means time at the Port. The buyer generally expects the provider on site one or two days a week, with about 40 to 50 hours of work weekly over an initial eight months. It will consider alternative staffing proposals.

The work combines senior executive advice with real-estate expertise. It is separate from the organizational review, whose packet contains a conflicting bid number. No budget for this assignment appears in the reviewed materials.

Questions close September 14 at 5 p.m. Pacific. Proposals follow on September 24 at the same time. The scoring makes the time commitment count: 30 points for the team, 25 for the proposed approach, 25 for management and availability, and 20 for price.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Budget unstated

No amount in the reviewed packet

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

24 SEP

5 p.m. Pacific

Deadline in 11 days (as of 13 Sep)

Before you start

Providers who bring both senior executive judgment and relevant real-estate experience. This is a separate assignment from the Port's organizational review. Questions close September 14 at 5 p.m. Pacific. The buyer expects an on-site presence, generally one or two days each week.

Official call & application details ↗

[Talk to Arkus about this opportunity ↗](#)

UPDATED / WASHINGTON BUYER

1 min read · Deadline in 19 days (as of 13 Sep)

Longview puts people ahead of price

For its organizational review, the Port assigns 40 points to the team, 30 to similar projects and 30 to price. Two comparable projects and three references are required.

Port of Longview · Organizational analysis



An organization can examine how its people work together. AI-generated illustration; not a photograph of this project.

The Port of Longview wants an outside view of how it is organized, how its leadership works and how it prepares people for future senior roles. It puts the people doing that review at the top of its scoring: 40 points for the team and 30 for similar projects. Applicants need at least two comparable projects and three references.

Proposals are due October 2 at 5 p.m. Pacific; questions close September 18 at the same time. No budget appears in the reviewed packet.

Before sending anything, the bid number needs clearing up. The listing and packet cover say 26-068-PSC, but parts of the packet say 26-066-PSC. The second number also belongs to a separate executive and real-estate assignment. The Port's coordinator should confirm which reference applicants must use.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Budget unstated

No amount in the reviewed packet

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

02 OCT

5 p.m. Pacific

Deadline in 19 days (as of 13 Sep)

Before you start

Consultancies that advise on organizational structure, leadership and preparing people for future senior roles. Experience with public bodies or complex organizations is desirable. Questions close September 18 at 5 p.m. Pacific. Applicants need two similar projects and three references. The packet prints two different bid numbers.

Official call & application details ↗

[Talk to Arkus about this opportunity ↗](#)

STILL OPEN / OREGON BUYER

1 min read · No fixed deadline (as of 13 Sep)

A good listener, when work gets complicated

Energy Trust is building a list for one-to-one employee coaching. It seeks coaches who understand nonprofit work and adapt to different cultural backgrounds. Assignments are not guaranteed.

Energy Trust · Developmental coaching pool



A quieter kind of work: time to listen, reflect and change.
AI-generated illustration; not a photograph of this project.

The next assignment could begin with a single employee. Energy Trust is building a list of coaches for one-to-one work with people at different levels of its organization. It is asking who can help, rather than booking a fixed number of sessions.

Coaches need experience with a range of clients, familiarity with nonprofit organizations and a practice that responds to people’s cultural backgrounds. The selection considers experience, credentials, an interview, pricing, answers about inclusion and references.

Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis, with no fixed closing date published. Coaches must supply their rates. Acceptance means Energy Trust can consider them when work arises; it guarantees no assignment, referral or payment, and sets no amount of work or earnings.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Propose your rate

No guaranteed work

OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS

APPLY ANY TIME

No fixed close published

No fixed deadline (as of 13 Sep)

Before you start

Coaches who adapt their practice to people’s cultural backgrounds, have worked with a range of clients and know nonprofit organizations. The buyer reviews experience, qualifications, interview, price, inclusion responses and references.

Official call & application details ↗

[Talk to Arkus about this opportunity ↗](#)

STILL OPEN / OREGON BUYER

1 min read · Deadline in 109 days (as of 13 Sep)

You don’t have to cover the whole field

Energy Trust lets applicants choose specific research areas. Work is typically assigned in tasks below \$100,000, with no guaranteed assignments. Applications remain open through December 31.

Energy Trust · Planning, evaluation & research



Careful observation turns a general question into something that can be tested.
AI-generated illustration; not a photograph of this project.

A researcher does not have to offer everything on Energy Trust’s list to apply. The buyer allows applications for individual areas of planning, evaluation and research. It is looking for people who work with interviews or numerical data, energy analysts and specialists who plan energy resources.

The application needs relevant work samples, three references, proposed staff and rates, and the required disclosures. Software vendors are outside this call. Diversity and supplier-program factors may influence who is chosen for a project, although the reviewed terms set out no fixed scoring bonus or certification requirement.

Applications are accepted through December 31 at 5 p.m. PST. Individual assignments are typically below \$100,000, but joining the list does not guarantee work. The decision now is whether to put a particular research skill in front of this buyer.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Usually under \$100k

Per individual research task

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

31 DEC

5 p.m. PST

Deadline in 109 days (as of 13 Sep)

Before you start

Researchers using interviews or numerical data, energy analysts and energy resource-planning specialists. Applicants can choose individual areas of work. Applications need relevant samples, three references, proposed people and rates, and required disclosures. The call is not intended for software vendors.

Official call & application details ↗

[Talk to Arkus about this opportunity ↗](#)

New additions come first, followed by approaching deadlines and material changes. Calendar reminders identify missing or conflicting cutoff times. Shared budgets and provider lists do not guarantee work. Checked September 13, 2026. The contracts in this edition are concentrated in Oregon and Washington. No Brazilian procurement or overseas-firm eligibility is presented as verified.

Two heads need a method

A person plus an AI system sounds like an upgrade. Sometimes it is. The plus sign is doing rather a lot of unpaid work.

In a 2024 review in Nature Human Behaviour, Michelle Vaccaro and colleagues examined 106 experiments that compared people working alone, AI working alone and the two working together. On average, the combined teams beat people working alone. They performed worse than whichever solo performer was better. Helping a person improve and producing the best result available are different achievements.

The kind of work mattered. When choosing among fixed options, the combined teams did worse than the stronger solo performer. Creating content looked more promising, but the evidence did not establish a clear win over the better solo result. The authors see scope for better collaboration, rather than a reason to abandon it.

Human judgment and AI can help each other. The useful question is how, and compared with what.

This is a study of published experiments from January 2020 through June 2023, not a league table of today’s models. Differences between experiments, and the possibility that some results went unpublished, limit how widely its averages can be applied. A promising pattern still needs testing in the work you actually do.

Imagine a museum rewriting its visitor instructions. In this hypothetical test, a staff member drafts one version, an AI drafts another, and a person using AI makes a third. Visitors try the instructions without being told who wrote them. Compare whether people find their way, what errors remain and how much staff time each version takes. Agree on those measures before admiring the prose. If the combination wins, examine what each contributor did well. If it loses, changing the division of work may be more useful than adding another tool.

COMPARE THE SAME TASK Person alone Use the same measures for all three.	COMPARE THE SAME TASK AI alone Use the same measures for all three.	COMPARE THE SAME TASK Working together Use the same measures for all three.
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Research: [Vaccaro, Almaatouq and Malone, Nature Human Behaviour \(2024\): When combinations of humans and AI are useful](#) ↗ The museum example is hypothetical.

OPINION / THE EDITOR’S VIEW

The learner never sees the launch party

A course can look excellent in a proposal and still leave someone struggling to open it on a phone. The learner meets the working system, not the sales presentation. Energy Trust is right to ask for course design and administration together. Within a \$300,000 ceiling covering content and two years of work, that second job needs real hours and named people. A polished sample cannot answer who will handle the next problem. The buyer has homework too: its online form and PDF disagree about how to apply. A contract built around clear instruction should begin with clear instructions for the people bidding on it.

The remarkably small idea lab.

Three choices. One useful nudge. There is no prize for sounding clever.

Your prototype works once. What happens next?

- ☐ Try it again under different conditions.
- ☐ Watch someone else use it.
- ☐ Work out how to keep it running.

You have one week left. Where does it go?

- ☐ Test the weakest assumption.
- ☐ Listen to the people affected.
- ☐ Make the work repeatable.

Pick one slightly awkward question.

- ☐ What would prove us wrong?
- ☐ Whose day would actually improve?
- ☐ Who handles the morning after?

Mostly first answers? Run another test. Mostly second answers? Invite another voice. Mostly third answers? Plan the morning after. One of each? Put all three jobs in the plan.

A playful editorial prompt. Your answers stay in this browser.

Between the lines.

Three scenes, each sparked by an opportunity in this week’s editions.

More chairs



We've designed the perfect community solution.



Which community?



Apparently, they have a few changes.

Humanity AI backs communities shaping how AI affects their lives. [Official opportunity details](#)

AFTER THE APPLAUSE



THE LAUNCH WAS FLAWLESS.



SO WHY CAN'T I LOG IN?



THAT WASN'T IN THE LAUNCH PLAN.

Energy Trust's request covers making the courses and keeping the learning system running. [Official opportunity details](#)

One more morning



It's working. Can we call it finished?



Let's see if it still works tomorrow.



It's awake. I'm still warming up.

Inspired by FAPESP PIPE's support for small-business research in São Paulo. [Official opportunity details](#)

The work after the launch.

WATCH THE STORY / 24 SECONDS

THE ARKUS SIGNAL

CONTRACTS / 14 SEP 2026

The course goes live.
The work keeps going.

ENERGY TRUST OF OREGON

\$300,000 ceiling

Initial term: January 2027 to December 2028
20 anticipated modules · Usually 10–30 minutes



- 01
BUILD THE LESSONS
- 02
LAUNCH THE SYSTEM
- 03
KEEP IT WORKING

29 SEPTEMBER

Questions and statement of intent are due.

AI-generated scenes. Editorial illustrations, not photographs of these projects.

A short guide to the lessons, learning website and support Energy Trust is buying. Silent, with on-screen captions. Photographs are generated illustrations.

ABOUT ARKUS

[MEET THE FULL TEAM ↗](#)

Meet Arkus Innovation Studios

Ideas deserve a fair hearing. Then a practical test.



Chandler Lewis

Founder · Managing Director



Walter Benadof

Partner · Global Markets
and Investments



Nadia Lerouge

Deputy Managing Director



Cloud (Yiyun) Qiu

Partner · Design and Innovation Strategy



Aarav Ghai

Research Analyst

Arkus Innovation Studios helps founders, investors and business teams decide what deserves their time and money, then put promising ideas to work. We examine ventures and products, compare competing opportunities and build practical AI systems. Curiosity gets an idea into the conversation. Evidence decides what happens next.

Our **Startup Diagnostic** takes a close look at one venture or product. The **Portfolio Diagnostic** compares several. An **AI Workflow Roadmap** starts with how a team actually works, identifies a task worth improving and produces a clear roadmap with a 30-60-90 day plan. Before setting that path, we check what data is available, where a person needs to review the result and what could prevent the tool from being useful.

Talk through a possible partnership
nadia@arkusinnovationstudios.com ↗

The useful output is a clear recommendation: keep going, change course or stop. Each comes with reasoning the team can examine. An attractive idea deserves serious attention. It does not automatically deserve a larger budget.

If a contract here needs capabilities your team is assembling, send the public call and describe the part you can take on. Tell us where the team needs help. We can discuss Arkus leading as prime contractor or joining as a subcontractor responsible for an agreed part, where the buyer’s rules allow. The first conversation should leave us clearer about the work, the people needed and whether there is a sensible reason to team up.