



**Request for Proposals (RFP): RFP-SFA-003**

**Community Solar Program Subscription Management Services**

| <b>Milestone</b>                      | <b>Date</b>   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| RFP launch date                       | February 4, 2025  |
| Questions Due                         | February 10, 2025 by 11:59pm Pacific Time               |
| Answers Posted                        | February 12, 2025                                       |
| <b><u>Proposals Due</u></b>           | <b><u>February 20, 2025 by 11:59pm Pacific Time</u></b> |
| Selection Notifications               | February 25, 2025                                       |
| Memorandum of Understanding Execution | February 28, 2025                                       |

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## 1. BACKGROUND

The Nevada Clean Energy Fund (“NCEF”) received a \$156 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”)’s Solar for All program to establish financial and technical assistance programs under its Nevada Solar for All (“NSFA”) initiative. NSFA will enable low-income and disadvantaged communities in Nevada to implement and benefit from solar energy. NSFA will administer statewide financial assistance programs for single-family homeowners, affordable housing properties, and residential-serving community solar that enable equitable access to solar in Nevada. NSFA will conduct targeted outreach, education, technical assistance, and workforce development in rural, urban, suburban, Tribal, and persistent poverty communities. NSFA will catalyze market transformation and impact for low-income solar in Nevada over the long-term by spurring regulatory change, building a sustainable and diverse solar workforce, and leveraging private capital.

Under the NSFA Community Solar Program, NCEF provides direct financial and technical assistance to community solar project hosts and owners, including a combination of rebates (or forgivable loans) and loans. A community solar project is a facility that produces electricity using solar photovoltaic (“PV”) panels with a nameplate capacity of up to 5 megawatts (MW) that deliver at least 50% of the benefits derived by the power generated from the system to multiple households. Entities such as local governments, Tribes, nonprofits, utilities, and businesses can serve as community solar site hosts. The community solar project owner must share a portion of the project’s benefits with LIDAC households. In collaboration with qualified vendor(s) selected through this RFP, NCEF will launch a centralized platform for enrolling eligible households as community solar subscribers who receive monthly payments funded by the loan repayments associated with community solar projects. Household subscribers will not have to pay to participate in the program. All subscribers will receive the same monthly payment.

## 2. REQUESTED SERVICES

NCEF seeks proposals from qualified vendors to develop and manage the centralized platform for enrolling eligible community solar subscribers and facilitating the transfer of benefits (“Centralized Subscription Platform”). The goal of the Centralized Subscription Platform is to efficiently manage the subscriber enrollment, billing, communications, and reporting for the NSFA Community Solar Program and ensure a seamless experience for subscribers and NCEF alike.

There are two core functionalities of the Centralized Subscription Platform: (1) qualifying and enrolling eligible subscribers, and (2) facilitating benefits transfer. Qualified vendors can submit a proposal focused on one or both of the core functionalities. NCEF anticipates selecting at most one vendor for each core functionality and may select a single vendor for both functionalities.

## 3. APPLICATION INFORMATION

Submit your proposal electronically to [info@nevadacef.org](mailto:info@nevadacef.org) with the subject line “Community Solar Subscriber RFP” **no later than 11:59pm Pacific Time on February 20, 2025**. Responses must be provided as attachments to an email. It is recommended that attachments with file sizes exceeding 25MB be compressed (i.e., zipped) to ensure message delivery. Late submissions will not be considered. Only electronic responses will be accepted.

NCEF will not respond to individual submissions or publish publicly a compendium of responses. A response to this RFP will not be viewed as a binding commitment to develop or pursue the project or ideas discussed.

#### 4. QUESTIONS

All questions regarding this solicitation shall be submitted to [info@nevadacef.org](mailto:info@nevadacef.org) with the subject line "Community Solar Subscriber RFP Question" by February 10, 2025 at 11:59pm Pacific Time. NCEF targets posting answers on its website on February 12, 2025.

#### 5. ABOUT NEVADA CLEAN ENERGY FUND

NCEF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting a thriving, affordable, and accessible clean energy economy by providing financial and technical resources to Nevadans. NCEF's programs are designed to accelerate clean energy growth in the state, reduce energy costs, create jobs, and meaningfully address climate change. NCEF works with communities, affordable housing, local businesses, schools, governments, Tribes, utilities, contractors, and others to increase access to clean energy opportunities, from rooftop solar and energy storage to energy efficiency and electric vehicles. NCEF was established by Nevada statute in 2017 to serve as the state's nonprofit green bank.

#### 6. ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS

Households eligible to participate in the NSFA Community Solar Program include the following:

- CEJST-Identified Disadvantaged Communities: All communities identified as disadvantaged through version 1.0 of the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), released on November 22, 2022, which includes census tracts that meet the thresholds for at least one of the tool's categories of burden and land within the boundaries of Federally Recognized Tribes.
- EJScreen-Identified Disadvantaged Communities: All communities within version 2.3 of EJScreen that fall within either (a) the limited supplemental set of census block groups that are at or above the 90th percentile for any of EJScreen's supplemental indexes when compared to the nation or state or (b) geographic areas within Tribal lands as included in EJScreen, which includes the following Tribal lands: Alaska Native Allotments, Alaska Native Villages, American Indian Reservations, American Indian Off-reservation Trust Lands, and Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas.
- Geographically Dispersed Low-Income Households: Low-income individuals and households living in Metropolitan Areas with incomes not more than 80% Area Median Income (AMI) or 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) (whichever is higher), and low-income individuals and households living in Non-Metropolitan Areas with incomes not more than 80% AMI, 200% FPL, or 80% Statewide Non-Metropolitan Area AMI (whichever is highest). Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is defined using the latest publicly available figures from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Area Median Income (AMI) is defined using the latest publicly available figures from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Metropolitan Area and Non-Metropolitan Area are defined using the latest publicly available figures for county-level designations from the Office of Management and Budget. Statewide Non-Metropolitan Area AMI is defined using the latest publicly available figures from the U.S. Department of the Treasury's CDFI Fund, with an adjustment for household size using HUD's Family Size Adjustment factor.

In addition, the NSFA Community Solar Program includes targets for minimum portions of subscriber households to be low-income and renters, and also prioritizes access for persistent poverty communities (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau).

Under the NSFA Community Solar Program, the federal funds will be provided to household subscribers in the form of Participant Support Costs (PSCs), and the PSC recipients are known as Program Beneficiaries (as defined by EPA).

## 7. SCOPE OF WORK

The vendor(s) will develop and manage a Centralized Subscription Platform. This platform should be user-friendly and able to handle all aspects of community solar subscription as described in the services listed below or as may be deemed necessary. The vendor(s) is expected to streamline processes, ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, enhance the overall experience for subscribers, and generate data to support federal grant reporting.

### A. Timeline

The anticipated period of the contract for services under this RFP will be for approximately four years from February 2025 to April 2029. Contracts for all or a subset of the services could be extended beyond April 2029, as deemed necessary and upon mutual agreement of NCEF and the vendor. NCEF targets releasing applications for community solar subscribers by the end of March 2025.

### B. Services

The selected vendor(s) will be responsible for the design, development, implementation, and management of the Community Solar Centralized Subscription Platform. The anticipated scope of work will include but is not limited to, the following two core functionalities:

#### i. Application Management

- a. **Application intake, review, and enrollment:** Manage application design and intake, review applications, verify applicant eligibility verification, and collect applicant data (e.g., address, contact information, census tract, renter status). Eligibility verification includes income verification (via categorical eligibility and/or using standard documentation such as Social Security award letter, pay stub, tax return, or bank statement) and ensuring beneficiaries are not excluded from participation in Federal Nonprocurement programs under 2 CFR Part 180.
- b. **Applicant support:** Help applicants navigate the application process, including understanding the effect of subscriber payments on the subscriber's eligibility for other income-qualifying programs and determining if other NSFA, NCEF, utility, state, or federal energy programs are suitable for the applicant.

#### ii. Benefits Transfer

- a. **Contract management:** Manage secure contract execution and storage with approved subscribers. Contract development will be led by NCEF and must comply with EPA's Guidelines on Participant Support Cost.

- b. **Financial benefits transfer:** Process monthly payments to subscribers allowing for multiple payment methods (e.g., ACH transfers, checks, digital wallets, and potentially other methods such as Cash App, PayPal, Venmo) and implement a robust system for payment tracking (e.g., payment history, outstanding balances, and upcoming payment due dates). NCEF expects approximately \$15 million to be transferred to over 13,000 households in Nevada.
- c. **Tax Compliance:** Manage generation of tax reports, as necessary (e.g., Form 1099; note that NCEF does not expect payments to a household to exceed \$600 in a given year).
- d. **Consolidated billing** (optional): Assume the subscriber's utility bill, bill subscribers for the monthly utility bill amount less the NSFA Community Solar Program financial benefit, receive payments directly from subscribers, and pay subscriber utility bills on their behalf. If the vendor offers consolidated billing, vendor shall be responsible for developing systems that allow adaptable pricing models (e.g., flat-rate, tiered and pay-as-you-go based on subscriber utility rates) and automatic bill generation with an accurate and clear break down of charges and credits. The vendor shall be responsible for developing an automated notification system for alerts such as billing reminders and outages. The vendor shall also be responsible for developing systems that allow for late payment management via automatic reminders and escalation steps, collections systems to handle overdue payments, and refund management in case of billing errors, overpayments, and program cancellations.
- e. **Data management:** Track and update subscriber data on an ongoing basis (e.g., contact information, address changes, bank account information, renter status, income status). Ideally with a customer support portal with self-service features, e.g., customer self-service account management including access to account details, energy usage and usage and billing history, and personal information updates as well as accessing FAQs and submitting support tickets.

In addition, vendor(s) will be responsible for the following services that are cross-cutting across the two core functionalities:

- iii. **Security and Data Privacy:** implement robust security protocols for to protect sensitive subscriber data (e.g., encryption, multi-factor authentication, and regular security audit, role-based access control). Ensure compliance with data privacy laws like NPICICA, and other relevant local and federal regulations governing the storage and handling of personal data.
- iv. **Ongoing Customer Support:** Respond to customer inquiries and support requests, log customer communication history and interactions, automate task management and workflows to ensure follow-through on support requests. Offer comprehensive support materials (e.g., FAQs, video tutorials) to ensure customers can effectively use the platform.
- v. **Reporting:** Provide regular, detailed reports to NCEF on subscriber data (e.g., demographics, enrollment status, participation levels) and the delivery of financial benefits.
- vi. **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations, including data privacy (e.g. NPICICA, etc.) and tax reporting requirements.

- vii. **Audit Trails and Documentation:** Provide audit trails for all system actions (e.g., subscription changes, payments, and communications) that are easily accessible for internal audits and regulatory inspections.
- viii. **Integration and Interoperability:** Enable secure and seamless data transfers with NCEF and with other relevant third-party applications, as needed. This may include API integrations.
- ix. **User Interface and Experience (UI/UX)**
  - a. **User-Friendly Design:** Develop a platform that is user-friendly with an intuitive, easy-to-navigate user interface for subscribers and administrators to ensure a smooth experience regardless of the user's technical expertise. Information is clearly presented and easy to understand, with important data (e.g., billing details, energy credits) clearly highlighted.
  - b. **Responsive Design:** Develop a platform whose interface is responsive across all devices (desktop, tablet, mobile), providing flexibility for users to manage subscriptions anytime and anywhere.
  - c. **Accessibility:** Ensure compliance with WCAG and other accessibility standards to accommodate users with disabilities (e.g., screen reader compatibility, keyboard navigation, high-contrast design) and individuals with limited English proficiency.
- x. **Ongoing Administrative Support and Maintenance:** Provide ongoing technical support and maintenance services e.g., software updates, bug fixes, security patches, among others to ensure the platform operates smoothly and securely post-launch. Work with NCEF to develop documentation, as needed, to ensure platform administrators and NCEF can effectively use the platform.

## 8. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposal submissions should not exceed 40 pages, 1" margins, 12-point font, single-spaced (excluding attachments). Submissions should include the following three sections, in addition to the attachments listed further below:

### Section 1: History, Qualifications, and Experience

- **Cover Page:** Include a cover page with your organization's EIN, unique entity identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov, primary contact, and whether your company is interested in providing application management or benefits transfer services or both.
- **Company Information:** Provide background on your company, including size, location, areas of operation, business model, years in operation, financial health, and organizational experience providing consumer application management or community solar subscriber services. If relevant, include your experience working with low-income and disadvantaged communities. Disclose any history of regulatory violations, non-compliance, or fraud. Include as an attachment your company's last three (3) years of audited financial statements and at least three (3) references from clients for whom you have completed similar projects as an attachment (see Appendix B - Reference Questionnaire).
- **Personnel & Qualifications:** Provide an overview of your team, including roles, responsibilities, and relevant experience. Include one-page resumes for at least three (3) and up to five (5) key personnel (see Appendix A – Template Resume).

### Section 2: Technical Proposal

- **Approach:** Describe your proposed approach to implementing the project, from initial design to deployment and post-launch support.
- **Organizational capacity plan:** Describe your plan for scaling up organizational capacity (staffing, software, and other resources) to deliver on this proposed contract.
- **Challenges & Mitigation Strategies:** Identify potential challenges during implementation and propose strategies for mitigating risks.
- **Product Features and Functionality:** Provide detail on the platform's core features and functionality, with a focus on how the platform provides each of the services and functionalities listed in Section 7(B), as applicable.
- **Software Platform:** Provide a detailed description of your software platform, including how it carries out each applicable step of community solar subscription process (application intake, payment processing, etc.), its reporting capabilities, security protocols, and how customers and NCEF would interact with the platform.
- **Other services:** Describe any other services you can or would like to provide, such as marketing and outreach and customer survey administration and data analysis for program performance evaluation. Note that costs for these additional services will not be determined by this RFP and should be excluded from the cost proposal below (or, if included, priced separately).

### Section 3: Cost Proposal

- **Cost Breakdown:** Provide a detailed and comprehensive cost proposal that includes
  - Fixed or one-time setup costs (e.g., design, development).
  - Recurring subscription fees (e.g., for ongoing maintenance, software updates)
  - Additional costs for training, support, customization, testing, deployment, and ongoing support.
- **Optional Features:** Outline any optional features or services that could incur additional costs if applicable.

## 9. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria and will be consistently evaluated and scored based on the following factors and relative weights:

### A. History, Qualifications, and Experience (35%)

- Demonstrated experience in developing and implementing similar subscription services, particularly in the energy, utilities or community solar sector.
- Technical expertise in billing/payment systems and CRM.
- Financial health evidenced in financial statements to sustain project size and scope.
- Proven track record of implementing projects on time and within budget.
- Positive feedback from previous clients.
- No history of regulatory violations, non-compliance, or fraud per background check.

### B. Technical Proposal (30%)

- Ability to provide applicable services and functionalities described in Section 7(B) to a high standard of quality.
- Compliance with data privacy regulations and other relevant standards.
- Usability of the platform for both subscribers and administrators and clarity and organization of information for easy navigation.
- Clarity, feasibility, and realism of the proposed approach and timeline.
- Reasonableness of the timeline and the ability to meet project deadlines.

**C. Cost Proposal (35%)**

- High cost-effectiveness and efficient use of federal funds relative to the proposed features and capabilities.

**10. TERMS & CONDITIONS**

NCEF reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and to negotiate with any respondent. All materials submitted as part of the proposal become the property of NCEF and may be used as necessary within federal and state regulatory requirements.

The selected vendor will be required to enter into a formal contract with NCEF.



## Appendix A – Resume Template

A Microsoft Word version of Appendix A is available for download [here](#).

|   |  |                  |  |
|---|--|------------------|--|
| Name of RFP Respondent (Firm):  |  |                  |  |
| Individual's Name:  |  |                  |  |
| Individual's Title:   |  |                  |  |
| Years in Classification:  |  | Years with Firm: |  |
| <b>BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE</b>   |  |                  |  |
| Include a summary of the proposed individual's professional experience.   |  |                  |  |
| <b>RELEVANT EXPERIENCE</b>  |  |                  |  |
| Include timeframe, company name, company location, position title held during the term of the contract/project and details of the contract/project. |  |                  |  |
| <b>EDUCATION</b>  |  |                  |  |
| Include institution name, city, state, degree, and/or achievement and date completed/received.  |  |                  |  |
| <b>CERTIFICATIONS</b>   |  |                  |  |
| Include type of certification and date completed/received   |  |                  |  |
|   |  |                  |  |

## Appendix B – Reference Questionnaire

A Microsoft Word version of Appendix B is available for download [here](#).

### 1. BUSINESS REFERENCE INSTRUCTIONS

The Nevada Clean Energy Fund (NCEF) requires business references for each RFP response.

- RFP respondents should provide Appendix B to every organization providing a business reference.
- Completed questionnaires should be submitted to [info@nevadacef.org](mailto:info@nevadacef.org) with “**Community Solar Subscriber RFP Reference**” in the subject line.
  - **Do not return the Reference Questionnaire to the Proposing Vendor.** References must be submitted to NCEF by the entity writing the reference.
- The completed Reference Questionnaire must be received no later than the due date in *Section 2*.
- In addition to collecting the Reference Questionnaire, NCEF may contact references by phone.
- NCEF requests all questions be answered.
- If an answer is not known, please answer as ‘U/K’.
- If the question is not applicable, please answer as ‘N/A’.
- If additional space is needed to answer a question or provide a comment, please attach additional pages.
- If attaching additional pages, please place your company/organization name on each page and reference the appropriate RFP number.
- NCEF will treat completed Reference Questionnaires as confidential. NCEF will not disclose submitted references but will confirm if a reference has been received.

### 2. REFERENCE INFORMATION

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Company Providing Reference: |  |
| Contact Name:                |  |
| Contact Title:               |  |
| Contact Phone:               |  |
| Contact Email Address:       |  |

### 3. REFERENCE QUESTIONS

Provide a numerical rating corresponding to the below rating methodology.

| Category                       | Rating |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Poor or Inadequate Performance | 0      |
| Below Average Performance      | 1-3    |
| Average Performance            | 4-6    |
| Above Average Performance      | 7-9    |
| Excellent Performance          | 10     |

| QUESTION   | COMMENT | RATING |
|--|---------|--------|
| In what capacity have you worked with this vendor in the past?   |         |        |
| Rate the vendor's knowledge and expertise.   |         |        |
| Rate the vendor's flexibility relative to changes in the project scope and timelines.  |         |        |
| Rate your level of satisfaction with soft and/or hard copy materials produced by the vendor.   |         |        |
| Rate the dynamics/interaction between the vendor and your staff.   |         |        |
| Rate your satisfaction with the products developed by the vendor.  |         |        |
| Rate how well the agreed upon, scope of work and planned schedule was consistently met and deliverables provided on time and per specifications. |         |        |
| Rate the overall customer service and timeliness in responding to customer service inquiries, issues, and resolutions.                           |         |        |
| Rate the knowledge of the vendor's assigned staff and their ability to accomplish duties as contracted.  |         |        |