



Request for Proposals (RFP): RFP_SFA_005
Solar for All Strategic Communications RFP

Milestone	Date
RFP launch date	May 29, 2025
Questions Due	June 5, 2025, by 11:59pm Eastern Time
Answers Posted	June 12, 2025
<u>Proposals Due</u>	July 1, 2025, by 11:59pm Eastern Time
<u>Selection Notifications</u>	July 7, 2025

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BACKGROUND

On April 22, 2024, *EnergizeNC*, North Carolina's Solar for All (SFA) coalition, was selected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for \$156 million in funding through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF). The coalition is led by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's State Energy Office, in collaboration with the North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center, North Carolina Clean Energy Fund, and Advanced Energy. After a planning and design period, the *EnergizeNC* coalition anticipates launching a program in late 2025 to transform solar energy growth statewide, enabling the rapid deployment of distributed solar and associated storage with meaningful benefits to low-income and rural communities across the state.

Our mission at NCCEF is to accelerate investment in clean and efficient energy solutions and increase climate resilience in North Carolina, particularly to the benefit of underserved populations. We partner with public and private investors, foundations and other non-profit organizations to deploy sustainable financing solutions that will create long-lasting environmental, economic and social benefits.

RFP PURPOSE

The EnergizeNC Coalition seeks proposals from qualified vendors to provide strategic communications support for EnergizeNC, North Carolina's Solar for All program. The selected consultant will work closely with EnergizeNC leadership and program staff during EnergizeNC's planning phase (anticipated to last through late 2025). The primary goal of this engagement is to develop a robust and actionable communications plan for the first year of the five-year program.

To be considered, proposals must be submitted by the deadline of 11:59pm Eastern Time on July 1, 2025. This is a strict deadline. No proposals will be accepted after this deadline.

SCOPE OF WORK

Timeline

NCCEF will establish a timeline for the project upon selection of a vendor.

Core Responsibilities

We anticipate responsibilities to include:

- **Content Development:** Develop clear, concise, and engaging consumer-facing content for EnergizeNC's "One Stop Shop" Portal. The Portal will be a user-friendly centralized platform that will serve as a statewide comprehensive resource center for consumers seeking energy information and financial assistance as well as contractors or other relevant stakeholders interested in participating in state and federal programs. The Portal will serve as an educational hub that provides information about all programs that could

be used to bring down energy costs for a household. The Portal will integrate with an income qualification tool (in development, separate from this RFP) to provide an accurate eligibility screen and direct users to the programs that best fit their needs. Content for the Portal must be engaging, digestible, and actionable for different user groups.

- **Strategic Communications Planning:** Develop a comprehensive communications plan for the first year of the program. This plan should include key messages, clear objectives, and an outline of specific communication tactics (including emails, webinars and in-person events) to achieve the objectives. The plan should also define metrics for success.
- **Identification of Tactics for Optimal Engagement:** Develop messaging and engagement strategies that will encourage trust and robust engagement from communities not often participating in public feedback events. Tactics should include approaches for reaching individuals who are mobile-first and have limited internet connection.
- **Storytelling Strategy Development:** Develop a strategy to identify, collect, and share powerful stories about the impact of the Program. These stories should be from locations across the state and include:
 - Testimonials from program participants;
 - Testimonials from households with high energy burdens;
 - Stories from individuals who rent their home; and
 - How these projects are advancing state and federal priorities.
- **Risk Communications Framework:** Develop a basic framework for addressing potential communication challenges, perceived barriers, or crises related to the program.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Respondents to this RFP are required to provide the following information:

- Cover Page
- Experience & Qualifications
- Overview of Features & Benefits
- Estimated Timeline for Delivery of Features and Benefits
- Key Staff Resumes
- Cost Proposal

COMPENSATION

Compensation will be determined through a competitive bidding process. Payments will be made upon an agreed upon schedule and will be aligned with the federal grant drawdown schedule. Vendors must submit invoices detailing completed work, which will be reviewed and approved prior to disbursement. Payment will be contingent upon compliance with federal grant requirements and availability of funds within the grant disbursement cycle. Bidders should clearly present their pricing (e.g., line-item pricing, hourly rates, and total project cost) to ensure transparency and facilitate the appropriate allocation of funds. Pricing for nonprofit rates is welcomed.

- Preference in scoring cost will be given to responders whose proposal does not exceed \$75,000.
- NCCEF may modify the scope of work or add related tasks, provided changes are appropriately documented and priced, without reissuing a new RFP. The selected vendor must allow for federal audits, maintain records for at least 3 years, and participate in EPA reporting as required.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposal Evaluation Process: All submitted proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee comprised of subject matter experts and/or, procurement professionals and/or, and key stakeholders involved in the *EnergizeNC* Coalition. The evaluation will be based on a set of predefined criteria located within the bid matrix below. The committee reserves the right to request additional information, conduct interviews, or seek clarifications as needed. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria and will be consistently evaluated and scored based on the following factors and relative weights:

Factor	Points Available	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Vendor 4
Experience & Qualifications	15				
Experience with Solar for All	20				
Proposal is Responsive to Needs Expressed in RFP	20				
Proposed Timeline for Delivery	15				
Cost	30				
Total	100				

QUESTIONS

All questions regarding this solicitation shall be submitted to RFP_SFA_005@nccleanenergyfund.org with the subject line “Solar for All Strategic Communications RFP_SFA_005 Questions” by June 5, 2025, at 11:59pm Eastern Time. NCCEF targets posting a way to obtain all questions and answers on its website <https://energizenc.com/> on June 12, 2025.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Submit your proposal electronically to RFP_SFA_005@nccleanenergyfund.org with the subject line “Solar for All Strategic Communications RFP_SFA_005” no later than 11:59pm Eastern Time

on July 1, 2025. Responses must be provided as attachments to an email. It is recommended that attachments with file sizes exceeding 25MB be compressed (i.e., zipped) to ensure message delivery. Late submissions will not be considered. Only electronic responses will be accepted. NCCEF will not respond to individual submissions or publish publicly a compendium of responses. A response to this RFP will not be viewed as a binding commitment to develop or pursue the project or ideas discussed.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- NCCEF reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, and to negotiate with any respondent. All materials submitted as part of the proposal become the property of NCCEF and may be used as deemed necessary. The selected vendor(s) will enter into a formal contract with NCCEF before commencement of any Solar for All activities.
- Compliance with Federal and EPA Requirements: All work performed under this RFP shall comply with applicable federal regulations, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) General Terms and Conditions for Assistance Agreements and the requirements of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) Solar for All program. Contractors must adhere to the provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Guidance), including procurement standards, conflict of interest policies, records retention, and allowable costs.
- NCCEF reserves the right to make multiple awards under this Request for Proposal if doing so is determined to be in the best interest of the organization.

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