

June 2025

Request for Information

Exploring Partnership Opportunities for Louisiana Clean Energy Fund's Residential Solar Program

Issued by: Louisiana Clean Energy Fund (LCEF)

Responses are due by Thursday, July 3rd, at 11:59 P.M. CT.

Submit responses as a PDF to info@lacleaneenergy.org.

1. Overview

A. Purpose

The Louisiana Clean Energy Fund (LCEF) seeks input from potential partners to shape a residential solar leasing initiative serving low-income and disadvantaged households across Louisiana. Responses will inform LCEF's decision to either support existing third-party owners (TPOs) or create a LCEF-led leasing platform.

This RFI seeks input from:

- Solar leasing companies;
- Solar contractors and installers;
- Billing, monitoring, operations & maintenance (O&M), legal, and fund administration vendors;
- Fund and tax equity managers.

Responses to this RFI will help LCEF assess market capacity, refine program design, identify qualified partners, and determine the most viable implementation pathway.

B. Response Instructions

Responses to this RFI must follow the instructions provided. Responses must be submitted as a PDF to info@lacleaneenergy.org no later than Thursday, July 3rd.

Responses should be no more than five (5) pages, single spaced, 1" margins, 12-point font. Questions are provided below as a guide. If responding to the below questions, please reference the appropriate question number(s).

Please note:

- LCEF will not respond to individual submissions or publish publicly a compendium of responses.
- A response to this RFI will not be viewed as a binding commitment to develop or pursue the project or ideas discussed.
- LCEF may consider requests to meet with organizations that have submitted an RFI response, in person or virtually, to further discuss their submissions. LCEF is under no obligation to meet with any RFI respondents.

2. Background and Program Vision

A. About the Louisiana Clean Energy Fund

LCEF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening resilient energy infrastructure and access by offering affordable financing solutions. LCEF provides targeted funding, bridges market gaps, and attracts investment to support projects in communities across Louisiana.

Additionally, LCEF coordinates, synchronizes, and works with other state and local agencies such as the Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (LDENR) and the LDENR Office of Energy, the Department of Environmental Quality, Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Louisiana Housing Corporation, and the City of New Orleans through its Office of Resilience and Sustainability (ORS).

B. Solar for Y'all Program

LDENR and LCEF are using a \$156 million award in Solar For All (SFA) funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement "Solar for Y'all". Solar for Y'all is a statewide initiative designed to expand energy options, lower household energy burdens, and build community resilience. The program provides both financial and technical assistance to support the deployment of solar and complementary technologies in disadvantaged communities across Louisiana.

Solar for Y'all will support a diverse range of project types, including single-family solar, multi-family solar, community solar, enabling upgrades (e.g., energy efficiency, weatherization), and battery storage. LCEF has also received an additional \$5 million from the Coalition for Green Capital to further accelerate these efforts.

In addition, LDENR and LCEF are collaborating with the City of New Orleans to coordinate Solar for Y'all with the Solar for All NOLA (SFANOLA) program. ORS, a recipient of an EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, will provide an extra \$5,000 subsidy for each residential solar installation within Orleans Parish. Participants using both Solar for Y'all and SFANOLA must meet all federal requirements applicable to both EPA-funded programs.

Key program requirements include:

- Minimum 20% savings on energy bills for participating households;
- A focus on low-income and disadvantaged communities;
- Full compliance with SFA, EPA, and 2 CFR 200 federal guidelines;

- A strong emphasis on workforce inclusion and local contractor participation.

Solar for Y'all is designed not only to deploy more energy options but also to build lasting infrastructure and foster economic development across Louisiana.

C. About the Residential Solar Program

LCEF's residential solar leasing program is in active development. It is currently evaluating two primary models:

- **Capital Support to Existing Third-Party Owners (TPOs):** Under this approach, LCEF would provide low-cost loans to existing solar leasing providers. These partners would then offer SFA-compliant leases to eligible households.
- **LCEF as a TPO:** In this model, LCEF would create and manage its own solar leasing platform. LCEF would retain ownership of the systems and oversee financing for solar installations, battery storage, and enabling upgrades. Operational responsibilities—including installation, billing, operations and maintenance, and customer service—would be contracted out to qualified partners. By owning the systems, LCEF could also raise tax equity and leverage additional capital to expand program reach.

LCEF is using this RFI to assess market capacity and stakeholder interest in supporting one of these models, with the ultimate goal of scaling an effective residential solar program statewide.

D. Program Design

Regardless of the model, LCEF anticipates incorporating the following program elements to support single-family and small multi-family residential properties (2-8 units):

- **Highly Competitive Pricing:** All partners—installers, leasing providers, and vendors—will be expected to deliver cost-effective solutions that achieve a minimum of 20% energy bill savings every year for participating households. LCEF may request standardized pricing submissions in future procurements.
- **Customer Protections:** Approved vendors will be required to comply with all applicable federal and state consumer protection laws, as well as adhere to program-defined standards that prioritize transparency, fairness, and customer support. These standards include providing clear, standardized disclosures of key terms such as expected savings,

ownership rights, contract durations, termination options, and available customer support. All customer-facing materials must be written in plain language and offered in the primary languages spoken within the target communities to ensure accessibility and understanding. Customer protections will be enforced through binding vendor agreements and actively monitored through regular reporting, complaint tracking, and direct customer feedback.

- **Battery Storage and Enabling Upgrades:** The Solar for Y'all program includes dedicated funding for battery storage systems and enabling upgrades—such as roof repairs, electrical panel replacements, and energy efficiency improvements—that are necessary for solar installation. LCEF intends to integrate these components into the residential solar offering. Respondents with experience bundling or financing these complementary services are encouraged to share their approaches.
- **Equitable Access and Workforce Inclusion:** LCEF seeks contractors and partners that support local hiring, workforce training programs, and participation of small businesses.
- **Financing Options:** LCEF seeks to support or develop leasing structures that feature no upfront costs, consumer-friendly terms, and performance guarantees. Lenders or TPOs using alternative underwriting methods or offering early buyout and transferability options are encouraged to respond to this RFI.
- **Ongoing Reporting and Transparency:** LCEF will adopt CRM tools and reporting platforms to track customer progress, measure program impact, and ensure quality assurance. Contractors will be required to provide demographic, project (e.g., solar PV system size), and compliance data throughout the implementation process.
- **Cross-Program Coordination:** LCEF will work closely with public agencies and nonprofit partners—such as roof fortification, home repair, and utility assistance programs—to streamline household enrollment. This is intended to reduce customer burden, lower acquisition costs, and increase participation among hard-to-reach communities. LCEF also anticipates formal collaboration with the City of New Orleans through its ORS office to support deployment in Orleans Parish.
- **Statewide Reach:** The program will be designed to serve households across all regions of Louisiana, including rural, coastal, and urban areas—and inclusive of both single-family and small multifamily properties. Responses that reflect geographic and housing-type reach will be viewed favorably.

3. Requested Information

LCEF invites respondents to indicate their interest and provide information related to their potential role in implementing a statewide residential solar program. You are not required to respond to all sections. Please focus on those that best reflect your organization's capabilities and interests:

- **Organizations interested in serving as TPOs** and being responsible for owning and operating residential solar systems should complete Sections A and B.
- **Organizations interested in supporting LCEF as the TPO** by providing implementation services such as installation, O&M, billing, fund administration, or customer outreach, should complete Sections A and C.

A. About the Respondent

1. Respondent Name
2. Respondent Email
3. Respondent Phone Number
4. Are you open to be contracted by LCEF to discuss this RFI response?
 - Yes
 - No
5. Please select which of the following describes your profession, role, or interest in a TPO system?
 - TPO or solar lease provider
 - Residential solar developer or installer
 - Commercial solar developer or installer
 - Financial institution or lender
 - Tax equity investor or syndicator
 - Legal or compliance advisor
 - Fund administrator or servicer
 - Operations and maintenance service provider
 - Billing or performance monitoring platform provider
 - Community-based organization or nonprofit partner
 - Local government or municipal program administrator
 - Policy advocate or researcher
 - Other (please specify)
6. What states or regions do you currently serve?
7. Have you either participated in or installed a third-party owned solar photovoltaic system on a single-family residence, multi-tenant building, or in another context?
 - Yes (If yes, please briefly describe your relevant experience)
 - No

B. For TPO Solar Providers.

1. **Program Delivery Strategies.** Please specify your experience and/or strategies for achieving the following potential program characteristics:
 - a) Achieving a minimum 20% utility bill savings, net of any costs of participating in the program, starting in Year 1 and extending through Year 20 of the project
 - b) Serving low-income and disadvantaged households and census tracts across the state
 - c) Providing a standard lease structure (please describe your typical lease terms, including duration, payment structure, and end-of-term options such as buyout or renewal).
 - d) Alternative approaches to underwriting for low-income customers, including alternatives to FICO
 - e) Upholding strong consumer protection standards, including clear, accessible communication of customer rights, obligations, and savings expectations in plain language and in languages commonly spoken by customers; responsive and accessible support throughout the contract term; and processes for addressing and resolving customer complaints
 - f) Providing performance or production guarantees for the term of the contract
 - g) Removal, transfer, or continuation options for the solar system if the customer moves or sells the home
 - h) Maintaining system operations, insurance, and warranties, including cases where lease ownership is transferred to another party
 - i) Ensuring the use of qualified and certified installers
 - j) Contracting out installation and/or O&M
 - k) Monitoring financial and operational performance across a distributed portfolio and managing underperformance
 - l) Including additional offerings (e.g., battery storage, energy efficiency)
 - m) Monetizing tax credits
 - n) Typical approaches to aggregating or bundling leases for scale or financing purposes
 - o) Ensuring Davis Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA) compliance (*Note: DBRA only applies if federal funds are used to cover construction labor costs and if the project is classified as a public work. Applicants should be prepared to comply if determined applicable based on project structure and funding use.*)
2. **Additional Questions on Capital Structure and Financial Terms.** LCEF is seeking to better understand how providing low cost, catalytic capital to existing TPOs could enable their participation under the Capital Support model. Note that while LCEF is prepared to offer below-market-rate

financing, it aims to support the expansion of the solar market in ways that allow it to recover most of its investments and continue serving the state of Louisiana in perpetuity. Please respond to any or all of the following:

- a) What forms of capital support would be most useful to your organization, besides grants? (e.g., low-interest debt, subordinated debt, loan loss reserves, credit enhancements)
- b) What are your minimum and preferred return expectations (IRR or interest rate) for participating in a low-income solar lease program?
- c) What conditions or terms would you require to accept public capital? (e.g., contract term, risk mitigation, repayment structure, equity stake, servicing arrangements)
- d) What is your preferred repayment mechanism? (e.g., monthly amortization, pay-for-performance, milestone-based)
- e) What level of grant capital—if any—would be necessary, as a percentage of total project costs, to make participation in the program viable?
- f) Are you able to serve customers in disadvantaged communities if certain cost or credit risks are mitigated? If so, how should LCEF structure this support?
- g) Would your organization be willing to accept limitations on lease escalators, fees, or other lease terms in exchange for below-market capital?
- h) Have you participated in similar public-private solar programs? If so, what financing structure made those programs viable?

C. For TPO Implementation Partners

Please indicate which of the following service areas your organization can support, and provide detail on your relevant experience, pricing structure, and ability to meet high standards for customer service and federal compliance (e.g., 2 CFR 200, Solar for All guidelines). You may respond in narrative form or use this table as a guide:

Service Area	Description
Installation	Describe your experience with residential and/or multifamily solar installations in Louisiana or similar markets. Are you certified by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP)? How do you ensure quality control, workforce standards, and timely deployment?
Billing and Monitoring	Do you provide a customer-facing billing platform? How do you integrate production monitoring and billing? Can

	your system support ACH, alerts for non-payment, and performance dashboards? Are you equipped to support compliance and data reporting?
O&M and Warranty Service	What ongoing service packages do you offer (e.g., annual inspections, performance guarantees)? How do you handle warranty claims and system repairs? Can you support customers if lease ownership changes?
Fund Administration and Management	Do you have experience administering clean energy funds or lease portfolios? Can you manage capital calls, investor reporting, and compliance tracking under federal guidelines? What systems do you use for financial reporting and audit readiness?
Customer Intake & Outreach	Can you support screening and enrolling eligible households, including verifying income or disadvantaged community status? Do you partner with community-based organizations?
Legal or Compliance Advisory	Do you offer legal structuring or compliance support related to Solar for All, ITC capture, Davis-Bacon, or 2 CFR 200? Have you supported solar or public funding programs in the past?

5. Response Format

Please submit a proposal that includes the following:

- Cover Sheet: Organization name, point of contact, website, relevant licenses and certifications.
- Narrative Response: Responses should be no more than five (5) pages, single spaced, 1" margins, 12-point font, addressing the relevant questions above.

- Attachments (optional but encouraged): Project case studies, rate cards, compliance certifications, sample contracts, or other supporting materials that directly support the narrative response.

6. Evaluation and Use of Responses

This RFI is for information-gathering purposes only. Responses will inform:

- LCEF's decision to either partner with existing TPOs or build its own leasing platform;
- A potential Request for Proposals (RFP) or pilot launch in select communities;
- Program design requirements, pricing, and operational planning.

LCEF anticipates issuing a targeted RFP based on insights from this RFI. Participation in this RFI is not required for RFP eligibility, but it is strongly encouraged