

**Request for Proposals: Solar For All Vermont Program**

**Solar For All: Planning, Design, and Community Engagement**

ISSUE DATE	July 3, 2024
QUESTIONS DUE	July 10, 2024 – 4:00 PM (EDT)
QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY	July 15, 2024 – 4:30 PM (EDT) <i>revised from 7/17</i>
RFP RESPONSES DUE BY	July 25, 2024 – 4:30 PM (EDT) <i>revised from 7/23</i>

**PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES, AND ADDENDUMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RFP WILL BE POSTED AT:**

**<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/renewables/solar-all-vermont>**

The Vermont Public Service Department (PSD) is requesting bids/proposals from qualified contractors to complete the scope of services listed in this request for proposals (RFP) regarding Vermont’s Solar For All (SFA) program funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The PSD’s State Energy Office (SEO) Division will be the coordinating office for the SFA and for the resulting contract.

State Contact Person: Andrew Perchlik.

Phone: 802-828-4017

Email: [Andrew.Perchlik@Vermont.gov](mailto:Andrew.Perchlik@Vermont.gov)

**SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT:** All communications, including submitted proposals, concerning this RFP are to be addressed via email to the State Contact Person listed above.

Bidding contractors must provide responses to the bid questions listed below (I. Required Bid Information).

Before bidding contractors should carefully read the bid specifications listed below on page two. These include the scope of services required, performance requirements, and project expectations.

**QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD:** Any bidder requiring clarification of any section of this RFP or wishing to comment on any requirement of the RFP must submit specific questions in writing no later than the deadline for question indicated above. Questions must be e-mailed to the point of contact listed above. Questions or comments not raised in writing on or before the last day of the question period are thereafter waived. At the close of the question period a copy

of all questions or comments and the State's responses will be posted on PSD's Solar For All web site:

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/renewables/solar-all-vermont>

All information provided by bidders during this process will be public and bidders shall not provide confidential information.

**FEDERAL FUNDS:** This project is being funded in whole or in part using federal monies. If a bidder requires assistance in preparing their proposal, registering with SAM.gov or needs guidance on socioeconomic certifications, the bidder may contact the Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD), Department of Economic Development (DED), APEX Accelerator. The Vermont APEX Accelerator (formerly the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)) specializes in helping small businesses navigate the documentation associated with State and Federal procurement. There is no cost to the Contractor for assistance provided by APEX Accelerator. Their website is: <https://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/programs/ptac>

## **Bid Specifications & Requirements**

Bidding contractors should understand they will be required to enter into a standard State of Vermont Contract for Service<sup>1</sup> should they be selected and thus, there will be specific State requirements and/or conditions that will apply to the contract that are not listed in these bid specifications.

Documentation relating to the selected contractor's bid, as well as other documentation (ie. insurance certificates) will be required to complete a negotiated contract.

### **I. Required Bid Information:**

1. \$/hr billing rate (or rates)
2. Fringe rate(s)
3. Indirect rate(s)
4. Names and resumes of staff likely to work under a contract resulting from this RFP.
5. Percentage of total hours each staff member identified are likely to work under a contract resulting from this RFP
6. Timeline for when services would commence and time availability to work on a contract resulting from this RFP.
7. List any other expenses that the bidder would ask to be covered/reimbursed under a contract resulting from this RFP.
8. Acknowledge if subcontractors will be used by bidder, including if the subcontractors have not been selected yet.

Rates shall remain firm for the initial term of the contract. The rates submitted by Bidder must be clearly structured, accountable, and auditable and cover the full spectrum of services required.

### **II. Statement of Work to be /Scope of Services Requested:**

1. The focus of the work is to assist the PSD in their revised Workplan, Quality Management Plan, and public and targeted community engagement on those plans for its EPA funded Solar For All (SFA) program.
2. Assist the PSD in the revision of its SFA Workplan as it pertains to Federal/EPA rules and regulations and requirements including quality assurance/monitoring and evaluation.
3. Develop implementation timeline for Vermont's three SFA programs.
4. Assist in implementation plans related to Davis Bacon, Buy American, and other federal regulations.
5. Assist in identifying staffing and technology needs for program implementation.
6. Support the development and implementation of a public/community and potential participants Outreach and Engagement Plan.
7. Assist in the development of the Quality Assurance Plan and other EPA data collection, data verification, and reporting requirements.
8. Assist with compliance and reporting design for all three of Vermont's SFA programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Including Attachment C: <https://bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms>

9. Support the PSD in impact measurement design for its SFA programs.
10. Other tasks as assigned.

### **III. Performance requirements**

The selected contractor will be required to:

1. Be readily available for weekly meetings and, during the contract period, respond promptly to phone or email requests.
2. Complete the scope of services based on the contracted deadline and budget.

### **IV. Expectations**

The PSD expects the scope of services to be completed:

1. At the selected contractor's business location
2. Start as soon as possible.

### **V. Method of Award**

Awards will be made in the best interest of the State. The State may award one or more contracts and reserves the right to make additional awards to other compliant bidders at any time if such award is deemed to be in the best interest of the State. All other considerations being equal, preference will be given first to resident bidders of the state and/or to products raised or manufactured in the state, and then to bidders who have practices that promote clean energy and address climate change, as identified in the applicable Certificate of Compliance.

**VI. Evaluation Criteria:** Consideration shall be given to the Bidder's project approach and methodology, qualifications and experience, ability to provide the services within the defined timeline, cost, and/or success in completing similar projects, as applicable, and to the extent specified below.

The bid selected by this RFP process will be based on the following criteria:

1. Rates listed in the bidder's Bid Specifications
2. Qualifications of the contractor and of the staff listed in the bidder's Bid Specifications
3. Overall responsiveness to this RFP

### **VII. Reservation of State's Rights**

This RFP reserves the following rights for the State of Vermont:

- (a) To accept or reject any and all bids, in whole or in part, with or without cause in the best interest of the State;
- (b) To waive technicalities in submissions; (a technicality is a minor deviation from the requirements of an RFP that does not impact the substantive terms of the bid/RFP and can be considered without a material impact on the RFP process, etc.). A late bid is NOT considered a technicality.
- (c) To conform the selection process, award and/or proposed contract language, at any time during the procurement, to comply with state or federal statute, regulation, or grant requirements;

- (d) To make purchases outside of the awarded Contracts where it is deemed in the best interest of the State; and
- (e) To obtain clarification or additional information.
- (f) Best and Final Offer (BAFO). At any time after submission of Responses and prior to the final selection of Bidder(s) for Contract negotiation or execution, the State may invite Bidder(s) to provide a BAFO. The state reserves the right to request BAFOs from only those Bidders that meet the minimum qualification requirements and/or have not been eliminated from consideration during the evaluation process.

## **VIII. EXECUTIVE ORDER 05-16: CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS IN STATE PROCUREMENTS**

Bidders are requested to complete the Climate Change Considerations in State Procurements Certification, which is included in the Certificate of Compliance for this RFP.

After consideration of all relevant factors, a bidder that demonstrates business practices that promote clean energy and address climate change as identified in the Certification, shall be given favorable consideration in the competitive bidding process. Such favorable consideration shall be consistent with and not supersede any preference given to resident bidders of the State and/or products raised or manufactured in the State, as explained in the Method of Award section. But, such favorable consideration shall not be employed if prohibited by law or other relevant authority or agreement.

**IX. CONTRACT NEGOTIATION:** Upon completion of the evaluation process, the State may select one or more bidders with which to negotiate a contract, based on the evaluation findings and other criteria deemed relevant for ensuring that the decision made is in the best interest of the State. In the event State is not successful in negotiating a contract with a selected bidder, the State reserves the option of negotiating with another bidder, or to end the proposal process entirely.

**X. COST OF PREPARATION:** Bidder shall be solely responsible for all expenses incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP and shall be responsible for all expenses associated with any presentations or demonstrations associated with this request and/or any proposals made.

**XI. CONTRACT TERMS:** The selected bidder(s) will be expected to sign a contract with the State, including the Standard Contract Form and Attachment C<sup>2</sup> as attached to this RFP for reference. The contract will obligate the bidder to provide the services and/or products identified in its bid, at the prices listed.

**XII. BUSINESS REGISTRATION.** To be awarded a contract by the State of Vermont a bidder (except an individual doing business in his/her own name) must be registered with the Vermont Secretary of State's office <https://sos.vermont.gov/corporations/registration/> and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms>

must obtain a Contractor's Business Account Number issued by the Vermont Department of Taxes <http://tax.vermont.gov/> .

### **XIII. Executive Order 05 –16: Climate Change Considerations in State Procurements Certification**

**Bidder certifies the following (Bidder may attach any desired explanation or substantiation. Please also note that Bidder may be asked to provide documentation for any applicable claims):**

1. Bidder owns, leases or utilizes, for business purposes, space that has received:
  - Energy Star® Certification
  - LEED®, Green Globes®, or Living Buildings Challenge<sup>SM</sup> Certification
  - Other internationally recognized building certification:

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2. Bidder has received incentives or rebates from an Energy Efficiency Utility or Energy Efficiency Program in the last five years for energy efficient improvements made at bidder's place of business. Please explain:  
  

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3. Please Check all that apply:
  - Bidder can claim on-site renewable power or anaerobic-digester power ("cow-power"). Or bidder consumes renewable electricity through voluntary purchase or offset, provided no such claimed power can be double-claimed by another party.
  - Bidder uses renewable biomass or bio-fuel for the purposes of thermal (heat) energy at its place of business.
  - Bidder's heating system has modern, high-efficiency units (boilers, furnaces, stoves, etc.), having reduced emissions of particulate matter and other air pollutants.
  - Bidder tracks its energy consumption and harmful greenhouse gas emissions. What tool is used to do this? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Bidder promotes the use of plug-in electric vehicles by providing electric vehicle charging, electric fleet vehicles, preferred parking, designated parking, purchase or lease incentives, etc..
  - Bidder offers employees an option for a fossil fuel divestment retirement account.
  - Bidder offers products or services that reduce waste, conserve water, or promote energy efficiency and conservation. Please explain:

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4. Please list any additional practices that promote clean energy and take action to address climate change:

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**XIV. CERTIFICATION REGARDING USE OF CONTRACT FUNDS FOR LOBBYING**

1. The prospective contractor certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, under the penalties of perjury under the laws of the State of Vermont and the United States that on behalf of the person, firm, association, or corporation he or she represents, that:

a. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any Federal agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

b. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any Federal agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

2. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by 31 U.S.C. 1352. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

3. The prospective contractor also agrees that they shall require that the language of this certification be included in all lower tier subcontracts, which exceed \$100,000 and that all such recipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

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*(Signature of Official Authorized to Sign Contracts)*

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*(Date signed)*

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*(Printed name and Title of Signatory)*