I. OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY:
The North Carolina Solar Center at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC ("the Center") is requesting proposals from solar photovoltaic ("PV") installation companies ("Installer(s)") or teams of installation companies ("Installer team(s)"") willing to provide pricing for group purchase of photovoltaic (PV) systems in conjunction with the Solarize Raleigh Program in Raleigh, North Carolina. Solarize Raleigh marketing is targeted to residents of Raleigh neighborhoods; however, residents within Raleigh city limits (or who live in areas subject to the City’s extra-territorial jurisdiction) are eligible to participate. The Solarize Raleigh Program aims to drive community adoption of solar PV projects through neighborhood-based, resident-driven marketing and education efforts targeted at reducing customer acquisition costs for the chosen installer.

To this end, the Center seeks proposals from Installers (or Installer teams) that can provide competitive, tiered pricing for residential solar PV installations. Quality of the proposal, proposed equipment, proposed pricing, and installation practices will be factors in the selection process (See Section C Selection Criteria). Proposing firms are invited to submit proposals individually, or collaborate with another firm to submit a joint proposal.

Refer to section 2.C. for more information on the evaluation criteria.

A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW, SELECTION AND GOALS:

Background
The North Carolina Solar Center is a public service center in the College of Engineering at North Carolina State University. The North Carolina Solar Center advances a sustainable energy economy by educating, demonstrating and providing support for clean energy technologies, practices, and policies. Visit us at ncsc.ncsu.edu and https://www.facebook.com/NCSolarCenter.

Program Description
The aggregation of multiple residential solar PV installations within a community provides opportunities to realize economies of scale (reduced customer acquisition and other marketing costs) for the Installer, and ultimately cost savings for the customer. By educating the local community, leveraging community support for marketing efforts, and aggregating sales, the Program seeks to increase demand for and lower the cost of residential solar PV.

Neighborhood Selection
Solarize Raleigh has selected several neighborhoods to target based on a variety of characteristics that the Solarize Raleigh team believes support a high rate of adoption of solar PV. Each of these neighborhoods and Solarize Raleigh’s project partners will
provide a team of volunteers to drive the program. The Center will provide each neighborhood (and the City as a whole) with educational and marketing support, including technical support and free educational meetings, to help implement a community-wide solar PV program for residential installation projects.

**Installer (or Installer team) Selection**

Through this Request for Proposals ("RFP"), the Solarize Raleigh RFP review team (composed of experts outside of the Solar Center) will select a solar PV Installer (or Installer team) who is best able to meet the goals of this RFP laid out in the following sections. The installer (or installer team) is expected to provide a tiered pricing structure that provides lower cost per watt installed as more people sign on, as well as free solar site assessments, financing models, applicable rebate information, and turnkey installation services. Upon receipt, all complete Installer proposals will be reviewed by the Solarize Raleigh RFP review team and an Installer/s will be selected.

**The Solar Center – Program Marketing Support**

The Center will assist the neighborhood volunteer team and the selected Installer (or Installer team) to deploy a marketing strategy to enhance local interest in solar PV technology, as well as alleviate some of the marketing and acquisition costs for the Installer (or Installer team).

Specifically, the Center will:

1. Provide marketing materials, educational tools, or other similar items.

2. Provide project website ([solarizeraleigh.org](http://solarizeraleigh.org)) and outreach materials.

3. Train community volunteers to serve as their contact for local residents to answer common questions about solar PV and available state and federal incentives. The selected Installer will be expected to assist the Center in informing the community volunteers of basic technical questions and answers.

4. Managing project media and outreach logistics.

5. Participate in certain outreach measures and events, including “Solar 101” community educational workshops.

6. Convene weekly meetings or conference calls as necessary to coordinate between the Center’s Project Lead and Installer outreach activities.

**Program Roles and Responsibilities**

Starting on March 21, 2014, interested customers will be able to contact the Installer (or Installer team) and sign up for a site assessment. If the customer’s site is deemed to be feasible for a solar PV project, they will have the option to contract with the Installer before the program deadline of June 20, 2014. The Installer (or Installer team) will be responsible for assessing individual sites, working with interested customers to design
appropriate systems, and contracting with the customer for installation of the solar PV system.

In order to participate in the Program, the Installer (or Installer team) must provide a dollar per watt ($/W) purchase price (“Purchase Price”) for solar PV systems that will decrease by defined tier levels as the total contracted capacity of solar PV within the community increases. See the Pricing Proposal (Attachment B) for more information on the specific pricing tiers.

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:
In order for an Installer to be eligible to submit a proposal, the Installer (or Installer team) must:

1. Demonstrate experience and proficiency in solar PV installations. The Installer (or Installer team) must be a licensed General Contractor in the state of North Carolina, have installed a minimum of twenty (20) solar PV systems in North Carolina, and have at least one North American Board of Certified Electrical Practitioners (NABCEP)-certified PV installer on staff.

2. Include on the project team at least one electrician holding a valid and current North Carolina electrical license to perform any electrical work on the solar PV installations.

3. Submit a proposal that meets all of the threshold review criteria outlined in Section 2.B. below in order to be considered complete.

4. Provide a complete application by 5:00pm EDT on February 28, 2014.

The Installer (or Installer) is directly responsible for turnkey project management and installation work.

C. PERMITTING AND INTERCONNECTION:
For each participating home, the selected Installer (or Installer team) will be responsible for securing all required permits. The selected firm will provide guidance and assistance to each contracted owner with completing a net-metering agreement with Duke Energy Progress or, in the alternative, executing a buy-all/sell-all agreement with Duke Energy Progress and registering their system with the NC GreenPower program. The firm will provide each owner with the information, documentation, and certified signatures required to complete the appropriate interconnection applications along with any other local permit requirements.

D. TIMELINE:
A proposed timeline for the RFP process and Program is outlined below. Please note that this is an estimated timeline and dates may change at the discretion of the Solarize Raleigh Project Lead.
E. APPLICATION DEADLINE:
Responses to this RFP must be received by the Center no later than 5:00pm EDT on February 28, 2013 in accordance with Section 2.B. Only complete, timely proposals will be considered. The Center, at its sole discretion, may determine whether an application is complete.

F. INSTALLER (OR INSTALLER TEAM) AGREEMENT:
Applicant Installer must review the terms and conditions outlined in the draft Center-Installer agreement (Attachment A) and provide comments on those terms and conditions at the time of application.

The Center has no financial obligation to any Installer arising from this RFP. All contracts will be executed between the homeowner and the selected Installer. The contract between the owner and the Installer (or Installer team) will state that the Center is not a party to the contract and that the Installer (or Installer team) will be solely liable for any claims, losses or damages arising out of the contract. By submitting a response to this RFP, Installer agrees to these terms and conditions.

G. QUESTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION:
This program is intended to support the local solar community. The Center encourages Installers (or Installer teams) to submit questions related to this RFP. Please submit all questions to the Solarize Raleigh Project Lead at jdkenne2@ncsu.edu by February 14,
2014. “Solarize Raleigh RFP” must appear in the email subject line. Questions will be responded to by February 18, 2014 at 5:00 pm EDT.

2. PERFORMANCE AND RESPONSE SPECIFICATIONS:

A. SCOPE OF WORK:
After selection, Installer for the Solarize Raleigh Program will have primary responsibility for managing leads, performing site assessments, providing general customer service, contracting, installation, and all other functions typically associated with the sales and installation process.

Between the months of March and May, the Center and other project partners will promote and deliver a series of educational workshops at easily accessible public locations in Raleigh. The selected firm or team of firms is expected to have staff available to answer questions and provide an interface to the community at major events and workshops. Installers are encouraged to provide additional training for the Project Lead on the Installer’s (or Installer team’s) operations or other relevant topics.

As prospective customers are identified and screened for basic pre-qualification factors (homeownership status, geographic eligibility), their names and contact information will be provided to the Installer upon receipt. The Installer will provide site assessments and system design proposals for each participant. Individual system design should take into consideration the preferences of the owner while minimizing project costs and maximizing solar energy production. System proposals should also take into consideration each owner’s self-identified financial limitations including, if applicable, any owner-arranged financing with a bank, credit union, or other financing entity.

Upon contracting, the Installer will be responsible for providing each customer with a turnkey service, which includes, but is not limited to, securing all local permits, providing interconnection with the utility, and completing and commissioning the installation.

The Installer and the Project Lead must identify a process for handling leads that have non-feasible sites for solar PV. Examples include, but are not limited to, offering individuals with non-feasible sites more information on other technology options, such as the installation of energy efficiency measures, or requesting potential assistance in any Solarize Raleigh volunteer opportunities. In addition, the installer must clearly indicate if certain sites outside of Raleigh itself will qualify for Solarize Raleigh pricing.

The Installer (or Installer team) will provide weekly updates to the Center regarding campaign progress and lead status. Weekly reporting must be submitted by Monday at 12:00PM Eastern Standard Time for the previous week’s work. Updates should include, but are not limited to:

- contact status
- date of scheduled/completed site assessment
The Installer will be able to contract with customers through June 20, 2014. The Installer will be required to provide the Center with an initial program report outlining the total number of contracted customers within the community and the resulting prices that will be associated with each installation by June 23, 2014. A final report will be due August 31. All extensions are at the discretion of the Solarize Raleigh project lead.

B. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS:
Proposals are due at the Center no later than 5:00 pm (EDT) on February 28, 2013. The Proposal must be in electronic form and must include a completed Pricing Proposal (Attachment B), and provide comments on the terms and conditions of the draft Center-Installer agreement (Attachment A). Proposals should be submitted via email to Solarize Raleigh at jdkenne2@ncsu.edu. “Solarize Raleigh RFP” must appear in the email subject line.

Proposals must contain the following:

**Executive Summary:** The Executive Summary summarize the highlights of the proposal, key features and distinguishing points of the proposal, as well as any unique problems perceived by the Installer (or Installer team) and proposed solutions.

**Proposal Team Experience:** Identify all members of the project team, including, but not limited to, partners assisting in project financing, customer service, outreach, and project installations. Include an organization chart outlining the various key individuals and partners, a description and location of each, and attach résumés and copies of any licenses, if applicable, of all key individuals on the project. Installers are welcome to partner, but one Installer must be the lead company on the proposal.

Proposals must include the following:

- Description of the applying Installer (or Installer team), including number of employees (including number of full-time installers, site assessors, and project managers), financial stability, location, capacity for work, and access to various
supply chains. Highlight relevant experience, skills and capabilities necessary to undertake this Program, including, but not limited to, demonstrated experience through the complete installation of a minimum of twenty (20) solar PV installations in North Carolina and having at least one North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP)-certified PV installer on staff. The Installer (or Installer team) should provide references for at least ten (10) of its projects.

- Provide a list of any partners on the project team, including number of employees (including number of full-time installers, site assessors, and project managers), financial stability, location, capacity for work, and access to various supply chains.

- Provide source of equipment options to be used in installations.

- **IF PROPOSING AS PART OF A TEAM OF INSTALLERS**: Provide any and all draft agreements between the installation companies on the team laying out, at a high level, the roles, responsibilities and appropriate division of labor and installations expected. All members of the installer team must also agree to the terms of this RFP and Attachment A.

- Optional: Propose a financing partner and/or contact who can install other renewable energy technology, or other energy efficiency measures, including but not limited to solar water heating technology.

**Proposal Narrative:** The proposal narrative should outline a detailed strategy that should at a minimum address the following items:

- **Program Plan:** Provide a plan for implementation, describing the Installer’s ability to provide solar PV installation services during the Program period. Specifically, the proposal should describe the Installer's ability to provide
  - customer service
  - site assessments
  - and turnkey installation services.

  Please elaborate on
  - the specific intake process for customer leads
  - method for screening sites
  - the quality assurance process for the solar PV installations
  - the process for managing permits, inspections and interconnection
  - customer warranties and any performance guarantees

- **Capacity:** Explain how Installer (or Installer team) can expand capacity capability and maintain quality to meet potential large demand that may occur due to this project. Provide best estimate of the number of average installations the Installer can complete per week. In addition, please explain how the Installer (or Installer team) would leverage other companies or resources in the event
that the sign-ups exceed the capacity of the Installer or Installer team to meet the program deadlines.

- **Timeline:** Provide an expected timeline for the average customer under the Program to guide the community and the customer expectations.

- **Business & Community Practices:** Outline experience with activities geared towards building public awareness and education about solar energy and other sustainability issues. List any apprenticeship or mentoring opportunities.

- **Marketing Strategy:** Provide information on whether Installer can assist in marketing beyond participation in Solar 101 and other educational events, or provide a contribution to the cost of marketing the program.

- **Tiered Price Structure:** Outline the Purchase Price on Attachment B, based on a total capacity (DC @STC) of solar PV contracted using the following five tiers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
<th>Tier 4</th>
<th>Tier 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1kW – 25kW</td>
<td>&gt;25kW – 75kW</td>
<td>&gt;75kW – 250kW</td>
<td>&gt;250kW – 400kW</td>
<td>&gt;400kW+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As total contracted capacity increases by tier, the Installer’s proposed cost per watt must decrease. Sharper cost decreases from tier to tier will be looked upon favorably by the proposal review team.

- **All-Inclusive Pricing:** Pricing proposals must specify total turnkey installation costs and be all-inclusive to give a complete and finished project. Costs must include, but are not limited to, system design, permitting, labor, materials and equipment, transportation, insurance, taxes, overhead and profit, and all equipment and workmanship warranties. The price should be independent of any tax credits, rebates or incentives available to the customers.

  Installers should refer to Attachment B. All project-related cost add-ons must be outlined in Attachment B at the time of proposal. (See Price Contingencies below.)

  The Purchase Price for customers who decide to purchase a solar PV system should be presented on a $/watt basis. A copy of the standard agreement for purchase should be submitted with the Installer (or Installer team) proposal, outlining all of the terms and conditions for a customer under the Program.

- **Price Contingencies:** It is understood that features of certain installations will result in higher costs. Installers (or Installer teams) must outline specific electrical, mechanical, structural, equipment, site, or labor features that will result in greater costs. In addition, Installers (or Installer teams) must identify a
maximum Purchase Price associated with more complicated installations and understand that an individual project price cannot exceed the base price (at a given capacity tier) plus the additional price. Add-ons should be listed as a flat cost or a $/watt amount. Installers (or Installer teams) will be responsible for identifying individual projects that trigger additional pricing.

- **System Specifications:** Identify system specifications for equipment that will be used, including equipment manufacturers, models, and warranties for modules, inverters, racking, meters, and data acquisition systems, if applicable. Include a description of manufacturer qualifications and selected equipment.

- **Proposal for sites that are not feasible for solar PV:** Outline the process by which the Installer team will handle leads that do not have feasible sites for solar PV.

- **Customer Service:** Explain Installer's ability to handle customer service at an increased capacity level that addresses incident reports, warranties, service calls, inquiries, response time on calls, hours of coverage, most common problems and reported issues, complaints received by the Better Business Bureau (BBB) or the North Carolina Attorney General's Office (NC AG), training provided to homeowners, customer care materials, etc.

- **Maintenance:** Describe Installer's plan for addressing long-term service and maintenance issues.

**C. EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

All proposals must meet Solarize Raleigh Program objectives and must be responsive to the relevant scope of work and proposal requirements outlined above. Proposals will be evaluated on the general criteria below:

**Application Checklist:** Applications must meet a threshold review before they will be provided to the RFP review team. To meet the threshold review, proposals must include the following:

- Installer is a licensed General Contractor in the state of North Carolina specializing in solar PV installations and has installed at least twenty (20) solar PV projects in North Carolina;
- Completed and signed Attachments A and B;
- Proposed program and marketing strategy;
- Presents a Purchase Price schedule (presented as a $/watt price) based on tier-pricing on Attachment B;
- The proposed price to the customer **must** decrease by each of the five tiers. Note: The price drop can be of a different magnitude between tiers;
• Identify any project price add-ons and the range of any price escalators on Attachment B;
• A template copy of a direct purchase contract with the customer, specifying the terms and conditions;

Once an Installer proposal passes threshold review, the proposals will be evaluated by the RFP review team based on the following criteria:

**Overall quality and value:** overall quality of proposal, value proposition for consumers, and specified equipment;

**Experience:** degree of Installer’s (or Installer team’s) experience and proficiency in the scope of work, including demonstrated experience in developing, designing and installing residential solar PV systems;

**Implementation:** ability to provide timely, high-quality customer service and installation workmanship as well as ability to work well with the community;

**Price structure:** Attractive Purchase Price ($/kW) for increasing tiers of capacity contracted within the community. In addition, the overall value offered by the proposed equipment, price add-ons, price escalators, and contract terms and conditions.

3. **GENERAL REQUEST FOR RESPONSE CONDITIONS:**

**A. CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS:**
Upon the RFP review team’s selection of a proposal, the Center and the selected Installer will execute an agreement binding the Installer to the pricing, terms and conditions set forth in their Proposal, and which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties. See Attachment A for a draft version of this agreement.

**B. WAIVER AUTHORITY:**
The Center reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, to modify the anticipated timeline, to request modifications of the application, to accept or reject any or all applications received, and/or to cancel all or part of this RFP at any time prior to awards.

**C. DISCLAIMER:**
This RFP does not commit the Center to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies. The Center reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.