



Electrify America: Researching Frontline Communities

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Background

As part of GRID Alternatives' vision of a transition to clean, renewable energy that includes everyone, we have launched a new initiative to make electric vehicles more accessible to the communities we serve. This effort is initially focused on California, in conjunction with investments from the [California Air Resources Board \(CARB\)](#) in [low-carbon transportation equity programs](#), and [SB 1275, the California Charge Ahead Initiative](#).

In 2018, GRID Alternatives was selected by the California Air Resources Board to administer the [One-Stop-Shop Pilot](#), a clean transportation project that will streamline access to clean transportation-related incentives available to income-qualified consumers in California. Aligned with this project, and in partnership with Electrify America, GRID is now embarking on a California state awareness and education campaign to inform and motivate low-income communities and communities of color about Zero-Emissions Vehicles (ZEVs). The end goal is to increase ZEV adoption equitably in California to reduce carbon emissions, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Key activities for this campaign include:

1. Consolidation of existing educational materials that communicate the benefits of ZEVs, and working with a market research firm with specific expertise in low-income communities & communities of color to identify gaps and create specific scopes for additional materials development;
2. Creation of a digital + print package of new and existing best-in-class brand-neutral educational materials for outreach in disadvantaged communities, including multilingual translations to the top languages spoken in California.
3. Deployment of these materials through the One-Stop-Shop network of existing program administrators and community-based organizations with deep access and credibility in disadvantaged communities;
4. Additional "ride and drive" events in targeted disadvantaged communities in parts of California underserved by existing efforts; and

5. A 3-5 month clean vehicle education social media campaign to leverage these assets with a highly targeted advertising buy to an audience of 18-45 year-old lower-income individuals, who tend to be very active on social media and a likely demographic to consider ZEV adoption for the financial and environmental benefits they offer.

GRID Alternatives' clients, solar consumers at or below 80% area median income (AMI), will be among the campaign's key audiences. GRID is partnering with several community-based organizations to deploy the marketing campaign: [Liberty Hill](#) (LA county, focused on communities of color), [California Service Employees International Union](#) (SEIU California), and at least two Tribal communities. These partners can provide resources to support the research project. We will also target their audiences for the campaign.

The campaign launches in summer 2019. The scope of this RFP includes only the market research portion of the project.

Research done to date

Extensive research on awareness and adoption of ZEVs has already been done, including CARB's [New Car Buyers' Valuation of ZEVs: California](#), [EVadoption.com's market analysis](#), and the Greenlining Institute's [Electric Vehicles for All](#) and [Mobility Equity Framework](#). We will continue to collect additional research throughout the project from our partners, Electrify America, and its other grantees. In addition, we'll be collaborating with Electrify America and [Veloz.org](#) on their statewide [Electric for All](#) advertising campaign, which will influence our own marketing plan/strategies. However, gaps remain in understanding the specific audiences our campaign will target.

To address these gaps, GRID Alternatives is soliciting proposals from market research firms with deep roots in low-income communities and communities of color. The winning bid will go to a firm with multicultural marketing/market research experience, multilingual capacity, familiarity with specific ethnic media channels (Spanish-language radio and television, Chinese newspapers, etc.), and preferably experience in the automotive industry. Minority-owned businesses preferred.

Objectives

The goal of the research project is to arrive at a clear understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of low-income communities and communities of color in California toward investigating, learning about, purchasing, owning, and driving cars. This research will help GRID Alternatives locate the communities that will be most receptive to ZEVs and provide them with information that will be most relevant to their concerns, to raise their awareness of ZEVs and motivate them to take advantage of the state's many incentive programs.

We must have all of the research in hand by May 20, 2019.

The following scope of work provides additional detail on target communities, methodologies, and required deliverables.

Scope of Work

The research project is broken into two phases.

Phase 1 involves analysis of existing research and materials, and primary research to obtain answers to the research questions.

Phase 2 involves testing key messages with target audiences.

Audiences

The audiences defined by Electrify America are [CalEnviroScreen Disadvantaged Communities](#) (DACs) throughout California, as measured by cities that contain at least one CalEnviroScreen Disadvantaged Community census tract. The project also embraces low-income communities that live outside of DACs, such as tribal communities. Audiences served by Liberty Hill, SEIU, and GRID Alternatives plus the tribal communities we partner with will be among the first we aim to reach.

Within those broad parameters, we are aiming to understand differentiators among different communities (Black, Latinx, Chinese-American, other ethnicities) and regions in the state. If you prefer, you could limit the research geographically (Los Angeles, Central Valley) in order to deepen your exploration of these audience segments, though we must include both rural and urban populations.

Research Questions

The gaps we are trying to fill in our research concern general attitudes and behaviors about vehicles among our target audiences:

How do they shop for cars?

How and where do they get information about cars?

- Which websites?
- Which social media platforms?
- Which offline channels?
- How do they conduct research about cars?

What criteria do they consider before buying a car?

What's the most important criterion that informs their decision?

What do they know about ZEVs?

How much did they spend on the last car they bought?

How often do they buy cars?

How do they use cars?

How many people in their family drive?
How many cars does their family own?
Do they have a garage, carport, or assigned parking space at home? At work?
How much do they drive each month (miles, hours)?
How much do they spend each month on gas?
Do they drive to work every day?
What are their core values around driving and transportation?

General and demographic information

What is their race/ethnicity?
What is their gender?
What is their age?
What is their literacy level?
What language is spoken at home?
What other languages do they speak?
Where do they live?
How many people are in the family?
Where do they get information they trust?

Note: if your firm already has access to timely data addressing these questions and audiences, please let us know what's available and adapt your proposal accordingly.

Methodologies

We are open to your recommendations about the best methodologies to be used in collecting and analyzing the data. However, we would like marketing personas to form part of the analysis, and we are looking for both qualitative and quantitative information.

In Phase 2, we ask that you conduct focus groups and/or surveys to test messaging ideas, which could be developed by your firm (if you are a full-service agency) or GRID Alternatives.

Deliverables

The selected vendor will meet with GRID staff to review project goals, objectives and timelines in a kickoff meeting. At the conclusion of the research and analysis phase, they will meet with GRID's ZEVs team to review key findings.

Meetings may be held in person, by phone, or by videoconference.

Phase 1 deliverables:

- Review and analysis of existing research and marketing materials that GRID will consolidate and provide
- Identify gaps in existing research and materials, especially gaps pertaining to key untapped low-income audiences for ZEVs
- Market research covering questions and targeting audiences identified in this RFP
- Up to 5 different personas for different ethnicity/language/region combinations
- Written summary of research findings with personas and charts/graphs explaining the data
- Executive summary PowerPoint presentation (deck + in-person or webinar presentation)
- Recommendations for the ZEV awareness campaign based on research findings:
 - Communities most receptive to ZEVs
 - How do we reach these audiences effectively?
 - Key messages most likely to be relevant to these communities
 - How do we analyze intent to purchase?

Phase 2 deliverables:

- 2-4 focus groups to test key messages
- 1 survey (split demographically and by language) to test key messages

GRID Alternatives must also receive full access to the data set.

Schedule

RFP Response

RFP announced: January 15, 2019

RFP response deadline: February 4, 2019

RFP selection: February 15, 2019

Project

Anticipated Phase 1 start date: February 18, 2019

Phase 1 findings and recommendations shared: April 22, 2019

Anticipated Phase 2 start date: April 24, 2019

Phase 2 findings and recommendations shared: May 13, 2019

Final report and recommendations: May 20, 2019

Budget

Phase 1 Research and Analysis:

\$30,000 - \$35,000 inclusive of gifts/rewards for research participants

Phase 2 Message Testing:

\$5,000 - \$10,000 inclusive of gifts/rewards for research participants

Total Budget: \$35,000 - \$45,000

Acceptance

On or before February 15, 2019, the firm will be selected by GRID's Marketing Director, with consultation from the ZEVs team including the Chief Strategy Officer and VP of Outreach.

You're welcome to approach GRID with questions prior to the RFP response deadline.