Monday, July 25th, 2022

Dear Installer,

Thank you for your interest in our **Hampton Roads Solar and EV Charger Co-op!** We're excited to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) on behalf of a group of **33** homeowners and businesses in the **region spanning Williamsburg to Virginia Beach, including Portsmouth, Chesapeake & Suffolk.** We've worked closely with community stakeholders and volunteers to recruit interested homeowners for this group.

We are issuing this RFP with the intent of selecting one company ("Proposer") to provide solar photovoltaic (PV) energy systems, level 2 EV chargers and optional battery backup or retrofits for the participating homeowners and businesses. The Proposer will provide a single price/kW installed for the group and an installed price for level 2 EV chargers. If the Proposer offers battery backup or battery retrofits, the Proposer will provide price ranges for installation, equipment, and design offered to homeowners and businesses participating in the group.

The goal of the solar co-op is two-fold: (1) to enable the co-op members to receive competitive pricing on their solar, EV charger, and battery systems by proceeding as a group, and (2) to provide the project developer with an extensively pre-screened and well-educated group of customers.

***Please note that during COVID, the health and safety of all program participants is our #1 priority. We are offering a blend of virtual and in-person events, which include info-sessions & selection committees and are requiring proposers to provide detailed safety protocol and plans for all phases of the sales and installation process. We will allow flexibility for virtual meetings for the in-person site visit phase of the group, and will adjust in accordance with all state, federal, and local guidelines.*

Richmond Solar and EV Charging Co- Timeline

1. **RFP Issue Date: Monday, July 25th**
2. **Proposals Due: Monday, August 8th by 5:00 pm**
3. **Selection Committee Review: (Week of Aug. 15th -TBD)**
4. **Notice of Intent to Award: (Week of Aug. 15th -TBD)**
5. **Contract Negotiations Completed: (August 19th)**
6. **Deadline for new co-op members to sign up: Monday, October 31st**
7. **Deadline (tentative) for all site consultations completed: (Wednesday, November 30th)**
8. **Deadline (tentative) for all proposals to co-op members: (Friday, December 16th)**
9. **Deadline (tentative) for all signed contracts: (Friday, December 30th)**

If you would like to submit a response to this RFP, please complete the attached RFP Response Template. Proposals are due to by upload on our website at RFP.solarunitedneighbors.org by 5:00 pm on Monday, August 8th. (Late submissions will not be accepted)

Below you will find additional information and requirements for compiling a compelling proposal. If you have any questions about the process or expectations, please don't hesitate to email. We look forward to receiving your submissions! Please see the document on the last page for guidance on commercial, non-profit, and large systems as part of the co-op.

Best,

Aaron Sutch
aaron@solarunitedneighbors.org
Atlantic Southeast Region Director (VA MD DC FL), Solar United Neighbors

Please respond to this RFP by completing the provided "RFP Response Template" Word doc.
The following are bid requirements and useful suggestions

Scope of work

Services to be provided by Solar United Neighbors

1. Pre-screen co-op members by reviewing each roof via publicly available satellite imagery. Assessments performed by Solar United Neighbors are categorized by "Qualified", "Maybe Qualified", and "Disqualified" (based on shading, size, shape, orientation) and are not intended to be overly restrictive. Our goal is to find the balance between wasting a homeowner's or the developer's time and unnecessarily excluding co-op members.
2. Recruit co-op members after selection (see timeline above). We expect the numbers of co-op members to increase significantly by the end of the project cycle.
3. We'll issue promotional materials (press release and social media posts, etc.) as well as work to generate local media attention. We'll clear materials with you to the best of our ability. We will feature your company prominently while keeping bid details confidential.
4. Support co-op members and the selected developer throughout the process.
5. Host celebration of successful co-op and public recognition of the work of the installer.
6. Distribute information should any details about the RFP be clarified or changed during the RFP period.

Services to be provided by the Proposer

1. A custom proposal for each co-op member in the group based on the group pricing and component offerings outlined in bid. The proposal should include language that explains all the services provided in the turnkey price for the system (assessment, system design, permitting, installation, interconnection paperwork, etc.). Please provide us the first three (3) proposals you send to co-op members.
2. In person (or virtual conference) site assessment, structural assessment, design, equipment procurement, installation, monitoring setup, financing, customer training (i.e. safety rules, monitoring, maintenance, how to deal with problems, etc.), permitting, and application/management of applicable incentives.
3. $600 per signed contract to be paid to Solar United Neighbors as a development fee. This includes solar, solar + EV charger, solar + storage, and battery retrofit contracts. Contracts for EV chargers only (without solar) will be at $75/signed contract. This fee should be incorporated into the $/W price, not listed as an adder. We accept payment by check or ACH (electronic bank transfer).
4. Responsive communication with group members
5. Responsive communication and coordination with Solar United Neighbors about group and individual co-op member status
6. Participate in public education/outreach events.
7. Installations performed in conformance with all applicable laws and codes, interconnection requirements for net-metered installations and any incentive-related installation requirements, rules, and timelines. Solar United Neighbors defers to the SEIA Solar Business Code as a determinant of fair, transparent business practices to ensure solar customers are treated in a fair and honest manner. In addition to the SEIA Code, Companies shall abide by the law and all applicable ethical business guidelines set forth by the Council of Better Business Bureaus (BBB), Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), relevant state consumer protection bureaus, and other regulatory bodies with jurisdiction.

8. For installers that provide brokerage services for SRECs, installer may not obligate co-op member to sell SRECs to said installer. As long as co-op member retains ownership of the solar system, co-op member should be able to select his/her preferred broker, which may include installer. If co-op member opts for a PPA or leased system, installer may manage SRECs freely.

Bid Requirements

- Offer a single purchase price ($/watt) for all co-op members.
    - This price will be offered to all homeowners (and businesses) participating in the solar co-op.
    - You may not exclude from your proposals any of the co-op members involved in this RFP.
    - You do not need to provide individualized proposals for each homeowner in this initial bid. If selected to develop the group of projects Proposer will provide individualized proposals for each co-op member.

- Explicitly state any additional charges not included in the $/watt price in the proposal (e.g., charges for electrical upgrades, steep roofs, specific roofing types/materials, roof attachment methods/components, multiple array locations, small system size, customized racking, tree trimming, etc.)
    - The assumption is that all costs to most co-op members are factored into the base price, and that an additional charge, if necessary, is reserved for unique circumstances.

- Consider all selection criteria when preparing your proposal. Although the Selection Committee will look for aggressive pricing, price is not the only factor they will consider. Participants also value experience in the marketplace, quality system components, and strong warranties, among other factors. Solar co-ops should not be a "race to the bottom" in terms of system price and quality, nor do we want proposers to feel they must sacrifice quality in order to be selected.

- Bid with PV modules that:
    - Are listed and reviewed on the California Energy Commission list, 'Incentive Eligible Photovoltaic Modules in Compliance with SB1 Guidelines' or installer must provide similar performance information for selection committee from an alternate source, or by referencing a CEC-listed panel from the same product family.
    - Have at least a 25-year power warranty with a 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;
    - Have a product warranty of at least 10 years.

- Bid with inverters that:
    - Are included in the California Energy Commission list 'List of Eligible Inverters per SB1 Guidelines' or installer to provide similar performance information for selection committee from an alternate source or by referencing a CEC-listed inverter from the same product family.

- Have a warranty that allows for replacement due to premature failure over the specified warranty time frame and be a minimum of 15 years for micro inverters and 10 years for string inverters.

- Utilize mounting equipment that is:
  - Grounded in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.
  - Used in accordance with its manufacturer's listed purpose and specifications.
  - Used in accordance with manufacturer specifications for waterproofing penetrations
  - Meets any specific local zoning requirements beyond #2 and #3

- Level 2 EV chargers must: Be UL or ETL certified.

- Meet the following insurance requirements (for proposer and any sub-contractors):[1]
  - General liability - $1,000,000 per occurrence, $2,000,000 in aggregate
  - Worker's compensation - $1,000,000 each accident, each employee, policy limit
  - Automobile liability - bodily injury, death, and property damage combined single limits of at least $1,000,000 per occurrence covering vehicles owned, hired, or non-owned
  - NOTE: Official proof of exemption by applicable jurisdiction for any above insurance requirements for a company is also acceptable.

Have you worked on a Solar United Neighbors co-op before?

In order to be eligible to submit a proposal for this co-op, you must:

1. Have no overdue invoices for past solar co-op work.
2. Have updated all customer tracking data for active or completed co-ops (including kW installed and interconnection completed dates).
3. Have completed initial contacts, site visits, and individualized proposals for the majority of any existing co-op you are currently working on.

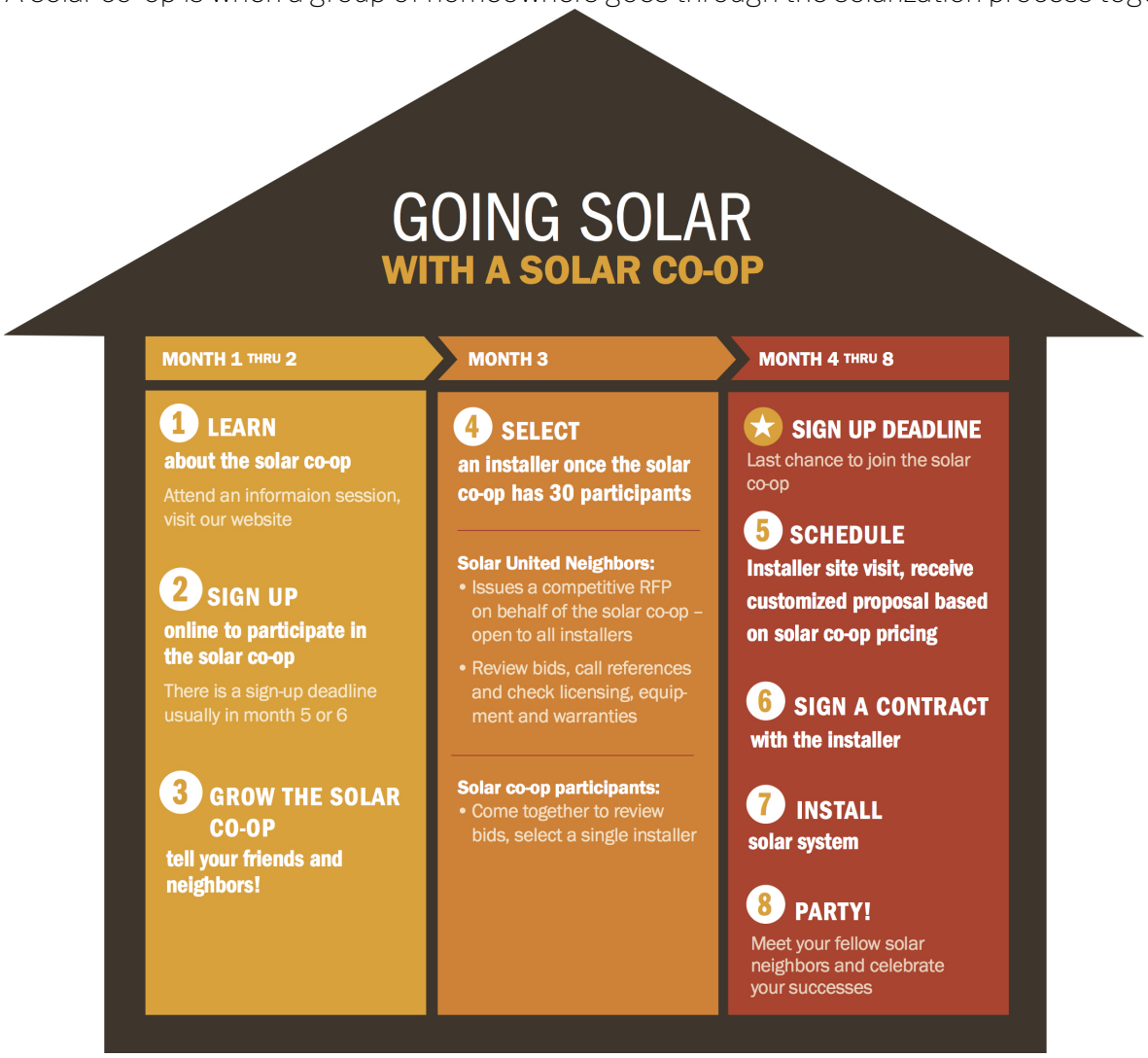
Solar United Neighbors reserves the right to deny any proposer's bid due to overdue payments, lack of proper licensure for applicable jurisdictions, or outstanding co-op member grievance yet to be resolved.

[1] These requirements are in line with the Solar Energy Industry Association's described best practices https://www.seia.org/research-resources/installation-best-practices-residential-portfolios

Useful Info

How a solar co-op works

A solar co-op is when a group of homeowners goes through the solarization process together.



More detailed information about each phase is available here:
http://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/for-installers/

How a co-op selects an installer

After all interested installers have submitted a proposal in response to this Request for Proposals, Solar United Neighbors will convene a selection committee of co-op members. This Selection Committee, consisting of homeowners participating in the solar co-op, will review the proposals. Each Selection Committee member signs a confidentiality agreement to keep your bid details private. The Committee will select one Proposer to develop all of the projects for the group.

The process used to select the winning bid will be as follows:

1. Once Selection Committee members sign the confidentiality agreement, bids will be distributed to Selection Committee members along with a summary spreadsheet created by our staff.
2. Selection Committee members may review bids independently before meeting as a group.
3. Committee members will convene in one evening to review all bids and make a decision. During that meeting they will:
    a. Discuss each bid
    b. Select finalists
    c. Contact the designated bid representative for each finalist if a bid component needs clarification. (Committee may decide not to contact finalists if no clarification is needed.)
    d. Select a winning company to service the co-op.

If you are selected as a finalist and the committee calls you that evening, you will have an opportunity to speak about your bid and to answer questions. Please abide by the following:

1. No discussions of other installers' bids, reputation, etc. This is about your proposal only.
2. Please do not negotiate to change any aspect of the bid from what is in your proposal. Clarifications of what's included are acceptable.
3. Keep responses as brief as possible.

Selection Criteria

**Please note: The "importance" column below reflects the selection criteria priorities and preferences of the co-op members and will often vary from one co-op to another*

Category	*Description*	*Importance*
Offer the best price *Questions 1 – 11*	The extent to which proposed pricing terms are competitive.	70%
Use higher quality equipment *Questions 12 – 15*	The extent to which the Proposer incorporates high-quality components (high CEC panel ratings, flashed/non-penetrating attachments, etc.) and American-made products into their system design.	76%
Have more experience *Questions 16 – 19*	The extent to which the Proposer demonstrates a track record of quality work and incorporates photovoltaic technologies in line with industry standards. Experience in the local market a plus.	67%

Offer stronger warranties *Questions 20 – 23*	The extent to which the Proposer offers strong warranties on system components and labor.	61%
Are a local company/ women or minority-owned business *Questions 24 – 26*	The extent to which the proposed solar PV systems foster social and community development, including hiring local workers and offering local job training opportunities. Preference will be given to locally-owned companies. Active membership in MDV-SEIA, our partner on policy issues, is also a plus.	25%
Please take note of these non-solar offering questions:		
Level 2 Electric Vehicle Chargers *Question 3*	Number of co-op members interested in level II EV charger only or solar + level II EV charger.	40%
Battery Storage *Question 4*	Number of co-op members either unsure about batteries or interested in batteries.	37% - interested 42% - maybe interested
Battery Retrofit *Question 5*	Number of co-op members who are interested in retrofitting battery storage to an existing solar system	0

If you would like a summary of roof types in this co-op, please contact us.

Q&A Process

Solar United Neighbors will act as the point of contact for all solar co-op and RFP related questions on behalf of the co-op members covered under this RFP. Benjamin Hoyne will manage all communications. Please submit any questions and/or comments via email to VATeam@solarunitedneighbors.org. Proposers that contact co-op members directly for any reason will be disqualified.

What we will disclose to group members about your bid if you are selected

We will disclose this information to the entire group (not the public) about your winning bid:

- Equipment included in the bid
- Warranties on all equipment and installation
- Base pricing and key adders
- System cost examples based on your bid pricing, average sizes and equipment options (noting that bid pricing and component offering is for limited co-op time frame and may not be applicable to non-co-op members)

- Installer contact information and next steps for each homeowner
    - NOTE: If you are selected, we will work with you to clarify this.
- COVID safety protocol

Commercial, non-profit, and large systems

Solar Co-ops are mostly made up of residential customers but may include some small businesses, non-profit organizations, churches and other larger than residential systems.

At Solar United Neighbors, we realize that commercial projects may be priced differently and are often custom or cannot be completed within the timeframe of the solar co-op. Due to the complexity of the projects, this can result in a higher price per watt due to permitting or sometimes a lower price per watt for larger installations.

If a lower price per watt is available for the customer than the co-op pricing, feel free to include this price in the customer's proposal. The solar co-op is not meant to get in the way of you making a sale.

If higher pricing is required due to the complexity of the project, including but not limited to engineering upcharges or meter issues, we expect that you honor the spirit of discounted pricing you are providing for residential customers for any commercial customers in the group.