



Request for Proposals (RFP)

**For the Installation of Residential and Small Business Solar PV Systems in
Solarize Group Purchasing Programs**

Date of Issue:	Friday, August 19, 2016
Proposal Due Date:	Friday September 2, 2016
This revision:	Wednesday August 31, 2016
Issued by:	Solarize Hudson Valley, a program of Catskill Mountainkeeper and Sustainable Hudson Valley.
Contact:	John Wackman, Program Manager jwackman.solarize@gmail.com

Solarize Hudson Valley Overview

Solarize Hudson Valley is a community solar initiative focused on facilitating a significant and sustained increase in the rate of solar electric adoption by homeowners and small businesses in the Hudson Valley of New York State.

Solarize campaigns work to overcome market barriers through consumer education, well-publicized community events and neighbor-to-neighbor marketing. Specifically, the program will reach its goals by simplifying the purchase process, building consumer confidence and discounting system costs for a limited time through a reduction in the soft costs of customer acquisition for installer partners.

Solarize Hudson Valley is a program of Catskill Mountainkeeper and Sustainable Hudson Valley, which are not-for-profit corporations in New York State. Solarize Hudson Valley is primarily funded by NYSEERDA through the Cleaner, Greener Communities program.

Hub Community: Village of Wappingers Falls; Town of Wappinger

This RFP is issued for our Community Campaign launching the first week of October 2016.

These two Hub Communities will be the hosts for the “service area” covered by this campaign: **all of Dutchess and Putnam Counties**. Most community events will be held in the Hub Communities.

We will select two installers for Residential customers and one designated Commercial installer. You may apply for either or both the residential and commercial side. We reserve the right to limit an installer’s participation based on our analysis of capacity.

We have several important goals for this campaign wave:

1. Solarize Hudson Valley serves businesses as well as residential customers. Our intention in 2016-2017 is to scale up commercial outreach and use business partners as very visible anchors for campaign events, case studies, and publicity. We seek commercial installer partners who have demonstrated capacity with larger installations and commercial clients in particular. We welcome creative outreach proposals such as working with entire commercial districts and/or business associations as a group. Commercial financing resources are key.
2. Serving Low and Moderate income (LMI) populations has been one of our program goals from the outset, yet we have not been effective. For this campaign, Solarize will dedicate our primary staffing and resources toward this goal, and we will select installation partners willing to make LMI outreach a priority with specific strategies.
3. Outreach to Hispanic neighborhoods is a priority which we will support with translated materials, community organization partners, and volunteer interpreters for events. We seek installer partners who are motivated and show capacity for this.

Program Timeline for 2016, Campaign Wave # 4

Friday, August 19 Issue RFP for Solarize Wappingers Falls

Sunday August 21 Volunteer Meeting/Orientation

Friday August 26 Installer questions due

Friday September 2, 5:00 PM Proposals due

Sept 6 - 13 Review proposals & schedule interviews

Sept 19 - 20 Installer Interviews

Sept 23 Installer selections announced

October 1 - 2 Press events and 1st Community Workshops

December 15 Registration deadline

January 15 Contract signing deadline for residential

February 15 Contract signing deadline for commercial

Snapshot of our “Hub Communities”:

The **Village of Wappingers Falls** has a population of 5,377. The Village government, led by Mayor Matt Alexander has demonstrated a strong desire to improve sustainability and increase renewable energy use by village residents. Following a solar installation project at the Village’s water treatment plant, the Village signed the climate smart communities pledge, following suit after the Town of Wappinger signed the pledge the same summer. In addition to the solar project on the water treatment plant, Mayor Matt (everyone calls him that) has identified several large apartment buildings that would be ideal for solar energy.

The **Town of Wappinger** rests on the east bank of the Hudson River 70 miles north of New York City. To the south of Wappinger is Fishkill and Beacon: to the North, Poughkeepsie and Hopewell Junction: to the East, East Fishkill. The population of the town of Wappinger totals 27,194 people. Nearly 70% of households in the town of Wappinger own their own home making the potential for a large number of solar installations very high. Wappinger, a climate smart community, is expected to enroll in a community choice aggregation program that will come into

effect by next summer, combining the purchasing power of residents to procure renewable power at a rate that is lower than conventional power.

The Village of Wappingers Falls is within both the Town of Wappinger and the Town of Poughkeepsie. Welcome to New York.

Our Volunteer Team will be comprised of individuals from the town and village governments, and several community based organizations including Wappingers Climate Action, Wappingers Interfaith Network, Abriendo Puertas and the Village Odd Fellows. *Abriendo Puertas*, Spanish for “opening doors,” is a community based Latino outreach organization that will assist in bringing information about Solarize to the Latino population that makes up over 25% of the village population as well as the low income population. Wappingers Interfaith Network brings together faith leaders from Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and Sikh congregations. Wappingers Climate Action, a youth-led grassroots group, will also be providing volunteers to staff events and helping with publicity. The Village Oddfellows is a local fraternity that will support solarize with event volunteers.

Our outreach strategies will entail a series of launch events followed by Solarize Workshops and open houses. During the campaign we will table at Poughkeepsie Farm Project and Obercreek CSA food pickups, the Beacon and Arlington farmers markets and at the Town of Wappinger transfer station. We will get our message out to the public using the Poughkeepsie Journal, local television, flyers, banners and yard signs. Abriendo Puertas will help us run Solarize community education events for the Hispanic population in the village and publicize such events through Hispanic media channels. Wappingers Climate Action will involve relevant Spanish and sustainability high school and college groups from Ketcham, Dutchess Community College, Vassar and Marist.

Solar Energy systems in the Town of Wappinger and Village of Wappingers Falls require a standard building permit and a certificate of occupancy/compliance. Both the Village and the Town of Wappingers have adopted the Unified Solar Permit. Systems must comply with the NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code as well as the New York State Energy Conservation Construction Code. Yard signs are allowed in the Town and Village of Wappingers but must be pre-approved by a code enforcement officer.

Prepared by Duncan Gilchrist, Solarize Hudson Valley/SCA intern, co-founder of Wappingers Climate Action and lifelong resident of Wappingers Falls.

Process for Solar PV Installation Firms

Step One: Submission and acceptance of our RFQ (Request for Qualifications). This is a one-time-only submission. Firms that meet the requirements of the program are included in the “pool of Installation Partners” and are eligible to submit a proposal for any of the successive Solarize campaign waves as they are announced.

The RFQ is available for download at <http://solarize-hudsonvalley.org>

Step Two: Pre-qualification by NYSEDA As a service to Solarize Westchester and the installers, NYSEDA will pre-qualify installers for the RFP. In order to pre-qualify, installers must send an e-mail to communitysolar@nyserda.ny.gov with the subject "Request for Solarize Hudson Valley Pre-qualification." The e-mail must contain the following information:

Name of the business

Address

FEIN

All installer ID numbers and installer names

Pre-qualification by NYSEDA can take up to two weeks, so please initiate that process quickly. Installers who receive approval of their pre-qualification request can forward the e-mail confirmation from NYSEDA to jwackman.solarize@gmail.com. If your company has already been pre-qualified by NYSEDA for another Solarize program and that pre-qualification approval is not more than four months old, you may simply forward the previously received pre-qualification approval.

Step Three: Respond to this RFP.

Note: in your submission, please break out your core narrative from your attachments (sample marketing materials, standard contract and lease agreement, etc.) into separate PDF files.

Summary of Requirements for Participating in Solarize Hudson Valley:

Proposing firms must respond to each section of this Request for Proposals to outline their ability to meet the unique requirements of a Solarize program. Please note carefully the following:

- Firms will specify whether they are applying as installer for Residential or Commercial customers.
- Commercial Installers must be trained in PACE Financing through the Energy Improvement Corporation's Energize NY program.
- Firms must have at least one team member who is a NABCEP Certified Installation Professional or has comparable certifications from UL or IBEW, as well as one NYSEDA eligible PON 2112 installer on their team.
- Installer Partners are not required to offer both roof-mounted and ground-mount/pole-mount systems, but our Program as a whole must have both options, and

proposals that facilitate this will be looked upon favorably.

- Installer Partners are not required to offer both a purchase option and a lease (and/or PPA) option. Note, however, that our Program as a whole must offer both options.
- Maintain at least \$1 million in general liability insurance coverage, and also demonstrate that any and all sub-contractors they use have coverage as well.
- Be compliant with, and staff- trained in all applicable OSHA requirements.
- Adhere to the Solarize Hudson Valley's Minimum Best Practice Installation Standards and Business Ethics/Customer Service Standards.
- Commit to having a tabletop/ floor exhibit and at least one staff person on hand for all of our community events (most of which will be planned and scheduled jointly with partner installers in advance of the campaign). These are the primary opportunities for customers to register for a free site assessment.
- Offer competitive discount-pricing, quoted as cost per installed watt (before incentives) of at least 10% off the "market rate" for their "standard system." (Our program no longer offers "tiered pricing.")
- Note that each Partner firm's Solarize pricing and equipment specifications (modules, inverters and racking) will be public information, available as handouts at all community events, and on the Solarize Hudson Valley website.
- Firms will indicate in their proposal the number of residential/commercial installations they want to, or are able to, provide for this campaign, i.e., their "capacity."
- **New to this RFP** Minimum capacity: firms must have the staffing and ability to install at least 25 systems during the life of the campaign (contract deadline plus 5 months) without resorting to sub-contractors.
- For each Customer contract, the Installer Partners will be responsible for securing all required permits, completing and submitting the NYSERDA incentive application, completing the net-metering agreement with the utility, and scheduling and passing all jurisdictional inspections.
- Each installer will use their own CRM platform, and will provide Solarize with a Leads Summary every 2 weeks (bi-weekly) throughout the campaign. Additional reporting requirements will be specified.
- Each installer's "contact person" will take part in bi-weekly, half-hour conference calls with Solarize program managers and Community volunteers.
- Accept the terms included with this RFP as part of your future agreement with Solarize Hudson Valley and with the Customers you acquire through the program.

New to this RFP: Sustainable Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountainkeeper are building into the program a \$0.02/Watt "success fee" to be paid by Solarize installers to Sustainable Hudson Valley to support sustainability efforts in the Hudson Valley. This has worked well in other Solarize programs for supporting programs beyond our NYSERDA funding.

A Memorandum Of Understanding will be executed between Solarize Hudson Valley and each participating firm before the campaign commences. SHV reserves the right to negotiate the final MOU in the best interests of the program and the public.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Please submit answers to the questions below. The completed proposals will be evaluated by Solarize Hudson Valley staff, by representatives from the Hub communities and by a technical consultant. Please consider this document to be a companion of the more detailed RFQ that was required as qualification for participation. Submittals will be evaluated based on the following weighted criteria:

Section	Points
I. Cover Letter	0
II. Table of Contents	0
III. Proximity and business timing: Projected capacity	20
IV. Marketing & staffing commitment (budget and person-power), outreach capabilities & experience	20
V. System Installation & Pricing: Installed price quotes for Standard package and Higher- efficiency systems	20
VI. New to this RFP: Range of financing options, including NYSERDA's Affordable Solar incentive. Experience and/or commitment to addressing the program's LMI and Hispanic	20
VII. Diversity of technologies offered: specifics of manufacturer's warranties, mounting options, your specified "adders"	20
Total	100

I. Cover letter (0 points)

Please submit a signed cover letter summarizing the highlights, key features, and distinguishing points of your proposal. Tell us specifically why you want to work with the Solarize Hudson Valley program. Include the name and address of the firm submitting the proposal, together with the name, address, telephone number, and email address for the authorized representative for the firm. Also include the firm's federal tax identification number; NABCEP, UL or IBEW certification number(s); and NYSERDA eligible installer number(s). Finally, please include a statement that the proposal is valid for sixty (60) days after receipt.

II. Table of Contents (0 points)

Your Table of Contents should organize your responses in the same format as this RFP, i.e., by section reference number and section title as described herein.

III. Proximity and Business Timing

1. Are you applying to be a designated installer for Residential customers or Commercial customers?
2. What are the factors that matter most to your participation in this local Solarize campaign?
3. Why is the timing of this campaign “wave” good for your firm?
4. We will favor companies with an established service office within 60 miles of the Hub communities in each local campaign. How does distance to a job site factor into your own feasibility/cost analysis?
5. Lead Management Capacity
We have found that timely and effective follow-up with sales Leads is the most critical part of the Solarize program. Please tell us how you will assure that every Lead generated through a Solarize campaign will receive excellent customer service.
6. Installation Capacity
We require that each firm project its work capacity and commit to the number of installations it will be able to complete during the 3-4-month marketing/sales period of this campaign, and within the period of 5 months following, i.e., through May 15, 2017. Please provide those numbers along with comments and any context you wish to provide.

IV. Marketing and Staffing Commitment

1. Solarize Hudson Valley will devote significant resources and staff to consumer education, well-publicized community events and neighbor-to-neighbor marketing. Please outline the marketing resources you will devote to this campaign, including your staffing commitment. Attach PDFs of some of your marketing materials and a photo of your public exhibition booth or table display.
2. **New to this RFP:** When potential customers register (“sign-up”) for Solarize, we promise them a “Free, no obligation solar assessment.” Each installer in our program must adhere to the same definition of this promise. Tell us what services you will provide as part of a solar site assessment. Be specific. Under what circumstances would any

payment be asked for? Tell us your policy for any payments required prior to contract signing.

3. Our NYSERDA grant has a very limited budget for paid advertising; yet we know that well-positioned paid advertising can make a significant impact. To complement our earned media strategy, we will commit to a modest marketing campaign focused on small print display ads, on-line ads and radio. We will ask each installer to commit a dollar share at least equal to ours towards a media budget we agree on for each service area. Please tell us the cost range you would consider appropriate for your participation.
4. Do you/can you provide bilingual outreach materials and any staff fluent in Spanish?
5. Solarize Hudson Valley is committed to reaching low to moderate income (LMI) populations. Describe your experience in marketing to potential clients in that income bracket, and your approach for this campaign. Note: you will not be expected to write a contract with any customer who does not meet your credit requirements; that is your decision.
6. Offerings for Homes Not Feasible for Solar PV: Our program aims to help guide customers unable or uninterested in moving forward with a solar installation toward other energy-related resources (e.g., home energy efficiency, energy-savvy transportation, community-owned solar). Please briefly outline how you might be able to support this aspect of the project. This may include existing relationships with other energy service companies, in-house expertise related to other energy services, etc.
7. As the program continues to develop, we will be working with the SUNY community college system and other partners to create workforce development programming to support industry growth with short modules of training in soft skills including sales, marketing, customer service, project management, business ethics and creative problem-solving. Would you expect to make use of these resources? You are invited to include any comments about your needs and priorities in this area.

V. Solar PV System Installation & Pricing

New to this RFP: Minimum installation capacity: Firms must have the staffing and ability to install at least 25 systems during the life of the campaign (contract deadline plus 5 months) without resorting to sub-contractors.

Solarize Hudson Valley Pricing Template

In this section you will provide both your pricing and details of the system components you will provide to your customers through Solarize. The purpose of these price quotes is to give the consumer a simple and transparent comparison of system plus installation costs.

Standard Purchase Pricing

Please provide your quote for a 7 kW (i.e., average residential) grid-tied solar PV system before any eligible incentives or tax credits. It should be roof-mounted, feature a specific module/inverter/racking combination, and should comply with the Program’s set of minimum best installation practices standards. This pricing should not vary by location within the region.

Give us the “market price” (i.e, your current pricing) for the same system, and please specify the percentage discount that this pricing represents. **Solarize Hudson Valley requires installers to offer a discount of at least 10%.**

These prices will hold for all Solarize installations you contract for between the sizes of 3kW and 10kW. You may specify an “adder” for systems smaller than 3kW, recognizing that your fixed costs for smaller systems reduce your margin.

Note: Each Installer must specify their “Solarize Community Discount” as a line item in the proposals they submit to customers. It should be a discount off of the “System Value”, following computation of the NYSERA incentive.

If your firm is selected for participation, this pricing information (as well as the specific system components you are offering) will be shared with the other participating firms before the campaign begins. We recognize that this is normally proprietary information; in the context of a Solarize campaign, it is shared information.

New to this RFP: We will no longer allow any adjustments to your pricing or your equipment selection after your submission of this RFP.

<p>Residential PV System Your current market pricing</p>		
<p>“Solarize discount” price/installed W</p>		
<p>Percentage discount off market pricing</p>	<p>(at least 10%) _____ %</p>	

Standard Equipment Specifications

List the specific PV system equipment that your firm would offer. **New to this RFP:** Please provide a link to the product page for each. Equipment or procedures that would add to the price should be included in the Adders section.

We are asking you to specify the components/systems that you customarily install--not a system you devise for Solarize customers. This should be a combination of modules, inverters/microinverters/optimizers and racking that are proven to your satisfaction.

	Solar Modules including Wattage	Inverter technology	Roof Racking	Monitoring
Manufacturer and Model				
Link to product page				
Country of origin (where made)				
Rationale for Selection, i.e., what feature influenced your choice?				
Manufacturer Warranty (Years & coverage)				
Panel efficiency (%) & production guarantee				
Any additional Warranty Protection				

Other standard equipment options (specify)				
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Higher-Efficiency options

We wish to structure cost options so that “super” high-efficiency materials (i.e., PV panels) are not eliminated by Customers purely on the basis of materials cost. Describe the high-efficiency system you offer and provide your quote for system upgrades.

Materials description & manufacturer	
Link to product page	
Installed Price/W	
Percentage discount	_____ %

VI. Range of Technologies Offered (“Adders”)

List any special conditions or options for Customers that would result in additional costs, such as required infrastructure improvements (i.e. upgrades to existing electrical service or building structural inspections), or equipment upgrades (i.e. system monitoring, ground-mounted systems, microinverters, and battery-backup system.) Please provide an add-on price for these items, which means the price the item would add to the base pricing above.

Please add any additional items you think appropriate. Mark “N/A” if an item is not something you offer, or “Included” if an item is already a part of your base pricing.

Additional Offerings	Price (\$/W or Flat Fee)	Notes
Systems smaller than 3 kW		
Systems larger than 10kW		
Electrical Service Upgrade		
Frame Ground-Mounted System		Assume a 100 ft. interconnection point
Pole Ground-Mounted System		Assume a 100 ft. interconnection point
Microinverters		
System Monitoring		
Made-in-America Modules		
Battery Backup System		

VII. Financing Options

New to this RFP: Include a narrative and list of all residential financing options you will present to Solarize customers. Include existing relationships with banks or financial institutions, and any other access to financing tools and products, including Green Jobs/Green NY loans. Tell us your experience with NYSERDA’s Affordable Solar incentive program. Comment also on any mechanisms for financing that you know of which you have recommended or could recommend to customers, including LMI prospects.¹

Lease Pricing

Provide a dollar per kilowatt hour (\$/kWh) lease or PPA price for residential solar PV systems. Lease offerings should be for roof-mounted PV systems.

Please email us a copy of your lease agreement as a separate attachment (PDF).

¹ The Solarize Team will be working with partners to identify and clearly communicate what financing options are currently available to residents in Solarize communities. All findings and related material regarding financing for solar will be publicly available even outside the Solarize Campaign.

Since outside investors take the project incentives and tax credits, these prices should be the Customer’s cost after all incentives.

Because lease pricing is not typically completely set by the Installers, the below should be average pricing but it is understood that it will vary slightly depending on factors internal to the lease provider and customer qualification.

Name of Leasing Provider	
Term of Lease	
Price/kWh in First Year	
Additional Price/kWh in First Year for Ground Mounted System	
Rate of Price Escalation Per Year (If Any)	
Additional Important Lease Details i.e. Transferability, Production warranty, FICO score required, etc	
Buyout Value of System at Year 7, i.e. “Cost to Own”	

Lease Offering Details

If the lease system offered is different from your “standard equipment” (above) please provide specifics for the module/inverter/racking combination. These must comply with the Program’s set of minimum best installation practices standards.

	Solar Modules	Inverter	Roof Racking	Monitoring	Other
Manufacturer and Model					

VII.

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Commercial Base Pricing Proposal

Include a base pricing proposal for solar systems up to 200 kW for the system sizes below. The base price proposal is designed to provide potential customers with reference points for pricing. System sizes that are smaller or larger than those listed below will vary in pricing, but the customer will expect that the base price will fall between the reference points (e.g., the base price for a 50kW PV system will be between the base price for a 25kW and 75kW system).

Contractors are also able to offer competitive pricing (i.e., lower pricing) if a customer places the project for bid.

System Size

	25kW	75kW	125kW	200kW
Base Purchase Price (\$/Watt)				

As a separate document attachment (PDF), provide a template version of your PV Contractor’s direct commercial purchase contract and/or a lease or PPA agreement with the customer, specifying all terms and conditions for a commercial customer under the Solarize Campaign.

The following must be included in the standard agreement:

1. A section outlining all possible additional costs for the customer.
2. For Lease or PPA offerings, the PV Contractor should clearly identify any criteria in which a price escalator may be present for customers, include a maximum range for the price escalator, and provide other relevant information such as for commercial property owners moving before the conclusion of a long-term power purchase agreement.