

Solarize Anchorage

Request for Proposals from Contractors for Photovoltaic Systems

Issuer: The Alaska Center

Posting Date: 11/19/2018

Deadline for Submission: 01/04/2019

Submit electronically to: kristen@akcenter.org

Interviews with PV Contractors: 01/21/2019 - 01/24/2019

Contractor Selection Date: 01/28/2019

Opportunity Summary

Solarize Anchorage is seeking proposals from qualified firms willing to provide for group purchase of photovoltaic (PV) system installation in conjunction with the 2019 Solarize Anchorage campaign. The goal of Solarize Anchorage is to accelerate solar PV energy education and installations in Anchorage through group purchasing and a competitive bidding process. For this second round of Solarize Anchorage, participant eligibility is targeted to residents within the geographic area represented by the community councils which apply to participate in the program.

The intent of this RFP is to select one or more firms to provide recruitment, system design and installation services, and ongoing customer service for eligible participants in the neighborhoods participating in this round of Solarize Anchorage.

This RFP is available for download at

<https://akcenter.org/climate-clean-energy/solarize-anchorage/>. If necessary, the Solarize Anchorage team will provide additional information about this RFP in a conference call before the submission deadline. The date will be publicized to interested parties and available on the Solarize Anchorage website. Questions can be submitted to Kristen via email kristen@akcenter.org, with "RFP Question" in the subject line. Please check online for any addenda to the RFP and for updates prior to completing and submitting a bid.

Instructions

Firms should submit a separate bid for each individual neighborhood for which they are interested. If a firm wishes to bid on more than one neighborhood, please detail an execution plan and timeline for completing installations in more than one neighborhood.

Program Overview

Solarize Anchorage is a joint effort between the selected neighborhoods, the Alaska Center and the Alaska Center for Energy and Power (ACEP) at the University of Alaska to make residential and small commercial solar PV energy systems more accessible and affordable for homeowners and commercial property owners in the Anchorage Municipality. Solarize is designed to reduce customer acquisition costs and other common barriers to promote greater adoption of residential and small commercial solar PV. The Solarize Anchorage campaign will assist the participating communities in selecting solar PV installers through a competitive bidding process.

- Solarize Anchorage engages homeowners and commercial property owners through an extensive outreach program led by volunteers, with input from the chosen installer, and supported by community leaders that encourages consideration of solar PV installation. This means PV contractors don't have to spend as much money to secure customers and can pass those savings on to their Solarize customers.
- Contractors may provide a community incentive that drives interest. These incentives may include an attractive tiered pricing structure in which the more people who sign up, the lower the price is for everyone.
- A specific timeframe and deadline creates incentives for potential customers to act quickly, and keep volunteers engaged and excited.
- Support from community leaders and third party technical experts increases consumer confidence. The selection of a single solar PV contractor (or consortium of contractors) for each community makes the process simpler for residents and more cost-effective for the selected installer.

The goals of the campaign include:

- A. Make solar PV more accessible to homeowners and commercial property owners in the participating neighborhood
- B. Substantially increase the number of solar PV installations in the community.
- C. Lower the cost of solar PV energy by reducing customer acquisition costs for selected PV contractors and transferring those savings to residents;
- D. Significantly ramp up adoption of solar PV in a way that can be sustained beyond the timeframe of the present Solarize Anchorage campaign.

Campaign Timeline (Subject to Change)

RFP Publicly Announced	11/19/2018
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Final RFP Questions are Due in Writing	12/07/2018
Final Responses to RFP Questions Posted Online	12/12/2018
Proposals Due	01/04/2019
Firms Notified of Interviews (if necessary)	01/14-18/2019
Interviews	01/21-25/2019
Firm(s) Selection and/or Further Negotiation	Week of 01/28/2019
Community Workshop #1	TBD February 2019
Community Workshop #2	TBD March 2019
End of Solarize campaign, customer signup deadline	TBD March/April 2019
Solarize Contract Expiration, deadline for installations	TBD Summer 2019

Once selected, the PV Contractor(s) will collaborate with Solarize Anchorage to roll out a neighborhood outreach campaigns, which are planned to start in February or March 2019 with the goal of maximizing the number of residential contracts for solar PV installations in the participating neighborhoods.

Commercial solar PV tends to require additional permitting and design constraints and a more extended period of time will be required to allow for this; the official deadline for signing commercial contracts will likely be later than the deadline for residential systems and may be extended beyond that date in consultation with the program administrator. All customer leads gained as a result of the outreach campaign will be forwarded to the chosen Solarize PV Contractor(s).

Descriptions of Participating Communities

Currently Solarize Anchorage has received interest from the following neighborhoods in Anchorage: Rogers Park, Turnagain, Spenard, and South Addition. As in the previous campaign, the neighborhoods are defined by the community council boundaries.

(see:

<https://muniorg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=60eb4a8b1e38445487fb06817d904330>) Depending on the neighborhood, communities will be served by

either

the Municipal Light and Power or Chugach Electric utilities. Details about community housing and zoning can be found on the Anchorage municipality GIS gallery under the zoning tab.

While Solarize enrollment in each of these communities can not be guaranteed, the numbers of signatures of interested community members in each neighborhood were as follows in an initial survey of participants.

Turnagain: 98 households

Rogers Park: 64 households

Spenard: 20 households

South Addition: 64 households

For reference, during the 2018 Airport Heights Solarize Anchorage campaign, 63 site assessments were conducted, and 33 households signed contracts for installations. No signatures or interested participants were collected prior to the Airport Heights campaign.

PV Contractor Eligibility and Expectations

Proposing firms must respond to each section of this Request for Proposals to outline their ability to meet the unique requirements of a Solarize program. Please note that to be eligible to participate in the contractor selection process, installers must be able to demonstrate the following:

- Have a demonstrated proficiency in the installation of solar PV and have installed at least 100 kW of residential grid tied PV with at least five successfully completed systems in the Municipality of Anchorage.
- Proposing firms must be licensed, bonded and insured.
- Proposing firms must maintain workers' compensation and employer's liability insurance as required under Alaska state law.
- Be compliant with all applicable OSHA requirements.
- The proposer shall have a contractor's license and ideally have a NABCEP installation professional certification. Electrical work shall be performed under the

supervision of a licensed electrical administrator as required by state and local codes.

- Commit to having a tabletop/ floor exhibit and at least one staff person on hand for all community events. These are the primary opportunities for customers to register for a free site assessment and learn more about solar, and the solarize process. Two workshops will be scheduled for February and March of 2019.
- Proposing firms will provide a group-based pricing structure quoted as cost per installed Watt (before incentives). We expect that quoted prices will be less than current pricing in the market for individual systems.
- Solarize pricing and equipment specifications (modules, inverters and racking) will be public information, available as handouts at all community events, and on the Solarize Anchorage website.
- Each installer's "contact person" will take part in a fortnightly, half-hour conference call with Solarize program managers and community volunteers.
- The chosen installer will accept the terms included with this RFP as part of your future agreement with Solarize Anchorage and with the customers you acquire through the program.
- For each customer contract, the installer partner will be responsible for securing all required permits, completing the net-metering agreement with the utility, and scheduling and passing all jurisdictional inspections.

Minimum Equipment Requirements

- a. All power generation and transmission equipment must be UL listed for its designed use.
- b. Construction must comply with the current building code for the Municipality of Anchorage as well as all other relevant state and local codes.
- c. System modules shall be UL1703 listed
- d. System modules shall have a minimum 10 year warranty on a minimum of 90% nameplate energy production and 25 year warranty of 80% nameplate energy production.
- e. Inverters shall be UL1741 SA listed
- f. Inverters shall have a CEC-listed efficiency of 95% or greater
- g. Inverters must carry a minimum 10 year warranty
- h. System interconnection must comply with NEC and utility regulations

Selection Criteria

Evaluation Matrix	Points Possible
A. Qualifications of Project Team	25
B. Price/ Value	30
C. Technical Merits of Proposal	10
D. Customer Service	25
E. Locally Based in Alaska	10
Total	100

Proposal Contents

A. Qualifications of Project Team

- a. Provide a statement describing the firm’s capability to complete the project per the project timeline specified above. If a firm is bidding on more than one neighborhood, please detail an execution plan and timeline for completing installations in more than one neighborhood. Include a discussion of the firm’s financial stability, number of employees (including number of full-time installers, part time installers and assistants, site assessors, and project managers), length of time in business, capacity, and resources.
- b. Explain how the firm can expand quickly—and maintain quality—to meet the demand that may occur due to this project. Present the firm’s plan to accommodate demand within the timeline stated above. If possible, provide two examples of large solar PV projects completed to date which have prepared the firm for an undertaking of this scale. Provide a best estimate of the number of average installations the firm can complete per week. Describe how the firm plans to maintain or exceed this installation rate, while maintaining quality, throughout the Solarize Anchorage campaign. Describe the firm’s plan to meet the expected time frames between lead generation and site visit scheduling, site visit completion and quote delivery, and contract signing and system installation.

- c. Describe how the firm will prioritize Solarize Anchorage customers relative to additional workload elsewhere.
- d. Identify key personnel for this project including roles, experience, licenses, and certificates including NABCEP certifications. Key personnel should include at a minimum: Owners/Principals; Project Managers; Designers; and Installers. Include resumes of the key personnel.
- e. Liability: Provide information on the level of insurance the firm has for worker's compensation and commercial general liability.
- f. Work practices: Address the firm's health and safety record and practices. Identify any communications with the Alaska State Department of Labor and Industries and state or federal human rights agencies regarding workplace issues in the last 3 years.
- g. Utility Interconnection Experience: Provide information on your experience working with Municipal Light and Power and the steps you will take to ensure utility interconnection is a smooth process without delays.

B. Price/ Value

Proposed Equipment

List the specific PV system that your firm would offer for the basic grid-tied package for which pricing information is included in the matrix below. PV energy monitoring should be included as part of the basic package.

Provide a brief description of the PV system.:

ie. "Monocrystalline Itek panels with APS microinverters mounted on Iron Ridge racking on composition shingle roof, mounted parallel to the roof. Assumption is made that the roof has a south facing azimuth."

Standard Equipment Specifications:

	Solar PV Modules Including Wattage	Inverter Technology	Racking	Monitoring
Manufacturer and Model				
Web link to product				
Country of Origin				
Rationale for selection				
Manufacturer's Warranty (Years and Coverage)				
Efficiency when new				
Additional warranties or noteworthy Information about product				

1. What is the minimum lead time required on the equipment package described above?

Solarize Anchorage Pricing Proposal

In the matrices below include a \$/Watt purchase price of the standard equipment described above that will reduce as system sizes increase. Pricing should be listed as price-per-watt of installed capacity, exclusive of any eligible incentives or tax credits. The tiers listed are only examples. Submissions can change the number of tiers and the installed sizes of each tier.

Installers are also encouraged to submit a bid for a high capacity price break. For example, for less than 10kW of *total* solar PV installed in a specific neighborhood campaign, there would be prices for different installation size categories. If more than 10kW is installed during the Solarize campaign, then the pricing would be adjusted to the figures submitted in the high capacity price break table. Please include the total installed capacity for each pricing structure in the upper left cell of the tables. 10 kW is used only as an example here and does not need to be the cut-off for a high capacity price break.

**If early adopters pay the regular rate structure and later participants qualify for the high capacity rate structure, then the installer will provide a rebate to the early adopters so all participants pay the same rate.

Note: Customer contact, site assessments, system design and cost estimates are to be provided free of charge.

Standard Price Structure:

****Tier sizing is shown as an example below. Installers may change the number of tiers and the tier sizing as desired.**

<i>Total Installed Capacity :</i>	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Tiers**	<2kW	2-5kW	5-8kW
Purchase Price Per Watt			

High Capacity Price Break:

<i>Total Installed Capacity:</i>	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Tiers**	<2kW	2-5kW	5-8kW
Purchase Price Per Watt			

Additional Considerations

We understand that different customers have different needs and preferences. Not all customers have a roof that works well with a basic south facing rooftop solar PV array installed parallel to the roof pitch. Please list any special conditions or options for customers that would result in additional costs such as required infrastructure improvements (i.e. upgrades to existing electrical service or building structural inspections, additional costs for second story buildings, additional trenching costs, atypical roofing materials etc.), or equipment upgrades (i.e. ground-mounted systems, microinverters if not included as part of standard equipment), and battery-backup system. Please provide an add-on (or decrease) in price for these items, which means the price the item would add to the base pricing above. Mark “N/A” if an item is not something you offer, or “Included” if an item is already a part of your base pricing. Use the additional rows to include other items as you think are needed.

Additional Offerings	Price (\$/Watt or Flat Fee)	Notes
Systems larger than 8 kW		
Electrical Service Upgrade		
Roof mounted racking at angle or azimuth different than roof		
Frame Ground Mounted		Assume a 100 ft. interconnection point

Pole Ground Mounted		Assume a 100 ft. interconnection point
Microinverters		
Made in America Modules		
Battery Backup		
Other grid backup options		
PV installed on multiply roof surfaces		
Long conduit runs		

Financing Options offered by Installer

Solarize Anchorage will be working with partners to identify and clearly communicate what financing options are available to participants. All findings and related material regarding financing for solar PV will be publicly available.

Describe all residential and commercial financing options you will present to Solarize Anchorage participants. Include existing relationships with banks or financial institutions, third party owned lease or Power Purchase Agreement options and any other access to financing tools and products.

C. Technical Merits of Proposal

Please describe why the technologies and components described in section B are the best way to complete the 2019 Solarize Anchorage campaign. List the technical merits of your proposal which you believe make it superior to others.

D. Customer Service

- a. Provide references from 3 recent residential installations including size, date of installation, and location, with a contact name and telephone number. Specify if project was completed on time per the original contract deadline. If it was completed later than schedule please list the reasons.
- b. Provide written permission for utilities to provide a reference to Solarize Anchorage in regards to their interactions with you and your staff and the quality and consistency of your firm's work.
- c. Billing practices: Provide a representative copy of the customer site assessment and proposal and contract that your firm plans to use in the Solarize Anchorage project that includes a description of the scope of work, expected payback/ rate of return of the solar system, the assumptions that go into this payback calculations, equipment to be installed, terms of payment, terms for termination, post-installation performance verification, and construction timeline from execution of contract to final system commissioning. Identify how the billing cycle and process for this project might differ from a typical billing cycle and process. Please specify what % or flat fee is required up front to sign a contract for installation and get the equipment on order. Note: All contracts will be executed between the home, condominium, or small business owner and the selected contractor. The contract between the owner and the selected firm will state that Solarize Anchorage and the Community Coalition are not parties to the Contract, and that the selected contractor will be solely liable for any claims, losses, or damages arising out of the Contract.
- d. Marketing practices: Identify and describe how any of the proposed project team members are engaged in activities geared towards building public awareness and education about solar PV energy and other sustainability issues. If possible, discuss the firm's previous experience with public awareness and education the Anchorage area. Identify any means by which the firm(s) will contribute to outreach efforts for Solarize Anchorage. Provide specific examples.
- e. Educational practices: Describe the proposing firm's ability to contribute to public awareness and education by supporting the Community Coalition at public meetings and outreach events. Identify the individual (s) who plan(s) to be present at Solarize Anchorage workshops and briefly describe their experience in conducting similar educational activities.
- f. What is the typical time between signing a contract for the installation of a solar PV system and receiving final inspections from the utility and municipality?
- g. Describe the installation process, including how the firm will minimize disruption and disturbance of neighbors, landscaping, structures, and clients' living arrangements during preparation, installation, and clean up.
- h. Describe final testing and sign-off procedures, including punch lists, inspection, and other necessary requirements. Include any post-installation performance verification procedures.

- i. Discuss the most common problems and reported issues that the firm has experienced and how they have been resolved. List any complaints received by the Better Business Bureau or the Alaska Attorney General's office over the last 3 years.
- j. Describe the training the firm provides the homeowner, including materials or manuals, customer care books, and/or support for later questions and system performance. Please include a discussion of the process by which you will work with the homeowners should equipment warranties need to be called upon in the case of a malfunction of some sort.

E. Location of Business

Please list the physical address of the business and the location of the corporate office as well as the city in which the principal owners(s) reside(s).