

January 21, 2025

Dear Solar Industry Professionals,

NYC is happy to share that we have been awarded \$37.5 Million through the EPA Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund as part of the Federal Inflation Reduction Act. The purpose of this grant is to design and deploy a program to deliver solar benefits to low-income New Yorkers, referred to as Public Solar NYC.

The intention of the attached RFI is to gather information and insight from the solar industry to inform the design of Public Solar NYC. Respondents may focus on topics and questions that are relevant to their organization.

This RFI is wholly voluntary, and submissions will not lead to an award of a contract. This is for informational purposes only. There is no funding associated with this RFI.

Please see the below document for program background and RFI questions. We are requesting responses by March 21, 2025, and will host information sessions on Feb 11 and March 11, 2025.

Thank you in advance for your responses.

Sincerely,

NYC Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice
NYC Comptroller's Office

RFI for
Public Solar New York City (PSNYC)
January 21, 2025



Table of Contents

Purpose.....	4
Program Overview	5
RFI	7
Submission Details.....	8

Purpose

The City of New York (City) issues this RFI to solicit ideas for potential strategies and partnerships to implement **Public Solar New York City (PSNYC)**, a new program dedicated to accelerating solar deployment for low-income New York City residents. PSNYC's initial efforts will focus on three core program areas:

1. Solar installations on owner-occupied 1-4 family homes in Disadvantaged Communities;¹
2. Community Solar projects that serve low-income New Yorkers (as defined by the Solar for All² program requirements); and
3. Preparatory investments in qualified buildings that facilitate these solar projects (such as investments in roof systems or building electrical equipment to bring them to a state of good repair and/or into compliance with code).

Initial funding for PSNYC is expected to be provided through New York City's subaward within the New York State Solar for All (SFA) program award from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). PSNYC is expected to continue to operate after the deployment of this initial funding, and is expected to continue to focus on investments that facilitate solar access to low income and/or Disadvantaged Communities defined by the New York State's Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act.

For the initial round of PSNYC programs, the implementation will be guided by the goals and requirements established by the EPA. These include specific requirements for labor, materials, and household energy bill savings, and are detailed in the [EPA's program description](#). The EPA expects the SFA grant awards to increase residential solar capacity serving low-income households in the nation by a third over the next 5 years, while guaranteeing at least 20% in household savings.

This initiative advances the City's climate mitigation, energy, and environmental justice goals. [PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done](#) is the City's overarching climate action plan. It establishes a framework for protecting New Yorkers from climate threats while improving quality of life and building a green economic engine. As part of this plan, the City committed to assisting building and homeowners with clean energy projects and solar installation - including by collaborating with the NYC Comptroller to launch Public Solar NYC. PSNYC will play a key role in strengthening the City's energy grid, as detailed in [PowerUp NYC](#) - the City's long term energy plan - and builds upon the goals established in [EJNYC](#) to reduce energy cost burden, improve indoor and outdoor air quality, and promote utility access and affordability for low-income and other EJ communities.

The City has begun work on an initial program design for PSNYC and has consulted extensively with existing industry participants to understand current services, gaps, and opportunities in the market. A high-level overview of this work is detailed in the "program overview" section below. The City of New York understands

¹ Disadvantaged community as defined by the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) developed by the federal Council on Environmental Quality.

² Solar for All is a grant program administered by EPA. It leverages funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund created by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

that this program will only be successful through a carefully coordinated program that engages residents and businesses throughout New York, connects them to new and existing City services, and engages directly with a range of new and existing private industry partners in solar and related fields.

The City anticipates that this RFI will be an important means of gathering feedback and understanding from industry partners before it finalizes its specific implementation plan for PSNYC. Respondents may elect to respond to any or all questions included in this RFI, especially if multiple categories of PSNYC operational tasks apply to the respondents' line of work. Responses to this RFI may inform potential future requests for proposals related to the City's broader solar renewable energy goals.

We welcome responses from all interested entities, including but not limited to:

1. Solar installers and maintenance providers;
2. Solar enabling upgrade providers (e.g., electrical and roofing service providers);
3. Originators and/or asset managers for solar leases and equipment;
4. Entities with an interest in designing and executing an outreach program to identify and work with potential customers for PSNYC, including not-for-profit entities;
5. Entities with an interest in bringing climate investment, home investment, weatherization, or other related programs to low-income New Yorkers and Disadvantaged Communities, including not-for-profit entities;
6. Organizations that represent intended beneficiary communities of PSNYC
7. MWBE firms with expertise in the areas mentioned above.

The City anticipates using information gleaned from the responses to shape the direction and form of PSNYC, including forthcoming Requests for Proposals (RFPs). Participation in this RFI is in no way required for participation in any forthcoming RFP.

Program Overview

New York City (NYC) has been a national leader in efforts to accelerate the clean energy transition. Across buildings, vehicles, and other major sources of carbon emissions, NYC has taken a multi-faceted and equity-driven approach to decarbonization citywide. Implementing renewable sources of power, such as rooftop solar, remains a critical component of that citywide effort. The City is committed to launching PSNYC in order to overcome the challenge of inequitable investments in a green energy transition and bring the benefits of clean energy to low- to moderate-income (LMI) communities in NYC.

The overall mission of PSNYC is to increase access to solar renewable energy for NYC residents who are being left out of the current or future solar market. To serve this hard-to-reach customer sector, PSNYC is intended to be a centralized one-stop shop for holistic services needed for solar installations, so that the customer can have one point-of-contact and a seamless experience through the solar installation process.

The overarching goals of PSNYC are to:

- Increase access to solar for NYC LMI residents not adequately served by the current market;
- Serve as a centralized one-stop shop for holistic services for solar installations;
- Effectively deliver the program using federal SFA funds, while setting the program up for long-term financial stability beyond the grant period; and,
- Deliver 20% household savings to participants, in line with Solar for All funding requirements.³

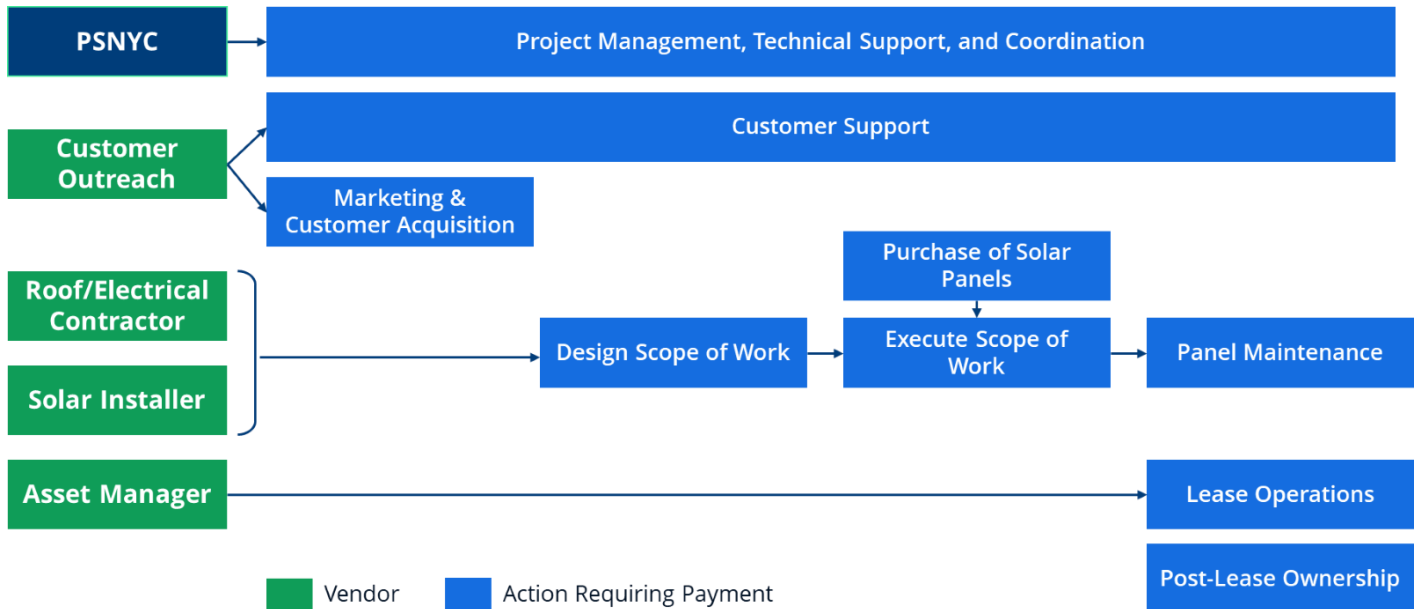
PSNYC expects to achieve these goals through a coordination of efforts across industries and New York City residents in three programs and illustrative transactions as detailed in the charts below:

Figure 1. PSNYC Program Overview

	1. Public Leasing Program for Homeowners of 1-4 Unit Residential Buildings	2. Community Solar for Multifamily, Commercial, or Institutional Buildings	3. Program for Solar-Enabling Upgrades
Description	PSNYC subsidizes solar installation and offers affordable leases of solar equipment to qualified 1-4 family homeowners.	PSNYC creates or supplements and administrates the operation of a community solar program using rooftops on identified buildings.	PSNYC provides grants up to \$20,000 to qualified 1-4 family residential buildings participating in PSNYC programs for solar-enabling upgrades, namely roof and electrical repairs, so the building is ready for solar installation.
Benefit to Participant	Able to install solar without upfront costs and benefits from 20% household net savings post-installation with a below-market rate lease payment.	Receive credit towards their electricity bill, reducing the participant's net electricity costs by 20%.	Able to perform retrofits to the building to prepare for solar installation.
Financial Flow	<i>PSNYC to homeowner:</i> Subsidizes all upfront solar installation; provides affordable lease <i>Homeowner to PSNYC:</i> Pays monthly lease, resulting in 20% net savings on utilities	<i>PSNYC to participant:</i> Creates or supplements and manages a community solar program <i>Participant to PSNYC:</i> Pays community solar subscription fee	<i>PSNYC to participant:</i> Provides grant & construction management of solar-enabling upgrades <i>Participant to PSNYC:</i> None

³ The Solar for All FAQ section on Meaningful Benefits define 20% household savings as “a direct financial benefit or, for households without an individual utility, a direct non-financial benefit equivalent to 20% of the average electric utility bill in the household’s utility territory.”

Figure 2. PSNYC Illustrative Transaction Structure



RFI

Having created an initial approach to PSNYC, the City is releasing this RFI to gather more information and to refine certain aspects of the program design and implementation plan. The City seeks ideas and information on the following topics related to PSNYC implementation:

1. Respondent Profile
2. Marketing and Customer Acquisition
3. Design of Scopes of Work
4. Execution of Scopes of Work
5. Equipment Maintenance and Asset Management
6. Project Management, Coordination, and ongoing Customer Support and Customer Relations

Respondents may choose to respond to all or only some of the questions in any of the topics. Nonetheless, all respondents should provide a Respondent Profile that identifies the respondent's experience relevant to its responses. Though the list of questions is organized into five sections as indicated above, the City is maintaining a flexible procurement strategy regardless of those five sections of the RFI and will finalize various categories of procurement after the review of responses. In other words, the categories of the RFP are subject to change based on the responses from the RFI.

Figure 3. PSNYC Illustrative Procurement and Implementation



Project management and coordination, including customer account management



Conduct **marketing, customer acquisition,** and **technical support** to customer



Design scopes of work – solar feasibility assessment, enabling upgrades, etc.



Execute scopes of work – permitting, installation, construction management, etc.



Equipment **maintenance** and **asset management**

Submission Details

Submission Format: Please submit responses to this RFI via email to nyclimate@cityhall.nyc.gov. We request that submissions include all information listed under "Respondent Profile" and respond to the questions on the five Topics of Interest outlined below, as relevant to your organization.

Timeline: RFI submission is due March 21, 2025 by 11:59PM EDT. Information sessions will be held on February 11, 2025 at 3:00PM EST and March 11, 2025 at 3:00PM EDT. Register [here](#) to attend Info Session #1 (2/11), and [here](#) to attend Info Session #2 (3/11).

Respondent Profile:

- Organization Name
- Name of Primary Point of Contact
- Title
- Street Address
- City
- State
- Zip Code
- Country
- Phone Number
- Email Address
- Please provide a short statement describing your organization and the services you currently provide.
- Please describe any relevant experience or expertise that has informed your responses.

Topics of Interest:

1. Marketing and Customer Acquisition

Among the key opportunities for PSNYC is that the City of New York will be able to coordinate an extensive outreach campaign to targeted disadvantaged communities throughout the city. This outreach will be conducted in multiple languages, through engagement with trusted community partners, and will be done under a program identity that clearly distinguishes PSNYC as a City-supported program. This effort will ensure that solar providers have access to a qualified and supported base of owners, and that household barriers to access for solar are addressed in every feasible manner.

Questions focusing on best practices on outreach and customer acquisition including customer journeys to ensure a smooth process from inquiry to installation.

- A. How would your organization target and perform marketing and customer acquisition for PSNYC, particularly toward low and moderate income 1-4 family homeowners in New York City?
- B. How would your organization target and perform marketing and customer acquisition for PSNYC, particularly toward low- and moderate-income renters that would like to participate in a Community Solar Program as subscribers?
- C. How would your company perform marketing and customer acquisition for PSNYC, particularly toward multifamily and/or commercial building owners in New York City that would like to host and/or participate in a Community Solar Program?
- D. Can you describe your process for taking a customer lead and turning it into a contracted customer?
- E. What would be your process for determining if a customer referral or prospect is a viable candidate for a solar leasing program or a direct ownership program for PSNYC (e.g., building type, ownership structure, shading, roof conditions, credit scores, building violations, etc.)?
- F. How would you build relationships and trust through existing community-based organizations to develop credibility with potential PSNYC customers? Based on your experience, what does and does not work?
- G. What types of marketing are most successful in engaging with and driving engagement with customers to an executed contract?
- H. What type of technical assistance and/or education would your company provide to interested customers for all the PSNYC program components listed in Figure 1 - specifically to those who are low-income? Are there other kinds of technical assistance you think are necessary for PSNYC to offer that your company might not provide?
- I. What additional incentives or benefits could be helpful to encourage participation and support LMI households? How can we ensure recipients are aware of and can take advantage of multiple incentives to amplify the benefit they receive from the PSNYC?
- J. How can PSNYC's operating entity leverage private investment within its program design?
- I. How would your company determine creditworthiness of potential PSNYC customers, and how would you address applicants with low credit? What support services would you specifically recommend (either through your work or through complementary efforts) to support these applicants?

- J. Does your work focus in a specific community (defined geographically or in other sense of community), or do you work throughout NYC? Where else do you work outside of NYC?
- K. In your technical, customer, or account assistance role, what would your company/organization need from PSNYC for customer acquisition and customer support (i.e., referrals, etc.)?
- L. How can the City facilitate the process to ensure seamless task hand-offs between other PSNYC contractors?
- M. What marketing and customer acquisition-related challenges have you experienced in your own work that PSNYC should consider? How would you plan to troubleshoot such challenges within PSNYC's proposed structure?
- N. What are some opportunities in program design to ensure PSNYC can continue to operate after the Solar for All funds are utilized?

2. Designing Scopes of Work

The City has identified complexity in scope design as a key barrier to installing solar, particularly on older buildings. In order to optimize energy potential, the scope for a solar installation project should be informed by a solar feasibility assessment. In older buildings, ancillary improvements are often required in order to facilitate solar installation at all, which can be particularly challenging for LMI households. To address this issue, PSNYC's Program for Solar-Enabling Upgrades may provide grants that help fund any necessary work prior to solar installation. Once a building is deemed suitable for solar, the solar installation partner can proceed with designing the scope of work based on the solar feasibility assessment. The following questions apply to all the program components described in Figure 1.

Questions focusing on solar make-ready repairs and contracting.

- A. How would you handle make-ready repairs to the roof and/or the building's electrical system for PSNYC customers? Would you conduct these ancillary upgrades in-house within your organization or outsource this to other vendors?
- B. PSNYC will involve task handoff across multiple vendors. How would your organization handle liability for solar make-ready work where a different service provider will perform their work on the same building systems you plan to work on (e.g. roof, electrical system)?
- C. What types of permitting would you be required to complete prior to conducting make-ready repairs, both electrical and structural, for PSNYC?
- D. How can the City facilitate coordination with NYC Department of Buildings, Con Edison, or other key entities within the PSNYC program? What could the City do to streamline and ease the permitting process for you?
- E. For solar make-ready work your organization has completed on 1-4 family homes, what is the average cost necessary to make a building solar ready and what are the biggest barriers to completing this work? Please break out these average costs by electrical work and structural work. Please also share the typical crew size and make-up for this work, including the trades, levels of workers, and wage scale for these positions.

- F. What percentage of projects have you worked on that required make-ready repairs? What types of repair needs result in substantial delays and/or projects not moving forward?

Questions focusing on solar feasibility assessment and designing solar installation scopes of work.

- G. How would you assess the solar feasibility for a potential building for PSNYC?
- H. Have you worked on a solar installation where the solar feasibility assessment was conducted by a different company?
- I. Describe what your process would be to design and develop a scope of work for a 1-4 family homeowner leased solar project and/or a community solar project for PSNYC. What is the process before and after contracting?
- J. What scope design-related challenges have you experienced in your own work that PSNYC should consider? How would you plan to troubleshoot such challenges within PSNYC's proposed structure?
- K. Please describe your construction crew for a typical solar installation, including number and types of workers made up therein (e.g., a breakdown of the types of trades and number of workers per trade, if you hire of apprentices, helpers or other entry level workers, and the licenses and certifications of workers)?

3. Execution of Scopes of Work

The scopes of work for installation of solar systems through PSNYC will require careful collaboration among owners, contractors, utilities, and the City. Further, as detailed in the program overview, the preferred approach to execution may involve installation of City-owned solar equipment.

Questions geared towards solar installers about the solar installation process and their comfort and preferences related to City bulk purchase and ownership of panels.

- A. If you were a vendor installing leased panels on homes for PSNYC, would you be comfortable with a model that would involve PSNYC leading a bulk purchase of solar panels, racking, and inverters that are then physically transferred to your company for installation, with continued ownership by PSNYC? If not, can you identify other alternatives that might work with your company's approach and the City's preference for public ownership of solar panels and other equipment?
- B. What are your company's preferred technical specifications for solar panels and inverters?
- C. How flexible would you be with using another specification, and what are the key components you would need to understand about an alternate set of technical specifications in order to evaluate their suitability?
- D. Would you be interested in the City bulk purchasing panels for PSNYC, and if so, how should the City work with you to ensure appropriate specs for a range of existing 1-4 housing stock?
- E. If the City were to bulk purchase the panels, how and where would you store panels that were purchased in bulk by the City prior to installation on customer roof?

- F. Please describe a typical 1-4 family homeowner transaction from start to finish, including the time and cost associated with each piece of the process (e.g., customer acquisition, contracting, assessment, design, permitting, make-ready repairs, if needed, installation, and close-out of permits)?
- G. Please describe a typical Community Solar transaction from start to finish, including the time and cost associated with each piece of the process (e.g., customer acquisition, contracting, assessment, design, permitting, make-ready repairs, if needed, installation, and close-out of permits)?
- H. Do you have experience executing projects with labor standards or wage requirements, such as city, state or federal prevailing wage requirements? What is the wage scale of your workforce as reflected in your pricing?
- I. What scope execution-related challenges have you experienced in your own work that PSNYC should consider? How would you plan to troubleshoot such challenges within PSNYC's proposed structure? How do you propose to work within the PSNYC structure to address the approval, invoicing and payments for any unexpected issues?
- J. Please list the criteria and describe your process for identifying MWBE firms that are qualified to provide services/support on any part of the Public Solar NYC process (e.g. customer engagement / acquisition, roof readiness, solar installation, etc.). Please also share the names of any specific MWBE firms that you are aware of that meet the criteria.

4. Equipment maintenance and asset management

Once installations have been completed, they will require ongoing maintenance and asset management, including reporting of results in accordance with Federal, state and local requirements. In addition to equipment maintenance, an asset manager will ensure receipt of lease payments from the public leasing program for 1-4 family homes, collection of subscription fees from subscribers to the community solar program, rent payments to the building owners hosting community solar equipment, and disbursing grants for solar-enabling upgrades.

Questions focusing on solar installation maintenance and lease management.

- A. Has your company been responsible for the maintenance of solar panels that your company has not installed?
- B. What types of quality assurance / quality control should PSNYC build in to ensure effective asset management, particularly if PSNYC solar installation and asset management responsibilities are carried out by different vendors.
- C. How would you handle the financial management of leases for PSNYC?
- D. Please describe the flow of funding under a leased transaction for PSNYC.
- E. How will you recycle the panels once they reach the end of their useful lives?
- F. What asset management-related challenges have you experienced in your own work that PSNYC should consider? How would you plan to troubleshoot such challenges within PSNYC's proposed structure?

5. Project Management, Coordination, and Customer Relations

A core function of PSNYC will be to work with building owners, tenants, the City, and private sector partners to execute impactful projects in line with best practices for solar implementation. This will require a dedicated focus on ensuring that projects are managed throughout the design, permitting, and implementation processes. The project management function will require detailed interaction with households citywide, constant communication and coordination with selected vendors for the implementation of PSNYC program components, along with tracking and reporting of project progress to the City, and in accordance with SFA and PSNYC requirements.

Questions focusing on how implementation partners may provide coordination support across PSNYC operational tasks and if they provide education of solar and technical assistance to PSNYC customers.

- A. Does your company currently use a proprietary customer management system to track projects?
- B. How comfortable would you be with using an external customer management system to track task hand off with other PSNYC contractors?
- C. What types of ongoing customer support (financial or otherwise) would you expect to offer to PSNYC customers? What level of support do you offer (e.g., general awareness, case by case management, others)?
- D. What information would you need to ensure seamless task hand off between other PSNYC contractors?
- E. Do you have experience navigating federal and state incentives, tax incentives, and/or city property tax rebates?
- F. Have you previously established or are you interested in establishing relationships with partners (e.g., places of worship, cultural institutions, schools, etc.) who operate in disadvantaged communities to build trust in a program?
- G. How would you plan to ensure that PSNYC projects comply with federal grant, reporting, and labor requirements? Do you have experience complying with federal or local requirements regarding hiring, and safety (e.g., Executive Order 11246, community hiring goals or requirements, MWBE requirements, or New York City Department of Building safety requirements)?
- H. What project management-related challenges have you experienced in your own work that PSNYC should consider? How would you plan to troubleshoot such challenges within PSNYC's proposed structure?
- I. How will you ensure that local community members have access to jobs created by these projects? Do you have experience working with New York City Workforce1 Centers or other community-based organizations that facilitate community hiring? Do you have experience working under project labor agreements? Do you have any affiliations with New York State Department of Labor registered labor management apprenticeship programs?