



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL:
SOLAR PV POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT**

Released May 24, 2021

Response Due Date and Time:

Friday, August 25, 2021 at 12:00 PM ET

Submittal Instructions:

Submit five (5) paper copies and one (1) electronic copy on a flash drive
in a sealed envelope clearly labeled and sent to:

“Solar PV RFP Bid”

City of Cuyahoga Falls

2310 Second Street

Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

1. Project Overview:

This section provides background information on Cuyahoga Falls Electric Service and generally outlines the project. Specific proposal requirements are listed in Section 5.

1.1. Introduction:

Cuyahoga Falls Electric Service (CFES) is a municipal utility provider for the City of Cuyahoga Falls. CFES is soliciting proposals from qualified solar photovoltaic (PV) vendors to design, construct, operate, maintain, and potentially decommission a turn-key installation of 600 kWac to 2 MWac of nameplate capacity in solar PV. CFES has multiple sites available for the arrays. CFES intends to obtain competitive bids for building and funding these arrays through a third-party power purchase agreement (PPA).

1.2. Goals:

Through this project, CFES expects to offer their customers an economical and local green energy option through the Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) generated by the solar arrays. CFES would like a substantial portion of the solar arrays to be visible to the public. CFES intends for the project to be cost-neutral or provide savings to its operational budget by reducing their transmission, capacity, and energy charges.

1.3. Solar PV System Overview:

See full details in sections below, this overview is just for perspective.

- **Desired Solar PV System Size & Location:**

- Base bid: The solar arrays must total 600 kWac to 2 MWac and can be constructed on the following site:
 - Cuyahoga Falls Electric System Service Department
- Alternate bid #1 (optional): The solar arrays must total 600 kWac to 5 MWac and can be constructed on one or all of the following sites:
 - Cuyahoga Falls Electric System Service Department
 - City Hall/Natatorium
 - Water Treatment Plant
 - Municipal Parking Lots (“Green”, “Blue”, “Red”, or Quirk Cultural Center)
 - Substations (#4, #8, Valley, or Theiss)
- Alternate bid #2 (optional): The solar arrays must total 600 kWac to 5 MWac (see Section 5.5.C) and can be constructed on any of the city owned sites listed in alternate bid #1 plus any properties that could be purchased or leased by either CFES or the vendor and interconnected into CFES’s electric distribution system.
- Alternate bid #3 (optional): Add battery storage to the base bid or alternates.

Details for the base bid site and some of the sites listed in alternate bid #1 can be found in Appendix B. The solar PV systems must convert DC to AC onsite and connect into CFES’s electric distribution system, in front of any customer meter.

- System Ownership:** The base bid must assume that the solar arrays are designed, constructed, operated, maintained, and potentially decommissioned by the vendor and that CFES will purchase the electricity generated by the arrays through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). In the PPA, CFES obtains all of the current and future energy and environmental benefits, such as, but not limited to the energy, PJM capacity, transmission reduction, auxiliary markets, and the Solar Renewable Energy Certificates (SRECs), associated with the arrays. CFES also obtains all of the current and future economic benefits, excluding incentives such as the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) and the MACRS depreciation which the vendor is expected to take advantage of to reduce the PPA price.

1.4. Schedule:

The schedule for this RFP is listed below. These schedules may be modified at CFES’s discretion.

RFP Schedule

Project Milestone	Date (and Time)
RFP Released	May 17, 2021 at 8 AM
Pre-Bid Meeting Onsite at 2550 Bailey Road, Cuy. Falls	June 4, 2021 at 1 PM
Deadline to Submit RFP Questions	June 10, 2021 at 6 PM
RFP Questions Answered	June 24, 2021 at 5 PM
Proposals Due	August 25, 2021 at Noon
Interviews	September 2021
Terms Negotiation, Approvals, and Execute Contract	October – November 2021
System Commissioning & Operation	Fall 2022

2. Scope of Work:

The information provided in this section does not provide instructions for the vendor’s RFP submittal. See Section 5 for specific RFP response requirements.

However, this section is meant to inform the full scope-of-work that will be required throughout the project’s lifetime, as performed by the vendor. Vendors with substantial disagreements to this scope-of-work are encouraged to either not apply or provide adequate documentation in their Project Approach/Technical Understanding section to clearly identify where deviations will occur and how they will benefit CFES.

The selected vendor will be required to perform the entire scope of a third-party power purchase agreement, simply resulting in CFES contractually agreeing to purchase the power generated by the system(s). The vendor’s role will include, but not be limited to, design, construct, operate, maintain, and potentially decommission the solar PV system. Details on the scope-of-work follow. CFES reserves the right to modify the scope of the project at any time.

2.1. Design Requirements:

The array(s) can be located on open space (ground-mounted), roofs, or parking lots and must adhere to the following guidelines:

Section A. Ground-mounted Arrays

- Mounting system design needs to meet applicable local building code requirements with respect to snow, wind, and earthquake loading factors.
- Mounting system is intended be fixed-tilt or single-axis tracker.
- The installation area must be bounded by a barrier that demarcates the system boundaries. Options may include, but are not limited to, fencing, railing, or other material that clearly shows the system boundaries. All barriers must comply with the City's Planning and Zoning Code.
- Removal of trees should be kept to a minimum. Tree removal must be approved by the City. Tree removal costs shall be borne by the vendor.

Section B. Roof-mounted Arrays

- The existing roof system and building's overall structural integrity must adequately support the new load.
- Mounting system design needs to meet applicable local building code requirements with respect to snow, wind, and earthquake loading factors.
- Mounting systems shall limit roof penetrations or be fully ballasted. Roof penetrations, if needed, shall be designed and installed in accordance with the roof manufacturer's requirements. Installation must not void the roof warranty (if warranty is in place). The roof must not leak as a result of construction, maintenance, or de-commissioning.
- All roof access points shall be securely locked at the end of each day during construction or O&M activities.
- System layout shall meet local fire department, code, and ordinance requirements for roof access.
- Removal of trees around buildings to reduce shading on the solar array(s) should be kept to a minimum. Tree removal must be approved by the City. Tree removal costs shall be borne by the vendor.

Section C. Parking Lot Arrays

- The carport's roof components shall be at least 9 feet above the ground (or grade).
- Carport impact on parking lot lighting should be considered and lighting should be installed to offset shading caused by the carports. Any newly installed lighting shall be high efficiency (e.g., LED), controllable (e.g., automated photocell controls to turn the lights on at dusk and off in the morning, considering multi-level control based on nearby motion), and meet exterior lighting code minimums (e.g., at least 0.2 foot-candles on pavement). Lighting power costs should be weighed into the PPA costs for RFP evaluation.
- The carport solar shall be designed for snow and ice management.
- Removal of trees in parking lots to reduce shading on the solar array(s) should be kept to a minimum. Parking lots can be restriped to better orient the parking spaces for PV installation. Reorientation of the parking spaces can reduce the number of spaces in the parking lot as long as the parking lot continues to meet the City's Planning and Zoning Code. Tree removal, lot restriping, and lot reorientation must be approved by the City. All of these costs shall be borne by the vendor.

2.2. Engineering and Design:

The selected vendor will be responsible for engineering and the final design of the system. The vendor will provide engineering source documents and design drawings stamped (by an appropriately licensed Ohio professional engineer) specifying all details of design including structural support and electrical interconnection. The vendor will provide as-built record drawings upon completion of the project.

The selected vendor will be responsible for all permits, licenses, applications, and meeting applicable codes and standards. For example, the solar PV system design must comply with the City's Planning and Zoning Code and current adopted Federal, State and Local Codes, Regulations and Standards including but not limited to Ohio Building Code, National Electric Code, National Electric Safety Code (NESC), Arc Flash Hazard Safety, OSHA, etc.

The selected vendor will be responsible for assessing all site conditions including, but not limited to, site topography, FEMA designation, wetlands delineation, endangered species, etc. and to review available geotechnical information or obtain additional geotechnical information if necessary. The vendor must also provide a stormwater/erosion control management plan and a ground cover/vegetation management plan.

The selected vendor shall be responsible for maintaining communication with CFES throughout the design process. Communication includes but is not limited to the following services:

- Host a kick-off meeting and provide written minutes
- Host weekly meetings and provide written minutes
- Completion of design and submittal to CFES
- Address comments received by CFES to their satisfaction
- Coordination and assistance to CFES for hosting public meetings
- Development of materials for public updates

2.3. Construction

The selected vendor must follow the City's Construction Standards and Requirements listed in the City's Planning and Zoning Code.

The vendor shall be responsible for maintaining communication with CFES throughout the construction process. Communication includes but is not limited to the following services:

- Host monthly meetings and provide written minutes
- Provide weekly schedule and project updates to CFES
- Provide full-time project representative who will report directly to CFES on project status
- Provide construction oversight/management
- Provide inspection, coordination and testing to assure compliance with contract documents
- Maintain reports of daily work and current record drawings, to be submitted to CFES at completion of project

2.4. Operation & Maintenance:

The selected vendor will operate and maintain (provide O&M) the solar PV system over the contract life. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Corrective maintenance to mitigate any risk to the system or minimize downtime
- Repairs to maintain the nameplate solar array output
- Preventative maintenance and inspections to identify and fix problems before they occur
- Performance notification and troubleshooting
- Online monitoring
 - Data storage, management, and display
 - CFES is to be provided access to all online monitoring systems
- Performance monitoring
 - Regularly collected data should reflect, but not be limited to, the following:
 - Average and accumulated solar generation (kWh/day, kWh/year, and cumulative kWh)
 - Capacity factor
 - Air quality emissions averted and real-world equivalents conversion (e.g., homes powered, vehicle miles drive, trees planted, etc.)
 - Annual system performance reports that compare actual generation to predicted generation

2.5. Decommission

The selected vendor will be responsible for decommissioning and removing the arrays and all associated equipment at the end of the PPA term if another agreement or transfer of ownership is not agreed upon between the vendor and CFES.

3. Minimum Qualifications:

This section outlines the minimum qualifications that vendors **MUST** meet in order for their proposals to be considered.

3.1. Previous Project Experience:

Vendors must have designed, installed, operated, maintained, and monitored at least three (3) solar PV arrays in the past five years, each of which was at least 500 kWac in nameplate capacity.

3.2. PPA Experience:

Vendors must have successfully constructed and brought online at least two (2) solar PV arrays under a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) within the past five years, each of which was at least 500 kWac output in nameplate capacity. Note, these projects may be different than those identified for Section 3.1.

3.3. Financial Requirements:

Vendors must include a bid bond of 5% of the project value with the bid. Vendor bid must be valid and binding for at least 3 months from submission to leave time for a contract to be approved and signed.

Vendors must have the ability to secure a construction performance bond in excess of \$1 million. Vendors must have minimum insurance of \$2 million. Vendors must have sufficient equity security to cover the project costs or builder’s risk insurance for 100% of the project value. If requested, vendors must be willing to provide audited financial statements from their most recent three financial years.

4. Evaluation Criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated by a review team based on the evaluation criteria and weighting as summarized in the table below.

Evaluation Criteria and Weighting

Criteria	Point Value
Cost Structure	60
Project Team Qualifications/Experience/Availability	20
Project Approach/Options/Terms (including Term End Considerations)	20
TOTAL	100

CFES provides details on what vendors should submit for each criterion in the following section.

5. Proposal:

This section provides instructions to the vendors on how to submit their proposal and what to include in their proposal.

5.1. Submission Instructions:

Sealed RFPs will be received at the City of Cuyahoga Falls Service Department until 12:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 25, 2021. No proposals will be accepted thereafter. Please provide five (5) paper copies and one (1) electronic copy on a flash drive in a sealed envelope clearly labeled “Solar PV RFP Bid”. The PPA bid must be valid for at least 90 days.

5.2. Pre-bid Onsite Meeting and Questions:

A pre-bid meeting will be held onsite on Friday, June 4, at 1 PM in the conference room at 2550 Bailey Road, Cuyahoga Falls, OH.

Direct questions to Michael Dougherty via e-mail (doughertymd@cityofcf.com). No calls will be taken during this process.

The deadline for questions is Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 6 p.m. Answers to questions will be addressed and distributed via email response by Thursday, June 24, 2021 at 5 p.m.

5.3. Interviews:

CFES reserves the right to conduct interviews with any, all, or none of the responding firms. CFES could deem interviews necessary for firms to present their project team and to clarify and respond to questions relating to their Proposal from the evaluation committee.

5.4. Format:

Proposals must follow the following format guidelines:

- Proposals shall be formatted for letter-size (8.5” x 11”) paper, with exception to any draft design drawings which may be submitted in a larger size format.

- Page numbers must be included at the bottom of each page.
- Font must be at least 12 point.
- Vendors shall limit proposals to **no more than twenty (20) total pages**, excluding the appendices. A ‘page’ is one side of a sheet of paper with text, graphics, etc. If only one side of a sheet of paper has text, graphics, etc., then that is one page. If both sides of a sheet of paper have text, that is two pages. All appendices and the optional sections will NOT count against page length. Responses longer than the maximum may be disqualified.

5.5. Required Sections:

Proposals must address each of the following subjects in the order specified below. Example table formats are suggestions and can be edited as needed. These sections correspond to the evaluation criteria noted above in Section 4.

Section A. Executive Summary

Section B. Minimum Qualifications

- Provide a brief statement acknowledging your firm meets the minimum qualifications outlined above in Section 3 including previous project experience, PPA experience, and financial requirements. Details on previous experience are requested below in Section D. Do not provide them here.

Section C. Cost Structure

- Base bid: The arrays must total 600 kWac to 2 MWac, a 20-year PPA term, a 1% escalation rate, and can be constructed on the following site:
 - Cuyahoga Falls Electric System Service Department

Alternate bid #1 (optional): The arrays must total 600 kWac to 5 MWac, a 20-year PPA term, a 1% escalation rate, and can be constructed on one or all of the following sites:

- Cuyahoga Falls Electric System Service Department
- City Hall/Natatorium
- Water Treatment Plant
- Municipal Parking Lots (“Green”, “Blue”, “Red”, or Quirk Cultural Center)
- Substations (#4, #8, Valley, or Theiss)

(Note: an array greater than 2 MW that has a single interconnection point into CFES’s electric distribution system may require infrastructure upgrades)

- Alternate bid #2 (optional): The arrays must total 600 kWac to 5 MWac, a 20-year PPA term, a 1% escalation rate, and can be constructed on any of the city owned sites listed in alternate bid #1 plus any properties that could be purchased or leased by either CFES or the vendor and interconnected into CFES’s electric distribution system.

CFES is willing to consider a total array capacity greater than 5 MWac in this alternate, if the vendor can show significant economic benefit to CFES. Note, an array greater than 2 MW that has a single interconnection point into CFES’s electric distribution system may require infrastructure upgrades.

- Alternate bid #3 (optional): Add battery storage to the base bid or alternates.

- Include a version of the following table.

Design	Capacity (MW-AC)	Annual Output (kWh/yr)	20-Yr PPA - Yr 1 Price (\$/kWh)	X-Yr PPA - Yr 1 Price [optional] (\$/kWh)	Cash Price [EPC] [optional] (\$)	Annual O&M [optional] (\$/year)
Base Bid						
Alternate Bid #1 (optional)						
Alternate Bid #2 (optional)						
Alternate Bid #3 (optional)						

- Proposals must be quoted in U.S. dollars in the year to be incurred.
- The PPA price should exclude REC sales.
- In the “X-Year PPA Price” column, vendors may propose another term length.
- CFES is considering purchasing and owning the system instead of entering into a PPA. In the “Cash Price [EPC]” column, the vendor may provide their Engineering, Procurement, and Construction contract price. Do not include O&M and decommissioning prices. Vendors may include an O&M price under the “Annual O&M” column.
- Several studies will likely need to be conducted after the vendor is selected but before a final PPA agreement is signed. Please provide an expected cost for each of the following studies that are applicable to either your base or alternate designs:
 - Geotechnical
 - Environmental
 - Structural
 - Interconnection
- Provide your standard draft PPA contract language as Appendix A.
- Provide a narrative describing the following:
 - Any assumptions made in the cost calculations (i.e. Investment Tax Credit (ITC), MACRS depreciation, etc.).
 - Any assumptions related to costs borne by the City of Cuyahoga Falls should be included with the proposal. These costs will be weighed into the PPA costs for RFP evaluation.

- Vendor’s minimum production guarantee. CFES expects a minimum production guarantee of 95% of the expected annual electricity production for each year of the PPA term. If the production guarantee is not met, the vendor will compensate CFES annually (specify month) with a check compensating CFES for the shortfall in actual generation vs. estimated generation.
- A detailed buy-down clause including all associated terms of CFES triggering this clause, which may be triggered by CFES at any time during the PPA term, unless the vendor provides specific justification for time periods in which CFES may not trigger this clause, pending final negotiation.
- One or more options for end-of-term PPA extension/renewal if ownership is not transferred to CFES. CFES desires options that include, but are not limited to:
 - Single or multi-year extensions to the PPA where the vendor and CFES maintain the roles and responsibilities held during the PPA term with no substantive change to the site or equipment except for those in need of replacement. Electricity produced during such an extension would be expected to be sold to CFES at a significant discount from the original PPA price.
 - An upgrade option that might include upgrading panels or equipment to increase system electricity production, presuming future technological advances with solar PV. CFES should be notified of the details of such an upgrade by one year before the end of the active PPA term, with a final decision on such an upgrade being made by CFES no less than 6 months before the end of the active PPA term.
- Clearly explain the invoicing and payment frequency process along with all documentation expected to be produced by the vendor to justify invoices.
- Vendor’s protocol for fixing or replacing components of the solar PV system due to normal wear and tear, or damage due to nature or vandalism, etc. and how this protocol will support the minimum production guarantee.
- Vendor’s overall plan for site maintenance. Be specific about how frequently routine maintenance items should be anticipated such as cleaning of the panels or servicing of the inverters and when throughout the year you propose those tasks will be performed.

CFES reserves the right to consider different PPA structures, different ownership structures, and different system options in the Contract Negotiation phase of the Procurement Process.

- In addition, submit an electronic version of the Required Submission Spreadsheet which includes:
 - Starting PPA prices for 20-year term and any other term length options suggested by vendor
 - Solar array degradation factor
 - Annual PPA costs and solar production for year 1 through end of PPA term
 - Schedule of costs for buy-down by CFES for year 1 through the end of PPA term
 - Single or multi-year extension costs at end of PPA term
 - Cost of upgrade option at end of PPA term

This spreadsheet should be included on the flash drive with the electronic copy of the RFP. Please acknowledge in the submission document that the electronic spreadsheet was submitted.

Section D. Project Team Qualifications/Experience/Availability

D.1 Anticipated Project Team

- Identify the Project Team, including sub-vendors, the percentage of work to be performed by each firm along with the address of each sub-vendor’s office. Replicate a completed version of the table below in your proposal.

Firm Name	Location	Date of Establishment	Role	Percentage of Contract

- Provide an organizational chart showing at minimum the name, title, role in this project, and firm association for each key team member.
- Present the education, experience, and availability of the Project Manager. Availability shall be indicated as hours per week on average.
- Present the education, experience, and availability of the key team members. Availability shall be indicated as hours per week on average.

D.2 Past Performance

- Provide at least three (3) examples of past projects that meet the minimum requirements listed above in Section 3. First, fill out a version of the example past performance summary table shown below:

Project Name/ Location	Client Name/ Contact Info.	Capacity (MW-AC)	Operational Date	Cash or PPA?	Installed Project Cost or PPA Terms (\$/kW or \$/kWh)

- Then, provide a narrative of each project and why you selected them as your examples including but not limited to:
 - Brief project description
 - Relevant project team members and their roles
 - Explain relevancy to this RFP
 - A description of how the project was financed
 - Describe the transfer of ownership to the site owner (if applicable)
- If you are submitting an Alternate Bid #3 which includes battery storage, please provide a description of your team’s experience with batteries.

Section E. Project Approach/Technical Understanding

- Present the vendor’s understanding of the scope, challenges, and limits within the context of the project.

- Provide a conceptual design for each array included in your base bid as Appendix B.
- If you included alternates to the base bid, provide a narrative detailing why you included each alternate and provide the conceptual design for each array included in each alternate as an appendix.
- Specify an interconnection plan for the base bid and any alternate bid, including recommendations on CFES distribution asset needs and assistance in interconnection work product.
- Include an explanation of potential innovative measures (e.g. maximizing transmission and capacity savings, and/or minimizing transmission and capacity savings uncertainty)
- Describe cost containment measures for design and construction.
- Include a description of required CFES involvement.
- Include a tentative project schedule.

Section F. Alternate Design #1 Description (Optional & does not count in page limit)

- Include explanation as to why this design is preferred over provided draft design.
- The cost structure summary to your alternate design should be included above under Section C.
- Provide a conceptual design for each array included in Alternate Design #1 as Appendix C.

Section G. Alternate Design #2 Description (Optional & does not count in page limit)

- Include explanation as to why this design is preferred over provided draft design.
- The cost structure summary to your alternate design should be included above under Section C.
- Provide a conceptual design for each array included in Alternate Design #2 as Appendix D.

Section H. Alternate Design #3 Description (Optional & does not count in page limit)

- Include explanation as to why this design is preferred over provided draft design.
- The cost structure summary to your alternate design should be included above under Section C.
- Describe your battery design and how it impacts the project economics.
- Provide a conceptual design for each array included in Alternate Design #3 as Appendix E.

Appendix A. PPA Draft Contract Language (Does not count in page limit)

Appendix B. Base Bid Conceptual Design (Does not count in page limit)

Appendix C. Alternate Bid #1 Conceptual Design (Optional & does not count in page limit)

Appendix D. Alternate Bid #2 Conceptual Design (Optional & does not count in page limit)

Appendix E. Alternate Bid #3 Conceptual Design (Optional & does not count in page limit)

Required Submission Spreadsheet (Include on flash drive with electronic copy of proposal).

6. **RFP Terms and Conditions**

6.1. **Communications:**

No contact with respect to this proposal or its status is to be made with any member of CFES's staff other than with Michael Dougherty via e-mail (doughertymd@cityofcf.com). No calls will be taken during this process.

6.2. **Amendments:**

This RFP shall be modified only by a written addendum issued by CFES. It is the responsibility of the firms to verify that they have received and incorporated all changes due to addenda into their responses.

6.3. **Cancellation/Rejection:**

CFES reserves the right to cancel at any time, for any reason, this solicitation and to reject all qualifying statements. CFES shall have no liability to any proposer arising out of such cancellation or rejection. CFES reserves the right to waive minor variations in the selection process.

6.4. **Preparation Costs:**

CFES assumes no responsibility for costs incurred in the preparation, presentation, or submission of the RFP.

6.5. **Negotiations:**

If CFES and the firm ranked best qualified cannot negotiate a contract in good faith, CFES shall notify the firm in writing of the termination of negotiations and enter into negotiations with the firm ranked next best qualified. If negotiations again fail, the procedure will be followed with each next best qualified firm until a contract is negotiated. However, CFES retains the right to cancel at any time, for any reason, this solicitation and to reject all qualification statements.

6.6. **Insurance:**

The successful respondent will be required to maintain, at a minimum, standard insurance coverages for workers' compensation, commercial general, employer's and automotive liability, and umbrella excess liability. Respondents are requested to define the assumed insurances and levels in the Proposal.

6.7 **Bid Validity Length:**

The RFP bid response must be valid for at least 90 days to allow for analysis of the bids, interviews, contract negotiations, approval at City Council, and signing of the contract.

7. **RFP Attachments**

7.1. **Appendix A: REQUIRED Submission Spreadsheet**

7.2. **Appendix B: Sites Details**