



Request for Proposals (RFP)
Community Solar
December 21, 2023

General Information

Organization: MassEnergize
Eversource East Electric Territory
Contact: Aimee Powelka
Contact Email: aimee.powelka@massenergize.org

Each Proposal shall be submitted in accordance with the Submission Requirements detailed within this RFP. MassEnergize reserves the right to accept any proposal, in whole or in part, to reject any/or all proposals and to waive minor irregularities, or cancel, in part or in its entirety, this RFP if it deems to be in the best interest of the organization. MassEnergize may amend this RFP at any time prior to the date the responses are due. Any such amendment will be posted to the organization’s website, www.massenergize.org.

A responsive proposal shall consist of two parts: a Technical Proposal and a Price Proposal. **The Technical Proposal and the Price Proposal shall be submitted in separate emails titled accordingly (ex. “[Vendor Name] – Price Proposal”, “[Vendor Name] – Technical Proposal & Supporting Documentation”).** The Price Proposal Form is included as Attachment 2. Submissions should be submitted in digital format, either emailed PDF file, or Word Document. No hard copies will be accepted. Completed proposals must be received by Aimee Powelka (aimee.powelka@massenergize.org) **no later than January 12 at 5PM.**

If reasonable accommodation or clarification is needed contact Aimee Powelka via email aimee.powelka@massenergize.org

Purpose of RFP

[MassEnergize](http://www.massenergize.org), a Massachusetts-based 501(c)(3) non-profit, empowers community organizers to plan, implement, and track community-based carbon reduction initiatives. Our unique tools and engagement strategies (which include a customizable online engagement platform and our online Community of Practice) support community organizations with how to 1) effectively engage local residents in climate action, and 2) quantify the carbon impacts of their community level actions. Founded in 2019, [MassEnergize](http://www.massenergize.org) has grown from engaging just a few communities outside of Boston, to supporting 20 communities and their leaders across the state. To date, working with over 75 community leaders in the 20 communities we support, residents have strengthened their climate resilience by completing over 38,000 individual decarbonization actions, yielding an annual reduction of 152 million pounds of carbon emissions.

MassEnergize, acting within the Eversource East Electric Territory, is seeking proposals from qualified community solar providers (“providers”) to promote and offer community solar subscription services to residents served by Eversource East with a focus on communities in the Boston MetroWest area, including but not limited to Acton, Framingham, Natick, and Wayland (the “Communities”). These communities are part of a regional campaign (the “Campaign”) that aims to reduce energy burden, enhance resident knowledge of

clean energy opportunities, and contribute to the growth of regional clean energy capacity. Qualified providers should possess ample existing or planned capacity in community solar projects serving this region, including for renters and residents of lower-income households and/or non-low-income households. MassEnergize recognizes that not all community solar providers serve lower-income households. MassEnergize will accept responses from providers who can serve lower-income households and/or non-low-income households. This RFP will not result in the provision of sites for the development of community solar projects.

Expected Benefits to Providers

- Support for lead generation over the course of the Campaign and potential enhanced capacity to generate leads following the end of the Campaign.
- Connections to partners and other organizations collaborating with MassEnergize through the Campaign.
- Volunteer outreach to promote community solar, including media promotion of engagement efforts.

Following completion of the RFP process, MassEnergize may seek to partner with a community solar subscription provider through a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”). The MOU will not directly fund community solar subscription services offered by the Selected Provider to residents. This RFP will accept responses from providers that serve low-income households, non low-income households, or both. The process may result in selecting one or more providers to ensure lower-income and other households can be served in connection with the Campaign.

Description of Services

The selected provider will be expected to actively engage with MassEnergize and play a crucial role in an extensive resident engagement campaign spanning the Spring and Summer of 2024. The provider's responsibilities will encompass effective communication with MassEnergize and coordination to ensure the success of the campaign.

Specifically, the provider will be tasked with the following:

1. **Resident Engagement Campaign:**
 - Collaborate closely with MassEnergize to strategize, plan, and execute an impactful resident engagement on community solar.
 - Contribute to the development of Campaign materials, ensuring alignment with the goals and messaging set by MassEnergize. All materials developed in connection with the Campaign shall be reviewed and approved by MassEnergize, including any materials featuring MassEnergize branding or the branding of its partners and collaborating organizations.
2. **Public Presentations:**
 - Conduct engaging and informative presentations for groups within the Communities. These presentations should effectively and accurately communicate the benefits and opportunities associated with community solar.
3. **Individualized Resident Interaction:**
 - Work individually with residents to establish a personal connection and provide detailed information about community solar subscription offerings.
 - Address individual concerns, questions, and preferences to tailor the community solar experience to each resident's specific needs.

- Connect leads with the Selected Provider’s community solar subscription offerings, supporting them with high-quality customer service.
4. Offer of Community Solar Subscription Services:
 - Provide a seamless process for residents to enroll in the Provider’s community solar subscription services.
 - Provide responsive and effective customer service for enrolled residents.
 - Act as a liaison between MassEnergize and residents, fostering a positive and informed relationship throughout the campaign.
 5. Reporting and Feedback:
 - Provide regular updates and feedback to MassEnergize on the progress of the resident engagement campaign, including regularly sharing data on leads generated, residents contacted, and residents enrolled.
 - Collect, document, and share valuable insights from residents, helping MassEnergize adapt and optimize the campaign strategy as needed.
 6. Adaptability and Flexibility:
 - Demonstrate adaptability to the evolving needs of the campaign, making necessary adjustments to engagement strategies based on real-time feedback and outcomes.

This role is integral to the success of MassEnergize's community solar promotion efforts. The provider is expected to act as a catalyst for positive resident participation, effectively conveying the advantages of community solar, and fostering a sense of community involvement and ownership throughout the campaign period.

Estimated Start Date/ Term

Table 1. Estimated Event Calendar

Step	Estimated Due Date	Time
RFP Posted	12/21/2023	12:00PM
RFP Responses Due	1/12/2024	5:00PM
MOU Awarded	2/1/2024	5:00PM
MOU Executed	3/1/2024	5:00PM
Conclude MOU	8/31/2024	5:00PM

The dates in Table 1 may change, and any change in the date and time of the submission deadline indicated in Table 1 will be posted on www.massenergize.org. Applicants are responsible for actively monitoring www.massenergize.org for any and all updates to this RFP.

It is estimated the selected applicant would be required to begin to provide services on or about approximately 2/20/2024. MassEnergize may elect to establish an alternative start date as needed.

The estimated term of the Description of Services entered into under this RFP shall consist of an initial term of approximately 5 months.

Payment/ Acquisition Method

Neither this RFP nor the Campaign will directly fund the community solar subscription services provided by the selected provider, and neither this RFP nor this Campaign will incur any fees on MassEnergize or its partners and collaborating organizations. This campaign may potentially result in the promotion of the selected applicant's business throughout various communities within the Eversource East region. The successful candidate may or may not accrue entitlement to additional business opportunities arising from the execution of this MOU.

Proposals

All applicant responses must be submitted via email to Aimee Powelka at aimee.powelka@massenergize.org. **Technical Proposals and Pricing Proposals must be submitted separately. Pricing information, including any discounts offered by the provider to residents, must not be included in the Technical Proposals.**

Technical Proposal:

The Technical Proposal must include a cover letter including the applicant's relevant contact information. Required attachments must be completed and included alongside the Technical Proposal. Technical Proposals must address the following:

1. Community Solar Project Capacity and Availability:
 - Provide a detailed inventory of your community solar projects serving Eversource East Electric Territory. Clearly specify capacity for Spring/Summer 2024 and indicate if capacity is anticipated to be available in the Fall 2024. If Fall capacity is available, outline the timeline for availability.
2. Availability and Support for Lower Income Households:
 - Present a comprehensive overview of any programs in place that cater to lower-income households. Please include in your pricing proposal the specific pricing information tailored for this demographic in more detail. Explain the level of support your company offers for projects enrolling lower-income households. Provide details on the assistance provided to customers in enrolling in the R2 rate, showcasing a commitment to inclusion and accessibility.
3. Customer Support Mechanisms:
 - Outline your customer support strategy, including how you respond to inquiries, support enrollment processes, explain billings, and assist customers in de-enrollment. Specify the level of support offered, including communication channels such as phone, email, multilingual support, and website resources. Provide the qualifications of the team member(s) that will lead these customer support mechanisms.
4. Customer Billing:
 - Detail any initiatives aimed at simplifying billing processes to enhance user-friendliness. Provide examples of how your company ensures transparency and clarity in billing statements.
5. Community Outreach Capacity and Approach:
 - Clearly present your capacity, relevant experience, and approach to engaging with specific communities. Specify your ability to attend in-person community events, webinars, and other outreach activities. Describe past experiences and successes in community engagement. In particular, highlight your experiences with communities

speaking languages other than English and/or communities with high proportions of renters.

6. Addressing Customer Concerns:

- Provide a plan for addressing customer skepticism about community solar projects or community solar subscription services. Describe how you instill confidence in customers by addressing these concerns. Additionally, outline the process for providing detailed project information, including physical structure and location, to interested customers or community members to help strengthen local connections to clean energy projects.

7. Differentiating Attributes:

- Clearly articulate other attributes that distinguish your company in terms of customer service, environmental impact, and pricing. Highlight specific factors that set your company apart within the context of community solar initiatives and identify any additional resources that your company may be able to provide to support residents and the Campaign.

Pricing Proposal:

1. Pricing and Subscription Sizing:

- Clearly outline the customer discount structure for community solar participation and what additional discounts may be available for low-income customers (such as those on the Eversource R2 electric rate). Specify how subscriptions are sized to meet individual customer needs without generating excessive credit. Provide a transparent explanation of the pricing model that identifies any additional benefits for residents of the Communities featured in the Campaign.

By submitting their response in the form of these proposals, the applicant agrees to the terms of this RFP.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals should provide a comprehensive outline of capacity and services to be provided based on the parameters required. MassEnergize seeks to award the MOU to the applicant offering the most advantageous proposal, considering all evaluation criteria as well as community solar subscription prices and discounts.

Proposals will be evaluated on:

1. Capacity in Existing Community Solar Projects:

- a. **Highly Advantageous:** Provider has capacity in community solar projects eligible for Eversource East communities from which to offer subscription services to at least 150 residents, including low-income residents on the R2 electric rate and/or non low-income residents, and has concrete plans to develop/acquire more community solar capacity that could be used to support subscription services in the future.
- b. **Advantageous:** Provider has capacity in community solar projects eligible for Eversource East communities from which to offer subscription services to at least 100 residents, including low-income residents on the R2 electric rate and/or non low-income residents.

- c. **Not Advantageous:** Provider has capacity in community solar projects eligible for Eversource East communities from which to offer subscription services to at least 35 residents, including low-income residents on the R2 electric rate and/or non low-income residents, and has concrete plans to develop/acquire more community solar capacity that could be used to support subscription services in the future.
- d. **Unacceptable:** Vendor unsuccessfully demonstrates that it has or claims that it does not have capacity in projects eligible for Eversource East communities from which to offer community solar subscription services.

2. Quality of Customer Service:

- a. **Highly Advantageous:** Vendor demonstrates exceptional customer service and that it has a streamlined enrollment process, easy-to-manage customer billing, responsive and effective customer support strategy and team.
- b. **Advantageous:** Vendor demonstrates quality customer service and that it has an adequate enrollment process, customer billing, and customer support strategy and team.
- c. **Not Advantageous:** Vendor demonstrates basic customer service and that it has an enrollment process, customer billing, and customer support strategy and team.
- d. **Unacceptable:** Vendor demonstrates poor customer service and provides little to no information on its enrollment process, customer billing, and customer support strategy and team.

3. Experience with Community Outreach and Engagement:

- a. **Highly Advantageous:** Vendor demonstrates significant experience in conducting engaging and transparent marketing to residential customers in multiple languages, with a clear strategy.
- b. **Advantageous:** Vendor demonstrates experience in conducting engaging and transparent marketing to residential customers in multiple languages, with a clear strategy.
- c. **Not Advantageous:** Vendor demonstrates some experience in conducting engaging and transparent marketing to residential customers in English only.
- d. **Unacceptable:** Vendor does not sufficiently demonstrate any experience in conducting engaging and transparent marketing to residential customers in English.

4. Quality of Response:

- a. **Highly Advantageous:** Applicant's response is complete and detailed, features all requested information, and conveys a strong attention to detail as well as a clear understanding of the RFP and the applicant's proposed role in the Campaign.
- b. **Advantageous:** Applicant's response is complete, features all requested information, and demonstrates a basic understanding of the RFP and the applicant's proposed role in the Campaign.
- c. **Not Advantageous:** Applicant's response is complete and features the minimum amount of requested information that demonstrates a basic understanding of the RFP and the applicant's proposed role in the Campaign.

- d. **Unacceptable:** Applicant's response is not complete and/or does not demonstrate an understanding of the RFP or its proposed role in the Campaign.

5. Applicant Quality and Competency:

- a. **Highly Advantageous:** Vendor has at least five (5) years of experience providing community solar subscription services to residents and demonstrates an experienced and competent team supporting its proposal.
- b. **Advantageous:** Vendor has equal to or more than three (3) years but less than five (5) years of experience providing community solar subscription services to residents and demonstrates an adequate team supporting its proposal.
- c. **Not Advantageous:** Vendor has equal to or more than one (1) year but less than three (3) years of experience providing community solar subscription services to residents and team with unclear or lacking experience to support its proposal.
- d. **Unacceptable:** Vendor has less than one (1) year of experience providing community solar subscription services to residents and/or does not detail the team supporting its proposal.

Promotional Materials:

Applicants must not reference MassEnergize, its partners, collaborating organizations, or any involved communities in any promotional or marketing materials, including but not limited to the use of Logos or likeness without first obtaining prior written permission for such use.

MBE's/WBE's/DBE's Encouraged

Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), Women's Business Enterprises (WBE), and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) are encouraged to submit proposals.

Waiver Authority:

This RFP does not commit MassEnergize to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies or execute a MOU. MassEnergize reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, modify the anticipated timeline, request modification of the application, negotiate with all qualified Applicants, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests. MassEnergize accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Applicants who submit an application based on an out-of-date RFP document.

Insurance:

The selected Provider shall have insurance throughout the term of the MOU.

Debarment:

Applicants must indicate whether the Applicant is or has been debarred, suspended, or otherwise prohibited from practice by any federal, state, or local agency, and that, should any proceeding arise in which it is debarred, suspended, or otherwise prohibited from practice by any federal, state, or local agency, the Proposer shall inform MassEnergize within one (1) business day of such debarment, suspension, or prohibition from practice.

Attachment 1: Certificate of Non-Collusion

The undersigned certifies under penalties of perjury that this bid or proposal has been made and submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in this certification, the word "person" shall mean any natural person, business, partnership, corporation, union, committee, club, or other organization, entity, or group of individuals.

Signature of Individual Submitting Proposal

Name of Business

Attachment 2: Community Solar Price Proposal Form

Instructions: This form shall be completed and submitted by the applicant in a separate email to Aimee Powelka (aimee.powelka@massenergize.org) with a clear title including the company name of the applicant with the words “Price Proposal” (ex. “[Vendor Name] – Price Proposal”). It should be sent in a separate email from the Technical Proposal submitted.

Applicants shall provide pricing for community solar subscriptions that they offer to residents.

- In Section 1, Applicants will provide a brief description of their pricing and discount structure.
- In Section #2, Applicants will provide pricing details **using an average subscription size of 3kW**. Subscription Options #1 and #2 have been pre-defined for Non-Low-Income Customers and Low-Income Customers, respectively. Applicants shall complete each Subscription Options table according to the subscription services that they would offer to MetroWest communities. Applicants should only complete the Subscription Option tables for each of their available subscription offerings (ex. Providers that do not have a low-income community solar subscription that is separate from Subscription Option #1 should not complete Table B). If an Applicant has more subscription offerings, they should provide this information and define the offers in tables C and D.

Section #1: Pricing and Discount Structure

Description of Price & Discount Structure:

Section #2: Subscription & Cost Information

A) SUBSCRIPTION & COST INFORMATION: <u>Subscription Option #1: Non-Low-Income Customer</u>
Subscription Size (kW AC): 3kW
Subscription Model (Upfront payment, pay as you go, or other):
Contract Effective Date:
Contract End Date:
Cost of Cancellation (\$):
Option to renew: Yes or No
Upfront Costs (\$):
Starting Rate (\$/month, \$/kWh):
Rate increase frequency (Monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.):
Amount of Rate Increase (\$/month, \$/kWh, percentage):
Estimated Year One Credit Value (\$):
Estimated Year One Savings (\$):
Is the subscription transferrable to other customers? Yes or No
Is the subscription portable within the utility service area or utility load zone? Yes or No
Describe opt-out or early termination terms and protections for the Participant in terms of ongoing project performance or default by the Provider:

B) SUBSCRIPTION & COST INFORMATION: <u>Subscription Option #2: Low-Income Customer</u>
Average Subscription Size (kW AC): 3kW
Subscription Model (Upfront payment, pay as you go, or other):
Contract Effective Date:
Contract End Date:
Cost of Cancellation (\$):
Option to renew: Yes or No
Upfront Costs (\$):
Starting Rate (\$/month, \$/kWh):
Rate increase frequency (Monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.):
Amount of Rate Increase (\$/month, \$/kWh, percentage):
Estimated Year One Credit Value (\$):
Estimated Year One Savings (\$):
Is the subscription transferrable to other customers? Yes or No
Is the subscription portable within the utility service area or utility load zone? Yes or No
Describe opt-out or early termination terms and protections for the Participant in terms of ongoing project performance or default by the Provider:

C) SUBSCRIPTION & COST INFORMATION: Subscription Option #3: Other (Please Describe Applicability):

Average Subscription Size (kW AC): **3kW**

Subscription Model (Upfront payment, pay as you go, or other):

Contract Effective Date:

Contract End Date:

Cost of Cancellation (\$):

Option to renew: Yes or No

Upfront Costs (\$):

Starting Rate (\$/month, \$/kWh):

Rate increase frequency (Monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.):

Amount of Rate Increase (\$/month, \$/kWh, percentage):

Estimated Year One Credit Value (\$):

Estimated Year One Savings (\$):

Is the subscription transferrable to other customers? Yes or No

Is the subscription portable within the utility service area or utility load zone? Yes or No

Describe opt-out or early termination terms and protections for the Participant in terms of ongoing project performance or default by the Provider:

D) SUBSCRIPTION & COST INFORMATION: Subscription Option #4: Other (Please Describe Applicability):

Average Subscription Size (kW AC): **3kW**

Subscription Model (Upfront payment, pay as you go, or other):

Contract Effective Date:

Contract End Date:

Cost of Cancellation (\$):

Option to renew: Yes or No

Upfront Costs (\$):

Starting Rate (\$/month, \$/kWh):

Rate increase frequency (Monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.):

Amount of Rate Increase (\$/month, \$/kWh, percentage):

Estimated Year One Credit Value (\$):

Estimated Year One Savings (\$):

Is the subscription transferrable to other customers? Yes or No

Is the subscription portable within the utility service area or utility load zone? Yes or No

Describe opt-out or early termination terms and protections for the Participant in terms of ongoing project performance or default by the Provider: