

**Midwest Renewable Energy Association
Request for Proposal**

**Power Pack Kankakee
INSTALLATION OF RESIDENTIAL PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS**

**APPLICATIONS DUE: AUGUST 9, 2013
July 10, 2013**

I. Introduction

The Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), a leader in renewable energy education and training, is seeking qualified firms to submit proposals for the **design, procurement, and installation of new, residential, direct-owned photovoltaic systems at a per-watt price lower than the typical residential installation.** The MREA is launching a program in conjunction with Kankakee Community College (KCC), the Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) called **Power Pack Kankakee.** This project is made possible with funding from a NSF Advanced Technology Education Grant.

Power Pack Kankakee is modeled on a pilot program that ran in Milwaukee, WI during 2012. The program is designed to educate consumers on the benefits of photovoltaic systems and demonstrate that solar power has never been more affordable or easier to install. The program will offer quality solar products from regional companies and will demonstrate how Power Pack installs support local companies and jobs in your region. The program will expand to 3 more locations throughout Illinois in 2013. Illinois is poised to become one of the more robust solar markets in the U.S. and the Power Pack is a program designed to educate consumers and move them toward the installation of solar systems.

As a result of this solicitation, qualified solar installation contractors may enter into a Master Service Agreement (“Agreement”) with the MREA. The Agreement will set forth the terms and conditions under which a contractor will design, procure, and install residential solar systems to the interested customers in the following communities:

- 1. Kankakee County, IL**
- 2. McHenry County, IL**
- 3. Lee County, IL**
- 4. McLean County, IL**

To select a contractor, the MREA may negotiate with or solicit quotes from one or more contractors qualified under this RFP. Nothing in this solicitation process, RFP, or any contemplated or final agreement relieves any qualified vendor from complying with all laws and regulations applicable to the agreement.

II. Notice

Proposers are responsible for carefully reading all the terms and conditions contained in this RFP and for following the instructions given. Proposals that do not contain all the information requested may be rejected as non-responsive.

Proposers must review the entire RFP to ensure that all required information is included in the proposal. The complete RFP consists of the following:

1. Request for Proposal
2. Attachment 1, Bidder Certification

It is expected these Agreements for solar implementation services will be offered, but MREA reserves the right to issue additional Agreements. Contractors are not guaranteed any particular volume or dollar amount of work.

III. Minimum Contractor Qualifications

Bidders must meet the minimum qualifications described in this section to become participating qualified solar installers. Determination of whether a bidder meets the minimum qualifications will be based on the complete proposal as defined in Section V.

- Participant must have at least one current employee or currently retained subcontractor who is legally licensed as an electrician
- Participant has accomplished one of the following:
 - Achieved PV Installer Certification through the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP), achieved a Underwriter Laboratories (UL) Photovoltaic System Installer Certification or Electronics Technicians Association (ETA) Photovoltaic Certification;
 - Completed a U.S. Department of Labor recognized electrical apprenticeship program and has at least two documented photovoltaic system installations; or
 - Has earned a certificate/degree from an accredited solar design and installation training program and has at least two documented photovoltaic system installations
- Local Residency – Primary place of business located within Illinois
- Previous installations will also be taken into consideration

IV. Scope of Work

A. Specific Requirements

Successful bidders (Contractors) will be asked to enter into a Master Services Agreement (Agreement) with the MREA. Residential customers will be given a list of approved Power Pack program Contractors after the successful completion of their solar site assessment through the participating Community Colleges. Contractor's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Finalizing the customer contract and managing all financial transactions;
- Handling preparation and submission of paperwork for any State rebate program (if applicable);
- Addressing all customer service matters related to the project including but not limited to scheduling and customer complaints;
- Obtaining all permits needed to install the solar system and provide interconnectivity with local utility as required by federal, state and local jurisdictions;
- Completion of a structural analysis, communication to the customer of results and any recommendations of the analysis, and implementation of any required structural modifications based upon authorization by customer;
- Purchase of all installation components in accordance with the System Requirements outlined in Attachment 2 of this RFP; and
- Installation of the photovoltaic system and related testing of the system to the customer's satisfaction;

Prior to contacting a Power Pack program Contractor, the sites will have received pre-approval through the participating Community College's solar site assessment process.

B. General Requirements

Contractors shall perform the following work and meet the following requirements from the Agreement resulting from this RFP:

- a. Represent the MREA program to residential customers in a professional, positive manner.

- b. Work with the MREA and other consultants to identify and resolve technical and program issues. Failure to resolve technical and program issues will result in termination of the Agreement.
- c. Make available all pertinent data and information generated or otherwise acquired during performance of the Agreement upon request of the MREA.

V. Proposal Content

Bidders are responsible for carefully reading all the terms and conditions contained in this RFP and following the instructions given. The proposal should clearly describe qualifications, experience and capability to do the work described in this RFP, and must include all information requested below. **Proposals that do not contain all the information requested may be rejected as non-responsive. Proposers must submit the following:**

- a. Cover Letter. **Must** bear the original signature(s) of the official(s) authorized to sign the proposal.
- b. Original proposal narrative, typewritten, single-sided on standard (8½" x 11") paper, **maximum eight (8) pages**, plus Attachment 1 and any additional requested attachments.

* In the case of a joint bid, one cover letter should be submitted presenting information and signatures from officials of each entity. The cover letter should clearly indicate that a joint proposal is being submitted. A separate narrative should be provided by each firm, but only one joint cost proposal should be presented.

All documents must be submitted electronically and compiled into one electronic file of 5MB or less. Proposals greater than 5MB in size may be divided into separate electronic files. However, the number of files should be kept to a minimum.

Proposals Must Contain the Following Information

COVER LETTER (0 points): Cover letters should be on company letterhead. In the cover letter or on a title page, please include the title of the proposal, the name of the proposer (firm or individual), the name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of proposer's contact person, and the date of submission. The authorizing signature(s) should appear on one of these pages. These pages are not included in the 8-page limit.

NARRATIVE (80 points): Limited to 8 pages.

1. General Firm Profile (15 points):

Include a brief description of the proposer's firm size and local organizational structure. Include a discussion of the firm's financial stability, capacity (i.e. number of installations capable of installing per week/month) and resources, and a description of the installations and services your firm specializes in. Include types of buildings on which you have installed photovoltaic systems, (i.e. residential and commercial), size/scope of installations, and services that may be similar to the work described in this RFP.

2. Certifications + Attachment 1 (10 points):

- One of the following certifications is required:
 - PV Installer Certification through the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP), an Underwriter Laboratories (UL) Photovoltaic System Installer Certification or Electronics Technicians Association (ETA) Photovoltaic Certification;
 - Completed a U.S. Department of Labor recognized electrical apprenticeship program and has at least two documented photovoltaic system installations; or
 - Has earned a certificate/degree from an accredited solar design and installation training program and has at least two documented photovoltaic system installations
- Local Residency – Primary place of business is located within Illinois. Please provide firm's mailing address and proof of residency via a public document such as a copy of a property tax bill or utility bill.

3. Specific Project Experience (10 points):

Describe prior work performed during the last 5 years that is similar to the work being proposed under this Solicitation. Describe the demonstrated experience of the firm in developing, designing and installing residential solar electric systems, along with a discussion of how experience on previous projects relates to the Power Pack program in Illinois. Provide a statement describing the firm's capability to complete the project within the desired time schedule. Also, specifically provide a:

- Brief description (one to three paragraphs) of three projects including scope of the project/size of the installation, customization required, identification of personnel who worked on the project, any lessons learned, and identification of the client (include the name, address and telephone number of the appropriate contact person.)

4. References (5 points):

Please provide three references from previous solar clients (including mailing address, contact name, and contact person's e-mail and/or telephone) that the MREA may contact. Question areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Professionalism in interactions with others and on site

- Efficient resolution of installation/operational challenges
- Quality of installation work
- Timeliness of installation work
- Quality and accuracy of cost estimates

5. *Organization, Management and Administration and Customer Service (10 points):*

Describe how the work will be organized, managed, and administered so as to meet specified requirements:

- Describe and outline your scheduling and installation process.
- Describe in detail your customer service plan to manage referrals and customer follow-up in a timely manner.
- Demonstrate the ability to accomplish the required tasks and deliver the final product(s) for the type of work being proposed under this RFP within the specified times.
- Briefly discuss your ability to coordinate complex projects and work with people.
- Please describe any financing options available through your organization, if applicable.

6. *Personnel Experience/Qualifications (10 points):*

- Identify the key project team members by name and position, and submit names and relevant experience of the personnel, including subcontractors, who will perform the work being proposed under this RFP.
- As an attachment to the narrative, provide resumes that give sufficient information to demonstrate minimum qualifications are met, and experience and expertise in the work to be done. (Resumes are not considered part of the 8-page limit on proposal length). * Substitutions of personnel identified herein during performance of Work Assignment Contracts will be allowed only with prior approval of the MREA.

7. *Employment Practices (10 points):*

Discuss your standards for:

- Wages - Describe how your firm provides compensation and advancement opportunities for employees
- Hiring - Describe experience requirements, education requirements, and the existence of non-discrimination policies
- Employee Benefits - Describe benefits including health benefits, family leave provisions, equality for spouses and domestic partners, retirement plans, and labor relation's practices.

8. *Equipment and Vendors - Sustainability (15 points):*

- Submit names and business address of vendors, manufacturers and other partners from whom you typically purchase residential photovoltaic system components.

- For each vendor please indicate if the vendor’s warehouse/distribution center is located within the State of Illinois or within 500 miles of the City where the installs will be occurring.
- For each vendor, manufacturer, or partner, indicate whether the equipment purchased from the listed vendors meets the California Energy Commission’s List of eligible equipment (www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/equipment/index) Grade A or Grade B.
- For each vendor indicate the equipment warranty policy.
- Indicate if your firm has a written policy to purchase locally produced equipment & materials (from vendors with 500 miles of the City where the installs will be occurring). If so, please provide a copy of this policy.
- Provide your firm’s warranty policy on installation.

COST PROPOSAL (20 points):

- Must carry 5 year warranty on the system
- Agreement that cost per watt will be no greater than \$5.00 per watt (with exception for structural work, roofing, or other special considerations)

VI. Evaluation Criteria

Step 1:

MREA will evaluate and score proposals to determine each proposal’s Draft Score. The maximum possible Draft Score is 100.

The evaluation procedure will consist of an assignment of a number score for each section of the proposal. A score of zero (0) on any section (other than the Cover Letter) will eliminate a proposal from further consideration. In other words, proposals must be complete with each required section or subsection (as identified in Section V) being addressed. Materials not requested in this RFP will not be considered in the evaluation of proposals.

In assigning scores to proposal sections or subsections the following response attributes will be considered: Completeness of response, adequacy of response, quality of response, and ability of response to meet or exceed requirements.

Step 2:

A Selection Committee will review and evaluate each Draft Score to help assure proposers that many factors and values important to the community were considered in the proposer evaluation process.

The following representatives will make up the Selection Committee:

- Two (2) Representatives from Kankakee Community College who are the grant recipients of the National Science Foundation Advanced Technology Education Grant

- Two (2) member of MREA
- Two (2) technical advisors

The Selection Committee will determine the Final Score for each proposal. The maximum possible Final Score is 100. All bidders will be notified of the results of their evaluation.

VII. RFP Terms and Conditions

Cost of developing the proposal, attendance at an interview or any other such costs are entirely the responsibility of the proposer, and shall not be reimbursed in any manner by the MREA.

The MREA reserves the right to issue amendments to this RFP. In the event it becomes necessary to amend any part of this RFP, the MREA will provide notice of the amendment in the same manner as notice of the original RFP. If amendments to the RFP are issued, each proposer must acknowledge each specific amendment in the transmittal letter accompanying proposals. If a proposer does not acknowledge any amendment, then that proposer may be deemed non-responsive.

The MREA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. The MREA reserves the right to cancel or postpone this solicitation at any time, if such would be in the public interest. The MREA reserves the right to award no Agreements, or to award multiple Agreements. Likewise, the MREA reserves the right to negotiate the statements of work from within the scope of work described in the RFP that may be required under Task Order Assignments with a specific contractor.

Firms or individuals submitting proposals in response to this RFP may be requested by the MREA to answer additional questions, which may include phone or face-to-face interviews, or provide additional documentation. This will allow the proposer to clarify the proposal and answer questions the MREA may have regarding proposer's understanding of the scope of work identified herein. However, the MREA may complete its evaluation without further discussion of proposals received. Therefore, it is important that each proposal submitted be as complete, clear and concise as possible.

VIII. Contract Terms and Conditions

Agreements will be written initially for a term of six months. The MREA reserves the right to extend any or all Agreements for additional periods as needed.

The Agreement will clearly indicate a legal liability separation for the organizers of the program.

Contractors are required to obtain and provide evidence of the following insurance coverage: Workers' compensation, comprehensive general liability with a combined single limit or equivalent in an amount not less than \$1,000,000, and automobile liability with a combined single limit or equivalent in an amount not less than \$1,000,000. Contractors are required to provide the MREA with certificates of insurance and prior notice of change or cancellation. Contractor shall provide the MREA with a copy

of its professional liability insurance policy upon request. An Agreement will not take effect until documentation of insurance coverage is received by the MREA.

IX. Questions

Questions about this RFP or the selection procedure should be directed to:

Elizabeth Hittman

Midwest Renewable Energy Association- Milwaukee

Telephone: 414-431-2830

Email: elizabethh@midwestrenew.org

Address: 1845 N Farwell Ave Suite 100 Milwaukee, WI 53202

X. Submission of Proposals

PROPOSALS ARE DUE AUGUST 9, 2013

Proposals must be submitted electronically to the attention of Elizabeth Hittman at MREA with the title "Power Pack Kankakee– Installer Application" in the Subject line.

It is the responsibility of the proposer to ensure that proposals arrive at the MREA:

Elizabeth Hittman

Midwest Renewable Energy Association- Milwaukee

Telephone: 414-431-2830

Email: elizabethh@midwestrenew.org

Address: 1845 N Farwell Ave Suite 100 Milwaukee, WI 53202

ATTACHMENT 1

Bidder Qualification Statement

Bidder Qualification Statement:

I, _____, have read the entire contents of the RFP- Installation of Residential Photovoltaic Systems and certify that Bidder has necessary purchasing contacts, equipment, storage facilities, experience, ability and capital to furnish the proposed products in the manner described and to perform the required work satisfactorily.

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title of Signatory: _____

I acknowledge that Bidder possesses the following certifications: (Check appropriate boxes to indicate compliance.)

- Certification through NABCEP
- Certification through Focus on Energy
- Primary place of business located within the State of Illinois.

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title of Signatory: _____

Bidder declares the following legal status in submitting this proposal:

- () A corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of _____
- () A partnership
- () An individual doing business as _____

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| _____ Company Name | _____ FEIN |
| _____ Address | _____ City/State/Zip Code |
| _____ Bidder's Signature | _____ Name & Title |
| _____ Witness' Signature | _____ Name & Title |

ATTACHMENT 2

Cost Proposal

Instructions

1) For the baseline estimate assume a 3KW residential home photovoltaic system installation of 2,500 square feet. Assume that no angle mounts on the roof or ground or pole mounted arrays are required and that the project has been pre-qualified. Assume installation of a dual metering system. Standard mounting and racking hardware should also be included. Please provide baseline estimates for each of the four designated total kW capacity levels. It is expected that the greater the total overall kW volume installed per contractor, the lower the baseline price will be.

2) For the customization section, please provide the estimated cost per watt for possible customization costs. An allowance for customization needs to be considered to allow for consumer preference and the expertise of the contractor given a particular installation situation, as not all homes are the same and many factors come into play when installing a solar system. Customization may take into account upgrades to more efficient solar panels, inverters and racking systems, or roofing materials and pitch, just to name a few. Space is available to add additional costs as deemed necessary by the proposer.

System Requirements

New Components: All of the major system components (modules, inverter and, if needed, a charge controller) must be new.

System Size: DC rated capacity of solar electric modules must be 0.5 kilowatts to 6 kilowatts.

Certified Modules and Inverters: Solar electric modules and inverters must be on the California Energy Commission's list (www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/equipment/index) of eligible equipment and must be either Grade A or Grade B.

Five-Year Installation Warranty: The system must include at least a five-year installation warranty that covers any defects in the workmanship of the installation at no charge to the owner. The warranty must be provided by the contractor that installs the solar electric system. Repairs, general maintenance, or replacement of batteries or inverters are the responsibility of the homeowner.

Code: All systems installed must meet the requirements spelled out by the State of Illinois for building and/or electrical code as it pertains to this photovoltaic system, as well as conform to any local requirements.

Permits: System owners and installers must adhere to permit requirements by federal, state, and local jurisdiction.