

08.13.2024

Bright Neighborhoods Initiative Request for Proposals

PROPOSALS ARE DUE BY MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024, BY 5:00 P.M. CT
SUBMIT PROPOSALS AS A PDF TO BRIGHT@ILLINOISSFA.COM

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Overview

About this Request for Proposals (RFP)

As the Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) Program Administrator, Elevate Energy (“Elevate” or “Program Administrator”) requests proposals from eligible and qualified firms (“Offerors”) to serve as the designated Approved Vendors in the ILSFA Bright Neighborhoods initiative (the “Pilot” or “initiative”).¹ The initiative aims to increase participation in the Residential Solar (Small) sub-program and support small and emerging businesses. Selected Offerors will serve as the Approved Vendor for Residential Solar installations in one of three specified communities in accordance with their approved response to this RFP and ILSFA Program requirements. Participation by selected Offerors will only result in opportunities to submit projects to receive REC contracts and will not involve the payment of any additional compensation by the Illinois Power Agency (“Agency”) or Program Administrator.

Offerors must indicate which one of the three designated Pilot communities the Offeror would prefer to serve in if selected. If an Offeror seeks to be considered for more than one Pilot community, the Offeror must submit a separate proposal to this RFP for each community. For clarity, participation will not require exclusivity. Offerors may continue working in other communities outside of the Pilot or serve customers within the Pilot community, even if those projects do not qualify for the Pilot. Proposals must highlight the Offeror’s plan and capacity to complete its commitment to the community.

More detailed information can be found in the *Bright Neighborhoods Overview section* of this RFP.

Proposal Submission Process and Instructions

Offerors should follow the instructions and must respond to each prompt, providing the necessary details for each, in the Proposal Content section of this request. Proposals that do not include all information specified in this RFP will be considered non-responsive.

SUBMITTING QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS RFP

Offerors may submit questions or clarification requests regarding this RFP to bright@illinoisSFA.com no later than 5 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Tuesday, August 27,

¹ Bright Neighborhoods is the marketed branding for the Residential Solar Pilot as outlined in section 8.5.3.4. of the 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan (the “2024 Long-Term Plan”).

2024. Responses (with the corresponding questions and clarification requests) will be posted to the ILSFA website and emailed to the ILSFA stakeholder list. The Program Administrator will host a webinar on **Tuesday, August 20, 2024, from 10 to 11 a.m. CT** to review this RFP and answer questions. The webinar will be recorded and posted to the Illinois Solar for All website.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

All proposals must be submitted as a PDF to bright@illinoisSFA.com no later than **Monday, September 16, 2024, 5 p.m. CT**.

The timeline for this RFP and the Pilot is as follows:

Timeline Event	Date
Residential Solar Pilot RFP Released	August 13, 2024
Residential Solar Pilot RFP Webinar	August 20, 2024
Offerors' Question Period Closed	August 27, 2024
Bright Neighborhoods Proposals Due	September 16, 2024
Approved Vendors Selected and Announced	October 14, 2024
Approved Vendor Onboarding	October 14-18, 2024
Marketing and Outreach Campaigns	September 17, 2024, through May 31, 2025
Participant List to Approved Vendors	Ongoing
Participant Signup Period	September 17, 2024, through April 30, 2025

Bright Neighborhoods Background Information

The 2024 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan (the “2024 Long-Term Plan” or the “Plan”) outlined the Residential Solar Pilot (referred to as Bright Neighborhoods) to address the ongoing underutilization of the Illinois Solar for All Residential Solar (Small) sub-program. Prospective participants and Approved Vendors have reported several barriers to participation in this sub-program, including unfamiliarity with solar power, distrust in marketers, language barriers, and a complex administrative process. Bright Neighborhoods is designed to reduce these barriers and to test a more vertically integrated model for facilitating the uptake of residential solar in 1-to 4-unit residential buildings.

In the first year of the Bright Neighborhood initiative, the ILSFA team was not able to complete solar installations, despite 16 referrals to Approved Vendors due to deeper barriers than anticipated and unforeseen barriers to solar adoption. The Program Administrator published an [evaluation report](#) year of the initiative analyzing the challenges to achieving increased program participation and new barriers discovered in the first year. Through those learnings, the Program Administrator devised updates to the [design](#) of the initiative to improve its functions and to continue learning about best practices for reducing the identified barriers to increasing program participation. Because of the challenges to achieving the ambitious installation goal in the first year, the Program Administrator has redefined our definition of success to engaging a number of prospective participants that would provide a data set substantial enough to evaluate the effectiveness of the participant engagement tactics being tested in this initiative.

The Program Administrator has defined this data set by setting goals for the number of intake forms, the number of participant referrals, and the number of projects installed. For the 2024-2025 program year, the Program Administrator has set a goal of 100-200 intake forms in each community area, 30-50 participant referrals to selected Approved Vendors in each community area, and 20-25 completed installations in each community area.

The Bright Neighborhoods initiative will take place in three selected community areas:

- Austin, Humboldt Park, East and West Garfield Park, North and South Lawndale-Chicago
- Waukegan
- Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan Area (Jackson, Williamson, and Johnson counties)

The initiative aims to improve participation in the Residential Solar (Small) sub-program while supporting small and emerging businesses. The 2024 Long-Term Plan set a goal of prioritizing the involvement of small and emerging businesses to encourage business development, particularly for those located in income-eligible and environmental justice communities; therefore, the Program Administrator will prioritize the selection of businesses that qualify as both small and emerging, as defined below, to participate in this Pilot (2024 Long-Term Plan, Section 8.2.3 and 8.5). Approved Vendors selected through this RFP will serve customers in one of the three communities through Program Year 7 (the 2024-2025 program year).

The key component of Bright Neighborhoods is the increased role of the Program Administrator in finding income-eligible households to participate. The Program Administrator will manage marketing, public outreach, participant interactions, income verification, and an initial site suitability screening, which is detailed later. The Program Administrator will develop and implement a marketing and outreach plan and connect with Grassroots Educators, houses of worship, school districts, Community Action Agencies, and other relevant community organizations to engage them to assist in

outreach as part of the participant acquisition efforts. This support by local organizations to build awareness could include promoting events and the program through their social networks, hosting events, or connecting the Program Administrator with other community contacts.

Once community partners are established, the Program Administrator will work with them to create unique outreach plans that may include house parties (a small gathering at a community resident's home, or a local nonprofit, with an installed residential solar project), tabling at community-hosted events, hosting coffee chats or focus groups to learn directly from residents and community stakeholders and hosting educational workshops. This outreach will include up to four community informational sessions during the participant sign-up period, from September 17, 2024, through April 30, 2025, where the selected Offeror will be invited to answer questions from prospective participants. This is the only outreach expected of the selected Offeror and is important to begin building trust between the homeowner and the selected Offeror.

Concurrently with this outreach, the Program Administrator will connect with interested participants to complete income verification and the initial site suitability assessment. The Program Administrator's review of the Site Prescreening Survey used during the first year of the initiative found challenges to moving participants through the process to the Approved Vendor. Because of these challenges, the Program Administrator will integrate the enhanced site prescreening questions into the income verification form to gather all participant information in one form. To finalize these site prescreening questions, the Program Administrator will consult the selected Approved Vendors. These questions will gather the participant's understanding of their electrical panel health, roof age, and level of shading on the roof. The Program Administrator will use the site suitability questions on the income verification form to either refer them to external funding programs serving their area (identified through the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative), notify the Bright Neighborhoods selected Offeror of the issues (if they are willing to support the repairs), or referring the participant to an Approved Vendor who is participating in the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative.

Once the Program Administrator has completed the income verification and review of the site prescreening questions, they will move eligible participants to the pipeline for the selected Offeror to initiate their participant interactions. The Program Administrator will follow the above acquisition process during the participant sign-up period to provide the selected Offerors with an ongoing pipeline of participants. The Program Administrator will assist and support the participant and the selected Offerors throughout the entire project application process.

The selected Offerors will receive a pipeline of participants from the Program Administrator who are income verified and complete an initial site suitability

assessment during the participant sign-up period once the Offerors have completed their onboarding, from October 21, 2024, through April 30, 2025. Once the selected Offerors have their pipeline of participants and have connected with them, the selected Offerors will proceed with the final site assessment, design the solar system, and develop and then present the disclosure form and contract to the participant. In the event the household is found ineligible for residential solar, the selected Offeror must notify the Program Administrator of the ineligibility, and the participant of their options to participate in either Community Solar (by providing the ILSFA Community Solar flyer) or the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative.²

Selected Offerors will be responsible for the following:

- Attend up to four, hour-long community information sessions facilitated by the Program Administrator between October 21, 2024, and April 30, 2025.
- Communicate with the Program Administrator on an as-needed basis (likely weekly or bimonthly)
- Use the pipeline of prospective participants from the Program Administrator to conduct the final site assessment³
- Complete the solar system design
- Communicate detailed information about the system design, costs, and savings to the customer (via the disclosure form)
- Provide the customer with a contract for signature
- Complete the Part I and Part II applications
- Obtain all necessary permits
- Install the solar projects
- Complete the interconnection agreement
- Complete final inspections
- Act as the sellers under the applicable renewable energy credit (REC) contracts

The initiative will be limited to ILSFA Residential Solar (Small) projects and will be subject to all of the normal income-eligibility and consumer protection requirements of the ILSFA Residential Solar (Small) sub-program. Because the Program Administrator is taking on some of the soft costs in customer acquisition from the Approved Vendor participating in the initiative, the REC prices are reduced for participating Bright Neighborhoods projects. As such, the REC price will be adjusted to an 80% increase for

² The Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative is a separate ILSFA Pilot that will provide additional incentivizes for eligible electrical and roof repairs necessary for solar installations on households eligible for the Residential Solar (Small) sub-program. This separate Pilot is described in Section 8.5.3.3 of the 2024 Long-Term Plan.

³ Provide the customer with necessary resources for Community Solar or the Home Repairs and Upgrades Pilot in the event the household is found ineligible.

projects in the West Garfield Park Chicago community and the Waukegan community, and a 95% increase for projects in the Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan Area. The Bright Neighborhoods REC prices are shown in the table below:

Project Size	Group A	Group B
0 - 10 kW	\$177.01	\$167.90
10 - 25 kW	\$146.70	\$144.01
25 - 100 kW	\$118.44	\$118.73

This initiative will operate within the Residential Solar (Small) sub-program, receiving part of that annual budget. The initiative has a goal of 30-50 referrals to an Approved Vendor and 20-25 total solar installations within each of the three communities. An Offeror may surpass this goal if it has the capacity to support more than 25 installations and if the Residential Solar (Small) annual budget allows.

The initiative's first year faced challenges supporting homes that required roof or electrical repairs to proceed with a solar project. Because of these challenges, this RFP was modified to include additional scoring opportunities for Offerors willing to participate in the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative.⁴ Another change to the RFP is that Offerors may now receive a prioritized review of their proposals if they participate in a mentorship arrangement where the Offeror is an Approved Vendor working with a designee that qualifies as a Small and Emerging Business and the Approved Vendor financially supports the designee’s participation in the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative.

Eligibility and Request for Proposals

Offeror’s Eligibility

At a minimum, Offerors must be an Approved Vendor through the Illinois Shines Program before the initiative starts. Offerors that are not ILSFA Approved Vendors at the time they submit their RFP response will be expected to register and meet ILSFA requirements should they be approved to provide services in the Pilot. (See Section 3 of the [Approved Vendor Manual](#) for requirements.) The Program Administrator reserves the right to remove any non-ILSFA Approved Vendor from the initiative and select a

⁴ The Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative provides additional incentives to participating ILSFA Approved Vendors who complete eligible electrical and/or roof repairs in order to complete the solar installation. (Link to HR&U initiative report)

different Offeror if the selected Offeror does not complete the ILSFA Approved Vendor registration process before the initiative launches.

Proof of Distributed Generation Installer Certification from the Illinois Commerce Commission, in the form of a Commission order granting the certification, must be submitted by the Offeror for itself or for its proposed sub-contractor(s)/designee installer(s).

Bright Neighborhoods Proposal Content

OFFEROR'S BACKGROUND AND CAPACITY

1. Select the community that the Offeror proposes to serve as the designated Approved Vendor for the Residential Solar Pilot. Offerors may choose only one community per proposal submitted: (Not scored)
 - Austin, Humboldt Park, East and West Garfield Park, North and South Lawndale neighborhoods in Chicago
 - Waukegan, IL
 - Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan Area

The Agency will use the federal SBA definition of “small,” based on annual revenues within the appropriate [NAICS category](#), to prioritize “small” businesses during the evaluation of RFP responses. The Agency defines “emerging business” as a business that has been authorized to do business in any US state for less than three years and will use this definition to prioritize “emerging” businesses during the evaluation of RFP responses. If the Offeror is affiliated with another company or companies, each affiliated company must also provide documentation showing that it meets these definitions of small and emerging to be considered for priority under the Pilot.

2. Does the Offeror qualify as a small and emerging business or use subcontractors that qualify as small and emerging businesses as described in Section 8.2.3 of the 2024 Long-Term Plan? (No points given, but given priority over other Offerors as specified in the RFP Evaluation Process section below)
3. Is Offeror a certified minority-owned business enterprise (MBE) and/or women-owned business enterprise (WBE) (“M/WBE”), or will Offeror work with M/WBE subcontractors? For the purposes of this Pilot, the definition of an M/WBE in the ILSFA Approved Vendor Questionnaire will be relied on. Specifically, an MBE is a business that is at least 51 percent owned by one or more minorities. A minority is defined as a person who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States and is African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, or Native American, as well as other groups found to be disadvantaged pursuant to

Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act federal statute. A WBE is a business that is at least 51 percent owned by a woman or women who are U.S. Citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States.

Also, the M/WBE certifications accepted by ILSFA are listed in the [ILSFA Approved Vendor Questionnaire](#) and any of these certifications will suffice to prove a business is M/WBE certified. This certification may include municipal, county, state, or other public or non-public third-party certifying bodies approved by ComEd/Exelon and Ameren Illinois, including but not limited to the National Minority Supplier Development Council and its regional affiliates and the Women's Business Enterprise National Council and its regional affiliates, the City of Chicago, and the Illinois Department of Central Management Services.

Select "Yes" if you are already registered as a M/WBE with the ILSFA program. Select "Other" if the Offeror is certified as an M/WBE but not yet registered through ILSFA. If you select "Other," the Program Administrator will be in touch following your submission to discuss the completion of the [ILSFA Approved Vendor Questionnaire](#). (15 points if Yes/Other)

4. Will the Offeror be able to utilize the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative to address eligible electrical, roof, or shading site suitability issues? The Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative provides additional incentives to Approved Vendors who complete eligible electrical and/or roof repairs for an ILSFA project. (10 points if Yes)
5. Provide details of the Offeror's size, history, and names and roles of key personnel. Describe the Offeror's plan to develop, design, and install residential solar electric systems (including the type of design software used and design approach, understanding of inspection and permitting fees, and requirements in the relevant local jurisdictions). (Up to 15 points)
6. Describe whether the Offeror has the capacity and available resources to complete 20-25 projects in the community during the Pilot timeline. For capacity, please estimate the maximum number of projects you are capable of completing as part of this Pilot. (Up to 15 points)
7. Transparency about potential subcontractors working on this Pilot and how Offeror will ensure oversight of its subcontractors is important to ensure high-quality installations by qualified subcontractors. Will the Offeror provide installation services directly? If not, explain the Offeror's experience using

subcontractors to complete solar installations. Please provide the name of the subcontractor(s) and their contribution to the project, and provide background information on size, experience, management, licensing, and subcontracting agreement. (Not scored)

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT AND READINESS

1. It is necessary for customers to have frequent communication with the Offeror and for the Offeror to provide clear timelines to customers. Describe Offeror's plan to communicate with customers throughout the installation process. (Up to 10 points)
2. According to Census data, demographics in the three Pilot communities are as follows:
 - Austin-Chicago
 - 72.8% Black (Non-Hispanic)
 - 19.4% Hispanic or Latino
 - 5.3% White (Non-Hispanic)
 - 1.7% Other (Non-Hispanic)
 - Humboldt Park-Chicago
 - 49.8% Hispanic or Latino
 - 34.5% Black (Non-Hispanic)
 - 11.7% White (Non-Hispanic)
 - 2.2% Asian (Non-Hispanic)
 - 1.6% Other (Non-Hispanic)
 - East Garfield Park-Chicago
 - 83.8% Black (Non-Hispanic)
 - 7.8% Hispanic or Latino
 - 5.7% White (Non-Hispanic)
 - 2.6% Other (Non-Hispanic)
 - 0.2% Asian (Non-Hispanic)
 - West Garfield Park-Chicago
 - 91.8% Black (Non-Hispanic)
 - 5.3% Hispanic or Latino
 - 2.1% White (Non-Hispanic)
 - North Lawndale-Chicago
 - 77.7% Black (Non-Hispanic)
 - 14.5% Hispanic or Latino
 - 5.3% White (Non-Hispanic)
 - 2.1% Other (Non-Hispanic)
 - South Lawndale-Chicago
 - 81.8% Hispanic or Latino

- 11.5% Black (Non-Hispanic)
- 5.3% White (Non-Hispanic)
- Waukegan
 - 52.6% Hispanic or Latino
 - 19.2% White (Non-Hispanic)
 - 17.7% Black (Non-Hispanic)
 - 7% Asian (Non-Hispanic)
 - 3.3% Other (Non-Hispanic)
- Carbondale-Marion Micropolitan Area
 - 81% White (Non-Hispanic)
 - 8% Black (Non-Hispanic)
 - 4% Two or more Races
 - 4% Hispanic or Latino
 - 2% Asian (Non-Hispanic)

Does Offeror’s staff reflect the demographics of the community that Offeror would like to serve in the Pilot? Does the Offeror employ “equity eligible persons” as defined in Section 10.1.1 of the [Agency’s 2024 Long-Term Plan](#)? Please provide a description of the Offeror’s demographics and “equity eligible” employees. (Up to 10 points)

3. What commitments has Offeror made to serving income-eligible and environmental justice communities in Illinois (or elsewhere)? (Up to 10 points)
4. It is important for the selected Offeror to address complaints raised by a customer during this Pilot. Explain your Offeror’s complaint management and response plan. (Up to 5 points)

COMPANY OFFER

1. How will offers to potential customers be structured? For example, direct sale of the system to participants, a system lease to participants, a power purchase agreement, or other? (Not scored)
2. For each type of structure identified in response to question 12 please provide a sample customer contract that is clear and tailored for use with the initiative, including, but not limited to compliance with the requirements set forth in the IPA [Consumer Protection Handbook](#) and the [ILSFA Contract Requirements](#), and that includes a description of your terms of payment, the anticipated level of participant savings, the anticipated costs to the participant, process, and timeline, from initial application to final energization that is easy to understand

by the participant. Please submit this document along with the proposal. Proposals missing a submitted contract will not be considered. (Up to 20 points)

JOB TRAINEE HIRING PLAN

1. Describe your plan to hire job trainees from a qualified job training program in accordance with Section 8.9.1. of the 2024 Long-Term Plan and the ILSFA [Approved Vendor Manual](#). (Up to 5 points)

2. Does Offeror currently have on-staff graduates from [qualified job training programs](#)? (Not scored)

RFP Evaluation Process

Proposal Scoring and Evaluation

Offerors’ proposals will be scored according to the scale shown below:

Category	Total Section Score
Offeror Background and Capacity	55
Community Commitment and Readiness	35
Company Offer	20
Plan to Employ Job Trainees	5
Total Possible Points	115

The proposals will be reviewed and scored by an evaluation committee made up of members of the staffs of the Agency and the Program Administrator. Considering the goals set forth in the 2024 Long-Term Plan, the Program Administrator and the Agency will first score proposals from entities that have shown that they qualify as small and emerging businesses.⁵ As noted above, if the Offeror is affiliated of with another company or companies, each affiliated company must also show that it meets the definitions of small and emerging to be considered for priority under the Pilot. “Affiliated” means, with respect to any entity, any other entity that, directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediaries, controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with each other or a third entity. “Control” means the possession,

⁵ See 2024 Long-Term Plan, Sections 8.2.3 and 8.5.

directly or indirectly, of the power to direct the management and policies of an entity, whether through the ownership of voting securities, by contract, or otherwise.

To be selected, small and emerging businesses must receive a minimum score of 80 points. If no Offerors qualifying as small and emerging businesses meet the minimum score for any one of the three designated initiative communities, only then will other Offerors' proposals be scored for that community, also requiring a minimum score of 80 points.

If there is a designated initiative community for which no Offeror obtains a score of at least 80 points, the Agency and Program Administrator reserve the right to modify this RFP to ensure the initiative can be implemented in the community. To do this, the Agency and Program Administrator may allow Offerors to supplement their proposals and extend the deadline for selecting an Approved Vendor for the community, temporarily decline to select an Approved Vendor for the community, and issue a new RFP focused solely on the community, or pursue any other options to further reduce barriers to participation in the community as determined by the Agency in accordance with the 2024 Long-Term Plan.

As a selected Approved Vendor, the solar company will have a short-term understanding with the Program Administrator to complete residential solar projects in accordance with their response to the RFP, their participant contract, and ILSFA program requirements.

In the event that the Program Administrator identifies more residents to participate in the initiative than a selected Approved Vendor indicated they had the capacity to complete in their RFP response, the Program Administrator reserves the right to call upon a vendor that applied but was not selected to complete that portion of projects. If this situation arises, the Program Administrator will call upon the next highest-scored vendor serving that geography to step in and complete those additional identified solar projects. The Program Administrator reserves these rights to reduce the number of stranded participants.

Similarly, in the event that a potential participant requires home repairs prior to a solar installation and the Approved Vendors indicate they are not able to participate in the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative, the Program Administrator reserves the right to provide the names of other Approved Vendors that are currently participating in the Home Repairs and Upgrades initiative to the potential participant.

The Agency also seeks to increase the number of M/WBE Approved Vendors participating in ILSFA (2024 Long-Term Plan, Section 8.9). To support this goal, Offerors certified as M/WBEs should identify their certification in their response to receive additional points.

Offerors will be notified whether they have been selected to participate in the proposal in accordance with the RFP schedule above.

RFP Terms

CAPITALIZED TERMS: Capitalized terms used but not defined in this RFP have the meaning ascribed to them in the 2024 Long-Term Plan.

GOVERNING LAW AND FORUM: Illinois law and rule govern this RFP. Offerors must bring any action relating to this solicitation in the appropriate court in Illinois and may only do so after timely submission of a protest conforming to the Protest Process.

PROTEST PROCESS: Any person may submit a protest relating to the notice of this RFP, the terms of this RFP, and any decision to reject a late offer. An Offeror (i.e., a person who submitted an offer to the Program Administrator in response to this RFP) may protest the rejection of its offer or an award to another Offeror. Any protest must be received via email sent to the Agency at IPA.Solar@illinois.gov by close of business no later than ten (10) calendar days after the protesting party knows or should have known of the facts giving rise to the protest to ensure consideration. Any notice published to the IPA or ILSFA website establishes the “known or should have known” date for the subject matter of the notice. In addition, protests relating to the notice or terms of this RFP must be received within fourteen (14) calendar days after release of this RFP.

Protest submissions must be concise and logically arranged; provide a statement of reasons for the protest specifically identifying any allegedly material violation of the IPA Act, another relevant Illinois law, or the terms of this RFP; and include any supporting facts, arguments, evidence, and documents. Protests that do not establish legally sufficient grounds for protest—that is, a material violation of the IPA Act, other relevant Illinois law, or the terms of this RFP— or that do not include supporting evidence will be denied. Note that this RFP is not subject to the Illinois Procurement Code, and protests based solely on rules applicable under that Code will not be considered.

Within one (1) business day of receiving the protest submission, the Agency will assign a staff member that was not involved in drafting this RFP or evaluating offers to review the protest submission and this RFP. If the protest relates to a rejection of an offer, the staff member will also review all relevant offers submitted in response to this RFP and any other relevant information such as evaluation materials. That staff member will make a recommendation to the Agency’s Director within seven (7) calendar days of being assigned to review the protest. The Director will make the final decision as to the determination of the protest within three (3) calendar days. The Agency will resolve the protest by means of a written determination. In determining the appropriate

determination, the Director shall consider whether the protestor established sufficient grounds for protest; the seriousness of the procurement deficiency, if any; the degree of prejudice to other parties or to the integrity of the competitive procurement system; the good faith of the parties; the urgency of the procurement; and the impact of the recommendation on the Agency's mission.

PUBLIC RECORDS AND REQUESTS FOR CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT: Proposals become the property of the Agency. Proposals, including late submissions will not be returned. All proposals will be open to the public under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") (5 ILCS 140) and other applicable laws and rules, unless Offeror requests in its Proposal that the Agency treat certain information as confidential. A request for confidential treatment will not supersede the Agency's legal obligations under FOIA. The Agency will not honor requests to keep entire Offers confidential. Offerors must show the specific grounds in FOIA or other law or rule that support confidential treatment. Regardless, the Agency will disclose the successful Offeror's name, the substance of the Offer, and the price upon final contract award. If Offeror requests confidential treatment, Offeror must submit one additional copy of the Proposal with proposed confidential information redacted. This redacted copy must describe the general nature of the material removed and shall retain as much of the Proposal as possible. In a separate attachment, Offeror shall supply a listing of the provisions identified by section number for which it seeks confidential treatment and identify the statutory basis under Illinois law and include a detailed justification for exempting the information from public disclosure. Offeror will hold harmless and indemnify the Agency for all costs or damages associated with the Agency defending Offeror's request for confidential treatment. Offeror agrees the Agency may copy the Proposal to facilitate evaluation, or to respond to requests for public records. Offeror warrants that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party.

RESERVATIONS: Offeror must read and understand this RFP and tailor its proposal to ensure compliance. The Agency and Program Administrator reserve the right to amend this RFP, reject any or all proposals, and waive minor defects. Program Administrator and/or the Agency may request a clarification, inspect Offeror's work, interview staff, request a presentation, or otherwise verify the contents of the proposal, including information about subcontractors and suppliers. The Agency and/or Program Administrator will make all decisions on compliance, evaluation, terms and conditions, and shall make decisions in the best interests of the Agency and in accordance with rules and other applicable state and federal statutes and regulations. This competitive process may require that Offeror provide additional information and otherwise cooperate with the Program Administrator and/or the Agency. If Offeror does not comply with requests for information and cooperate, Program Administrator and/or the Agency may reject its proposal as non-responsive to this RFP. Submitting a proposal

does not entitle Offeror to participation in the Pilot. Posting Offeror's name in any notice does not entitle Offeror to participate in the Pilot. Neither the Program Administrator nor the Agency is responsible for and will not pay any costs associated with the preparation and/or submission of any proposal.

AWARD: Neither the Program Administrator nor the Agency is obligated to award participation in the Pilot to any Offeror pursuant to this RFP. The Offeror's participation in this Pilot will only lead to potential REC contracts with each installation and will not involve the payment of any additional compensation by the Agency or Program Administrator. The Agency and Program Administrator cannot guarantee any minimum number of REC contracts that may result from participation in this Pilot.