**SUN FOR ALL**

**Solar Empowerment Grants**

**Request for Proposals**

**from Solar Contractors (RFPSC)**

**Response Requirements & Guidelines**

**Issued: July 22, 2020**

**Responses Due: 6:00 pm EDT on August 12, 2020**

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**SECTION 1. SUN FOR ALL PROGRAM INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for your interest in bidding on the opportunity to install one or more solar photovoltaic (PV) systems for selected finalists with funds from the SUN FOR ALL Solar Empowerment Grant Program. We are pleased you are interested in capturing the energy from the sun to energize your community!

Solar project funding totaling approximately $450,000, as well as some funding from the finalists, is available for installations of less than 0.5 MW for organizations that serve low income and vulnerable populations in Indiana with a preference for applicants in the AEP Energy Indiana & Michigan electric service territory.

The SUN FOR ALL Review and Selection Committee consists of representatives of Environmental and Community Development interests in Indiana, and it has narrowed the list of eligible candidate projects to participate in this RFP for solar contractors. This means that, provided that there are no technical issues identified in this bidding process that would create a significant obstacle for an installation at the sites listed in Appendix A, each of these eligible candidates should proceed with the installation of projects. Due to our limited budget, the listed projects must be bid at not more than +/- 10% of the kWdc presented in the Helioscopes in Appendix A.

This RFP is designed to solicit firm proposals from solar installers (“Installers”) interested in bidding on one or more of these projects.

**SECTION 2. SUN FOR ALL PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

1. **Settlement Agreement with AEP Energy**

The funding for the creation of the SUN FOR ALL Solar Empowerment Grant Program was provided by American Electric Power (AEP), I&M’s parent company under a legal settlement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, eight states, and 13 citizen groups. [[1]](#footnote-1) The settlement included an agreement by AEP to invest $3.5 million to improve air quality and to reduce pollution in Indiana through various projects. The AEP settlement monies are being overseen by an oversight committee that includes Citizens Action Coalition, Clean Air Council, and Indiana Wildlife Federation, with the Sierra Club as a non-voting member and Environmental Law & Policy Center as a non-voting legal advisor and facilitator. The fiscal agent for the SUN FOR ALL grant program is the Citizens Action Coalition Educational Fund (CACEF).

1. **SUN FOR ALL Program Partner for Technical Assistance**

Chatham Energy Consulting, LLC (“CEC”) has been retained by the SUN FOR ALL grant program for technical assistance and to perform feasibility studies on several potential sites that the Selection Committee identified. These studies included, but were not limited to, preliminary desktop solar assessments in support of the screening, development and operation of the proposed solar systems.



1. **The anticipated 2020 timeline for the SUN FOR ALL Program is as follows:**

**June 15:** Announce Program, Release Request For Grant Applications (RFGA)

**July 10:** Deadline for Responses to RFGA; application review begins

**July 22:** Release Request for Proposals from Solar Contractors (RFPSC), Announce Finalists for SUN FOR ALL Grant funding

**July 29:** Deadline for questions related to this RFPSC

**Aug. 5:** Responses to questions posted

**Aug. 12:** Responses to RFPSC due 6:00pm EDT (Proposals will be reviewed for completeness, and proposals that do not include the information requirements will be notified and allowed 5 days to conform)

**Aug. 12-19:**  Final Review and Grantee Selection by Application Review Committee

**Aug. 21:** Announce Installers selected to install solar PV systems on recipient properties

**Aug. 22:** Execution of Grant Agreements begins

**Sept. 4:** Deadline for the negotiation and execution of contracts with Installers

**Sept. 8:** Project installations begin

**Dec. 31:** Project installations completed, fully operational and approved by local permitting authorities including sign-off by grant recipient’s electric utility, if applicable

**SECTION 3. BID INFORMATION**

SUN FOR ALL is inviting qualified and experienced Installers to submit firm proposals for one or more of the eligible candidate projects listed in Appendix A.

Submittals must be in the form of:

1. one PDF document (including Appendix B spreadsheets), and
2. Appendix B completed and returned in Excel spreadsheet format.

The PDF submittal must be:

* in 11-point Aerial font
* with numbered pages
* with clear appendices
* no more than 20 pages, excluding cover page and supplemental documents included as attachments or appendices (i.e. supplemental documents, such as product specification sheets, experience, resume, Excel Spreadsheets, array layout within the appendices will not count toward the page limit of 20 pages)

Wednesday, July 29, 2020, 6 pm EDT is the deadline to submit all questions related to this RFPSC to SUNFORALL2020@gmail.com by email with subject line “SUNFORALL question.” Responses to questions will be available to all companies here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1e6NDqez6nF40hgMX6vY7TvWJoFOlpPB6-w8zbGjrdLI/edit?usp=sharing>

Wednesday, August 12, 2020, 6 pm EDT, is the deadline for submitting final proposals for any projects to [SUNFORALL2020@gmail.com](mailto:SUNFORALL2020@gmail.com) by email with subject line “SUNFORALL solar final bid.”

1. **Funding Projects at Nonprofits Serving Low Income and Vulnerable Populations in Indiana**

Solar project funding totaling approximately $450,000, as well as some funding from the finalists, is available for installations of solar energy systems of less than 0.5 MW for organizations who serve low income and vulnerable populations in Indiana with a preference for applicants in the AEP Energy Indiana electric service territory. The SUN FOR ALL Selection Committee has narrowed the list of eligible candidate projects to those listed in Appendix A which will participate in this RFP for solar contractors (“Installers”). This means that, provided that there are no technical issues identified in this bidding process that would present a significant obstacle for an installation at the sites listed in Appendix A, each of these eligible candidates should proceed with the installation of projects not more than +/- 10% of the kWdc presented in the Helioscope in Appendix A. This RFP is designed to solicit firm proposals from Installers interested in bidding on one or more of these projects.

Appendix A contains a list of the finalists and a desktop screening (preliminary Helioscope Reports) for each project that was prepared based on each finalist’s application. The desktop screenings were prepared to determine initial sizing and to stay within the budget available for this initiative. Each funding recipient’s proposal has been evaluated by Chatham Energy Consulting (“CEC”), a solar consultant selected to evaluate the technical aspects of the proposed projects on behalf of SUN FOR ALL and the Selection Committee. Therefore, CEC is not eligible to submit a response to this RFPSC.

**Due to budget constraints, do not make a bid for a project that is more than +/- 10% of the kWdc that is presented in the Helioscope in Appendix A.**

1. **Disclaimer**

* SUN FOR ALL reserves the right to award each project or group of projects on an all-or-none basis, award to one or multiple companies, accept or reject any or all proposals received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify the RFPSC in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, at its sole discretion.
* SUN FOR ALL reserves the right to rescind any award if it determines the offer is not in the best interest of SUN FOR ALL or the potential solar customers, or if errors, omissions, inaccuracies, non-compliance, or any deficiencies are discovered after the award has been issued. Any minor informality or non-conformance with the RFPSC may be waived.
* If SUN FOR ALL determines that all proposals received should be rejected, bidders shall be notified accordingly, and the Invitation may or may not be resubmitted.
* SUN FOR ALL reserves the right to solicit or award additional Installers should such action be deemed necessary, at its sole discretion, to meet program goals.
* This RFPSC does not commit to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an RFPSC response, or procure or contract for services or supplies.
* Nothing in this solicitation process, RFPSC, or any contemplated or final agreement relieves any qualified Installer from complying with all applicable laws and regulations.
* Owners are not obligated to use the Installers for any services and may choose other contractors.
* The Installer or their affiliate/sub-contractor agrees to the terms and conditions of this RFPSC by submitting a proposal.
* All proposals submitted shall become the exclusive property of the SUN FOR ALL program and may be used for reasonable purpose by the SUN FOR ALL program.

1. **Confidentiality**

Pricing proposals of Installers will be shared with the relevant SUN FOR ALL finalist/s and Chatham Energy Consulting (“CEC”). Proposal documents may be shared with public entities that are subject to the Freedom of Information Law providing for public access to information; therefore, proposal documents may be subject to public disclosure. SUN FOR ALL cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information submitted.

1. **Proposal Organization Overview**

Proposals must contain the following:

1. Executive Summary of highlights in your proposal, key features and distinguishing points of your proposal, and/or any problems with this program perceived by your company and your proposed solutions.
2. Proposal Limitations in reasonable detail about any economic, operational or system conditions that might affect the Installer’s ability to deliver capacity, energy and SRECs.
3. Recent Experience. List recent solar projects your company has installed each year in 2018, 2019 and 2020 YTD by categories of residential and commercial including size and location (i.e., provide references from three (3) recent solar projects, including location, size and date of installation. Include a contact name, email, and phone number for each reference. In addition, identify any recent municipal solar projects and/or nonprofit solar projects).
4. Team Experience. Identify all applicable members of your team, including sub-contractors with a job description and address of each, identify licenses and certifications, if applicable, and provide resumes of key individuals as attachments.
5. Insurance. Provide evidence of your liability coverage and other insurance as attachments. Identify the process for honoring workmanship and product warranties
6. Proposal Narrative. Outline a detailed strategy as explained in #5 immediately below.
7. Completion of the Two Tabs in Appendix B Excel Spreadsheet
8. **Project Narrative Requirements**

Please provide the following information:

1. Contact: Provide the name of your contact person including phone number and email address.
2. Program Plan: Provide a plan for implementation that describes the company’s ability to provide solar PV installation services during the program period. Specifically, the proposal should describe the Installer’s ability to provide site assessments, site visits, and customer firm-price proposals, installation, and customer service/maintenance after the installation.
3. Business Practices: Provide a sample customer contract as an attachment that includes a description of your terms of payment and timeline from initial deposit to final payment.
   1. NOTE: All contracts between the property owner and the Installers will state that SUN FOR ALL and its affiliates and Program Partners are not a party to the contract, and that the Installer will be solely liable for any claims, losses, or damages arising out of the contract.
   2. NOTE: SUN FOR ALL will provide grant funding for the listed finalists’ projects provided that this RFP process does not identify technical issues or unforeseen circumstances that would make a project impractical, uneconomical, or otherwise inconsistent with the objectives of the Selection Committee. SUN FOR ALL will provide grant funding with one lump sum payment to the successful grant applicant who will make payment arrangements with the selected Installer. However, we are asking that Installers agree to the following payment schedule and to notify us in your application if you are not able to agree to these terms:
      1. 25% is paid once proof of equipment has been ordered, local permit(s) and approvals have been obtained and copies provided to Finalist
      2. 25% is paid once equipment has arrived at job site
      3. 40% paid once all equipment has been installed and is fully operational
      4. 10%, final payment, is paid once Finalist has verified system is installed as planned and is fully operational/approved and SREC registration and application has been sent to applicable agency/company
4. Meeting Demand: Describe your ability to begin work immediately upon selection by specifying the earliest date you can begin providing site assessments. If you are selected, the same firm-price proposal provided through this RFP shall also be provided to the grantee selected to receive funding. Provide an estimated time-line and strategy to complete all installations (i.e., address capacity and capability while maintaining quality). Please note the following anticipated dates provided earlier in this RFP:

Aug. 22: Execution of Grant Agreements begins

Sept. 4: Deadline for the negotiation and Grantee’s execution of contracts with Installers

Sept. 8: Project installations begin

Dec 31: Project installations completed, fully operational and approved by local permitting authorities including sign-off by the Grantee’s electric utility.

1. Proposal Dates: Confirm that your proposal is valid for 90 days or until a contract has been executed, whichever comes first.
2. Project Information: Individual site proposals shall include the following information for each project that is bid on:
   1. Array size in number of panels and total rated kilowatt dc size. Due to budget constraints, do not make a bid for a project that is more than +/-10% of the kWdc that is presented in the Desktop Review/Preliminary Helioscope Report in Appendix A.
   2. Total cost, cost per wattdc
   3. Payback period
   4. Estimated annual kWh ac production for 25-year period
   5. Ratio of estimated annual kWhac per kWattdc, e.g. 1,300 kWh ac per KW dc installed
   6. For each Project provide annual energy usage history (see link here for any bills and annual usage history submitted by applicant: <https://citizensactioncoalitioneducati.box.com/s/gm7sr9fkv671rr0l22ru8n8810ra5alx>)
   7. Estimated percent reduction of annual energy usage
   8. An image showing location of the solar array on the property
   9. Product specification sheets for panels, inverter and racking
   10. Product warranties
   11. Expected financial savings and assumptions for its calculation, including utility price per kWh. For the purposes of this program use a 3 percent annual utility kWhac price escalator
   12. Exceptions
   13. Observations or Opportunities for Improvement (i.e.; using micro-inverters or optimizers; utility rebates)
   14. System design: The Installer shall design each system by considering the preferences of the Selection Committee while minimizing project costs and maximizing solar energy production. Sites with partial shade or limited space may require high performance panels and/or power optimizers or micro-inverters.
3. Financial Analysis: For each project you are bidding on, provide a financial analysis estimate showing PV module and inverter type, system size, projected energy production and expected financial savings. Clearly state all assumptions, including utility kWh price and annual utility kwh price escalator (use 3%). Clearly label which project this information applies to.
   1. For example: a 5 kWdc array could be 17 x 290 watts or 15 x 330 watts. Your pricing for nominal size arrays will be an indicator of the range of total expected cost with variation for site specifics system size and availability. It is understood that some sites will have higher or lower costs, and pricing for system should include, but not be limited to:
      1. Central inverters shall be transformerless.
      2. Electrical connection shall be on the load side of the meter.
      3. Metal conduit shall be used for all above ground wiring.
      4. Surface mounted metal conduit is acceptable, except in finished interior areas.
      5. Only copper wire shall be used.
      6. Include a lightning suppressor and revenue grade PV performance meter for selling SREC
      7. Complete Recipient’s application for registering and selling SRECs
      8. Provide online, real-time performance monitoring & reporting
      9. Provide a solar system compliant with NEC 2017 Article 690 or current version (e.g.; rapid shutdown, labeling).
   2. Provide solar pricing as a price per wattdc of installed capacity that is inclusive of materials, labor, permitting/approvals and all other expenses involved in the installation. Prices should exclude any eligible incentives or tax credits. The price is to apply to all work described in Supplement A: Solar Scope of Work.
   3. **Note: Assume the Recipients do not qualify for the Federal Investment Tax Credit or depreciation.**
   4. **Due to budget constraints, do not make a bid for a project that is more than +/- 10% of the kWdc presented in the Desktop Review/Preliminary Helioscope Report in Appendix A.**
4. All inclusive (lump-sum) pricing:
   1. Your costs of customer development and communication, site assessments, system design and bid preparation should be factored into the proposal price.
   2. Identify any factors or special conditions that would result in additional costs (such as roof condition, structural engineering evaluation, roof slope, roof access, improvements to existing service/wiring, interconnection, permitting, shading, installation schedule, etc.) and provide dollar estimates or ranges of additional charges for each such factor or condition. To the extent possible, minimize the amount of special pricing by anticipating these factors in your overall per-watt price to reduce the uncertainty for individual installations.
   3. Your choices of system design and components will be used to evaluate customer proposals and executing the final contract. We expect all Installers to use products as listed in Appendix C. If this requirement presents a significant constraint to your proposal, please explain.
5. **Appendix B and Appendix C Requirements**

You must completely fill out the two Tabs in the Excel Sheet provided as Appendix B, including:

* 1. Identify Projects: You can bid on just one or more of the projects identified in Appendix A. Also, use the Appendix B Excel spreadsheets to (1) identify which projects you are bidding on and (2) fill in the relevant information about your bid on that project/s. To view a map of the geographic locations of the proposed project sites, visit: <https://j.mp/3eNHyF6>.
  2. System Specifications: In Appendix B Excel sheets, provide a summary of the system specifications for equipment that will be used, including equipment manufacturer, models, and warranties for modules, inverters, racking, lightning surge suppressor, SREC/revenue grade meter and data acquisition/monitoring systems. Include as an attachment to your proposal the manufacturer data sheets, as applicable. **Note**: Appendix C has a list of pre-qualified equipment suppliers. We ask that your proposal only include equipment from this list. If this requirement presents a significant constraint to your proposal, then explain.

1. **Site Visits**

In Appendix A, SUN FOR ALL has provided to Installers the contact information for finalist projects, as well as energy usage history (see link here which has any billing information and annual usage history submitted by the finalist applicants: <https://citizensactioncoalitioneducati.box.com/s/gm7sr9fkv671rr0l22ru8n8810ra5alx>). An on-site inspection shall be conducted before accepting a contract from each Finalist. The Installer is responsible for contacting the Finalist to schedule the site visit, identifying features that may result in lower or higher costs, and providing associated cost estimates for them in their proposal.

1. **Process**

After the proposal deadline, the Selection Committee will review all responses for completeness and responsiveness. The Selection Committee may request that an Installer provide additional information or clarification to its initial proposal. Failure to provide the requested information or clarification within 5 calendar days of notice may result in disqualification of the proposal for that site. The Selection Team will not guarantee evaluation of proposals associated with this Request if submitted after the August 12, 2020, deadline.

1. **Expectations**

The Installers will prepare a proposal narrative for each project site the Installer would like to bid on. Each proposal shall also include the information identified in Appendix B and Appendix C. Friday, August 12, 2020, 6 pm EDT is the deadline for submitting final proposals for any projects to [SUNFORALL2020@gmail.com](mailto:SUNFORALL2020@gmail.com) by email with subject line “SUN FOR ALL solar final bid.”

If selected, a copy of the final accepted contract shall be sent by the Installer to (1) the Grantee’s primary point of contact (or the property owner if different from applicant), and (2) via email to [SUNFORALL2020@gmail.com](mailto:SUNFORALL2020@gmail.com) with “SUN FOR ALL-final contract” in the subject line.

Installers are expected to provide the following services:

1. Be familiar with and abide by the SEIA Solar Business Code: <https://www.seia.org/initiatives/seia-solar-business-code>
2. An on-site assessment and individual proposal for each selected funding recipient project, as assigned to the individual Installer.
3. Installation of a complete, fully functional, inspected, approved and commissioned photovoltaic system on each site.
4. Report work progress on a regular basis (only Start of Install date & Operation date), include the project name, status comments, dates of the following: contact, site visit, customer proposal, signed contract, job completed, system kWdc size and cost.
5. Work includes all design services, permits, materials, labor, equipment, commissioning, and incidentals necessary to install a complete photovoltaic system with online reporting as specified hereinafter, including, but not limited to, the work included in this specification.
6. Installer shall include (1) a structural and roofing integrity review for roof installed systems and (2) an electrical service review.
7. The photovoltaic system shall be connected to the utility grid following the design and installation standards for the Grantee’s electric service provider.
8. Prepare applications for interconnection and net metering (if available) with the Grantee’s electric utility, any local building or electrical applications and register the system with applicable SREC agency and company (SRECTrade or another solar renewable energy certificate broker).
9. Photovoltaic system components shall minimize the number of roof penetrations for roof mounted systems.
10. Provide the owner with adequate training including maintenance and warranty information for photovoltaic modules, equipment and system components, mounting system and inverters.
11. Provide an owner’s manual including equipment specifications, warranties, system documentation and drawings, shading analysis and an annual kwh production forecast specified by month (year one) and annually thereafter.
12. Maintain a safe workplace environment.
13. Comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
14. **Contractual Obligations and SUN FOR ALL**

SUN FOR ALL, its fiscal agent CACEF, its affiliates and program partners have no financial obligation to any Installer participating in the SUN FOR ALL program. All contracts will be executed between the property owner and the Installer. The contract between the property owner and the Installer will state that SUN FOR ALL, the SUN FOR ALL fiscal agent CACEF, its affiliates and program partners are not a party to the contract and that the Installer will be solely liable for any claims, losses or damages arising out of the contract. The Installer agrees to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals from Solar Contractors by submitting a response to this Invitation.

1. These groups are Ohio Citizen Action, Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana, Hoosier Environmental Council, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, West Virginia Environmental Council, Clean Air Council, Izaak Walton League of America, Environment America, National Wildlife Federation, Indiana Wildlife Federation, League of Ohio Sportsmen, Sierra Club, and Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)