



**Solarize Asheville-Buncombe
Request for Proposals
Residential and/or Commercial Solar PV and Battery Storage Systems**

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I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe is a public-private coalition consisting of the Blue Horizons Project, City of Asheville, Buncombe County, Green Built Alliance, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club/WENOCA, Hood Huggers International, MountainTrue, Solar Crowdsourcing, and community leadership.

The Blue Horizons Project is the community partner on this campaign, and its work is rooted in energy efficiency as the foundation of clean energy. Buncombe County and the City of Asheville have adopted 100% renewable energy goals for the community by 2042, and the Blue Horizons Project is helping to reach that goal.

The objectives of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe program are to:

- Lower the cost of solar energy and battery storage installations through the power of bulk-purchasing, reduce contractor acquisition costs and transfer those savings to homeowners and business owners of Asheville and Buncombe County;
- Educate consumers and cultivate a sense of community participation and ownership in the clean energy market;
- Substantially increase the number of solar energy systems and battery storage installations in a way that can be sustained beyond the timeframe of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign.
- Reduce the [energy burden](#)¹ of vulnerable residents in Asheville and Buncombe County through additional measures available to low- and moderate-income families to reduce upfront cost;
- Advance and encourage renewable energy workforce development opportunities;
- Encourage the adoption of solar-friendly permitting practices in Asheville and Buncombe County.

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe invites proposals from solar energy companies specializing in the design and installation of solar photovoltaic systems ("Contractor") to participate in a Solarize campaign for Asheville and Buncombe County, NC ("Project Area").

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe wants to ensure that residential and commercial participants/customers get the best quality materials and service for the best possible price and recognizes that Contractors may specialize in one market segment or the other. Therefore, respondents to this RFP may bid for:

- A. residential applications only, or
- B. commercial applications only, or
- C. residential and commercial applications.

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe reserves the right to select one Contractor for residential applications, one Contractor for commercial applications, or one Contractor for both

¹ Energy burden map for City of Asheville

residential and commercial applications. Bids received by the due date, March 2, 2021, will be reviewed and evaluated by the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe Coalition Members.

Bid Meeting: Organizers of the campaign will hold a virtual bid meeting via Zoom on February 8, 2021 at 10:00AM EST. Prospective bidders are highly encouraged to attend this meeting to get an overview of the campaign and participate in a Q&A session, however, attendance is not required to bid on this RFP. [Register in advance for this meeting](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

The Contractor will collaborate with Solarize Asheville-Buncombe to roll-out a 4+ month community marketing, education, and outreach campaign with the goal of securing 60+ residential and commercial contracts for solar energy and battery storage installations. Installations are anticipated to continue beyond the outreach period with the goal of all installations complete on or before December 31, 2021. All Asheville and Buncombe County residential and commercial residents that enroll in the program will be exclusive leads advanced to the selected Contractor, who will provide the services described in this RFP, including responsive participant communication; a transparent pricing/financing structure; accurate proposals; and turnkey design and installation services.

II. SOLARIZE ASHEVILLE-BUNCOMBE CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

This section provides a summary of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign activities and responsibilities. The success of the Solarize campaign depends upon the collaboration of Solarize Asheville-Buncombe and its partners, the Selected Contractor, and the participating community members (participants).

A. Solarize Asheville-Buncombe Roles and Responsibilities

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will help facilitate the campaign with the following roles and responsibilities:

Technical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website, landing page • Signups, intake, voice service, and automated workflows • Database management • Reporting and analytics
Marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic design, branding • Print initial campaign materials, i.e., brochure, banners, yard signs.² • Social media, media outreach • Community events

² Contractor will share print costs after the initial print is exhausted.

Education

Schedule, organize, and coordinate 4-6 workshops, open houses, and information sessions, virtual or otherwise, including secure locations, schedule speakers, and announcements.

B. Contractor Bid Submission Process

Each contractor shall carefully examine this RFP and any and all amendments, revisions, and other data and materials provided with respect to this RFP process. Contractor should familiarize themselves with all proposal requirements prior to submitting their proposal.

Should a bidding contractor note any discrepancies, require clarifications or wish to request interpretations of any kind, the bidding contractor may send a written request by email to admin@solarizeabc.com until bids are due. Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will promptly respond and make both the question and answer public via the online RFP page. Bidding contractors are highly encouraged to visit the online RFP page from time to time before submitting written requests to admin@solarizeabc.com.

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00PM on March 2, 2021. Proposals received after the aforementioned date and time may not be considered in Solarize Asheville-Buncombe's sole discretion.

Proposals must be submitted in electronic form only to admin@solarizeabc.com. The subject line should be identified as: "Proposals for Solarize Asheville-Buncombe Campaign"

C. Community Outreach Campaign

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe is preparing for widespread community education and outreach during the course of the campaign. Working closely with the Contractor to coordinate messaging and activities, Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will implement a community education, marketing and outreach campaign consisting of public workshops and events, open house events, media outreach, email, social media and online marketing, along with other activities to encourage area residents and businesses to enroll in the program.

The Contractor is required to have staff available to attend a series (4-6) of informational workshops designed to educate the community about the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe program, benefits of solar, meet campaign stakeholders and participate in a Q&A session. Additionally, the Contractor should be prepared to have staff attend 2-3 press events throughout the course of the campaign.

The Contractor will agree to market only under the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe brand in the Project Area for the duration of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign

period and through the completion of all installations. All participants must be offered the finalized discounted Solarize Asheville-Buncombe pricing via the tiered pricing schedule, when applicable.

D. Participant Process

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will collaborate with the Contractor to design and implement a full participant process experience. The following process outlines what Solarize Asheville-Buncombe values in order to give participants the best possible customer service while conserving the Contractor's time and resources.

1. Enrollment

- Interested residential and commercial participants will enroll through the dedicated Solarize campaign webpage (www.solarizeabc.com), hosted on the Solar Crowdsourcing platform. Said webpage will include relevant campaign information including but not limited to the campaign, Selected Contractor, selected materials, tiered pricing schedule, financing options, and processes.
- Participants will provide address and electricity bill information. Participant data will be immediately accessible to the Contractor and Solarize Asheville-Buncombe through an automated workflow process. The Contractor is expected to make initial contact to participants as soon as possible upon receipt of participant data.
- The Contractor will integrate, to the extent practical, their sales processes with the Solar Crowdsourcing platform to track participants and continuously communicate their progress to Solarize Asheville-Buncombe throughout the campaign.
- A 2-3 week onboarding process will take place prior to launching the campaign to ensure a seamless customer workflow between the Contractor and Solarize Asheville-Buncombe.

2. Solar Assessment

- Initial Solar Assessment: the initial solar assessment includes a desktop review of property and utility bill information. This may include site assessment through satellite imagery and the creation of an energy load profile. The initial site assessment is to determine solar radiance on property, rooftop and property orientation, estimated system size, and preliminary payback and return analysis. The purpose of the initial solar assessment is to screen participant property to determine suitability of solar and participant ability to finance the system. Participants whose sites are not suitable for solar will be promptly informed, with explanation provided, by the Selected Contractor. This information shall also be shared with Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign organizers.

- Detailed Assessment: Upon determination that participant property is suitable for solar and/or battery storage and participant has been screened by phone or email, Contractor will generate a detailed solar assessment report including but not necessarily limited to visual representation of solar energy system on roof or land, participant energy load profile, environmental benefits, and financial analysis.
- Site Visit: A site visit includes but is not limited to meeting the participant; taking measurements; shading analysis; determine tilt and orientation; verify annual energy production, and note any electrical, mechanical, or structural considerations that may incur costs above and beyond the standard pricing schedule for the project. Site visits may be clustered to reduce contractor costs.

3. Participant Proposals

- In all proposal materials, the Contractor must use the current utility rate for the participant (e.g. kWh AC rate). The Contractor may use a set escalator rate for predicted electric utility price increases at no greater than 2% per year in predicting payback periods, and make clear that all figures are based on given assumptions.
- Upon request by the participant, the Contractor is expected to provide multiple assessments based on the type of financing and ownership structure desired without additional cost to the participant.
- The Contractor must clearly specify all other assumptions for their estimates, including derate factors for their equipment; estimated annual energy production based on the region of the system as per the PV Watts estimator (www.pvwatts.nrel.gov) (or other industry accepted resource, including PVSyst or NREL System Advisor Model) taking into account panel orientation and shading; estimated annual AC energy production decline over 25 years, and any other relevant factors.
- Renewable energy credit (RECs) valuations may not be included in financial analysis reports produced as a part of the project.
- Solarize Asheville-Buncombe and Contractor must clearly represent to potential participants that, previous to signing a contract with the Selected Contractor, they are free to independently seek other offers.
- Selected Contractor(s) shall brief participants of the federal tax credit, how it works, and provide blank tax forms, however, written claims regarding federal tax credits or other tax benefits must include a disclaimer that the participant contact a tax professional to determine how tax incentives apply to them.

4. Contracting

- Contractor installation agreements should explain and itemize materials, system type, cost, sizing, and energy production. Individual system designs should be aesthetically pleasing, taking into consideration the preferences of the participant; local zoning and building codes; historic preservation, and HOA regulations while minimizing project costs and maximizing solar energy production.
- Participants whose sites are feasible for solar will be offered the pricing and financing options established in the Contractor's submitted Attachment B: Pricing Proposal.

5. Installations

- The Contractor will provide turnkey installation including permitting, utility interconnection and commissioning services for eligible and interested participants.
- The Contractor will provide a clear list of work to be performed and estimated schedule to all participants.
- The Contractor is responsible for timely completion of each installation. If and when the Contractor geographically-clusters installation work to reduce costs, they must communicate that clearly to the affected participants.
- The target date for completion of all installations is before December 31, 2021.
- The Contractor will continue to communicate progress to Solarize Asheville-Buncombe until all installations are complete.

E. Community Project.

As part of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign, the Contractor will take part in a charitable community project. The location(s), and beneficiary(ies) of the project will be determined by Solarize Asheville-Buncombe. The Contractor will collaborate with Solarize Asheville-Buncombe to design, develop, and construct the project(s) as well as partially finance the project from a percentage of total Solarize Asheville-Buncombe revenues. See Sections VI.K. below for more details on the Community Project.

F. Low- and Moderate-Income Program.

In addition to providing group discount pricing on solar energy, battery storage, and other clean energy technologies to all participants, the Project will include a

component to help reduce the upfront cost of solar and help reduce the energy burden for low-income and moderate-income (LMI) residents in Asheville and Buncombe County.

The Solarize Asheville-Buncombe coalition is currently in the process of designing the program and seeking funds to reduce the upfront cost of solar. At a minimum, the Contractor will be expected to take part in this program by assessing selected properties and providing installation services just as is done for all participants.

III. SOLARIZE ASHEVILLE-BUNCOMBE TIMELINE

Milestone	Date
Organizing/Stakeholder Engagement	ongoing
RFP draft and approval by	1/25/2021
RFP Release	2/1/2021
Bidder Meeting	2/7/2021
RFP Bids Due	3/1/2021
Installer interview day	3/3/2021
Announce selected solar installer	3/5/2021
Installer agreement draft and approval by	3/15/2021
Installer onboarding, begin campaign outreach (i.e. press release, social media)	3/5/2021 through 3/25/2021
Website complete/Launch Campaign/Customer signup period begins	4/1/2021
Customer signup period ends	7/30/2021
Deadline for contracts	9/30/2021
Installations complete	12/31/2021

IV. CONTRACTOR ELIGIBILITY THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible to submit a proposal, Solar Contractor must:

- A. Demonstrate experience and proficiency in solar energy installations. The Contractor must have installed a minimum of five (5) solar PV projects in North Carolina.

- B. With a goal of supporting the local solar industry, preference will be given to firms located within the Project Area.
- C. Be, at minimum, licensed to conduct business in North Carolina, with no negative Better Business Bureau rating.
- D. Include on the project team at least one master electrician holding a valid and current electrical license to perform any electrical work on the solar PV projects.
- E. Include on the project team at least one NABCEP certified installer.
- F. Maintain standard insurance policies for Workers Compensation (\$1,000,000 per accident) and Commercial General Liability (\$2,000,000 per occurrence). All coverage maintained by Contractor shall be primary to any insurance coverage carried by Participant, shall contain waivers of subrogation, and shall not be amended or terminated without notice to Participant. Proof of this coverage will be provided by the Selected Contractor.
- G. Submit a complete proposal by 5:00PM on March 2, 2021. Proposals should be emailed to admin@solarizeabc.com.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA

The Solarize Asheville-Buncombe RFP Committee will be composed of Coalition Members, community partners and volunteer residents. Proposals will be scored in the following categories, with a maximum possible score of 100 points. The final scoring of each proposal will be at the exclusive discretion of the RFP Committee.

Subject	Description	Top Score Possible
System Quality	Evaluates the quality and performance of the proposed equipment including panels, inverters, racking systems, and batteries. Panels should be Tier 1 according to Bloomberg New Energy Finance Corporation, have efficiencies greater than 17% and be rated for wind loads up to 90 mph.	20
Pricing	Assesses the proposed tier prices for base turn-key solar PV systems provided by the respondent and ranks them competitively. Project “Adders” should be reasonably priced when compared with market rates. Additional consideration will be given to the extent bulk-purchasing of “adder” materials such as battery storage and EVSEs are provided. Respondents are encouraged to show a tiered-pricing, bulk-purchasing schedule for adder materials in <u>Attachment D</u> where possible.	20

System and Workmanship Warranty	Evaluates the equipment warranty of the proposed panels and inverters along with the proposed workmanship warranty provided by the Contractor. Panels require a 25 year power warranty with 80% of nameplate power by year 25. Inverters require a warranty of at least 15 years for microinverters and 10 year for string inverters, however longer inverter warranty periods will be viewed favorably. The contractor workmanship warranty is required to be at least one year, however longer workmanship warranty periods will be viewed favorably.	15
Contractor Experience, Implementation Plan	Evaluates the respondent based upon their # of years in business, the quality and experience of the proposed project team, the # and size of projects previously completed. Assesses the respondent's proposed plan for tracking leads, handling project volume, proposed timeline from site evaluation to contract to installation, and their ability to handle projects within HOAs and historic districts.	15
Innovative Concepts	Assesses the level of innovation the Contractor proposes as a part of the core project and additional items of value for customers to consider. Core project Innovative concepts may be associated with the LMI and WfD components of the program as well as willingness and ability to hire new workers from within the Project Area. Customer innovative concepts may include creative use of outdoor spaces, energy efficiency solutions, roofing services, equipment upgrades, and incentives for early adopters.	15
Community Project	Evaluate the ingenuity, level of commitment (i.e., monetary contribution), and services the respondent proposes for a project to support the nonprofit community or LMI bulk discount.	5
Financing	Assesses Contractor's ability to offer financing options to program participants <i>including innovative financing options for the low-income community</i> . Financing that includes low interest, low fees, and no money down options will be given a higher score.	5
System Aesthetics	Evaluates the degree to which selected components and installations are aesthetically pleasing and blend in with structure and adjacent surroundings.	2.5
Marketing Plan	Assesses the respondent's ability to support education and marketing efforts associated with the project. This should be evaluated on the quality of the promotional materials and the level of support offered for the educational and promotional portions of this project.	2.5

VI. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS

The core proposal must be submitted as a single PDF document. Each page must be numbered and include the company's name. Clearly label each of the subsections outlined below:

A. Cover Letter

Include a cover letter (one page) signed by an authorized company representative on company letterhead. The cover letter should summarize highlights, key features, and distinguishing points of the proposal, as well as any unique problems identified and proposed solutions.

B. Company and Project Team Experience

Description of the bidding contractor: Highlight relevant experience, skills, and capabilities necessary to undertake a Solarize campaign, including, but not limited to, number of systems, and kW capacity installed in each of the last 3 years, how long the company has been in business, ability to handle a large number of leads and projects over a short timeframe. Do not repeat information provided in Attachment A.

Identify all members of the project team, including, but not limited to, sub-Contractors and/or partners assisting in project financing, participant service, outreach, and project installations. Include a brief description of each member's experience and role. Include an organization chart of your company and the project teams.

Identify ability to hire from within the project area. This includes current job openings, apprenticeships, or training programs offered by the contractor and any partnerships with schools or programs in the project area.

C. Program Implementation Plan

Outline the intake process for participant leads; method for screening sites and follow-up with those participants; and data tracking systems for leads, participants and installations.

Describe a plan for ensuring that Contractor has adequate capacity to accommodate the anticipated increase in volume of leads, including initial contact with participants, site visits, follow-up visits, outreach events, and installations. Estimate the number of residential and small commercial solar PV projects the Contractor could reasonably complete on a monthly basis. Describe a contingency plan if outreach results in a workload exceeding the Contractor's expectations and staff capacity.

The plan should include an anticipated installation schedule based on your expectations for the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign and the Contractor's strategy for completing installations no later than 120 days after contract approval for each participant. For these estimates, an average system size of 5kW may be used. Include an assessment of the firm's upper limit of capacity for site assessments and installations

within a given time period. Provide information about how many site assessments and quotes the firm can perform on a weekly basis. Include details outlining the number, size and types of systems per set time period that your firm including any engagement with subcontractors are capable of installing, and what factors are accounted for in these estimates.

Describe the internal quality assurance process for the solar PV equipment and installations, including any contractor warranties on equipment installed and/or labor. manufacturers' warranties for equipment components should be listed in Attachment C, Equipment Specifications.

Describe the operation and maintenance agreement that will be offered to participants, and describe the provisions to address scheduled and corrective maintenance, system monitoring and communications protocols, as well as associated participant costs for each, if applicable.

D. Participant Experience

Describe the process a participant will experience from inception as a lead to project completion or determination that the participant site is not viable for solar. Please include:

1. All aspects of participant experience, including site evaluation, securing of any financing or leasing or SEPA agreement arrangements, installation, and any follow-up;
2. Information on quality assurances to participants and examples that might indicate exemplary participant experience;
3. Expected timeline for the average participant from evaluation to installation.

E. Partnering and Sub-Contracting with Other Contractors (if applicable)

Bidding contractors may choose to partner or subcontract with other contractors to diversify and strengthen their bid and avoid strains in capacity. If the bidding contractor chooses to do so, it must specify the name of the company and the relationship that exists between the companies. The partnering or subcontracting firm must meet the same threshold eligibility criteria as stated in Section IV of this document. In addition, the bidding contractor must disclose the relationship and obtain approval in advance from Solarize Asheville-Buncombe.

F. Offerings for Homes Where Solar PV Is Not Feasible

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe aims to help guide participants unable or uninterested in moving forward with a fixed solar installation toward other energy-related resources, and reduced environmental footprint, such as portable solar/battery systems, home energy audits, weatherization, insulation, roofing, more efficient electrical use and appliances, and/or other clean energy products. Explain how you might be able to support this

aspect of the project. This effort may include existing relationships with other energy service companies, or in-house expertise related to other energy services

G. Unique Challenges

Identify areas or tasks that might result in delays or extensions of the anticipated program schedule. Examples of unique challenges may include COVID-19 social distancing practices, property located within a historic district. Please describe unique challenges perceived by the Contractor and proposed solutions.

H. Outreach and Marketing Strategy

In addition to Solarize Asheville-Buncombe outreach efforts described above, bidding contractors should describe additional ways to expand the number of residential and commercial solar PV projects. Include ideas about leveraging outreach to generate strong leads. Identify any potential community partners that might assist in deploying or enhancing the marketing strategy. If applicable, cite specific examples of marketing services that will be provided, items or marketing materials that will be offered by the Contractor (i.e., signs, flyers, direct mail, videos featuring participants, etc.) or Contractor funding/resources that will be allocated to complement and support Solarize Asheville-Buncombe's efforts or to produce these marketing materials.

I. Financing Options

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will be working with financing partners to identify and clearly communicate financing options available to participants. All findings and related material regarding financing for solar will be publicly available.

Bidding contractors must describe all residential and commercial financing options available to Solarize Asheville-Buncombe participants. Include existing relationships with banks or financial institutions, third party-owned lease/PPA and any other access to financing tools and products. Comment also on any mechanisms for financing that you know of which you have recommended or could recommend to participants. Do not duplicate information provided in Attachment B.

J. Price Structure

1. Tiered Pricing Schedules.

a. Residential tiered pricing. In Attachment B, provide a dollar per watt (\$/W) installed price for **residential solar PV systems** that will decrease by tier levels as the total amount of aggregate capacity from signed contracts increases. During the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign period, all participants benefit from reaching the highest Tier (lowest price), regardless of when they signed a contract. Participants who sign a contract at a higher-priced tier will receive a rebate check from the Contractor once the final tier is determined.

b. Commercial tiered pricing. In Attachment B, provide a dollar per watt (\$/W) installed price for **commercial solar PV systems** that will decrease by tier levels

as the total amount of aggregate capacity from signed contracts increases. During the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign period, all participants benefit from reaching the highest Tier (lowest price), regardless of when they signed the contract for solar. Participants who sign a contract at a higher-priced tier will receive a rebate check from the Contractor once the final tier is determined.

2. Lease/PPA Contracts.

If the Contractor opts to offer a Lease/PPA model, they must provide a base dollar per kilowatt hour (\$/kWh) Lease/PPA price (Purchase Price) that will decrease by defined tier levels as the total contracted capacity within the community increases. The Lease/PPA contract must include a “not to exceed” lease payment or PPA payment that is applicable until the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign concludes. This provision includes any extensions or date modifications implemented if agreed to by all Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign participants. At the conclusion of the campaign, all Solarize participants will be notified of the final Purchase Price, based on the final pricing Tier achieved.

3. Increased Pricing Factors.

Features of certain installations will result in higher costs. Contractor must outline specific electrical, mechanical, and structural equipment as well as site or labor features that will result in greater costs by completing the “Increased Pricing Factors” in Attachment D. Throughout the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign, Contractor will be responsible for clearly identifying individual projects that trigger additional pricing and include this information in their proposal to participants. For property located within a historical district or listed as a historic place, a flat fee of \$200 can be included to cover the design review process.

4. Adders.

Provide a list of additional system features in Attachment D otherwise known as “adders,” along with associated costs of such features, which may be preferred by the participant and would affect the final project cost. Examples of adders can be equipment upgrades, energy storage, home energy monitoring, etc.

Community feedback from our survey shows that more residents are interested in accessory items such as battery storage and EVSE equipment. Therefore respondents to this RFP are encouraged to show a tiered-pricing, bulk-purchasing schedule for adder materials in Attachment D where possible. If tiered-pricing for adder materials are not possible, please explain why it is not possible.

K. Community Project Component

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will seek to identify a local nonprofit for a charitable community project for this campaign in which the Contractor is expected to contribute. Describe how the Contractor will contribute to the community project. These contributions might include: designating a percentage of Solarize Asheville-Buncombe gross revenues, utilizing contract workers from the Project Area, discounting installation

fees, and/or providing a demonstration project on a nonprofit's property. This item will be evaluated on an innovative approach and total commitment proposed by the Contractor.

L. Low- and Moderate-Income Component

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will work closely with the Contractor to include a component of the Project to reduce the upfront cost of solar energy and help reduce the energy burden for low-income and moderate-income (LMI) residents.

As such, previous experience and/or demonstrated willingness to work with LMI customers will be valued highly. Contractors are encouraged to provide insights on potential LMI-focused outreach strategies, financing options, roof repairs, options for reduced credit score requirements or alternative structures (e.g., EnergyScore), and operations and maintenance offerings. Any suggestions on enhancing our existing financial partnerships would also be appreciated. The Contractor can expect additional installations as a result of the LMI component of the Project.

Because LMI homes are often not energy-efficient, this portion of the program may require energy-efficiency measures such as weatherization and insulation to be taken in conjunction with a solar installation. Contractors who are able to provide such energy efficiency measures internally or with a subcontractor will be highly competitive.

NOTE: because of the source and nature of potential funding available for this component of the program, Contractor must be prepared to evaluate and install 20+/- LMI residential properties on or before June 30, 2021.

M. Workforce Development Component

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will work closely with the Contractor to include and develop Workforce Development (WfD) opportunities for Asheville and Buncombe County low income and Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) community members as a component of the Project. As such, all previous experience and/or demonstrated willingness to collaborate on development and implementation of a WfD program will be valued highly. Contractors are encouraged to provide insights on potential entry level learning materials such as written or online tutorials, curriculum, and/or NABCEP certification study guides; indicate any existing partnerships or relationships with educational institutions and community-based organizations to pursue WfD programming; and demonstrate willingness to initiate an hands-on internship/apprenticeship/entrepreneurial skill building. Examples of internship/apprenticeship/entrepreneurship activities may include site assessment, system design, system installation, project management, business training, etc.

VII. STANDARD SYSTEM SPECIFICATIONS

Use Attachment C to identify standard system specifications for equipment that will be used for solarize installations. Specifications listed in this section are listed with the intent of establishing a standard for baseline performance, which Solarize Asheville-Buncombe has made best efforts to outline for the purposes of pricing. The Contractor remains fully responsible to meet all applicable local, state, federal and other codes, as

well as applicable industry standards and best practices. In your proposal, include a narrative describing the merits of the proposed equipment. Outline a contingency plan should any equipment become unavailable, e.g., due to circumstances such as a plant closure or more demand than available product. Solarize Asheville-Buncombe is interested in high quality as well as cost-competitive equipment.

A. Photovoltaic Panels

All panels must have a Tier 1 ranking as defined by Bloomberg New Energy Finance Corporation and have at least a 25 year power warranty with: specified performance degradation curve showing acceptable levels of performance or replacement and show achievement of a minimum of 80% of the nameplate rated power at STC by year 25: and PTC/STC ratio greater than 0.9, having no negative PTolerance. PTolerance may be positive or zero for both the positive and negative tolerance ratings. Independent of the mounting systems, panels must be rated for snow and wind load up to 5400 PA. Panels should have efficiencies of no less than 17%, for the base price, and for the Premium Efficiency Alternative Price, please specify a panel substantively higher efficiency, which may be used for situations with space limitations.

B. Inverters

Inverter technologies have a warranty that allows for replacement due to premature failure over the lifetime of the system, and UL certification. Warranties shall be at minimum 15 years for microinverters, and 10 years for string inverters; however, longer warranties will be viewed favorably.

C. Racking

- Roof: Pre-engineered roof racking systems at a minimum in accordance with North Carolina Building Codes and International Building Code 2009
- Ground: Pre-engineered ground mount racking systems at minimum, compliance with UL 2703 or 2703 certified.

VIII. PARTICIPANT PROPOSAL AND CONTRACT SAMPLES (Provide in a PDF file)

A. Proposal/Estimate

Sample of typical participant proposal/estimate, showing system size, project energy production, and expected financial savings. Participant proposals must clearly state all assumptions, including utility price and utility price escalator.

B. Purchase Contract

Sample of typical residential and commercial participant contract. For the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign, Contractors will be requested to show estimated savings to the participant gained by participation in the campaign. Include a section

explaining how the final price will be adjusted for all participants when the final pricing tier is determined at the end of the campaign.

B. Lease/PPA Contract

If applicable, Contractor's direct purchase contract and/or a lease or power purchase agreement ("PPA") agreement with the participant, specifying all terms and conditions for a participant under the Solarize Campaign.

IX. Program Administration and Platform Service Fee

The Contractor will pay Solar Crowdsource the following fees of all gross contract amounts for solarize program administration, services, and platform:

- Residential: 5%
- Commercial up to 100kW: 4%
- Commercial over 100kW: 3%

This fee-for-service will be required for all contracts signed as part of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign and contracts signed for locations outside the Project Area but given Solarize Asheville-Buncombe pricing. The Contractor is not required to provide Solarize Asheville-Buncombe pricing for participants outside of the Project Area or non-Solarize designated equipment, such as ground mounted or large commercial systems, but will be expected to pay the aforementioned fee-for-service should these participants originate through the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign. This fee-for-service will be payable to Solar Crowdsource upon the first draw payment of each contract. Solar Crowdsource will invoice the Contractor monthly.

X. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. Indemnification

Contractor will protect, indemnify and hold harmless Solarize Asheville-Buncombe, its Coalition Members, directors, officers, board, trustees, employees, volunteers, agents and/or representatives from and against all liabilities, losses, claims, damages, judgments, penalties, causes of action, costs and expenses (including, without limitation, expert and attorney fees and expenses) imposed upon, incurred by or asserted against Solarize Asheville-Buncombe resulting from, arising out of or relating to the Contractor's work under contracts entered into as part of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign. The obligations of the Contractor under this paragraph will survive the expiration or termination of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe program.

B. Insurance

For the duration of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign, the Contractor shall maintain standard insurance policies for Workers Compensation (\$1,000,000 per accident) and Commercial General Liability (\$2,000,000 per occurrence). All coverage

maintained by Contractor shall be primary to any insurance coverage carried by Participant, shall contain waivers of subrogation, and shall not be amended or terminated without notice to Participant. Proof of this coverage will be provided by the Selected Contractor.

C. Limitation of Liability

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe its partners, affiliates, agents, officers, directors, employees, volunteers, successors and/or assigns shall not be liable to the Contractor for any special, indirect, incidental, consequential, punitive, or exemplary damages of any kind whatsoever, whether based on contract, warranty, tort (including negligence or statutory liability), or otherwise.

D. Non-discrimination

The Contractor agrees and warrants that they will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States and North Carolina;

E. Waiver Authority

Solarize Asheville-Buncombe reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, to modify the anticipated timeline, to request modifications of the proposal, to accept or reject any or all proposals received, and/or to cancel all or part of this RFP at any time prior to Contractor selection.

F. Confidentiality Statement

Proposal documents are not generally considered to be a matter of public record. Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will endeavor to keep information confidential if the Contractor marks the subject information as confidential, provided that the confidential information was not publicly known and made generally available in the public domain prior to disclosure hereunder or becomes publicly known and made generally available after disclosure hereunder.

G. Disclaimer

This RFP does not commit Solarize Asheville-Buncombe to award any contracts, funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies. Solarize Asheville-Buncombe reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, intervene and remove lead Contractor and/or partnering firm, negotiate with all qualified bidders, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in the best interests of the community.

H. Contractor Responsibilities

The Contractor will have the following responsibilities, and, by submitting a proposal under this RFP, agrees to be bound by these responsibilities.

The Contractor will provide technical expertise, free site evaluations, financing options/support, and turnkey installation services for eligible participants. The Contractor will also track leads and contracts and collaborate with Solarize Asheville-Buncombe on outreach strategy. The Contractor will provide status information for all leads and participants in a bi-weekly progress report. All participant contact information acquired as part of the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign can be used by the Contractor only for the Solarize Asheville-Buncombe campaign and not for any other purposes or disclosed to a third party.

Installations will be carried out by the Contractor in accordance with all applicable laws and codes, interconnection requirements for net-metered installations and existing rules and timelines. For each participant contract, the Contractor will be responsible for securing all required permits, completing and submitting incentive applications (if applicable), and scheduling and passing all jurisdictional inspections. Solarize Asheville-Buncombe will arrange for Contractor to meet with the jurisdictions having authority prior to finalizing any participant contract to ensure local permitting and inspection requirements are known and that Contractor is in compliance with local code. The Contractor will provide guidance and assistance to each participant with completing an interconnection agreement with their utility, and provide coordination with the utility. These services are to be included in the per watt cost under the tiered or flat rate price structure proposed.

[end of main RFP document; remainder of page intentionally left blank]

Please submit questions in writing to: admin@solarizeabc.com

Thank you for your interest in Solarize Asheville-Buncombe

