



## **SOUTHEAST RURAL POWER: SOLAR FOR ALL**

### **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION & EXPRESSION OF INTEREST SOLAR DEVELOPMENT & INSTALLATION (EPC) SERVICES FOR COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECTS**

**Prepared By: Groundswell**

80 M Street SE  
Washington, DC 20005

*March 5, 2025*

*This is a Request for Information (RFI) only. Groundswell will not pay for information provided under this RFI and no project will be supported as a result of this RFI. This RFI is not accepting applications for financial assistance or financial incentives. Groundswell may or may not issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) based on consideration of the input received from this RFI.*

Contact information, Email: [seruralpower@groundswell.org](mailto:seruralpower@groundswell.org) | Website: [www.groundswell.org](http://www.groundswell.org)

**Request for Information (RFI)  
& Expression of Interest**

March 5, 2025



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**RFI Issuance Date:** Wednesday, March 5, 2025

## **RFI OVERVIEW**

This Request for Information (RFI) seeks responses from organizations with experience developing, installing, and providing operations and maintenance services for solar energy projects, ideally within the Southeastern region. Responses from organizations with experience working in rural communities and in collaboration with municipal and rural electric cooperative utilities are especially encouraged.

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## **BACKGROUND**

Groundswell builds community power to cut electricity bills in half for our neighbors who need savings the most. We use community solar, resilience hubs, and home energy efficiency to preserve affordable housing, strengthen the grid, and support local economic development. Then we connect people with projects through our data platform to deliver sustainable, measurable results. Founded in 2009, Groundswell joyfully serves 6,500 families in rural, small-town, and urban communities in the Heartland, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast with more than \$3 million in annual electricity savings, on a pathway to delivering \$15 million per year in savings to 30,000 families by 2030.

In that spirit, during 2024, Groundswell's Southeast Rural Power coalition was awarded a \$156 million regional Solar for All contract from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help build community solar and associated energy storage projects that will cut electricity bills in half and improve local resilience for more than 17,000 families. The

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coalition includes nonprofit rural cooperative and municipal utilities across Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.

## Goals and Outcomes

Through the SE Rural Power Solar for All program, Groundswell anticipates supporting the construction of approximately 107 MW of residential-serving community solar projects across our collective service territories, with individual projects ranging from 200 kW to 5 MW.

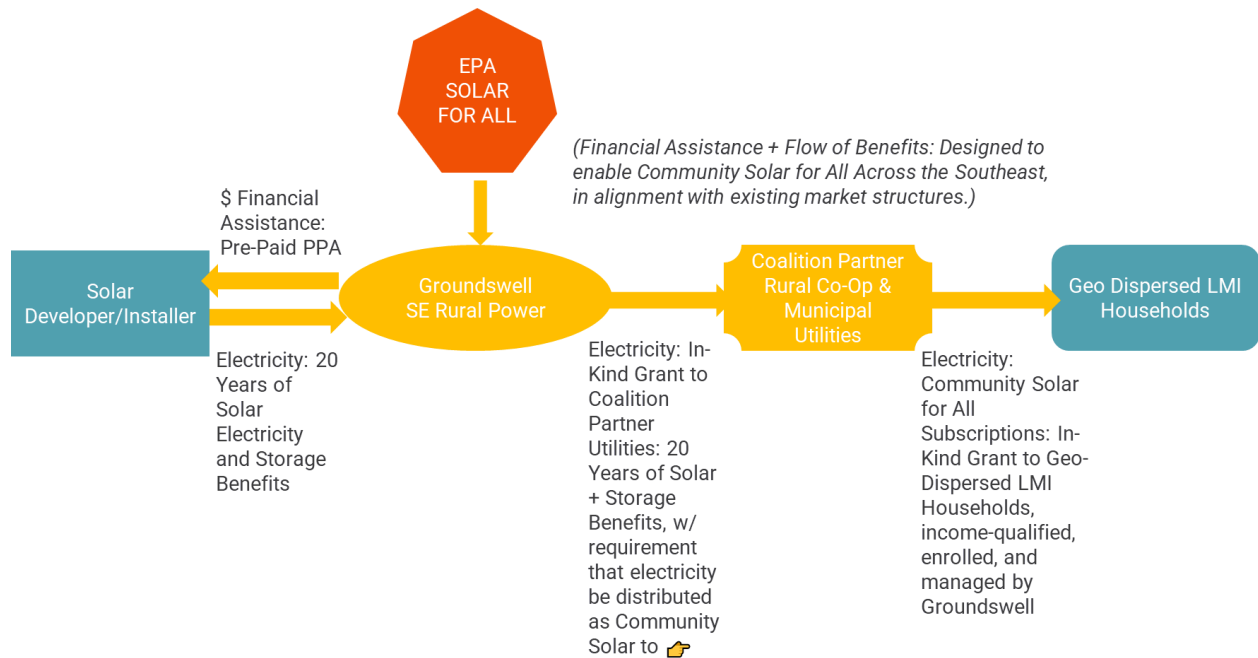
Toward these goals, and working in close collaboration with our local utility partners and in alignment with the market structures of each of the states we serve, Groundswell plans to issue a total of four annual RFPs beginning this summer to pre-purchase 20 years of electricity from qualifying community solar projects to fund project deployment. In conformance with EPA program definitions, qualifying projects must be located in the service territories of coalition partner utilities and be no larger than 5 MW. Qualifying projects may include associated energy storage.

**Groundswell is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to identify developers, installers, and other contractors who are interested in participating in the Southeast Rural Power Solar for All Program.**

This RFI seeks responses from organizations with experience developing, installing, and providing operations and maintenance services for solar energy projects, ideally within the Southeastern region. Responses from organizations with experience working in rural communities and in collaboration with municipal and rural electric cooperative utilities are especially encouraged.

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## INFORMATION REQUESTED

### 1. General Qualifications

- 1.1 Provide a summary of your experience in solar energy project development (200 kW to 5 MW), including location, capacity, initial operation date, utility partner, storage inclusion, and installation type (roof/ground).
- 1.2 Can you provide ongoing operations and maintenance (O&M) services for completed projects?
- 1.3 Please describe how you ensure the long-term performance and reliability of your solar projects, including how you track energy production over time. How do you handle scenarios in which projects you develop produce below expectations?
- 1.4 Do you have experience with federal reporting and compliance requirements, including Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA) and Build America Buy America

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(BABA)?

- 1.5 Are you North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) certified?

## **2. General Information**

- 2.1 Where is your organization incorporated and headquartered? Do you have an office or permanent, operational presence in the Southeast region?
- 2.2 Provide your annual revenue for the past three years and total number of employees.
- 2.3 What is your estimated project timeline for a 1 MW, ground-mounted community solar project from start to completion? How soon could you start?
- 2.4 List key owners, partners, or parent companies associated with your organization.

## **3. Site Location**

- 3.1 Do you have site control, land access agreements, or effective site control for potential development of community solar installations in the Southeast region?
- 3.2 Would you require assistance in identifying, leasing, or acquiring land for development?

## **4. Project Budgeting & Financing**

- 4.1 Provide an indicative project budget for a 1 MW, ground-mounted community solar project that connects to a local distribution grid.
- 4.2 Describe your knowledge and experience with Inflation Reduction Act tax credits, including Elective Pay (Direct Pay).
- 4.3 Do you have existing financing partners for potential projects to be completed in the Southeast?

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## **5. Workforce & Community Development**

- 5.1 Would you be open to co-ownership with local individuals, businesses, or organizations?
- 5.2 Do you anticipate that hiring and retaining workers to advance projects in our target states in the Southeast will present challenges? If yes, please describe.

## **6. Other Considerations**

- 6.1 Please provide any additional information that you consider relevant to Groundswell's implementation of this program, and your suitability as a partner in that effort.
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# **INSTRUCTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR RESPONDENTS**

**RFI Issuance Date:** Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Questions regarding this RFI can be submitted to [SEruralpower@groundswell.org](mailto:SEruralpower@groundswell.org). Groundswell will make best efforts to respond to questions submitted. Early submission of questions increases the chances of response. Responses to any questions by Groundswell will be shared with all RFI respondents.

RFI responses should be submitted electronically to [SEruralpower@groundswell.org](mailto:SEruralpower@groundswell.org), in PDF format, not exceeding ten pages, 12-point font, with "SE Rural Power RFI Response - [Firm Name]" in the email subject line. In addition to answers to the questions listed above, responses should include the name of the firm/respondent, firm/respondent address, primary contact person, email, and phone number.

The planned Request for Proposal related to this RFI is slated to be issued in June 2025.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

This RFI is not a Request for Proposal (RFP); therefore, Groundswell is not accepting solicitations at this time. Groundswell may issue an RFP in the future. Responding to this RFI does not provide any advantage or disadvantage to potential applicants if Groundswell chooses to issue an RFP regarding the subject matter. Any information obtained as a result of this RFI is intended to be used by Groundswell on a non-attribution basis for planning and strategy development. Your response to this notice will be treated as information only. Groundswell will review and consider all responses in its formulation of program strategies. Groundswell will not provide reimbursement for costs incurred in responding to this RFI. Respondents are advised that Groundswell is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information received or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted under this RFI. Responses to this RFI do not bind Groundswell to any further actions related to this topic.

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## **CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION AND DATA PRIVACY**

Pursuant to 10 CFR 1004.11 and Groundswell's Confidentiality and Data Privacy policies, any person submitting information that he or she believes to be confidential and exempt by law from public disclosure should submit via email two well-marked copies: one copy of the document marked "confidential" with all information, including information believed to be confidential, and one copy of the document marked "non-confidential" with the information believed to be confidential deleted. Failure to comply with these marking requirements may result in the disclosure of unmarked information under public records requests or otherwise. Groundswell is not liable for the disclosure or use of unmarked information. Any person submitting information must adhere to all governmental privacy laws and regulations.