

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Solar for All DC Innovation and Proliferation

The District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) is requesting input on portions of a draft project description, to be released competitively early next year. The project seeks to identify innovative ways to overcome barriers that may prevent the District from increasing the amount of locally generated solar capacity to 5% by 2032, while increasing the access of seniors, small local businesses, nonprofits, and low-income households in the District to the benefits of solar power, and reducing 100,000 low-income households' with high energy burden electricity bills by 50% by December 31, 2032. 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 ben.stutz@dc.gov with "RE: Solar for All RFI" in the subject line.

Pick up a copy in person from the Department's reception desk, located at 1200 First Street NE, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20002. To make an appointment, call Ben Stutz at (202) 481-3839 and mention this RFI by name.

<p>Public Information Session: Thursday, December 15th at 1:00pm, Department of Energy and Environment, 1200 1st Street NE, 20002, 5th Floor (NOMA Metro Station).</p>
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The deadline for RFI responses is Wednesday, December 28th, 2016, at 5pm. Responses should be submitted via email (preferred) to ben.stutz@dc.gov or by mail to DOEE office at 1200 First Street NE, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20002. Attention: Ben Stutz, Office of the Director.

For additional information regarding this RFI, call Ben Stutz at 202-481-3839.

Request to Stakeholders

Stakeholders responding to this RFI are asked to provide informed responses and feedback regarding the project description below *and* describe any benefits, changes, limitations, unintended consequences, and potential economic gains or losses that may result from the project. In addition, respondents can provide recommendations (including proposed draft 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 and energy burdens.

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 requires the District to increase the amount of energy to be consumed from renewable sources to 50% by 2032, increase the amount of locally generated solar energy from 2.5% in 2023 to 5% by 2032, and establish 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 to be administered by DOEE with the goal of reducing, by at least 50%, the electric bills of at least 100,000 District low-income households with high energy burdens by December 31, 2032. The Act also requires DOEE to develop and submit a plan to Council to implement the Program by February 1, 2017.

RFI Purpose

DOEE is issuing this RFI to seek feedback from stakeholders on designing short-term projects that will begin to meet the Solar for All goals of increasing the development of solar energy in the District and reducing low-income homeowners and residents’ electricity bills and burden, *and* simultaneously identifying specific, innovative strategies to overcome persistent barriers to expanding solar energy systems in the District, which have been identified by the Solar for All Task Force and DOEE’s discussions with relevant stakeholders.

Project Purpose

This project will provide funding to develop and install new solar energy systems and simultaneously identify innovative solutions to remove barriers to increasing the District’s solar energy capacity. DOEE will use lessons learned from these projects to ensure that future medium- and long-term Solar for All programs are cost effective and

designed with strategies tested and proven in the District to meet the goals established by the Act.

Project Description

In this project, qualified applicants would be asked to submit an application to install new solar energy systems that must include a specific strategy to address at least one of the barriers listed below. Applicants would be required to formulate or develop a specific strategy or strategies for overcoming the identified barrier(s), be prepared to implement the strategy, and report to DOEE on the performance of their strategy, including its successes or failures and lessons learned during the project period. Solutions to barriers may include incentives, education, process, systems and policy changes, new partnerships, etc.

Applicants would propose a specific strategy to address at least one of the following persistent barriers to increasing solar capacity in the District, including:

- A. How can we identify, acquire, and access sites for future solar installations? What would compel building owners of various types (e.g., Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) owners, Class B owners, multifamily building owners, low-income housing owners) to consider installing solar energy systems?
- B. How can we address concerns or misconceptions about solar energy and educate the general public, and in particular, low-income residents and commercial and multifamily buildings owners about the benefits of solar?
- C. How can we develop solar energy when there is significant competition for roof space due to conflicting incentives or requirements, such as stormwater management requirements, i.e. “green” roof, rooftop amenities, e.g., roof deck, or equipment needs, e.g., HVAC equipment?
- D. How can we best address the age of the District’s building stock and the associated roof repairs and replacement that must take place before new solar energy systems can be installed?
- E. How can we provide benefits of new solar systems to low-income residents living in master-metered buildings?

In addition, DOEE would place additional emphasis on projects that address one or more of the additional issues listed below in addition to a barrier(s) listed above:

- 1. Incorporates electric or thermal storage for efficiency or resiliency;
- 2. Proposes a solar energy project as part of an overall strategy to achieve a net-zero energy building;

3. Uses atypical spaces or surfaces such as road barriers, brownfields, or vertical surfaces, etc.;
4. Proposes to share a portion of profits derived from Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) during the life of the system with low-income households or residents;
5. Leverages funding from outside philanthropic, faith based, or other sources;
6. Installs a project or project(s) larger than 50 kilowatts;
7. Installs a project or project(s) larger than 100 kilowatts;
8. Combines solar installation with energy efficiency measures;
9. Employs locally trained workers or training for new workers for the proposed solar energy project;
10. Incorporates new technologies, such as smart inverters, to address backfeeding and the hosting capacity of distribution feeders; and
11. Designs the solar energy system to help reduce the distribution system's peak loading.

Project Focus Areas

DOEE is considering dividing the projects into two main areas, each with an associated goal for installation capacity:

1. The first area will focus on the installation of roughly 2 to 4 megawatts of new solar capacity and address barriers to installing new solar energy systems on multifamily and commercial buildings and other types of non-residential spaces or surfaces, such as brownfields, road barriers, or parking lots.
2. The second area will focus on the installation of roughly 1 megawatt of new solar capacity and address barriers to installing new solar energy systems that benefit low-income single family households, seniors, small local businesses and nonprofits.

Project Financing

DOEE recognizes that the existing financial incentives for solar projects in the District are already the highest in the nation, far exceeding the level of incentives provided in other states that are leading in solar generation. Therefore, DOEE will emphasize that the funding under this project will be used to fund innovative solutions to the barriers and additional issues listed under the Project Description.

DOEE expects the per-watt cost of submitted proposals to vary, perhaps significantly, depending on the nature of the barrier(s) and issue(s) to be addressed, the type of real estate, e.g. commercial building, brownfield, low-income single family household, etc., and based on the proposed approach and execution of the project. Therefore, DOEE will

not set a cap on the per-watt amount per project, but instead will carefully scrutinize the financial description within each application to determine its overall merit.

DOEE will require that each application provide a detailed breakdown of how the proposed solar energy systems will be financed, operated, and maintained, including:

- A detailed breakdown of the estimated per watt installation cost;
- The assignment of any Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) generated as a result of the solar energy systems installed, who will receive the credit(s), the estimated value of such credits and the length of the assignment (SREC assignment would be limited to 15 years);
- If the Federal Solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC) will be claimed, and if so, who will receive the credit and the estimated value;
- A clear description of who will own the PV system(s) installed under the grant and for how long. (If ownership will be transferred during the life of the system, please explain how that process will take place and what, if any, transaction costs will occur and who will pay them.); and
- A clear assignment of who will perform any necessary maintenance on the systems installed during and after the project period, including the removal and re-mounting of the system during any roof repair or replacement during the project period.

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

Roof Assessment and Screening Project

One of the main obstacles associated with finding project sites for solar energy development is accessing roofs that are structurally sound. The Solar for All Task Force has found that this process and the associated repair costs is a significant cost driver for the installation of new solar capacity in the District.

Based on the responses received from DOEE's Community Solar Access Request For Information, DOEE is considering a separate project to pre-screen and assess rooftops throughout the District and perform a to-be-determined amount of analysis (e.g. 10% design) of those roofs to determine their structural suitability and the cost of repairs. This project would consider funding for the inspection and assessment of roofs in four categories of buildings: single-family residential houses, multi-family buildings, commercial or institutional buildings, and other structures such as small owner occupied businesses, non-profits and religious organizations. The project may also produce a list of pre-approved buildings that are ready to receive new solar energy systems.

Respondents to this RFI may submit alternative concepts and methods to achieve the purpose of this project.