Interstate Renewable Energy Council
Website Design & Development
Request for Proposal

This RFP is for website design and development services for the SolSmart program
(http://www.solsmart.org), administered by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)
and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

RFP Sent: April 27, 2022
Responses Due: May 20, 2022

We aim to select a developer no later than June 1, 2022. The beginning of the contract will
depend on when we receive DOE funding for the project, but we hope to begin on May 1 or as
soon as possible afterward. **The project must be completed by October 1, 2022.**

Send proposals and any questions on the RFP with the subject line "Submission: Website Design
& Development" to: SolSmart@IRECUSA.org.

If you have any questions on the proposal, please submit your questions to the email above.
We will respond to all questions in a public forum accessible at this link:
https://irecusa.org/requests-for-proposal-solsmart-program-designation-platform-and-
solsmart-website/.

Budget for website design and development shall not exceed $30,000.

About Us

For nearly four decades, the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) has focused on making
clean energy possible for millions of Americans, by identifying and removing regulatory,
workforce, and economic barriers. IREC's organizational mission is to build the foundation for
rapid adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency to benefit people, the economy, and our
planet.

Since 2016, IREC has led the SolSmart program in partnership with the International
City/County Management Association. SolSmart is a national program that helps local
governments (cities, counties, and regional organizations) encourage the development of solar

energy in their communities. The program offers no-cost technical assistance to help communities achieve their solar energy goals.

The core of the program is the [SolSmart criteria](), a list of local actions and policies that help reduce barriers to solar energy growth. Communities receive points for achieving each criteria, and those with a sufficient number of points are designated SolSmart Gold, Silver, or Bronze. Since the program launched, over 450 communities in 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have achieved designation, as displayed on the [SolSmart designee map]().

Project Overview

IREC is seeking a web developer to update and improve the SolSmart program website. The existing website launched in 2016 and is in need of an update to improve functionality, user-friendliness, searchability, and SEO optimization. While we will retain the existing url (http://solsmart.org), we are open to organizational and design changes that will improve the functionality of the website. The current website is built in Wordpress, and our preference is to continue using Wordpress for the website backend.

Concurrently with these website improvements, IREC is developing a new login-based platform to be used by participating communities that are pursuing designation. We have issued a separate RFP for the platform development (likely to be based in Salesforce). A link to the separate RFP can be found at this link: https://irecusa.org/requests-for-proposal-solsmart-program-designation-platform-and-solsmart-website// An important aspect of this web development project will be to ensure that the updated website is integrated with the new platform, in consultation with the platform developer as needed. Applicants are welcome to apply for both RFPs if they so choose.

The primary audience for this website will be local government officials interested in expanding their solar energy use. This website should be a one-stop resource where local governments can find the information they need about solar energy, sign up with our program, and work toward SolSmart designation. Other audiences include the solar industry, state and federal government, environmental advocates, and the general public.

Timeline for Selection

April 27, 2022	RFP distributed
May 20, 2022	Proposals due to IREC
May 26-27, 2022	Proposal presentations (invitation only)
June 1, 2022	Determination

October 1, 2022	Implementation complete

Project Requirements

The following is a list of our main goals and requirements for the updated SolSmart website. We are open to other proposals for improvement based on your review of the website, depending on available budget.

Improve general website design. The design of the website is several years old and in need of an update. We need a design overhaul to make it as attractive and user-friendly as possible on desktop and mobile. We need improved flexibility on what can be posted on the website (for example, the current home page has a very rigid layout and it is difficult to make updates in a visually appealing way).

Improve page navigation and search function. We need improved site organization and search functionality to make it easy for users to find what they are looking for.

Improved SEO and loading speed. We need to optimize the page and make it easier to find our resources in a web search, as well as improve the website loading time.

Increase program participation. We need the website to funnel new communities into our program. When new users find the site, we need to make it as easy as possible for them to contact us, learn more information, and ultimately sign up. Secondarily, we need to encourage other actions such as subscribing to our newsletter and downloading resources.

Integration with designation platform*.* As noted above, we are building a new login platform for communities that are engaged with the SolSmart program. This platform will be handled under a separate RFP. For the website developer, the only task will be to help ensure the platform is visually and functionally integrated with the larger website. Some of the data that is submitted via the login-based platform will be carried over to public website pages.

Work Requirements

- Offeror must operate within a block of business hours in Eastern Standard Time (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. EST)
- Work should provide opportunity for pre-launch testing of new website updates
- Staff training on the website backend provided as needed
- Weekly checklist report of tasks completed submitted via email
- Touch-base meetings with core staff members as needed
- Comprehensive documentation of work to be performed and outcomes

Application Process

Please submit the following information with your proposal:

- Cover letter
- A description of your proposal and how you would meet the requirements in this RFP
- Statement of the organization's qualifications, including a sample of relevant work
- Contact information for three professional references
- Staff CVs of key personnel who will be involved
- Statement on your organization's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) principles and objectives

Selection Criteria

The applicant selected must have a clear understanding of the SolSmart program and must act as a partner in solar deployment by minimizing expenses and maximizing efficiency through effective feature enablement and user adoption support.

Upon notification of selection, the successful offeror is required to execute and deliver a contact within two weeks of notification. If the successful respondent is unwilling or unable to execute an agreement, IREC maintains the right to request another offeror to enter into a contract with IREC.

Selection criteria include:
- Cost
- Methodology: Please describe how your firm will approach the project with a detailed description, outline, and anticipated date of completion of each deliverable
- Quality assurance: Define schedule for routine progress meetings, allocate a portion of project timeline to end-user testing and adoption, documentation of completed deliverables, and knowledge base documentation for continued use of the organization and staff
- Demonstration of positive results with current and previous clientele
- Experience level and competence of staff who will execute deliverables
- Adherence to a well-defined diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) statement submitted with the application.

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