



SOUTHEAST RURAL POWER - SOLAR FOR ALL

Request for Proposals (for Solar Development Services)

Issued By: Groundswell (on behalf of the SE Rural Power Coalition)

Issuance Date: Monday, June 30, 2025

Responses Due By: Friday, August 8, 2025, 5 pm ET

June 30, 2025

Contact information - Email: seruralpower@groundswell.org | Website: www.seruralpower.org

RFP OVERVIEW

This Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is designed to solicit proposals/bids from firms/companies with experience designing, building, owning, and providing operations and maintenance (O&M) services for solar photovoltaic (“PV”) installations (“Project Developers”), ideally within the Southeastern region. Proposals from Project Developers with experience working in rural communities and in collaboration with municipal utilities and rural cooperatives are especially encouraged. Proposals should relate to the series of projects outlined in the PROJECT PROFILES/DESCRIPTIONS section below.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND..... 2

GENERAL CONDITIONS..... 3

GENERAL PROPOSAL GUIDELINES..... 5

PROJECT PROFILES/DESCRIPTIONS..... 5

SCOPE OF WORK..... 11

DESIGN GUIDELINES..... 13

PROJECT DEVELOPER RESPONSIBILITIES..... 13

DETAILED PROPOSAL GUIDELINES..... 17

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 upgrades 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 7,800 families in rural, small-town, and urban communities in the Heartland, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast with \$3.9 million in annual 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 households. The coalition includes municipal utilities and rural cooperatives 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 a collection of service territories, with individual projects ranging from 200 kW AC to 5 MW AC.

Toward these goals, and working in close collaboration with our partner utilities and cooperatives, and in alignment with the market and regulatory structures of each of the states we serve, Groundswell plans to issue, at minimum, four RFPs (beginning in summer 2025) to pre-purchase 20 years of electricity from qualifying solar projects. These advance payments will help to fund project deployment, and the completed solar installations will be connected to local distribution grids. Each of the partner utilities/cooperatives has agreed to collaborate with Groundswell to ensure the energy generated is allocated to eligible households. Consistent with EPA program rules, qualifying projects must be located in the service territories of partner utilities/cooperatives and be no larger than 5 MW AC. Qualifying projects may, in certain cases, include associated battery storage.

Groundswell is issuing this RFP to solicit a bid or bids from developers, installers, and other contractors who are interested in participating in the Southeast Rural Power Solar for All Program.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

- a) Each respondent is responsible for reviewing and understanding all terms of this Request for Proposals. Failure to thoroughly examine, request clarification, or respond to all RFP terms may result in disqualification or negatively impact proposal assessment.
- b) Any bid(s) may be withdrawn at any time prior to the RFP response due date/time with a written request signed by the authorized respondent representative. Revised proposals may also be submitted up to the due date/time. Revised proposals should have a file name exactly the same as the original proposal, followed by "(Version [2])".
- c) The issuance of this RFP and receipt of proposals does not commit Groundswell to move forward with an award or complete any project described herein. Groundswell reserves the right to postpone the RFP award process in whole or in part, to accept or reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP, and to modify the scope of a project or projects at any time.
- d) An award under this RFP will not be based solely on the lowest price but will be made to the respondent with the overall best value proposal, taking into account the considerations outlined below. Successful proposals will meet the project site design guidelines and provide a service level acceptable to Groundswell, among other elements.

- e) Upon award, successful respondents shall secure any required licenses not currently possessed, yet required to complete the scope of work included in the RFP.
- f) In the event that there is a pause or a termination with regard to government funding to Groundswell, Groundswell reserves the right to immediately pause or terminate any Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) entered into subsequent to this RFP, at any point prior to the project's end date. In the event of termination, the project developer will be entitled to payment, determined on a pro rata basis, for services satisfactorily performed or, during Milestone 3 (discussed further below), for work product procured and not returnable/reusable, up to the date of termination.

RFP Schedule

The schedule for this RFP is as indicated below. It may be modified at the discretion of Groundswell.

RFP Number: SFA_SERP_Y1_CSP_01

RFP Title: SERP Community Solar Projects_01

Date Issued: June 30, 2025

Deadline for Proposal Submissions: August 8, 2025

Period of Performance: Fall 2025 – NLT Fall 2027 (or as stipulated in the subsequent PPA)

Contracting Entity: Groundswell Inc.

Address: 80 M Street SE, Washington, D.C. 20003

Funded by: EPA - Solar for All Grant

Respondent Questions

Please submit any/all questions regarding this RFP via email to seruralpower@groundswell.org. Responses to questions, if any, will be shared with all prospective bidders, and made available at www.seruralpower.org. Groundswell and/or partner utilities/cooperatives will endeavor to make themselves available during the bid period, if project developers want to conduct additional due diligence in constructing their bids/proposals.

GENERAL PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Bidders must adhere to the following submission instructions:

- **Submission Deadline:** NLT 5 pm ET on August 8, 2025
- **Submission Method:** Email, to seruralpower@groundswell.org
- **Proposal Format:** Proposals must be submitted in PDF format.

Selection Process

Bidders are permitted to bid on one, multiple, or all of the projects profiled below. For each project, Groundswell reserves the right to either select a bidder based solely upon RFP response or shortlist multiple bidders. Shortlisted bidders may be asked to submit additional information and/or meet with Groundswell (and potentially the relevant partner utility/cooperative).

Negotiations

Best offer proposals are requested. Contracts may be awarded solely upon the basis of the original responses received. However, as noted above, Groundswell reserves the right to conduct further discussions, negotiations, and/or request clarifications in written form or via a meeting, prior to awarding a contract. Furthermore, Groundswell reserves the right to establish a competitive threshold and then conduct further discussions, negotiations, and/or request clarifications from bidders with the most highly-rated proposals. Groundswell also reserves the right to make no award(s) at all.

Decisions on awards are expected to be made on a rolling basis during Fall 2025 and announced once they have been made. Given that the projects will vary considerably, including with regard to the partner utility/cooperative, Groundswell will announce project awards as individual project decisions are reached, not as a group.

PROJECT PROFILES/DESCRIPTIONS

SE Rural Power Program grant funds will support community solar installations and associated energy storage projects in eight states in the Southeast - Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.

The community solar projects profiled below are subject to bid in this Year 1 SE Rural Power RFP, in their current form. Partner utilities/cooperatives have specifically indicated their interest in projects scoped with the delineated specifications. With most of the below projects, a potential site location has been pre-identified. However, project developers may also propose projects of a similar size/capacity, within the same service territory, at alternative site locations.

Southeast Rural Power - Solar for All
Request for Proposals
June 30, 2025

These alternative site locations will all be considered, in earnest, by Groundswell and its partner utilities/cooperatives. There may be various reasons that alternative site locations may ultimately prevail in the bidding process. For instance, the land acquisition costs for an alternative location may be lower, reducing the PPA price offered. Or, the alternative site location may be better shielded from a floodplain and have a lower risk profile. Project developers are encouraged to explain, in their bid submission, any/all reasons an alternative site location might be preferable.

In certain circumstances, project developers might also propose projects with different specifications, designed to not only fulfill the needs outlined below, but potentially others as well. For instance, if Groundswell/partner cooperative has requested a 3 MW AC project, a project developer with a behind-the-meter industrial customer with 3 MW AC energy requirements might be able to propose a 6 MW AC project. In such circumstances, Groundswell's PPA would only cover 3 MWs of energy production, but the larger overall project might provide certain benefits to all parties involved. With projects that have an additional offtaker beyond Groundswell, the energy purchased by Groundswell should be at least 50% of the total energy generated. Project developers are encouraged to contact Groundswell during the bid period if there is a unique, alternative project profile they would like to propose.

Alabama

State	Alabama
Utility/Coop Territory	<i>Huntsville Utilities</i>
Size/Capacity	1 MW AC
Battery Storage (Yes/No, w/ size/capacity)	No
Resilience Hub (Yes/No)	No
Site Location	Water Treatment Plant
Site Location (Address/Coordinates)	397 Walker Rd, Grant AL 35747 (LIDAC)
Site Location (City/County)	Grant/Marshall County
Site Location (Available Area)	30 Acres (near highway)
Site Location Cost (Lease)	\$1,000 per month
Distance to Interconnection Point	1,500 Feet
Interconnection Costs (Paperwork, etc.)	\$150,000
Required Enabling Upgrades (if any)	\$75,000 (fencing-related costs)
Mount Option(s)	Ground

Southeast Rural Power - Solar for All
Request for Proposals
June 30, 2025

State	Alabama
Utility/Coop Territory	<i>City of Lanett & Energy Southeast (1)</i>
Size/Capacity	950 kW AC
Battery Storage (Yes/No, w/ size/capacity)	Yes, 200 kW / 800 kWh
Resilience Hub (Yes/No)	Yes (2)
Site Location	Lanett High School
Site Location (Address/Coordinates)	1301 South 8th Ave, Lanett, AL 36863 (LIDAC)
Site Location (City/County)	Lanett/Chambers County
Site Location (Available Area)	1.5 Acre Parking Lot
Site Location Cost (Lease)	TBD
Distance to Interconnection Point	100 Feet
Interconnection Costs	TBD
Required Enabling Upgrades (if any)	TBD via Interconnection Study
Mount Option(s)	Parking Canopy (height: 14 feet) (3)

(1) The behind-the-meter connection to Lanett High School will need to follow the interconnection process of Energy Southeast (Renewable Behind the Meter Generation Program). Please contact Arthur Bishop (art@energysoutheast.com) for Interconnection Documentation.

(2) Energy Southeast is interested in project ownership at a future point in time (after 5 or more years).

(3) Must accommodate normal school bus clearance (14 feet).

Arkansas

State	Arkansas
Utility/Coop Territory	<i>West Memphis Utility Commission</i>
Size/Capacity (AC)	5 MW AC
Battery Storage (Yes/No)	No
Resilience Hub (Yes/No)	No
Site Location	Wastewater Treatment Plant (adjacent parcel)
Site Location (Address/Coordinates)	502 South Loop Rd., West Memphis, AR 72301
Site Location (City/County)	West Memphis/Crittenden County
Site Location (Available Area)	25-30 Acres
Site Location Cost (Lease)	\$0
Distance to Interconnection Point	500 Feet
Interconnection Costs (Paperwork, Equipment, etc.)	\$0

Southeast Rural Power - Solar for All
Request for Proposals
June 30, 2025

Required Enabling Upgrades (if any)	None
Mount Option(s)	TBD

Florida

State	Florida
Utility/Coop Territory	SECO Energy
Size/Capacity (AC)	1.44 MW AC
Battery Storage (Yes/No, w/ Size/Capacity)	Yes, 201.5 kW / 806 kWh
Resilience Hub (Yes/No)	Yes
Site Location	Lake Sumter Community College
Site Location (Address/Coordinates)	1423 Co. Rd 526A, Sumterville, FL 33585
Site Location (City/County)	Sumterville/Sumter
Site Location (Available Area)	7 Acres
Site Location Cost (Lease)	TBD
Distance to Interconnection Point	100 Feet
Interconnection Costs	TBD (minimal upgrades required)
Required Enabling Upgrades (if any)	TBD
Mount Option(s)	Fixed, Single Axis Tracker

Georgia

State	Georgia
Utility/Coop Territory	Fort Valley Utilities
Size/Capacity (AC)	5 MW AC
Battery Storage (Yes/No)	No
Resilience Hub (Yes/No)	No
Site Location	Perry Railroad St.
Site Location (Address/Coordinates)	32°32'10.13"N 83°52'43.527"W
Site Location (City/County)	Fort Valley, GA
Site Location (Available Area)	Roughly 30 Acres

Southeast Rural Power - Solar for All
Request for Proposals
June 30, 2025

Site Location Cost (Lease)	TBD
Distance to Interconnection Point	TBD
Interconnection Costs (Paperwork, Equipment, etc.)	TBD
Required Enabling Upgrades (if any)	TBD
Mount Option(s)	TBD

State	Georgia
<i>Utility/Coop Territory</i>	<i>Lagrange</i>
Size/Capacity (AC)	2 MW AC
Battery Storage (Yes/No)	No
Resilience Hub (Yes/No)	No
Site Location	Water Treatment Plant
Site Location (Address/Coordinates)	980 Cameron Mill Road
Site Location (City/County)	LaGrange, GA
Site Location (Available Area)	31 Acres
Site Location Cost (Lease)	TBD
Distance to Interconnection Point	TBD
Interconnection Costs (Paperwork, Equipment, etc.)	TBD
Required Enabling Upgrades (if any)	TBD
Mount Option(s)	TBD

State	Georgia
<i>Utility/Coop Territory</i>	<i>Fitzgerald Utilities</i>
Size/Capacity (AC)	2 MW AC
Battery Storage (Yes/No)	TBD

Mississippi

State	Mississippi
<i>Utility/Coop Territory</i>	<i>Public Service Commission of Yazoo City</i>
Size/Capacity (AC)	1 MW

Southeast Rural Power - Solar for All
Request for Proposals
June 30, 2025

Battery Storage (Yes/No)	No
Resilience Hub (Yes/No)	No
Site Location	Wastewater Treatment Plant
Site Location (Address/Coordinates)	308 Wastewater Rd., Yazoo City, MS 39194
Site Location (City/County)	Yazoo City
Site Location (Available Area)	122 Acres (near highway)
Site Location Cost (Lease)	TBD
Distance to Interconnection Point	700 Feet
Interconnection Costs (Paperwork, etc.)	\$2,000
Required Enabling Upgrades (if any)	None
Mount Option(s)	Ground

North Carolina

State	North Carolina
Utility/Coop Territory	<i>Roanoke Cooperative</i>
Size/Capacity (AC)	500 kW AC
Battery Storage (Yes/No, w/ size/capacity)	Yes, 500 kW / 1.5 MWh
Resilience Hub (Yes/No)	No
Site Location (Address/Coordinates)	513 Old Merry Hill Rd., Merry Hill, NC (LIDAC)
Site Location (City/County)	Merry Hill/Bertie
Site Location (Available Area)	43 Acres
Site Location Cost (Lease)	Est. \$700-\$800/Acre, per Year
Distance to Interconnection Point	3.5 Miles
Interconnection Costs (Paperwork, Equipment, etc.)	\$355,000
Required Enabling Upgrades (if any)	TBD
Mount Option(s)	Ground-Mount, Fixed or Single-Axis Adjust Tilt

Virginia

State	Virginia
Utility/Coop Territory	<i>Rappahannock Electric Cooperative</i>
Size/Capacity (AC)	5 MW AC
Battery Storage (Yes/No)	Yes, 1 MW / 3 MWh
Resilience Hub (Yes/No)	No
Site Location	Fort Walker (Military Base)
Site Location (Address/Coordinates)	38°05'39.0"N 77°17'43.0"W
Site Location (City/County)	Near Bowling Green/Caroline County
Site Location (Available Area)	94 Acres
Site Location Cost (Lease)	TBD
Distance to Interconnection Point	1,500 Feet
Interconnection Costs (Paperwork, Equipment, etc.)	>= \$50,000 (4)
Required Enabling Upgrades (if any)	TBD
Mount Option(s)	Ground

(4) Includes Feasibility Study, System Impact Study, Facility Study.

SCOPE OF WORK

Groundswell is issuing this RFP to select a project developer or series of project developers to design, build, and provide operations and maintenance (O&M) services for the projects profiled above, or similarly scoped projects at alternative site locations within the same service territory. Project developers may or may not also own or co-own the projects.

Deliverables expected from each project developer, for each project profiled, will include, but are not limited to:

- Design the community solar project, and obtain Groundswell approval of design;
- Purchase, install, and make operational new solar panels and other requisite equipment (inverters, mounting equipment, etc.), at agreed-upon site location;
 - Solar panels/modules must be UL certified. Panels must include a 20-year performance warranty, with no more than 1.0% annual degradation. Panels must be sourced from Tier I manufacturers.

- Inverters must be UL certified, and must include a digital or web-based output display.
- Purchase, install, and make operational associated battery storage at the agreed-upon site location, if applicable;
- For resilience hub sites, purchase, install, and make operational all required equipment to allow PV/BESS system to provide power to the resilience hub site upon grid failure, until the BESS system energy is depleted or grid power returns;
- Obtain required permits and meet regulatory requirements (land use, zoning, interconnection, electrical, easements, etc.) associated with project construction and operations and maintenance;
- Lease or acquire land as needed to execute upon the project plan;
- Provide power to the local distribution grid at expected production levels for 20 years at a fixed, agreed-upon price per kWh (AC);
- Directly or through a third party, provide O&M services, including repairs for 20 years post completion of the project and permission to operate (PTO);
- Make any/all enabling upgrades (such as roof repairs) necessary to complete the solar installation (unless the partner utility/cooperative has to make such upgrades, in which case the project developer will typically be required to provide reimbursement for the costs). Note: As further discussed below, there may be special circumstances in which the cost of enabling upgrades may be covered separately by Groundswell.
- Meet project development milestones on the agreed-upon timeline;
- Reporting Requirements
 - Periodically report to Groundswell on project status, requisite changes to plans, project challenges, etc., in a template form to be provided by Groundswell;
 - Demonstrate compliance with Davis-Bacon (DBRA) requirements;
 - Demonstrate compliance with Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements;
 - Demonstrate compliance with all other EPA-stipulated requirements (as highlighted in the Developer Responsibilities section below, and as fully spelled out in the PPA);

- Provide before, during and after installation photos of site development;
- Demonstrate compliance with state/local codes, rules, and regulations.

Project developers are not responsible for subscriber acquisition or management.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Project developers should consider the following guidelines when responding to the RFP.

- The fixed price per kWh (AC) will be memorialized via a Power Purchase Agreement, based upon the RFP bid price (subject to any subsequent negotiations).
- During project development and operations, Groundswell, its partner utilities/cooperatives, and agents acting on behalf of Groundswell will monitor the quality of work and project operations, including through site visits.
- Project developer will submit periodic progress reports, change order notifications (if any), and periodic financial reports. Periodic reports will be due at a frequency determined in the PPA. Groundswell will provide template report formats, yet is also open to considering pre-existing report formats used by project developers, as long as key information is included.
- Project developer will be required to attend monthly check-in calls with Groundswell in the period prior to PTO. Groundswell may waive this requirement for certain months.
- Project developer will submit a final financial and project summary report, within six months of PTO. Groundswell will provide template final report formats.

PROJECT DEVELOPER RESPONSIBILITIES

The final Power Purchase Agreement and related documents between Groundswell and the project developer will include, but not be limited to, the following project details and associated requirements. However, all such elements are not required at the bid stage. Please reference the *DETAILED PROPOSAL GUIDELINES* section for specific bid submission requirements.

General

- Project developer will provide a full description of the project and project plan.
- Project developer will provide a comprehensive safety plan.
- Project developer will provide a comprehensive quality control plan.
- Project developer will provide operations and maintenance manuals and/or guidebooks for system operations and performance monitoring over the life of the project.
- Project developer will promptly notify Groundswell of any expected changes in project ownership, and work with Groundswell to ensure that all obligations/responsibilities appropriately transfer.

Licenses/Permits

- Project developer will possess valid licenses required to perform the work.
- Project developer will secure and pay for all permits, governmental fees, and inspections necessary for the proper completion of the work and operation of the project. These costs are presumed to be embedded in the project developer's bid price.

Warranties/Certifications

- Project developer must provide warranties for construction work, products, and equipment provided for the project(s) prior to final milestone payment.
- Project developer will extend to Groundswell and project owner (if the project developer is not the owner) all manufacturers' warranties for material and equipment installed. These warranties will not in any way limit project developer's other obligations.
- Project developer will register all warranties, including parts and systems, on behalf of the project owner.
- Project developer will manage all warranty contracts as part of O&M services.

Davis-Bacon Requirements

- Project developer will comply with Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA) and submit certified payroll reports/submissions each week, on its own behalf and for any subcontractors. That submission will include a Signed Statement of Compliance. Project developer may use Form WH-347 for such purposes. These reports will be reviewed on the basis of locality, type of work, and class of laborers or mechanics. Project developer may be required to submit to on-site worker interviews. For further information on DBRA requirements, see [Contract Provisions for Davis-Bacon and Related Acts | US EPA](#).

Build America, Buy America (BABA) Requirements

- Project developer will comply with Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements, and ensure that manufactured products are both (a) manufactured in the United States and (b) the cost of components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States are greater than 55 percent of the total costs of all the components of the manufactured product. Project developers will be expected to submit self-attestation statements, with appropriate levels of detail, related to their products, equipment, etc.

Foreign Entity of Concern

- Project developer will represent, warrant and covenant that it and its subcontractors are not (i) an entity owned by, controlled by, or subject to the direction of a government of a covered nation under 10 U.S.C. 4872(d); (ii) an entity headquartered in a covered nation under 10 U.S.C. 4872(d); or (iii) a subsidiary of an entity in (i) or (ii).

Debarment

- Project developer will represent, warrant, and covenant that neither it nor any of its subcontractors are debarred entities, per the System for Award Management database at [SAM.gov](#).

Performance Bonds/Insurance Requirements

- Project developer will likely be required to provide a performance bond, payable to Groundswell, for 100 percent of the cumulative PPA total price to ensure the timely fulfillment of the developer's obligations under the pre-paid PPA. That performance bond will need to be provided and maintained at the total price amount until Permission To

Operate (PTO) has been granted. After PTO, the performance bond amount may be reduced on an annual basis by the percentage amount of the total contracted energy that has already been provided to Groundswell.

- Project developer will maintain current and appropriate minimum business insurance, including liability insurance, workers' compensation insurance, and commercial vehicle insurance.
 - General liability: \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 aggregate;
 - Workers' compensation, if required: \$1,000,000 for each accident, each employee, policy limit;
 - Automobile liability: bodily injury, death, and property damage combined single limits of at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence, covering vehicles owned, hired, or non-owned;
 - Professional liability at appropriate levels if the project developer is also designing systems;

In the event any insurance coverage is ended, notice of cancellation of insurance will be required.

Other EPA Requirements

- Project developer will represent, warrant and covenant that all costs included in its proposal are allowable, allocable, and reasonable under 2 CFR 200.403-405. All cost elements must be justified, well-documented, and aligned with the requirements of the grant. Non-compliance may result in cost disallowances, funding reductions, or other administrative actions.
- Project developer will disclose any conflicts of interest and/or any potential violations of law that occur during its execution of a contract entered into with Groundswell, or during any other engagement related to the SE Rural Power Program, consistent with 2 CFR 200.113. Such information will be disclosed to Groundswell, or to the Environmental Protection Agency, if the matter involves Groundswell and reporting to Groundswell would be inappropriate under the circumstances.
- Project developer will comply with all [other EPA requirements](#), including but not limited to nondiscrimination requirements, Clean Air Act and Federal Water Pollution Control Act requirements, anti-lobbying, election activity and litigation requirements, floodplain

management, etc. Further detail on the abovementioned requirements will be included in the PPA.

DETAILED PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Please provide any/all bids on an abovementioned project or projects in electronic format via email to seruralpower@groundswell.org by NLT 5:00 pm ET on August 8, 2025.

Proposal Format

Please include the following sections and information in your proposal submission in the following order.

- **Cover letter:** Cover letter must be addressed to the SE Rural Power Program Team and signed by a legally authorized representative of the respondent. The cover letter should highlight key provisions of the proposal and must include the name, address, phone, and email address of a single, primary respondent contact.
- **Executive Summary:** Summarize key provisions of the proposal, such as the respondent's price per kWh AC (with and without associated battery storage), roles carried out directly by the respondent vs. through partners/subcontractors, key equipment/components to be used in the installation, the core components of the project capital stack, key timeline dates (from contract signature to Permission to Operate (PTO)).
- **Price Proposal:** Price per kWh AC, *fixed* for the entire 20-year period of performance. Please provide your best, most competitive PPA price, with and without battery storage (if applicable). Payment for the 20 years of energy will be made at designated milestones between contract signature and PTO (explained further below). The pre-paid nature of the PPA payments should be reflected in bids/proposals.
 - The proposal should include a complete and detailed cost breakdown (development costs, EPC costs, interconnection costs, various soft costs, etc.). When preparing the budget, please ensure that all costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable under federal regulations (2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500) and EPA-specific guidelines, including Davis Bacon and Related Acts requirements. If you have any questions about allowability or specific cost items, please reach out during the proposal period. Proposals without both a complete and detailed cost breakdown may be considered non-responsive.

- o The proposal should also include a breakdown of the project developer's expected capital stack, highlighting the portion of costs to be covered via PPA payments, the portion covered by tax credits (including bonus credits), and the portion covered by various forms of private capital (equity, debt, etc.). For the private capital elements, details on the capital providers should be provided, along with an assessment/evidence of how secure/firm the capital source is. Proposals without both a complete and detailed capital stack breakdown may be considered non-responsive.
 - o Please provide a rate/wage sheet for the workers and/or types of workers that will work on the project in the proposal.
 - o The proposal should also outline the process for change orders, including company policies, any requirements, and potential risks. Groundswell needs to know the circumstances, if any, in which the PPA price quoted might change.
- **Company Profile:** Years in business, headquarters location, other office locations, key licenses/certifications, etc.
- **Project Experience:** Include projects completed in the last 5 years similar in scope and size to the proposed projects (200 kW AC - 5 MW AC). Include system size/capacity, location, battery storage inclusion (yes/no) and size/capacity, utility/cooperative service territory, installation type (rooftop, ground, etc.), racking style.
 - o **References:** Provide references from three previously completed projects (200 kW AC - 5 MW AC), with customer name, phone number, and email address.
- **Project Team:** Principal point of contact (project manager), and key support staff, if awarded project(s).
- **Basic Technical Details:** Describe basic, expected technical details for the project, including:
 - o Equipment, components to be used (e.g., solar panel tier, type)
 - o Operations & maintenance plan (e.g., frequency and type of service; on-site visit response time)
- **Expected Annual Energy Produced:** Specify the total kWh energy production expectation on an annual basis, along with the expected degradation by year from Year 1 to Year 20.

- o Please note whether the project developer will provide a Performance Guarantee (Yes/No), and if not, describe the recourse that Groundswell will have if the system substantially underperforms.
 - o For projects with battery storage, please note whether the project developer will provide Availability Guarantees (Yes/No) and/or Capacity Guarantees (Yes/No).
- **Enabling Upgrades (if applicable):** Please describe, if known, any enabling upgrades that will be required in order to complete or optimize the project, and that are factored into the PPA price. EPA generally defines “Enabling Upgrades” as investments in energy or building infrastructure that are necessary to deploy and/or maximize the benefits of residential-serving community solar projects (electrical system upgrades, structural building repairs, etc.). Please specifically delineate the cost associated with such enabling upgrades, and whether you want to apply for the designated funding that is available to cover qualifying enabling upgrades. If so, please ensure that you also provide a modified, reduced PPA price that would apply, if the costs associated with enabling upgrades were separately covered by Groundswell.
- **Project Ownership:** Identify the expected equity owner(s) of the project, including whether any local entities will own a percentage of the project (and if so, what percentage). If there is to be a co-ownership structure, please provide the percentage ownership levels of the co-owners. If the project developer’s plan is to own the project, please indicate whether the developer would be open to co-ownership with another entity, or to transferring ownership at some point post PTO.
- **Local Hires/Apprenticeships:** Please describe the number, types and employment duration of locally sourced employees and/or paid apprentices, if any, to which the project developer is willing to commit to hire. Local hires would include any employee or trainee who lives within the service territory of the relevant utility/cooperative.
- **Site Location (if distinct from pre-identified site location)** – Please provide all key details on your proposed site location, if different from the pre-identified site location provided above, including proof of site control (written contract, option, etc.), address/coordinates, lease/acquisition costs associated with the site, etc. Information should be similar in kind, scope, detail as that provided above for pre-identified sites.

Please also note whether there will be additional off-takers of energy, besides Groundswell, and whether that additional off-taker(s) will use solar and associated battery storage to establish a “resilience hub.” Groundswell may prioritize projects that facilitate the development of resilience hubs, given the collateral benefits such hubs

bring to affected communities. In addition, please note the annual expected energy to be used by the additional off-taker(s).

- **Dual-Use of Property (e.g., agrivoltaics):** If a proposed site location is different from the pre-identified site location provided above, please describe any additional, concurrent uses for the site that has been proposed (e.g., plans to concurrently engage in commercial agricultural activities). Groundswell may prioritize projects that leverage land in multiple ways.
- **Safety:** Please include a brief description of the safety practices/protocols for your organization that would be applicable to the project. The safety protocols should relate to your employees and/or contractors, as well as any non-affiliated individuals who may be in the area of the construction work.
- **Proposed Schedule:** Please provide an expected timeline for your work on the project, identifying key project milestones (including design completion, interconnection application submitted, construction materials acquired, project substantially completed, etc.). Please indicate any penalties applicable if the project developer fails to perform by the dates outlined.

Pricing and Payment Terms

The PPA will be a fixed-price per kWh AC contract, and Groundswell would prefer a production guarantee associated with that price per kWh. The purchase of energy will be pre-paid, and the contracted payments will be transferred between the time of contract signature and PTO. Given that the contract payments are pre-paid, please indicate any penalties that will be applicable if production/performance expectations are not met. The following terms will be applicable:

- **Milestone Payment Schedule:** Payments will be made upon completion of the following milestones:

Milestone 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Contract signed● Project development timeline set● Site control secured/documented● Notice to proceed from the utility/cooperative	10% of total payment
Milestone 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Project design completed● Letters of funding commitment secured● Interconnection application submitted	25% of total payment

Southeast Rural Power - Solar for All
Request for Proposals
June 30, 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit applications submitted • Engineering documents stamped 	
Milestone 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction materials acquired • Permit applications approved 	40% of total payment
Final Milestone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project substantially completed • Interconnection completed • Final inspections completed • Permission to operate (PTO) granted 	25% of total payment

Evaluation/Selection Criteria:

The Groundswell Selection Committee intends to evaluate proposals according to the evaluation criteria set forth below. For each project, the result of this process will be the identification/selection of a proposal(s) upon which to negotiate a power purchase agreement. Points will be awarded to proposals based on the merit of the information provided in the response to the solicitation. Failure to provide certain information will generally result in a failure to be awarded the relevant points associated with that criteria. Selection is based on the total number of points awarded by the Groundswell Selection Committee.

Financial Factors (price per kWh AC; secured financing commitments; insurance coverage; etc.)	40 points
Experience/Expertise Factors (prior projects of similar size/scale; prior experience in region; prior experience with municipal utilities/rural cooperatives; positive references; ability to directly execute upon all required functions; etc.)	20 points
Technical Factors (projected annual kWh output; contract protections related to energy production; equipment/component quality; equipment/component warranties; etc.)	40 points
Community Development Factors (regional/local presence of project developer; local hiring plans/commitments; resilience hub inclusion; community ownership; broader benefits to low-income communities; etc.)	25 points
Program/Project Prioritization Factors (project development timeline; proposal completeness and	20 points

clarity; robust engagement with Groundswell and partner utility/cooperative; etc.)	
Other Factors (land/property dual use; use of brownfield land; etc.)	5 points

Groundswell may elect to conduct interviews with high-scoring respondents to ask additional questions or solicit more details related to the proposed project. Groundswell reserves the right to seek supplemental information from any respondent at any time after the official proposal opening and before the award. This will be limited to clarifications or additional detail on information included in the original proposal. Upon acceptance of a proposal and declaration of intent to award, the successful respondent will be required to work expeditiously with Groundswell to execute a PPA, and commence construction. Should the selected firm fail or refuse to execute upon the project documents expeditiously, Groundswell reserves the right to accept the proposal of the firm offering the next best value to Groundswell.

Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)

Groundswell will maintain the right to control all RECs and other environmental attributes associated with the energy generated by the abovementioned projects. This includes, but is not limited to, RECs created under applicable voluntary or compliance market frameworks.

Selected project developers will not claim, sell, transfer, or otherwise monetize any RECs or related environmental benefits generated by the abovementioned projects, unless pursuant to explicit, written agreement with Groundswell.

Failure to comply may result in contract termination or other remedies as to be specified in the subsequent power purchase agreement.

Confidentiality:

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.