

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Solar for All DC CREF Credit Distribution

The Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) is requesting input on a proposal to provide free power through Community Net Metering (CNM) credits to organizations that pay a local Pepco bill. In exchange for the free power, the organizations would distribute the dollar value of those credits either directly or indirectly to income-qualifying District residents. DOEE would be willing to offer more CNM credits than the economic value provided to low-income residents to account for administrative or overhead costs. Comments on the accuracy and relevancy of technical aspects of the work plan are welcome, as are suggestions on approaches to implementing an effective program.

This document is a Request for Information (RFI) only – it is not being posted as an actual statement of work (SOW) at this time, nor does it constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Application (RFA) or a promise to issue an RFP or RFA in the future. Respondents are advised that DOEE will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP or RFA.

A person may obtain a copy of this RFI by any of the following means:

Download from the Department's website, www.doe.dc.gov. Select the *Laws & Regulations* tab. Cursor over the pull-down list and select *Public Notices & Hearings*. On the new page, cursor down to the announcement for this RFI. Click on *Read More* and download this RFI.

Email a request to john.young1@dc.gov with "RE: Solar for All RFI" in the subject line.

Public Information Session: July 21, 2022 at 11:00 AM,

<https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/j.php?MTID=ma303c4a25749676f7212c3eb3d20a4ef>

Meeting number: 2315 299 5611

Password: public

+1-202-860-2110 United States Toll (Washington D.C.)

1-650-479-3208 Call-in toll number (US/Canada)

Access code: 231 529 95611

The deadline for RFI responses is July 28, 2022 at 5:00 PM. Responses should be submitted via email (preferred) to john.young1@dc.gov or by mail to DOEE office at 1200 First Street NE, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20002. Attention: John Young, Policy and Compliance Division.

For additional information regarding this RFI, call John Young at 202-695-5588.

Request to Stakeholders

Stakeholders responding to this RFI are asked to provide informed responses and feedback regarding the program description below *and* describe any benefits, changes, limitations, unintended consequences, and potential economic gains or losses that may result from the program. In addition, respondents can provide recommendations (including proposed draft Request For Qualifications (RFQ)/RFP/RFA language) regarding the best approach for implementation and program design—specifically noting how the program would impact the District’s solar energy goals and reduce low-income residents’ electricity bills.

Introduction and Background

In July 2016, Mayor Muriel Bowser signed the Renewable Portfolio Standard Expansion Amendment Act of 2016 (the “Act”), D.C. Act 21-466, introduced by Councilmember Mary Cheh and passed by the Council of the District of Columbia.

The Act, among other things, established the “Solar for All Program” to increase the access of seniors, small local businesses, nonprofits, and low-income households in the District to the benefits of solar power.

Specifically, the Act requires the Solar for All Program be administered by DOEE with the goal of reducing, by at least 50%, the electric or gas bills of at least 100,000 District low-income households by December 31, 2032. Low-income households are households that have annual incomes equal to, or less than, 80% of the area median income. The area median income for a household of four (4) persons in the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area is set forth in the periodic calculation provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Reaching the Solar for All goal of serving 100,000 District low-income households will require DOEE to serve eligible, income-qualifying households who would not otherwise benefit from the program. Income-qualifying households who otherwise cannot benefit from the Solar for All Program include District residents who lack electricity bills as they live in master-metered multi-family buildings with a single Pepco meter, lack a stable address, or are unable to complete the process of applying for Solar for All benefits.

RFI Purpose

DOEE is issuing this RFI to seek feedback from stakeholders on designing projects to meet the Solar for All goal of providing the long-term financial benefits of solar energy to at least 100,000 District low-income households, by allowing the Program to serve eligible, income-qualifying households who would not otherwise benefit from the Program.

Program Purpose

These projects will provide financial benefits to income-qualifying households, who would not otherwise benefit from the Program. The financial benefits would be equivalent to at least 50% of the District’s average residential electric bills in 2016 and would be in the form of either direct payments vouchers, services rendered for no-fee or at a significant cost-reduction, or other alternative benefits. These projects will also document the transfer of the CNM credit value in such a way that the benefiting households count towards the Districts Solar for All Program goal of reducing the electric bills of at least 100,000 low-income households by 50%.

Program Description

In this program, qualified applicant organizations that pay a District Pepco bill would be asked to submit an application to receive an amount of CNM electricity credits, which would reduce their electric bill by a specified dollar amount of electricity savings, thus freeing up money to be used to fund approved projects. The application would need to demonstrate how that specified amount of savings would be used by the applicant to provide financial benefits, equivalent to at least 50% of the District's average residential electric bills in 2016, to income-qualifying District residents who would not otherwise benefit from the Program. DOEE would be willing to offer more CNM credits than the economic value provided to low-income residents, to account for administrative or overhead costs.

Applicants applying to the potential RFA or RFP would be required to develop a specific strategy or strategies for ensuring the maximum economic benefits are conveyed to income-qualified district residents. Strategies may include, but are not exclusive of, providing incentives, including direct payments, vouchers or rendered services at no-fee or at a significant cost-reduction; supporting existing benefit programs; making process, systems or policy changes; or forming new partnerships.

DOEE would also place emphasis on projects that address one or more of the issue areas listed below:

1. Provide cost-reduction for on-site laundry services at multi-family buildings;
2. Provide public transit vouchers for residents of multi-family buildings;
3. Reduce electricity costs for community benefit organizations, health clinics, food pantries, and places of worship;
4. Leverage funding from outside philanthropic, faith based, or other sources;
5. Further reduce electricity costs by combining CNM credits with energy efficiency measures;
6. Demonstrate a process to reliably determine the income-qualification status of the households to be served;
7. Demonstrate the fair market value of any goods or services provided; and
8. Demonstrate the electricity savings derived from use of the CNM credits

Project Financing

DOEE expects that the CNM credits will be used to offset a qualified recipient organization's electricity costs in a way that frees up the cash-flow to be used to fund approved projects. These funds would not be used to supplant existing projects but may be used to enhance existing projects.

DOEE understands that the cost of administering any project will vary based on the proposed approach and execution of the project. Therefore, DOEE will not set a cap on the credit to service ratio (CNM dollar for Low to Moderate Income (LMI) benefit dollar value) of a project.

DOEE will require that each application provide a detailed breakdown with documentation of how the proposed project will be established, funded, operated, and maintained, including:

- A detailed breakdown of project operating costs;
- The number of income-qualified residents served by the recipient on a monthly/quarterly/annual basis, before the project and during its duration;

- The baseline social benefit of the recipient's current funding levels;
- The recipient's baseline electricity costs, cost per kilowatt-hour of electricity (or tariff rate), and total annual consumption as detailed in the last twelve months of electric bills for the Pepco account(s) proposed to receive the Community Net Metering (CNM) credits; and
- How the organization demonstrates the fair market value of any in-kind benefits or services provided to income-qualifying District residents in lieu of direct cash benefits;

Successful applicants awarded CNM credits would also be required to annually report to DOEE on:

- An accounting of the financial benefits provided to the low-income households served by the project, including demonstrating that the dollar value of the financial benefits are equivalent to at least 50% of the District's average residential electric bills in 2016;
- The number of low-income households served by the project;
- The amount, type, and dollar value of the financial benefits provided to each household;
- The period of time that the financial benefits were received by each household;
- The methodology used for the derivation of the dollar value of the financial benefits each low-income household received from the project; and
- Performance of the project strategy, including its successes or failures and lessons learned during the project period.

RFI Questions

Please respond to some or all of the questions or comments by **July 21, 2022 at 5:00 PM**.

- How can we provide benefits of solar CNM credits to low-income residents living in master-metered buildings?
- How can we provide benefits of solar CNM credits to low-income residents that do not have a stable address?
- How can we provide benefits for solar CNM credits to low-income residents who are not able to complete the administrative process to access the benefits or are not aware of the program?
- How can we ensure that project recipients are not already receiving benefits from the Solar for All Program?
- What is the best way to recruit income qualifying households to participate in the program?

Comments on the accuracy and relevancy of technical aspects of the work plan are welcome, as are suggestions on approaches to implementing an effective program.

Respondents to this RFI may submit alternative short-term concepts and methods to achieve the purpose of this program.