



**Request for Proposals  
for Solar Installation Vendors for Solarize Philly  
Responses to Applicant Questions**

*Deadline to submit RFP questions: September 27, 2023*

1. ***If a firm intending to submit a bid does not hold Electrical Contractor licenses or NABCEP certifications, but intends to partner with a local firm that does hold these certifications, are we still eligible to submit a proposal to provide financing/PPA as a contractor for the commercial market segment?***

Yes, we can accept proposals from firms which offer standalone financing who will be partnering with local installation companies. Note that we are looking for partners that have demonstrated experience originating projects and dedicated sales and marketing resources. Additionally, any installation companies will need to be vetted and approved by Solarize Philly.

2. ***Since all commercial solar installations are unique in siting (roof, ground, solar canopy) and size (kW to MW) and complexity (customer owned building, landlord owned building, interconnection requirements) and timing (for ITC %'s, incentive, product prices) it would be challenging for us to quote firm pricing for commercial clients. With that being said, are you seeking us to provide capabilities and experience (case studies) and our company's range of services/and financial options more so than pricing per se?***

Please provide as much detail as possible regarding pricing and the variables that factor into pricing decisions. Price ranges for various scenarios will be helpful.

3. ***My company does lead generation and I would like to submit a Proposal in partnership with an installation contractor. When filling out the application form, should I, as the main applicant, complete applicable details for the installation contractor?***

Yes, please provide details about the installer partner, including submitting all required documents for them (e.g. letter of insurance), and fill out pricing and other details accordingly.

4. ***My company offers solar financing; if questions are not applicable to our business model, what is your preference for responding to them? Are there specific sections that we should skip entirely, and focus on financing specific sections, or would you prefer a line by line response to all items, with an N/A included where applicable?***

Please focus on only the financing sections and leave non-applicable sections blank. From the language in page 16 of the RFP, you only need to complete parts I, XX, and XXI for a “complete” response to the RFI for solar financing models: *Standalone Financing Products (Part XX) is required for Respondents that offer standalone financial products that may be made available to third-party solar companies to offer to their customers. Respondents only offering standalone financing products need only respond to Parts I, XX, and XXI.*

5. ***Can you provide more information about the LMI customer segment that the program is looking to support? I noticed the program documentation includes the following: "Program fees collected from each Solarize Philly installation are used to increase LMI access to solar energy...". Are you able to expand on this at all? From a general standpoint, I am curious if the program is willing to pay a portion of the customer's loan/installation costs in order to help make it more affordable for customers in this group. If there's anything specific you're able to share, including how much \$ might be available to support this group, that would be very helpful.***

We currently support LMI installations by providing pre-purchasing SRECs from leased projects at LMI homes at a set value, thus guaranteeing an income stream for these project developers. This is a beneficial option for us because we are able to revolve these funds by selling the SRECs or retiring them ourselves. That being said, we are open to other financing ideas, as well. We are looking for respondents to inform us of what forms of support they are seeking to help grow the LMI sector, whether that's a direct subsidy to buy down project cost, buying down the cost of financing, providing loan loss reserves, etc. Please share your suggestions in as much detail as possible.

6. ***Do you know the FICO spread across the LMI segment specifically? I know the program is interested in creative ways that view customer payment performance outside of credit score but was curious if you happened to have a general idea of what this might look like.***

We don't track FICO scores for participants, so we are not able to provide that information. There may be research firms that have this data available in some form, but it's not something we have available.

7. ***Can we change the dates in section VI to 2022-23 (most of our installations have taken place in 2023)?***

Please provide additional information like this in a separate attachment.

8. ***We know that the Solarize Philly campaign has a particular focus on low- and moderate-income (LMI) residential customers and our company shares in this mission. Our business model and financing partners require a minimum credit score of 650. Before running in-home consultations we ask potential customers to confirm that their credit score is above 650. Can we ask interested customers for that same pre-consultation confirmation of credit?***

We are open to considering LMI ownership options that have a minimum credit score requirement. We could also explore lowering the credit score minimum with some financing

support from our green bank affiliate, the [Philadelphia Green Capital Corp \(PGCC\)](#). If that's possible, please tell us what that could look like to you by filling out the RFI section in your proposal.

- 9. *Our company commonly runs into an issue when installing on residential flat roofs where PECO requires that the electric meters be outside of the home. We have found that many of Philadelphia's flat roof homes have the electric meter on the inside of the home, typically in the basement. Relocating the meter from the inside of the home to the outside of the home is a painful and expensive process, as we have to coordinate extensively with PECO on the relocation and it is expensive from a building perspective too. That additional cost almost always kills the deal because it negates the savings gained from solar. Can we either a) get PECO to drop the requirement of the electric meters being outside the home or b) is there some other alternative solution that can avoid the need for meter relocations?***

Technically, PECO only requires the meter to be moved outside if a material change is made (e.g. upgrade to service/change in service entrance cable etc.). If there are no changes made to the service, then it's a simple meter exchange to bi-directional meter. PECO doesn't run into these material changes too often and our current Solarize Philly installer partners have been able to work with inside meters with no issues in most cases, though it can take longer to schedule as homeowners need to provide access.

PECO, which operates regionally, also explained that they have an internal policy to move meters outside if possible even where there is no material change, and PECO's metering department is seeking to enforce that policy in more cases. Currently, in Philadelphia, this policy is not uniformly enforced as it is not feasible to move meters outdoors in certain areas of the city.

- 10. *Given the limited amount of space available in the RFP form for descriptive questions (i.e., describe your sales process, etc.), can we provide a brief answer in the allotted space and then either attach a more elaborate response or include a link to external resources to support our answers?***

Please provide additional information like this in a separate attachment and hyperlink external resources.

- 11. *Proposals are requested to help achieve the following 2-year goals for each target market segment: 10 MW of additional contracted residential solar capacity, contract 750 more LMI households, and 5 MW of contracted commercial solar capacity. Instructions state that respondents may propose serving any segment or combination thereof.***

- a. Are each of these market segments weighed equally in terms of scoring?***

Each market segment is considered equally, but will be evaluated by the different members of the PEA team who manage that segment. Evaluation criteria may vary to account for the needs of that segment. For example, for bidders responding to the LMI option, the review committee is particularly interested in the financing available for low-income or credit-limited individuals.

Additionally, the volume of residential and LMI projects is significantly higher than that of commercial projects, and the bidder's capacity to meet that demand will be considered.

**b. Will proposals listing more than one market segment receive higher scores inherently?**  
No, bidders focusing on more than one market segment will not be considered differently than bidders focusing on a single segment.

**12. For commercial proposals, are there prevailing wage or formal apprenticeship requirements?**

There are no formal requirements for prevailing wage or apprenticeship. Bidders may want to consider incorporating prevailing wage, apprenticeship, and domestic content into their projects to take advantage of new tax breaks but we will not impose these as requirements.

**13. For commercial projects, will there be domestic content requirements once the guidelines are clarified?**

There are no formal requirements for domestic content. Bidders may want to consider incorporating prevailing wage, apprenticeship, and domestic content into their projects to take advantage of new tax breaks but we will not impose these as requirements.

**14. If selected, what determines the ability to exercise the option to renew the Contract for up to three years; is this based on any particular criteria?**

Contract renewal will be determined based on contract performance, including Contractor's customer service based on feedback received from customers, working relationship with PEA, Contractor self-generating leads, and outcomes of quality assurance inspections of installed systems.

**15. Will there be an ability to update the pricing structure in the future based on external conditions that either allow for the opportunity to pass along reduced costs, or if needed, adjust costs based on market-wide pricing pressures like supply chain issues that drive up costs?**

Contractors may submit requests during a contract period for price adjustments based on changing economic conditions for approval by PEA. Pricing changes will also be considered at contract renewal.

**16. Are there any incentives for self performing installation work rather than hiring subcontractors?**

No, we do not have any incentive for self-performing installations as opposed to subcontracting the work. However, PEA must approve all subcontractors, and Contractors must report any subcontractors used on individual projects.

**17. Are there any incentives to hire individuals living within the city limits.**

No, there are no specific incentives to hire individuals living within city limits.

**18. Are there any incentives for companies that hire ex offenders?**

No, there are no specific incentives to hire individuals who are ex offenders, but we recommend reaching out to nonprofit organizations who work in this space to identify such opportunities.

There are also financial incentives to hire graduates of PEA's Workforce Development programs, Bright Solar Futures (BSF) and Green Retrofit Immersive Training (GRIT). You can find more information about the programs and incentives [here](#).

**19. Are there any requirements/incentives for having an Operations & Maintenance program/department?**

No, there is no explicit requirement to have a separate Operations & Maintenance department. However, we expect that all installers provide sufficient and continuous O&M support to all customers and depending on the size of the company, a separate program or department may be needed in order to do so effectively.

**20. Can installers opt to participate in only some segments of the solarize program ie. commercial, residential, low income, etc.**

Yes, installers can opt to only participate in only some segments of the program.