



# Request for Proposals (RFP)

**For the Installation of Residential and Small Business Solar PV Systems in  
Solarize Group Purchasing Programs**

Date of Issue: Friday January 15, 2016

Proposal Due Date: Thursday February 4, 2016

Issued by:  
Solarize Hudson Valley,  
a program of Catskill Mountainkeeper  
and Sustainable Hudson Valley.

Contact: John Wackman, Program Manager  
jwackman.solarize@gmail.com

## Solarize Hudson Valley Overview

Solarize Hudson Valley is a community solar initiative focused on facilitating a significant and sustained increase in the rate of solar electric adoption by homeowners and small businesses in the Hudson Valley of New York State.

Solarize campaigns work to overcome market barriers through consumer education, well-publicized community events and neighbor-to-neighbor marketing. Specifically, the program will reach its goals by simplifying the purchase process, building consumer confidence and discounting system costs for a limited time through a reduction in the soft costs of customer acquisition for installers.

Solarize Hudson Valley is a program of Catskill Mountainkeeper and Sustainable Hudson Valley, which are organized as private not-for-profit corporations in New York State. Solarize Hudson Valley is supported by NYSERDA through the Cleaner, Greener Communities program.

## Hub Communities: Ulster, Dutchess and Rockland Counties

This RFP is issued for our 2016 Community Campaigns launching the first week of March.

Our “Hub Communities” are:

Saugerties (Ulster County)

Northern Dutchess Alliance (Dutchess County)

Nyack (Rockland County)

“Hub Communities” are the host communities for this 3 county campaign.

All residents of Ulster, Dutchess and Rockland Counties are eligible for the benefits of this campaign. Most community events will be held in the Hub Communities.

For this RFP, we ask firms to specify which Communities/Service Areas they wish to work in.

**New in 2016: For each service area we will select one or two installers for Residential customers and one designated Commercial installer. Within each campaign, you may apply for either or both the residential and commercial side. We reserve the right to limit an installer’s participation based on our analysis of capacity.**

Solarize Hudson Valley serves businesses as well as residential customers. Our intention in 2016-2017 is to scale up commercial outreach and use business partners as very visible anchors for campaign events, case studies, and publicity. We seek commercial installer partners who have demonstrated capacity with larger installations and commercial clients in particular. We welcome creative outreach proposals such as working with entire commercial districts and/or business associations as a group. Commercial financing resources are key.

We will also consider designating an “Installer-at-Large” who could assure us coverage in all three counties outside the Hub Communities, and in areas served in 2015 but without active campaigns in 2016 (i.e., Orange County). A firm wishing to play this role would need to make a significant commitment to staffing and customer follow-through. Please call Program Manager John Wackman to discuss further.

Start date: March 1, 2016

Registration Deadline: June 30, 2016

Contract Deadline: July 31, 2016

### Program Timeline for 2016, Campaign Wave #3

Friday January 15	RFP for 2016 Campaign Wave #3 issued
January 25	Installer questions due
Thursday February 4	RFP Due
February 8 - 10	Installer Interviews
February 11	Installer Selection announced
March 1 - 8	Press Events & 1st Community Workshops
March - June	Marketing, Public Events, and Enrollment
June 30`	Registration Deadline
July 31	Contract Signing Deadline

During the marketing and sales period of 4 months, (March - June 2016), the Hub Communities will each host up to 6 community workshops, a “solar home tour” for each Installer Partner and hopefully one “live solar installation” in each county. Workshops are the primary opportunity for customer registrations. Each participating Installer must schedule 2 staff for the first event, and at least one staff member for all subsequent events.

### Snapshots of our “Hub Communities”

**SAUGERTIES** Bordering the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains, the Town of Saugerties, a Climate Smart Community, is a 68 square-mile area with a population of approximately 19,500. The town adopted an Open Space Plan in 2010 with a goal “to minimize the impact of climate change...” and strategies to implement the goal. One-hundred and sixty-six permits for solar have been issued in the town and twenty-two permits in the Village of Saugerties. Permits are

obtained through the Town Planning Department. The building inspector adheres to the NYS Building Code. Applicants are required to obtain a standard building permit and proceed through the regular building-permitting application process that includes, but not limited to, site analysis, electrical specifications, roof carrying load, etc. There are no Architectural Review Board approvals required by the town. There is a separate permitting process for village permits. The Town Board is considering a Net –Metering Credit Purchase Agreement to provide solar energy for municipal buildings

An eight-member Solarize Saugerties Team was formed in October 2015. Following another presentation to the Town Board, Solarize Saugerties received the unanimous support of the Town Board, with letters of support from the Economic Development Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, the Conservation Advisory Commission, Sustainable Saugerties, and the Esopus Creek Conservancy.

Outreach efforts to inform and engage the community have begun with three recent articles about solar in the local newspaper, letters to the editor, a Solarize Saugerties Facebook page, and videotaping of the SHV informational session airing on the town’s local cable access station. Solar ambassadors are being identified and going forward, the team intends to conduct a multi-media outreach campaign including: workshops, tabling at community events, solar display at local bookstore, solar display at the library, press releases, letters to the editor, monthly column in the *Saugerties Times*, Kingston Community Radio, Facebook, e-mail lists, local cable access, print materials, webpage on town’s site, webpage on Solarize Hudson Valley site, word of mouth.

*Prepared by: Mary O’Donnell, sustainablesaugerties@gmail.com*

**NORTHERN DUTCHESS ALLIANCE** Founded in 2000, Northern Dutchess Alliance aims to create a broad-based and inclusive institutional structure for regional cooperation and economic development throughout Northern Dutchess County with a public process that will lead to the implementation of the goals, ideas and policies established by the members of Northern Dutchess Alliance.

Current members include many of the Towns, Villages, School Districts, Chambers of Commerce and other business associations of **Clinton, Hyde Park, Milan, Pleasant Valley, Red Hook/Tivoli, Rhinebeck, Stanford**, as well as organizations such as BARD COLLEGE, DUTCHESS LAND CONSERVANCY, OMEGA INSTITUTE, SCENIC HUDSON, and WINNAKEE LAND TRUST.

The core Northern Dutchess communities are nestled on the banks of the Hudson River; over 60,000 community members live and work in a blend of home town main street America, educational & healthcare institutions, weekend homes, farms, orchards and historic properties. Our commercial and civic hubs are connected by Route 9.

**Rhinebeck** A thriving community of over 10,000 people, is proud to be participating in Solarize Northern Dutchess. Renowned for being the home of the Dutchess County fairgrounds, many delicious restaurants, an engaged and vibrant community, and a bucolic, walkable downtown filled with locally owned businesses. Rhinebeck is ideally situated to function as a central hub

for the campaign. There are nearly 80 solar installations in the village and town of Rhinebeck. The Town, which became a proud Climate Smart Community in 2014, will support Solarize Northern Dutchess with access to public meeting rooms and presence at town events. Educational outreach workshops will be promoted by the Town of Rhinebeck Conservation Advisory Board, the schools, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Rhinebeck & Rhinecliff Libraries.

The **Town of Red Hook**, like neighboring Rhinebeck, has already challenged the community to get engaged with sustainability, and the carpet has been rolled out for solar. The trust and connections among the community members are strong. The vibrant **Village of Red Hook** is in the heart of the Town and the home to a diverse set of people who share open attitudes to all things home grown, including solar. They pride themselves on the walkability of our community, avidly recycle, highlight new tree plantings and solar rooftops, install artistic bike racks, and most recently, were successful in incorporating an EV charging station as part of a new retail parking lot. The eclectic **Village of Tivoli** has an impressive adoption of solar of over 7%. Tiny **Milan** is like many towns in New York, with no cities, villages or hamlets within its borders, and very little commercial activity. But what Milan lacks in population, it more than makes up for in solar enthusiasm. The Town Garage is already powered by solar energy, and by the end of this year the Town Hall will be as well - making Milan government virtually 100% solar powered. **Hyde Park** and **Pleasant Valley** round out the 7 members of the consortium with dedicated leadership to the Solarize program.

**Hyde Park** is located in the western portion of Dutchess County and has over 22,000 residents. The town is home to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Eleanor Roosevelt's residence at Val-Kill, the Vanderbilt mansion, the Ogden Mill's estate, as well as the Culinary Institute of America. Hyde Park also boasts rich natural resources and has identified three critical environmental areas for species and habitat protection. In 2015, Hyde Park passed the Climate Smart Community pledge thus participation in the Solarize campaign further builds upon the town's interest in sustainability and energy efficiency. The conservation advisory committee is pleased to partner with the Town Board, the Hyde Park Central School District, the Staatsburg library, and others to promote and deepen solar use in the town.

*Prepared by Laurie Husted, Chair, Town of Red Hook Conservation Advisory Council;  
Sustainability Manager, Bard College*

**NYACK** Though Nyack is a small place, with just 7,000 residents, it plays a significant role in the region. The Village boasts a compact, walkable and vibrant downtown that attracts people from well beyond its borders, giving it a well-deserved reputation as a destination for shopping, eating and entertainment. Over the past four years Nyack has made strides in a planning and promoting sustainability and has taken a leadership role in these efforts among communities in Rockland. According to the Village of Nyack Sustainability Action Plan, 2016 is the year for Nyack to conduct significant community outreach on energy efficiency and alternative energy. There are currently 20 residential solar installations in Nyack and no commercial ones, although the commercial district has many buildings with flat roofs that would be good candidates.

The Village of Nyack, the Nyack Chamber of Commerce, the Nyack Arts and Antiques Association, the Nyack Arts Collective and the Friends of the Nyacks add up to a talented and creative community with design capacity and promotion experience. The core team for the Solarize campaign includes members of the PTA, Boy Scouts and the business community and will be coordinated by the Village's Sustainability Coordinator, who manages the Sustainability Desk at Village Hall. The Village of Nyack Board of Trustees enthusiastically support the Solarize project and are committed to assisting in a broad and deep outreach effort.

*Prepared by Marcy Denker, Sustainability Coordinator, Village of Nyack*

## **Process for Solar PV Installation Firms**

To participate in this program, a company must:

1. Be pre-qualified by NYSERDA. Details for attaining this pre-qualification are outlined in our RFQ.
2. Respond to the Solarize Hudson Valley Request for Qualifications (RFQ). This document is available for download at <http://solarize-hudsonvalley.org>. For more information or assistance, contact John Wackman, the Project Manager.
1. Have their Statement of Qualifications reviewed and accepted. Firms that meet the requirements of the program are included in the pool of Installation Partners and are eligible to submit a proposal for any of the successive "community campaign waves" as they are announced.
2. Be selective in the proposals you submit. Choose the localities and timing that make the best business sense for you.
3. The completed proposals will be scored by Solarize Hudson Valley staff and by representatives from the specified communities.
4. Commercial Installers must be trained in PACE Financing through the Energy Investment Corporation's Energize NY program. (Note: this is not a requirement for Rockland County).
5. Interviews will be scheduled and conducted with the top-scoring solar PV installation firms.
6. The goal of each specific RFP is to identify the firms that will provide the best fit for the particular communities and that will, in combination, be able to meet our campaign goals.
7. No one firm will be selected for all the campaign waves.

## **Summary of Requirements for Participating in Solarize Hudson Valley:**

Proposing firms must respond to each section of this Request for Proposals to outline their ability to meet the unique requirements of a Solarize program. Please note carefully the following:

- Firms will specify whether they are applying as installer for Residential or Commercial customers.
- Firms must have at least one NABCEP Certified Installation Professional and one NYSERDA eligible PON 2112 installer on their team. Note, we also accept UL or IBEW certification.
- Offer roof-mounted and ground-mount/pole-mount systems. Each Installer Partner is not required to offer both, but the Program as a whole must have both options, and proposals that facilitate this will be looked upon favorably.
- Installer Partners are not required to offer both a purchase option and a lease option, however, the Program as a whole must have both options, and proposals that facilitate this will be looked upon favorably.
- Maintain at least \$1 million in general liability insurance coverage, and also demonstrate that any and all sub-contractors they use have coverage as well.
- Be compliant with, and staff- trained in all applicable OSHA requirements.
- Adhere to the Solarize Hudson Valley’s Minimum Best Practice Installation Standards and Business Ethics/Customer Service Standards.
- Commit to having a tabletop/ floor exhibit and at least one staff person on hand for all of our community events. These are the primary opportunities for customers to register for a free site assessment.
- Firms will offer competitive discount-pricing, quoted as cost per installed watt (before incentives). Subject to NYSERDA review, this may be Tiered pricing or Base Pricing. The tiered pricing structure motivates community participation and drives sales, since all signed contracts qualify for the lowest price achieved at the end of the campaign.
- Note that each Partner firm’s Solarize pricing and equipment specifications (modules, inverters and racking) will be public information, available as handouts at all community events, and on the Solarize Hudson Valley website.
- Firms will indicate in their proposal the number of residential/commercial installations they want to, or are able to, provide for this campaign, i.e., their “capacity.”
- For each Customer contract, the Installer Partners will be responsible for securing all required permits, completing and submitting the NYSERDA incentive application, completing the net-metering agreement with the utility, and scheduling and passing all jurisdictional inspections.
- Commit to entering your customer lead information and progress updates into an excel platform we provide.
- Accept the terms included with this RFP as part of your future agreement with Solarize Hudson Valley and with the Customers you acquire through the program. A Memorandum Of Understanding will be executed between Solarize Hudson Valley and each participating firm before the campaign commences. SHV reserves the right to negotiate the final MOU in the best interests of the program and the public.

## Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Please submit answers to the questions below. Narrative answers or bullet point responses are both acceptable. Please consider this document to be a companion of the

more detailed RFQ that was required as qualification for participation.

Submittals will be scored based on the following weighted criteria:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Points</b>
I. Cover Letter	0
II. Table of Contents	0
III. Proximity and business timing: Projected capacity	25
IV. Marketing & staffing commitment (budget and person-power), outreach capabilities & experience	25
V. System Installation & Pricing: Installed price quotes: Standard package, Higher-efficiency systems, Lease pricing, Loans for Purchase option, tiered pricing structure	30
VI. Diversity of technologies offered: specifics of manufacturer's warranties, mounting options, your specified "adders"	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### **I. Cover letter (0 points)**

Please submit a signed cover letter summarizing the highlights, key features, and distinguishing points of your proposal. Tell us specifically why you want to work with the Solarize Hudson Valley program. Include the name and address of the firm submitting the proposal, together with the name, address, telephone number, and email address for the authorized representative for the firm. Also include the firm's federal tax identification number; NABCEP, UL or IBEW certification number(s); and NYSERDA eligible installer number(s). Finally, please include a statement that the proposal is valid for sixty (60) days after receipt.

### **II. Table of Contents (0 points)**

Your Table of Contents should organize your responses in the same format as this RFP, i.e., by section reference number and section title as described herein.

### **III. Proximity and Business Timing**

1. Are you applying to be a designated installer for Residential customers or Commercial customers?
2. What are the factors that matter most to your participation in this local Solarize campaign?
3. Why is the timing of this campaign “wave” good for your firm?
4. We will favor companies with an established service office within 60 miles of at least one of the communities in each local campaign. How does distance to a job site factor into your own feasibility/cost analysis?
5. Lead Management Capacity  
We have found that timely and effective follow-up with sales Leads is the most critical part of the Solarize program. Please tell us how you will assure that every Lead generated through a Solarize campaign will receive excellent customer service. What Customer Relationship Management system do you use?
6. Installation Capacity  
We require that each firm project its work capacity and commit to the number of installations it will be able to complete during the 4-month marketing/sales period of this campaign, and within the period of 6 months following, i.e., through December 2016. Please provide those numbers along with comments and any context you wish to provide.
7. Application for Commercial Installers  
If applying for consideration as a commercial installer, provide a brief description of the scope and scale of your commercial installations, and a description of 3 projects you have completed in the previous 12 - 18 months, including the financing package. Please provide a reference for each project.

Provide a template version of a PV Contractor’s direct commercial purchase contract and/or a lease or PPA agreement with the customer, specifying all terms and conditions for a commercial customer under the Solarize Campaign.

This document (subject to any modifications requested for Solarize Hudson Valley) will be the sales contract used by the PV Contractor, if selected. The following must be included in the standard agreement:

- A section outlining all possible additional costs for the customer.
- For Lease or PPA offerings, the PV Contractor should clearly identify any criteria in which a price escalator may be present for customers, include a maximum range for the price escalator, and provide other relevant information such as for commercial property owners moving before the conclusion of a long-term power purchase agreement.

#### **IV. Marketing and Staffing Commitment**

1. Solarize Hudson Valley will devote significant resources and staff to consumer education, well-publicized community events and neighbor-to-neighbor marketing. Please outline the marketing resources you will devote to this campaign, including your staffing commitment. Attach pdfs of some of your marketing materials and a photo of your public exhibition booth or table display.
2. Our NYSERDA grant does not include a budget for paid advertising; yet we know that well-positioned paid advertising can make a significant impact. To complement our earned media strategy, we will commit to a modest marketing campaign focused on small print display ads, on-line ads and radio. We will ask each installer to commit a dollar share at least equal to ours towards a media budget we agree on for each service area. Please tell us the cost range you would consider appropriate for your participation.
3. Do you/can you provide bilingual outreach materials and any staff fluent in Spanish?
4. Solarize Hudson Valley is charged with reaching low to moderate income (LMI) populations. Describe your experience in marketing to potential clients in that income bracket, and your approach for this campaign. Note: you will not be expected to write a contract with any customer who does not meet your credit requirements; that is your decision.
5. Describe your experience and marketing approach for non-profit organizations and faith communities.
6. As the program scales up, we will be working with the SUNY community college system to create workforce development programming to support industry growth. Do you currently participate in a workforce development or training program? If so, please state the details, the length of your involvement, and the number of employees-in-training you have incorporated into your company's workforce. Would you expect to participate in these programs (e.g. hiring and on-the-job training for highly qualified recent trainees)? You are welcome to include any comments about the success and/or challenges of these programs.

Interest in this workforce development partnership is not a requirement for Solarize qualifying firms, but informs our planning.

#### **V. Solar PV System Installation & Pricing**

NYSERDA is engaged in an analysis of how "Tiered Pricing" vs "Base Pricing" has affected the dynamic within campaigns statewide. That analysis may result in recommendations or rules about the application of Tiered Pricing. For the present, we ask for your pricing for

three Tiers and will consider your Tier One price to be your “Base Price.” Note that we have revised our 2016 Tier benchmarks.

### Program Tiers

Firms will offer competitive discount-pricing, quoted as installed cost per watt (before incentives), for each of three "tiers." Each benchmark will bring a larger savings to the Customer. The tiered pricing structure motivates community participation and drives sales.

The Tiers are defined by the number of systems that come under contract (purchase plus lease/PPA) in each service area for all installers combined (not per-installer).

Our 3 Tiers are defined as follows:\*

Tier One: 1 - 20 systems service area wide (all residential installers)

Tier Two: 21 - 29 systems county-wide

Tier Three: 30 and above

Solarize Hudson Valley will track and report periodically on program enrollments and systems under contract. This community “barometer” will be reported on frequently in our publicity to drive interest and motivate participation.

All Customers are guaranteed the best price achieved by the program. The difference between the price at signing and the final tier reached by the program will be paid by check in the form of a rebate from the Installer Partner to the Customer, or as a labelled reduction in their final payment.

\*We may make adjustments to the Tier structure before campaign launch.

### **Solarize Hudson Valley Pricing Template**

In this section you will provide both your pricing and details of the system components you will provide to your customers through Solarize. The purpose of these price quotes is to give the consumer a simple and transparent comparison of system plus installation costs.

#### **Standard Purchase Pricing**

Please provide your quote for a 7 kW (i.e., average residential) grid-tied solar PV system before any eligible incentives or tax credits. It should be roof-mounted, feature a specific module/inverter/racking combination, and should comply with the Program’s set of minimum best installation practices standards. This pricing should not vary by location within the region.

Give us the “market price” (i.e, your current pricing) for the same system, and please specify the percentage discount that this pricing represents. Solarize Hudson Valley requires installers to offer a discount of at least 10% for Tier One (Base Price).

These prices will hold for all Solarize installations you contract for between the sizes of 3kW and 10kW. We will allow you to specify an “adder” for systems smaller than 3kW, recognizing that your fixed costs for smaller systems significantly reduce your margin.

Each Installer must specify their “Solarize discount” as a line item in the proposals they submit to customers.

If your firm is selected for participation, this pricing information (as well as the specific system components you are offering) will be shared with the other participating firms before the campaign begins. We recognize that this is normally proprietary information; in the context of a Solarize campaign, it is shared information.

You will have the opportunity to adjust your pricing and /or equipment selection in your final Memorandum of Understanding.

	<b>Tier #1 Base Price</b>	<b>Tier #2</b>	<b>Tier #3</b>
<b>Your current market pricing</b>			
<b>“Solarize discount” price/installed W</b>			
<b>Percentage discount off market pricing</b>	(at least 10%) _____ %	_____ %	_____ %

**Standard Purchase Details**

List the specific PV system equipment that your firm would offer by manufacturer and model (modules, inverter, racking, etc.).

We are asking you to specify the components/systems that you customarily install--not a system you devise for Solarize customers. This should be a combination of modules, inverters/microinverters and racking that are proven to your satisfaction; a system you believe in.

	<b>Solar Modules</b>	<b>Inverter</b>	<b>Roof Racking</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Manufacturer and Model</b>					
<b>Rationale for Selection, i.e., what feature influenced your choice?</b>					
<b>Manufacturer Warranty (Years &amp; coverage)</b>					
<b>Any additional Warranty Protection</b>					

### **Higher-Efficiency options**

We wish to structure cost options so that “super” high-efficiency materials (i.e., PV panels) are not eliminated by Customers purely on the basis of materials cost. Describe the high-efficiency system you offer and provide your quote for system upgrades in Tiers 1, 2 and 3.

	<b>Tier #1</b>	<b>Tier #2</b>	<b>Tier #3</b>
<b>Materials description &amp; manufacturer</b>			
<b>Installed Price/W</b>			
<b>Percentage discount</b>	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %

### Lease Pricing

Provide a dollar per kilowatt hour (\$/kWh) lease or PPA price for residential solar PV systems that will decrease by tier levels as the total number of signed contracts for solar PV within the community increases.

Lease offerings should be for grid-tied solar PV systems that are roof-mounted, feature a specific module/inverter/racking combination, and should comply with the Program’s set of minimum best installation practices standards. Since outside investors take the project incentives and tax credits, these prices should be the Customer’s cost after all incentives. Because lease pricing is not typically completely set by the Installers, the below should be average pricing but it is understood that it will vary slightly depending on factors internal to the lease provider and customer qualification.

<b>Name of Leasing Provider</b>	
<b>Term of Lease</b>	
<b>Price/kWh in First Year</b>	
<b>Additional Price/kWh in First Year for Ground Mounted System</b>	

<b>Rate of Price Escalation Per Year (If Any)</b>	
<b>Additional Important Lease Details i.e. Transferability, Production warranty, FICO score required, etc</b>	
<b>Buyout Value of System at Year 7, i.e. "Cost to Own"</b>	

**Lease Offering Details**

List the specific PV system equipment that your firm would offer by manufacturer and model (modules, inverter, racking, etc.).

	<b>Solar Modules</b>	<b>Inverter</b>	<b>Roof Racking</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Manufacturer and Model</b>					

**VI. Range of Technologies Offered ("Adders")**

List any special conditions or options for Customers that would result in additional costs, such as required infrastructure improvements (i.e. upgrades to existing electrical service or building structural inspections), or equipment upgrades (i.e. system monitoring, ground-mounted systems, microinverters, and battery-backup system.) Please provide an add-on price for these

items, which means the price the item would add to the base pricing above.

Please add any additional items you think appropriate. Mark “N/A” if an item is not something you offer, or “Included” if an item is already a part of your base pricing.

Additional Offerings	Price (\$/W or Flat Fee)	Notes
Systems smaller than 3 kW		
Systems larger than 10kW		
Electrical Service Upgrade		
Frame Ground-Mounted System		Assume a 100 ft. interconnection point
Pole Ground-Mounted System		Assume a 100 ft. interconnection point
Microinverters		
System Monitoring		
Made-in-America Modules		
Battery Backup System		