



Questions and Answers

for Solarize Philly solar installation and development vendors for

PHILADELPHIA ENERGY AUTHORITY

Last Updated: May 16, 2017

Issued by:

THE PHILADELPHIA ENERGY AUTHORITY (“PEA”)

## Questions

All questions regarding Solarize Philly, this RFP and the Solarize Philly Installer RFP Response Form are to be sent by email to [lrigell@philaenergy.org](mailto:lrigell@philaenergy.org) and [solarize@philaenergy.org](mailto:solarize@philaenergy.org).

Responses to questions received by 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, May 12, 2017** will be issued by 4 p.m. on **May 16, 2017**. All effort will be made to respond to questions received after May 12, 2017 deadline, but responses are not guaranteed.

The answers to all questions, regardless of the installer submitting them, will be posted on the Solarize Philly website: [www.SolarizePhilly.org](http://www.SolarizePhilly.org). Installers responding to this RFP are urged to check the website for the responses to the questions. Bidders wishing to register to be included in email notifications regarding this RFP may do so by emailing [solarize@philaenergy.org](mailto:solarize@philaenergy.org).

## Bid Process

### 1. Will there be a pre bid / process meeting and if so, when is it?

There will not be a pre-bid/process meeting for this proposal. All questions should be submitted to Philadelphia Energy Authority as described above.

### 2. Does one have to qualify to be part of the program?

All Installers participating in Solarize Philly must meet the qualifications described in Section 5 Evaluation Criteria of the RFP. Any individuals seeking to participate in the program to have solar PV installed on their homes will need to meet minimum qualifications, such as being the homeowner.

## Program Details

### 3. Is the Solarize Philly program for electric photovoltaic or solar hot water systems?

Solarize Philly is exclusively for the installation of electric photovoltaic system.

### 4. Will contractors be providing Independent Underwriters Inspection?

No, this will be the installer contractor's responsibility.

- 5. Typically, we do not perform site surveys until after the contract is signed. A site assessment for us would be a sales visit to assess the site. We do have our sales representatives take pictures to determine structure and meter location and general site viability. But we would not go on the roof during that time as our sales people are not OSHA 10 certified. Would that qualify as a free site assessment?**

The free site assessment provided by Installers as part of Solarize Philly must provide reasonable assurance of site suitability prior to signing a contract with a customer. Please highlight any issues relevant in your sales process as part of your proposal. If roof condition assessment is not required in your experience, please explain why.

It is the opinion of PEA that the free site assessment should include a roof condition assessment and shade analysis if the roof is accessible directly through the home or by ladder without the need of a personnel lift, given the likely varied condition of urban rooftops.

- 6. How long from when you receive the customer contact info until Installers receive the information? This is key to success; to minimize lead distribution as the warmth of the lead cools with time.**

Selected vendors will meet with PEA to review the sales and lead transfer process. PEA will make every effort to ensure that leads are as warm as possible, and will work with selected vendors to determine the most helpful processes.

- 7. Do you give multiple Installers the same customer? Do you randomly give customers to different Installers? Do you ensure the quality of customers is spread equally between Installers? Do you segregate by area/neighborhood? For example will you segregate the customer leads into different neighborhoods? How are the leads distributed?**

Selected vendors will meet with PEA to review the lead assignment process. PEA does not intend to distribute the same lead to multiple vendors.

- 8. Will there be excel uploads and downloads for the weekly update on status of customers?**

PEA will manage customers through the entire Solarize campaign through the Prosperworks Customer Relationship Management tool. Installers participating in the Solarize campaign will be issued Prosperworks licenses to track the sales pipeline. Installers will be notified in real time of new leads assigned to them. Weekly reports will be produced to inform Installers of lead statuses and flag leads that need attention.

- 9. What will be provided as customer Basic requirements in the prescreening? (e.g. annual usage, credit rating, address, email, name, roof type, roof condition and roof age)**

Q&A: Solarize Philly Installer RFP

Page 3 of 9

PEA will perform a prescreening, and will work with selected vendors to ensure that it includes relevant data that will support the sales process. If there is particular information you would like to have included in that prescreening that is relevant to your proposal, please include that information.

**10. If Installers provide on the job training to students by having them involved in site assessment, sales calls, or the actual install, can Installers apply for training reimbursement?**

Interesting idea! PEA would be open to discussing ways to incorporate on-the-job training for students. Funding is not likely to be available during the first open enrollment period but could become available in subsequent periods.

**11. Are the local workforce and more principally the EOP and minority participation requirements able to be met by the workforce demographics of a firm that is not a certified M/W/DBE or, if the primary respondent is not a certified M/W/DBE must the EOP and minority participation requirements be realized via working with a certified M/W/DBE as a subcontractor? The RFP sort of suggests both in different parts of that section.**

Yes, the EOP requirements may be met by the workforce demographics of a firm not certified as an M/W/DBE.

**12. How will the location and footprint of a firm be assessed in terms of the RFP selection process? Does a Philadelphia business location headquarters matter? If so, how will a Philadelphia-based business be defined? Does being a Philadelphia-based taxpayer have a positive impact on the selection process?**

PEA strives to create jobs for residents of Philadelphia, and to increase the economic development of the City of Philadelphia. Ability to do so will be considered as part of the selection process. Location of offices, headquarters, and residency of owners and employees will be considered. Respondents may add any additional information they deem relevant on this issue.

**13. How will customers be presented the selected Installers and how will the Installers be presented to customers? How will Installers differentiate themselves — pricing the same/different? How will things like customer reviews regarding prior solar installs (SolarReviews, EnergySage...) be made available to customers? Will firms headquartered in Philadelphia be noted to customers? Will the PEA present these types of information on each selected installer to help inform the buyers decision making process?**

PEA will discuss the customer communication process with selected vendors to ensure the best possible outcomes for overall program sales and consumer protections. We hope to be able to

Q&A: Solarize Philly Installer RFP

Page 4 of 9

standardize pricing across vendors. We do not intend to distribute the same lead to multiple vendors.

**14. Will the customer have the right to pick the installer they would like to go with or will PEA just set that for them?**

PEA will design this process with the selected vendors.

**15. Alongside the PEA outreach will selected Installers be able to market themselves to generate their own leads as a part of the Solarize Philly effort? If they can, how would they ID that customer as their lead in the online database? Could the Installer have their own "signup token" the customer could enter into the PEA sign up website?**

Yes, we would encourage participants to market themselves. We will work with selected vendors to develop an appropriate mechanism for lead registration.

**16. Please identify the anticipated timeline for 2nd and 3rd signup period installation schedule (just conceptual of course).**

See page 8 of the RFP.

**17. Given the long term goal of creating jobs in solar / renewables / energy for Philadelphians how will PEA insure a company that is Headquartered outside of Philadelphia will continue to generate jobs inside Philadelphia even after the campaign has ended?**

Great question! One of the core goals of the Solarize Philly program is to develop solar training programs in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia and other local entities, and to kickstart the local solar market. Philadelphia will have a well-trained, ready labor force that PEA will work to connect with local and regional solar installers. We hope Solarize Philly will support the long-term growth of solar in our region, creating jobs for the long run.

**18. What will happen to customers denied at interconnection? Who will staff their follow ups with PECO, chasing down the follow up responses etc? (There are some benefits to the installer remaining involved if PEA imagines doing this on a per project basis).**

PEA expects selected vendors to complete all steps of the normal solar sales process, including interconnection follow up. PEA will discuss ways we can be helpful with selected vendors.

## **Program Pricing Structure**

**19. Will Prevailing Wage be in effect. If so, what would the categories for workers be?**

Q&A: Solarize Philly Installer RFP

Page 5 of 9

Prevailing wage will not be required.

**20. Does the System Owner own the SRECs? What values should be used for SREC Investment Analysis.**

PEA assumes that the system owner will own the SRECs they generate unless they procure the system through a Power Purchase Agreement. Please indicate in your response if you have an alternate proposal.

The SREC value to be used in investment analysis will be determined by PEA and selected contractors prior to program launch based upon the market value and conservative projections of future SREC prices.

**21. If Installer submits a certain \$/watt pricing scale, will they be disqualified by that price alone?**

Installers will be evaluated on several criteria, including, but not exclusive to the pricing scale. We encourage Installers to submit a \$/watt pricing scale that will be market competitive and financially viable for their business operation.

**22. Is the pricing you've requested just for the first wave of signups and installs or fixed for the entire campaign (all three signup periods)? If just for the first wave, will it be re evaluated before the subsequent waves or signups and installs?**

The pricing requested in the RFP is for the first round of signups and installs, and is expected to be able to be used through the first round of installations. Understanding that solar equipment pricing changes and that Solarize Philly must remain cost competitive with the larger market in order to be successful, PEA and the selected vendors will set a schedule for reevaluation of pricing.

**23. Will pricing on purchase installs be held consistent across all Installers? If so, how do you propose to move from the individual pricing submitted to agreed on pricing?**

Pricing on purchase installs will be held consistent across all Installers selected to participate in the Solarize Philly campaign. PEA will assess prices included in submitted proposals and propose a pricing structure to Installers. This pricing will then be negotiated with Installers as part of the selection process until all parties come to an agreed upon price structure.

**24. When the Installers are selected as the Ownership/PPA installer, will the Tier pricing rates be the same between all the Installers? Furthermore, will the alternative systems be set between all the Installers with the same price adders?**

See question 23. Adders should be consistent across suppliers if possible.

## Customer Participation

**25. How will existing conditions be considered, including a) tree pruning, b) condition of roof; and c) access to roof, d) Condition and Code Compliance of existing electrical MDP, service entrance cable etc.**

Installers may charge adders to the base system installation price for existing conditions such as roof access, roof slope, and other conditions. The cost of tree pruning or roof replacement or any other site preparation requirements will be considered external to the Solarize Philly program, and should be handled as you would normally handle them in the course of regular business.

**26. What to do about PECO High Voltage lines in their “Center City Sector” and other areas and neighborhoods where 4kV high voltage lines exist? Will Installers have the PECO map to determine if a home will be rejected for interconnect?**

PEA will coordinate with PECO to prescreen leads for potential issues interconnecting into the PECO grid. The PECO map of interconnection risk areas will be shared with Installers when available publicly.

**27. Do commercial systems qualify for the Solarize Philly program?**

Commercial and larger multi-family systems will be included on a case-by-case basis. Small businesses located in small mixed-use buildings, such as (but not exclusive to) buildings in neighborhood commercial corridors zoned CMX-1, CMX-2, and CMX-2.5, are included.

## Permitting and Interconnection

**28. We need a guarantee, in writing please, from the Philadelphia license and inspection that PDF submittal is allowed (either online or through email) for permits to prevent > \$200 fees for scanning.**

PEA cannot guarantee changes to L&I’s permitting process. We will work with solar vendors, the Office of Sustainability and L&I where appropriate to support the quickest, simplest, most cost-effective way of applying for and receiving permits.

**29. We need a guarantee, in writing please, from the Philadelphia license and inspection that there will be no Additional Review Fees of \$100 EACH for pickup or for resubmission.**

The streamlined solar permitting process released by L&I and the Office of Sustainability earlier this year will be in place for Solarize Philly. PEA will work with solar vendors, the Office of Sustainability and L&I where appropriate to support the quickest, simplest, most cost-effective way of applying for and receiving permits.

**30. Can PECO agree to waive the interconnect fee for Solarize Philly?**

PECO has not made any commitment to waive interconnection fees for the Solarize Philly program.

**31. Your wording in the RFP indicates the contract signature deadline of Oct 31, 2017 can be extended due to interconnection, permitting etc. What are some other issues for extending the deadline?**

Contract signature deadline can be extended due to interconnection and permitting delays as indicated in the RFP. The signature deadline will also be extended in certain cases with PEA's express approval. If there is a specific concern, please indicate it in your proposal.

## **Equipment**

**32. When will we be told whether materials will be procured by Solarize Philly and what those material prices will be?**

The RFP for solar PV modules and inverters is currently out for bid with responses due by June 6, 2017. Qualifying vendors, if any, will be selected on June 20, 2017. Selected Installers will be notified of the status of this vendor RFP as information becomes available.

**33. What modules and MLPPs might be provided by Solarize Philly?**

Specific equipment details are not currently available.

**34. What distributor would Solarize Philly use for equipment procurement?**

Specific distributor or manufacturer details are not currently available.

## **Financing**

**35. What will be done if the purchaser needs financing?**

Customers that require financing will obtain it through normal market channels.



**36. Do you have banks or institutions that are willing to start PPA program for the mid to low income solar customer? Is PECO or the city of Philadelphia considering providing a PPA program for customers who have good payment history?**

PEA is exploring options for identifying PPA and other financing partners for low and moderate income customers. Respondents are encouraged to bring their usual partners to the program. PEA expects to be able to provide options for financing low and moderate income solar customers for future rounds of the 18-month Solarize Philly program.